



#GEO2026

GEO 2026 National Conference Policies

GEO's 2026 National Conference is creating a vibrant, supportive space where we can transform philanthropic culture and practice together. To help guide us in this work, we have developed the following policies to guide conference participation. Please contact us with any questions.

Participant Eligibility

GEO conferences are open to current GEO members; all staff and trustees of grantmaking institutions; staff of philanthropy-supporting infrastructure groups, such as regional associations of grantmakers and affinity groups; and staff of academic institutions and programs focused primarily on the study of philanthropy and the practice of giving.

GEO conferences also have 50 tickets available to GEO-member and non-member consultants who support grantmaking institutions and nonprofits. Tickets will be available on a first-come, first-served basis with priority available to GEO member consultants during the priority registration time. Remaining consultant tickets will be sold as available to nonmembers when early registration opens to nonmembers. Consultant organizations are limited to a maximum of 2 registration tickets per organization. Once the consultant tickets are sold out, consultants can join a wait list and will be sold a ticket as one becomes available per GEO's wait list policy.

Limiting participation to organizations that are eligible for GEO membership creates a space where participants can speak openly and candidly about challenges within their work. To achieve this, GEO conferences are not open to nonprofits and grant seekers unless invited to speak at the conference.

Please [visit our membership page](#) for additional information on GEO membership and conference participation eligibility. Your name and organization affiliation are pulled from your registration form. GEO will only print organization affiliations that are in accordance with our eligibility policy. GEO has the discretion to edit your submission, in accordance with our policies, and will alert participants to any changes.

Conference Registration Verification

GEO reserves the right to cancel and refund registrations that are deemed to be ineligible per GEO's eligibility policies. We will verify all registrations within three business days. GEO strongly recommends waiting for verification before booking travel or accommodations. If verification is not received after three business days, please check spam filters and contact registration@geofunders.org.

If you register with an incorrect ticket type, additional registration fees may apply and must be paid by Friday, May 1, 2026.

Cancellations and Substitutions Policy

GEO incurs immediate expenses when a participant registers for a conference, including but not limited to registration system fees and payment processing charges. To recover these expenses, all requests to cancel a confirmed conference registration are subject to a \$100 service fee by GEO which are non-refundable. All cancellations must be submitted in writing on or before Friday, May 1, 2026.* No requests for refunds will be granted after this date or for no-shows.

Participants may also choose to transfer their registration to a colleague or peer. Transferred registration may incur additional fees if they are transferred across registration type. Transfers must be requested by Friday May 1, 2026. No refunds will be issued for transferred registrations.* The individual submitting the registration transfer request is responsible for ensuring that all financial obligations (any balance due) associated with that registration are met and that contact information for the new participant is updated with GEO's registration team. Requests for cancellations and substitutions must be submitted in writing to registration@geofunders.org.

Through the registration process, participants have the option of opting into the Peer Coaching Program for an additional \$50. The registration fee for this program is non-refundable.

*In line with our commitment to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all participants, we offer an exception to our attendance policy for those who test positive for an illness, have symptoms of contagious conditions, or have had recent close contact with someone who is ill. Participants will have the option of choosing a refund and will be required to submit a signed attestation indicating their illness and/or symptom-status to be reimbursed. Stripe fees are non-refundable. Participants have the option of not seeking reimbursement and instead donating the registration fee to support GEO's mission.

Preferred Method of Payment

Our preferred method of payment is via Stripe, GEO's payment processor through the Whova platform at the time of registration. Should you need to pay by check or ACH, please reach out to registration@geofunders.org in order to register.

Payment by Check

Please send all checks to:

Attention: Conferences Grantmakers for Effective Organizations 1310 L Street NW, Suite 650
Washington, DC 20005

Memo: Participant Name 2026 National Conference [Confirmation numbeorg]

Payment Deadline & Cancellation

All participants need to submit payment within two weeks of registration. Registrations with an outstanding balance as of Friday, May 1, 2026 will be cancelled. In that situation, GEO will contact the registrant and seek to obtain payment before cancelling the registration.

Wait List

Demand for GEO conferences typically exceeds the number of available seats. In the event that the conference reaches capacity, GEO will open a wait list and interested individuals may add

their names to the list. There is no charge to join the wait list, and you will not be charged for the conference until you are notified that a seat is available for you to register; however, waitlist participants registration payment will be due Friday, May 16, 2026.

GEO will review the wait list on a weekly basis and notify individuals from the wait list as space becomes available, with priority going to GEO members. All individuals on the wait list will be alerted of their status no later than Monday, May 11, 2026.

Please do not book travel or accommodation until your seat at the event is confirmed.

