

Call for Presentations Guidelines

Submission Deadline: Oct. 15, 2025

Design-build is growing rapidly, now making up 42% of construction spending and expected to reach nearly 50% by 2028, driven by its cost and schedule efficiencies and flexible procurement methods like Best-Value and Progressive Design-Build. As the use of design-build continues to grow, particularly in the expanding Water/Wastewater sector, understanding its best practices and challenges is crucial.

The Design-Build for Water/Wastewater Conference, April 13-15, 2026, in Grapevine, TX, is an exclusive opportunity to share your design-build insights and adapt to changes in project delivery. This event will help Owners confidently navigate design-build amidst market uncertainties and address industry challenges. DBIA invites experts — Owners, practitioners and other professionals — to contribute. Join over 1,100 AEC professionals to learn and network and consider submitting a session proposal to influence the future of design-build.

What We're Looking For: At a Glance

Priority consideration will be given to submissions adhering to these guidelines.

Quality submissions that address and/or align with the below:

- The right presenters are as important as the right topic:
 - One or more presenters holds a DBIA credential.
 - One or more presenters holds a DBIA membership.
 - Owner's involvement in the presentation.
 - Panels that include multiple project team members (ex., design-builder, designer, Owner or Owner Advisor, trade partners).
 - Presentations and panels/speakers that incorporate broad perspectives — such as experience levels, firm sizes, market sectors, geographic regions — while also highlighting efforts to expand opportunities and promote engagement for small and Underrepresented Business Enterprises (UBEs) in Design-Build.
- Presentations that are educational with crisp instruction and clear takeaways on the “how to” of Design-Build Done Right®

- Presentations that highlight challenges, with an emphasis on “lessons learned” and tools and resources others can apply to avoid similar difficulties in their practice.
- Presentations that speak to one or more of the following:
 - Best practices with a focus on practical application of key practices, and lessons learned to guide future success.
 - Managing risk and expectation
 - Collaboration/teaming successes
 - Application of Virtual Design & Construction (VDC)
 - Making the essential mental shift for success and the all-important facets of developing a successful acquisition strategy

Content that will not be considered:

- Self-congratulatory presentations on a project.
- Presentations that provide a sense of commercial/brand promotion. Please note presentations that serve to promote a specific product or service will not be accepted.
- Anything that does not precisely relate to the Design-Build delivery method.

Topics of Interest for 2026

How the Industry Is Evolving

- Ever-Changing Engineering
- Ever-Changing Contracting
- Ever-Changing Pricing and Supply Chain Management

Procuring and Contracting for Design-Build Services

- Writing and Responding to the RFQ/RFP
- Risk and Opportunities in Contracting, Insurance and Procurement
- Risk Assessment and Management
- Design-Build for Smaller Projects
- Using Proprietary Meetings Effectively

Highly Effective Design-Build Teams

- Structuring a Dynamic Design-Build Team
- The How/Why of Early Engagement of the Team (Designer, Specialty Trades, Owner, etc.)
- Dealing with Limited Owner and Design-Builder Staffing Resources
- Integration Tools and Techniques
- The “Commercial Deal” – Achieving True Contractual Partnerships
- Contingency and Allowance in a GMP – The Essentials

Potential Tools/Future of Design-Build

- Progressive Design-Build: Achieving Phased Delivery Cost Success
- Collaborative Problem Solving, Best Value Solutions
- Virtual Design & Construction (VDC), Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Innovative Technologies

Potential Tools/Future of Design-Build (continued)

- Innovative Funding Solutions
- Show Me the Money – Stimulus WIFIA and IRA Funding – Creating Shovel Ready (and Shovel Worthy) Projects
- Design-Build in Times of Crisis/Disaster

Owners and Design-Build

- Positioning Your Agency to Be an Owner of Choice
- Owner Considerations in Choosing a Collaborative Delivery Model
- Evaluating Procurement Methodologies
- Which Delivery Method Is Best for My Project?
- Balancing the Role of the Owner's Advisor
- New Owner Experiences in Design-Build
- How Does an Owner Create a Collaborative Mindset within Its Organization?
- What Owners Need to Do in Pre-Procurement to Enable Project Success
- How to Develop RFQ/RFPs That Are Attractive to Practitioners
- Contractor Self-Performance Essentials for Owners

