

*An Ask Direct and Charities Institute Ireland partnership*

**The Fundraising Summer School 2025**

**Call for Session Proposals**

**Fall in love with fundraising all over again**

We want your ideas for Summer School 2025.

This is your chance to pitch your proposal and speak at The Fundraising Summer School in Dublin, on 20 & 21 May 2025.

We are looking for exciting speakers and interesting proposals for sessions at next year’s event. These could be ideas for keynotes, presentations, workshops, panel discussions, debates or other session formats. We’re open to all ideas!

In 2024 we had open space discussions, conversations, panels, presentations and even a walking tour. Who knows what we’ll see in 2025.

**About you**

We care about what you have to say, the stories you have to tell and the insights you want to share.

You don’t need to be an established ‘speaker’, but if you’re presenting, you should be able to talk confidently and authoritatively about your subject matter.

We want to hear from both gnarly-toothed veterans and iconoclastic rising stars.

You might have a success story (or a failure story) to share. Or you could have new insights that you’ve uncovered, or learnings that you’ve developed over the course of your career.

If you have limited experience of developing and presenting a conference session, we will pair you with a mentor who will help you deliver the best possible presentation.

**Our Principles**

Fundraising Summer School is a place to combine best practice in fundraising with critical thinking about fundraising.

The people on the platform don’t know everything and are not the only experts. Summer School should be an environment in which all participants can participate fully and share their own particular experience and expertise.

Summer School embraces experimentation and innovation. It should be a time and place to try new approaches, formats and ideas.

Summer School is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and aims to be fully accessible to fundraisers and those interested in fundraising regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, neurotype, age, class or family status.

In particular, Summer School will ensure that as far as practicable the platform of speakers reflects the diversity of our society and that the gender breakdown of speakers is reflective of the fundraising sector – at least two thirds of those speaking or presenting should be women.

Speakers are contributing their time and their expertise. All speakers are paid and appropriate travel expenses covered.

**Our Audience**

In 2024 we had over 350 people at The Fundraising Summer School. We’re expecting this to increase in 2025. When you’re submitting your application we’d like you to think about how it will relate to the audience.

*Where they come from*

While most attendees came from Irish organisations, we had a considerable number of international delegates (*hallo Nederlandse fondsenwervers!* 👋). We’re hoping to see an increase in the number of international attendees in 2025.

*The organisations they work in*

Most of the larger Irish charities were represented, but as the bulk of Irish charities are small to medium sized, this is where a lot of the delegates work. There are plenty of fundraisers who work alone or in small teams in attendance.

*Their experience and seniority.*

This is very mixed. We had newbies who have just started fundraising alongside 30 year veterans. CEOs and Directors of Fundraising as well new entrants. Some specialising in one area such as individual giving, others who work across multiple disciplines.

**The Theme for 2025**

The world is on fire.

We need to equip ourselves to fix our future.

We need to challenge ourselves to be better.

We need to fall in love with fundraising again.

**What we’re looking for**

We are now looking for interesting proposals for sessions at The Fundraising Summer School 2025.

These could be ideas for keynotes, presentations, workshops, panel discussions, debates or other session formats. We’re open to all ideas!

We are specifically looking for proposals which:

1. Inspire our audience so that they return to their desks fired up, re-motivated and ready to take on the world.
2. Show evidence of critical thinking – conceptualising, analysing, synthesising and evaluating information, data and experience.
3. Draw on established fundraising knowledge, research, understanding and learning and convey the ideas in a new and interesting way.
4. Introduce new learning or insights that we can apply to our fundraising. Are there new tools, techniques or technologies that we can use? How can we become more innovative as a sector?
5. Provide practical learnings and take-aways that delegates can apply to their own work.
6. Address the big trends that will shape our work going forward - technological disruption, social instability, climate change, demographic shifts and a fracturing world.
7. Tackle the key issues facing us as fundraisers – creating a more inclusive sector, tackling misogyny and racism and other forms of discrimination, preventing burnout, building more sustainable organisations and ways of working.
8. Apply learning from outside fundraising – marketing, politics, culture, psychology, business – to the challenges we face.

Obviously, not every session will need to cover every single one of these, but you should aim to address at least a few of them.

We are looking for sessions that are tailored for a general audience, and also for sessions geared towards senior-level and highly experienced fundraisers.

We are also keen to consider sessions that are relevant to smaller organisations and to specific sectors, such as the arts and culture sector, or higher education.

And we would like to include some ‘wild-card’ sessions – sessions that may be unrelated to fundraising, but might get people thinking in a different way, spark unexpected connections or are just on really interesting topics.

When we’re putting together the programme, we’ll be aiming to include sessions that cover (amongst other things):

* Individual giving
* Digital
* Legacies
* Innovation
* Research
* Leadership
* Marketing
* New technologies
* Ethics
* Corporate fundraising
* Major donors

Sessions will generally be either 45 minutes or 1 hour in length. But if you have an idea that is significantly shorter or longer, do get in touch.

When you’re proposing a session, bear in mind that the rooms are set up in a fixed lecture theatre format.

**Fees and expenses**

We will cover appropriate travel and accommodation expenses for speakers and all speakers will be paid a speaking fee.

Delivering full presentations, workshops, keynotes - €200

Leading panel sessions - €150

Participating in panel discussions - €50

We encourage speakers to play an active part in The Fundraising Summer School, attend all the sessions and enjoy the debate (whether that’s during the sessions or in the pub afterwards!).

**What makes The Fundraising Summer School special**

Launched in 2016 by Ask Direct, and now run as a partnership between Ask Direct and Charities Institute Ireland, the intention of The Fundraising Summer School is not simply to talk about the “how to” of fundraising, but also to look at “where now?” and “what’s next?”.

The idea is to create a space for debate, discussion, participation and inspiration; to look critically at fundraising and to challenge current thinking; to introduce ideas from other spheres; and to fire up participants so they can tackle the challenges of their work with renewed energy, ideas and inspiration

**How to submit a proposal**

Submitting your proposal couldn’t be easier. [All you have to do is follow the linked Google Form and complete your submission before 12noon on Friday 20 December 2024](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSetgEFNvPOP5YD9NNB6A67cD7ZwsdnS-cYNLzJNi54fcewBeQ/viewform).

We’re looking for submissions with engaging content. You might want to tell us about what you do, why you do it, how you’ve got here and what you get up to when you’re not working. But it’s entirely up to you.

Explain the idea for you session. What the content will be and what the outcomes will be for attendees. Will you be delivering the session alone or with other people? Who will your session be aimed at and what level of expertise will it be pitched at?

In addition, you’ll need to submit a short video - no more than 2 minutes long - telling us why your session is important and why it should be part of The Fundraising Summer School 2025.

If you have any questions about The Fundraising Summer School and making your submission, you can Inga@AskDirect.ie with your questions or to arrange a call.

[**Don’t forget, the submission deadline is 12noon on Friday 20 December 2024.**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSetgEFNvPOP5YD9NNB6A67cD7ZwsdnS-cYNLzJNi54fcewBeQ/viewform)

