

Conference Theme & Learning Tracts

Thank you for your interest in the 2026 Inspire Neighborhoods Conference! Our conference theme and learning tracts are listed below to help guide you as you complete your speaker applications. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to our team using the contact information on the second page of this document.

2026 Conference Theme

Resilience — Together We Are Stronger

This year's theme recognizes resilience as something built with neighbors—through relationships, shared learning, and practical on-the-ground experience. We welcome session proposals that center real stories, hard-earned lessons, and accessible tools that help neighborhood leaders sustain hope, navigate challenges, and support one another for the long haul.

Learning Tract Definitions

Focus Area 1: Connection

Connection sessions remind neighborhood leaders that they are not in this work alone. These sessions provide opportunities to meet others, build relationships, and experience shared joy through interactive, welcoming activities that foster trust, belonging, and mutual support.

Past & Potential topics include: *Telling your story and your Neighborhood's story; Healing and Connecting with Art; Neighborhood Networking Hour*

Focus Area 2: Collaboration

Collaboration sessions explore how neighborhood associations work well together—within their own leadership teams, with volunteers, and across neighborhoods and organizations. Topics may include organizing people effectively, member leveraging diverse strengths, reducing burnout, and building partnerships that make the work more sustainable and impactful.

Past topics have included: *Building Bridges Across Generations: Avoiding Burnout; How Language Access Can Generate a Positive Impact in Your Community; Fostering Unity and Resilience in our Communities; Conflict Resolution*

Focus Area 3: Innovation & Resources

Innovation and resource-focused sessions help neighborhoods better understand and build on what they already have. These sessions may explore identifying strengths, mapping community assets, accessing funding, and connecting to people, existing or new programs and systems that support prosperous, resilient neighborhoods.

Past topics have included: Fundraising 101: Seeking Grants & Sponsorships; Tree Planting as Neighborhood Activation; Innovative Housing; Neighborhood Associations' Responsibilities & Best Practices; Fair Housing in Action

Focus Area 4: Vibrancy

Vibrancy sessions focus on infusing more energy, life, and momentum into neighborhood work. Topics may include creative placemaking, celebration, and community-led advocacy efforts that shape local policies, strengthen civic participation, and help neighborhoods feel more connected, hopeful, and alive—while sustaining the people who lead the work.

Past topics have included: Healthy & Livable Communities; Organized Outdoor Activities to Build Safer, Friendlier, Healthier Neighborhoods; Complete Streets & Traffic Calming; Healing Communities: Addressing Trauma; Tools and mindsets to improve goals and performance

Program Manager Contact Information

If you have any additional questions about the conference, contact Réna Bradley at rena.bradley@cityoffortwayne.org or by calling 260-427-2284.