GEO's Meetings Sustainability Plan

GEO strives to be a good steward of our environment. To reduce the impact of GEO events on the local host community, GEO has implemented a conference sustainability plan. This plan guides GEO's efforts to prevent wasteful practices at all events. Some prominent features of the plan include:

1. Reducing the use of paper by: a. Limiting the number of printed materials to a print program and name badge; b. Utilizing electronic communications to share information with event speakers and registered participants; c. Providing electronic resources including the participant roster, session resources and facilitator bios, online prior to and after the conference.
2. Reducing the number of promotional items that organizations ship to conference sites.
3. Collecting and recycling paper and beverage containers used at the conference as available.
4. Promoting ride share efforts and public transportation for travel between local airports, hotels and the conference venue.

On-Site Communication and Social Media

For the most current information on the conference, visit GEO's website or follow us on [LinkedIn](#). The official social media hashtag for the 2026 National Conference is #GEO2026.

Photography/Video/Audio Taping Release

GEO strives to capture the community, peer-learning environment of our conferences. To do so, we photograph and record various aspects of the conference, and your image and voice might be captured. Furthermore, we may use these photographs and videos for future distribution and promotional purposes in our print and online communications materials. By participating in this conference and/or being present at the venue, you authorize GEO to use and reproduce any photographs and videos taken, without compensation or attribution. All negatives and positives, photographic prints, digital photo files and video files shall constitute GEO property, solely and completely. If you would like to opt-out, you must contact registration@geofunders.org by Friday, May 1, 2026.

No Solicitation Policy

GEO's 2026 National Conference aims to create a welcoming and brave space. We encourage relationship building and honest, vulnerable conversations between funders and partners including non-profit and community leaders. We ask all conference participants to refrain from soliciting other participants for business, clients, or funding while at the conference. Participants may, and are encouraged to, share their experience and expertise, but promotional materials

and pitches will not be allowed. Any participants found in violation of this policy will be ineligible to attend future GEO events.

Participant Roster

We want to ensure that all conference participants can network and build connections at the conference. Before the conference, participants will be given access to the participant roster via the conference app, Whova. Only registered participants will be given access to the conference app and the participant roster. The roster provides participant contact information but is for networking purposes only and should not be used for solicitation of any kind. If you do not wish to have your contact information included in the conference participant roster or feel that you have been contacted in violation of our non-solicitation policy, please email registration@geofunders.org.

Code of Conduct

GEO conferences are spaces dedicated to learning. For learning environments to be effective, the dignity of all participants must be consistently respected. GEO is committed to creating a harassment free environment for everyone.

We do not tolerate harassment of anyone including conference participants, conference staff, hotel staff, vendors or volunteers in any form. GEO appreciates your partnership in ensuring that the learning environment we share is one defined by mutual respect and inclusiveness, where dignity and diversity are valued. If you experience or witness harassment of any kind, please alert any member of the GEO staff or use the anonymous hotline available during the conference. In the event someone intentionally or unintentionally violates the code of conduct, a member of the conference team, GEO staff or hotel security will intervene with appropriate action that may involve community accountability, ways to mediate, or necessitate expulsion from the event with no refund.

Safety and Security Policy

GEO is committed to creating a safe and secure environment for all participants throughout the 2026 National Conference. To support safety and security during the conference, access to the event space is restricted to registered attendees, speakers, hotel staff and hired vendors supporting the event only. Name badges must be worn and visible at all times in all conference spaces. Only individuals with official conference credentials, including essential support persons or aides, are permitted in the meeting spaces. If you require a non-registered aide for accessibility or security, you must notify GEO in advance (via the "Accessibility" section of registration or by emailing registration@geofunders.org). This ensures they receive the necessary credentials and name badge for entry.

. Our on-site staff is trained and prepared to respond to a range of escalating situations, ensuring that every participant has space and resources for immediate assistance readily available. GEO recognizes that some participants may be at increased vulnerability or targeting by outside agencies. GEO conferences are private events, and no outside individuals, agencies or agents are permitted to access event spaces without legal standing. If you anticipate the need for additional support or security while onsite, contact the GEO team at registration@geofunders.org ahead of conference.

In the event of an emergency, immediately alert any member of the GEO Staff (wearing a staff badge), the nearest hotel security staff, and/or dial 911.

Health & Wellbeing Policies & Protocol

GEO considers the wellbeing of all those on-site at our 2026 National Conference a top priority. The COVID-19 pandemic and other airborne illnesses target the most vulnerable among us, leading to heightened vulnerability for members of our community with disabilities and/or chronic illness. We encourage conference participants, speakers, vendors and GEO staff to take a rapid COVID-19/Flu A & B test prior to travel and prior to attending any conference programs. We will have a limited number of tests and masks available at no cost on site. We strongly encourage those who are able to stay up-to-date on their COVID and flu vaccinations. GEO reserves the right to update our policies at any time.

Not yet a GEO Member? Interested In Joining?

[Join GEO now](#). Simply complete the [membership interest form here](#), and we will contact you to process your new membership. More information about GEO membership and rates are available [here](#). If you have questions or would like to speak to someone directly, please contact Autumn Shepherd-Van Patten, Membership Manager at shepherd@geofunders.org or 314-806-3518.