Hot Topics in Design-Build

- Cost Volatility and How to Handle
- Early Collaboration: Best Value and Progressive Design-Build
- Extended Equipment Procurement Cycle

Project Challenges

- Instances Where Significant Issues Occurred and How Those Challenges Were Overcome
- Teaming
- Changes in Scope
- Value of the Right People in the Right Roles as Contractors, Designers and Owner

DESIGN-BUILD FOR WATER/WASTEWATER CONFERENCE

April 13-15, 2026 | Grapevine, TX (Dallas Area)

Submitting Your Presentation Idea

All submissions must be completed [online](#). Incomplete submissions will not be accepted. You must answer “yes” to the following questions to be considered. If selected, I/we:

1. Agree to have our draft presentation submitted to DBIA no later than **Mar. 6, 2026**.
2. Agree to collaborate with the Water/Wastewater Conference Planning Committee to refine and finalize our presentation, having our final presentation submitted to DBIA no later than **Apr. 1, 2026**. DBIA will withdraw session presenters from the program if we do not receive final presentations by the **Apr. 1** deadline.
3. Should circumstances dictate the need to transition to a virtual event, agree to pre-record your session approximately two weeks prior to the event for use during the conference.
4. Commit to be available **IN PERSON** in Grapevine, TX, at a time slot determined by DBIA between **Apr. 13–15, 2026**.
5. Any plans for polling or other special requests are subject to approval by DBIA.

Presentation Overview

1. **Presentation Title** – Title should capture the essence of the topic to be discussed and should not exceed 10-12 words.
2. **Presentation Summary** – Please provide an overview of the session intent and why the topic is relevant to successful integrated delivery. The summary statement should not exceed 200 words and may be used for marketing purposes should your presentation be selected.
3. **Four Major Presentation Points** – A learning objective is an explicit statement that clearly expresses what the attendee will be able to do after taking a course. Learning objectives should be concise and open to limited interpretation. An example of a learning statement is as follows: Define best practices for effective collaboration using technology. Suggested behavioral verbs to use when writing learning objectives include the following: acquire, analyze, apply, assess, build, clarify, compare, define, demonstrate, describe, determine, differentiate, discover, etc.
4. **Presentation Level** – Based on your judgment what is your content level? Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced?
5. **Full Team Perspective** – How does your presentation or panel incorporate broad perspectives — such as experience levels, firm sizes, market sectors, geographic regions — while highlighting efforts to expand opportunities and promote engagement for small and underrepresented businesses in design-build?"
6. **Differentiation Strategies** – Based on the presentation level you indicated in #4, how do you plan to differentiate your presentation content to address the diverse learning needs of your audience to ensure all learners leave with meaningful takeaways?
7. **Intended Audience** – What is the intended primary audience for this presentation? (check all that apply)
 - ☐ Owners (Procurement/Pre-Award Professional)
 - ☐ General Contractors
 - ☐ Owner Advisor
 - ☐ Specialty/Subcontractors
 - ☐ Design Professionals
 - ☐ Other (please specify)

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Speaker Overview

1. **Logistical Contact** – This person must be prepared to serve as DBIA's main point of contact if selected, including coordination with co-presenters, where applicable. If the logistical contact is also a presenter, please include their information below.
 - a. Name
 - b. Title
 - c. Email
 - d. Phone
2. **Panels are limited to four (4) presenters.** The following information will be used in conjunction with the description above to determine the relevance and balance of your session proposal. This information is critical to the committee review process. Later in this process you will be asked to provide full contact information. For review purposes, however, only the following information will be requested.
 - a. Presenter Name
 - b. Presenter Licenses/Credentials (DBIA, Assoc. DBIA, PE, AIA, etc.)
 - c. Presenter Company
 - d. Experience Presenting the Topic – Has the presenter conducted a similar topic at a DBIA or any other industry event? If so, please indicate when and where.

A committee of design-build industry experts will review and make decisions on submissions. You will be notified of the decision **no later than Nov. 29, 2025.**

All selected presenters will receive a discounted registration to the full Spring conference. Submit your proposal **online** by **Oct. 15, 2025.**

Questions regarding the submission process should be directed to:

Courtney Zsitek, Director, Conference Programming
Voice: (202) 454-7521
E-mail: czsitek@dbia.org