

Call for Open Submission Proposals

2026 AALS Annual Meeting

January 6-9, 2026

New Orleans, Louisiana

Submission dates:

Proposals for Discussion Groups, Open Source Programs, and Symposia due **August 8, 2025**

Proposals for Hot Topic Programs due **November 7, 2025**

[Submission Form](#)

Questions: events@aals.org

The Program Committee for the 2026 Annual Meeting is pleased to request proposals for several types of open submission programs at the AALS Annual Meeting. Open submission programs are organized by individual faculty members at member or fee-paid law schools. These programs are not sponsored by AALS Sections.

2026 Annual Meeting Details

The 2026 Annual Meeting theme, selected by AALS President Austen Parrish, is **Impact. Excellence. Resilience. The Enduring Contributions of Legal Education.** At the beginning of the 20th century, representatives of 35 law schools convened to establish a new association designed to strengthen American legal education, with the goal of producing lawyers, judges, and legal thought-leaders with the expertise and integrity essential for the country's future. As we mark the Association's 125th anniversary (and our 120th annual meeting), this year's theme will look back at the enduring impact of American legal education, including the contributions of our faculty and staff colleagues, on our local communities, our nation, our society, and the world. The Program Committee encourages proposal organizers to consider using the 2026 theme in framing their proposals. Addressing the theme is not required, but consideration will be given to programs with this theme as a focus.

Types of Program and Panel Proposals

The AALS schedules four types of open submission programs, which are more fully described below:

Open-Source Programs: These offer an opportunity to present either traditional or innovatively-structured programs that stand apart from those proposed by AALS sections.

Discussion Groups: These provide a setting for focused discussions among a small group of invited discussants and engaged participation by the audience.

Symposia: These are extended half-day sessions that focus on in-depth scholarly exploration of a topic of academic interest.

Hot Topic Programs: These focus on topics that emerged too late in the year to be included in section programming.

Open Source, Discussion Group, and Hot Topic programs run for 75 minutes and should allow 15-20 minutes for audience participation and Q&A.

Symposia run for a half-day (3 hours) and should include sufficient time for audience participation at the end of each panel.

Deadlines

Discussion Groups, Open Source, Symposium proposals are due **August 8, 2025**.

Hot Topic proposals are due **November 7, 2025**.

General Submission Guidelines

Full-time faculty members or administrators at AALS Member or Fee-Paid law schools may propose programs.

International faculty, visiting faculty (who have no permanent affiliation at another Member or Fee-Paid law school), graduate students, and non-law school faculty are not eligible to submit proposals but may serve as speakers.

A proposal for any of the four program categories should include:

- Program title.
- Names, affiliations, and contact information of the proposal's organizers.
- Detailed description of the proposed program, including:
 - The format of the proposed program.
 - An explanation of the overall goal of the program.
 - A description of how diversity is achieved by the program's speakers, content, and/or structure.
- If applicable, an indication that one or more speakers will be selected from a call for participants.
- Names, titles, and affiliations of speakers to be invited, including links to or copies of their curricula vitae. The number of speakers per program or Symposium panel should be limited to a maximum of four, plus one moderator. Discussion Groups typically have between eight and twelve discussants. Speakers should represent a mix of institutional affiliations.
- If applicable, proposals should name the journal or edited volume that will be publishing any papers that are presented.

When developing proposals and identifying speakers, program organizers should consider the AALS core value of diversity. Relevant considerations include, but are not limited to, gender, race, years of teaching experience, faculty status (junior/senior faculty, tenured/tenure-track/clinical/non-tenure-track faculty), type of law school, geographic location, and viewpoint of the speakers. To ensure diverse viewpoints, proposals should feature speakers who represent a range of philosophical, ideological, doctrinal, and methodological perspectives on the program topic.

The scheduled program time should be used only for the academic discussion itself; if there is any “business” to take care of (e.g., discussion of whether to form a new AALS section or combine with an existing section), those discussions should take place outside of the allotted programming time.

If you have questions, please contact events@aals.org

General Selection Guidelines

When reviewing proposals in any category, the Program Committee will consider the overall quality of the program and whether the proposal:

- Is well-written and thoughtfully constructed.
- Is likely to be of interest to Annual Meeting attendees.
- Is creative in including and facilitating audience engagement.
- Includes presenters who further the diversity goals described above.
- Includes topics or viewpoints that further the diversity goals described above.

Although addressing the 2026 Annual Meeting theme is not required, consideration will be given to programs that focus on this theme.

Program Committee for the 2026 Annual Meeting

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Open Source Program Proposals

Proposals Due: August 8, 2025

Proposals should follow the General Submission Guidelines set forth above.

Open Source programs may take many shapes: programs may be interdisciplinary and cut across the interests of two or more sections or subject areas, address themes outside the scope of any existing section, or focus on specific issues such as recent cases or developments in a given area of law.

In addition, we welcome innovative proposals for Open Source programs that depart from the typical format of having speakers present 10- or 20-minute talks. For example, Open Source proposals might offer the following:

- A roundtable-style program in which speakers answer a series of questions posed by the moderator and the audience.
- A program where speakers engage in one or more role-play sessions.
- A program that invites extended engagement with specific scholarly work, such as an “Author Meets Reader” program that discusses a significant new book, or a “Living Legend” program that invites attention to the overall work of an established scholarly figure.
- A program that consists of short presentations coupled with questions designed to set the presentations against one another to foster debate and discussion.

Open Source Program proposals are due August 8, 2025, and should be submitted using the [online submission form](#). Questions may be directed to events@aals.org

Discussion Group Proposals

Proposals Due: August 8, 2025

Proposals for a Discussion Group should follow the General Submission Guidelines set forth above.

A Discussion Group provides a group of discussants the opportunity to engage in a sustained conversation about a shared topic of interest. Discussion Groups will not feature formal presentations. Instead, each discussant will typically prepare brief remarks of 3-5 minutes (some past discussion groups have referred to these presentations as “opening statements”). These initial presentations are intended to stimulate a lively and engaging discussion that will include both the discussants and members of the audience.

Discussion Groups may be limited to a single substantive area and subject or address a broad topic (past topics have included, “Equitable Remedies in Civil Rights Litigation” or “Post-COVID-19 Online and Hybrid Learning Pedagogy and Best Practices”). No matter how the Discussion Groups structure their topic or focus, they will ideally offer an opportunity for discussants in related fields to bring useful perspectives to the conversation. For example, a Discussion Group on “Free Speech and Community Policing” could invite perspectives from multiple vantage points, including public law and criminal law as well as critical, feminist, and comparative law perspectives.

Discussion Group sessions should have at least six and no more than ten invited discussants, including the moderator. Proposals should identify approximately two-thirds of the discussants and leave the remaining one-third to be selected from an “open call for participation”. Proposals should include a “Call for Participation”. For accepted proposals, AALS staff will post “calls for participation” in coordination with the Discussion Group’s organizers. The final discussant list chosen by the organizers is subject to review and approval by the Program Committee.

Once all discussants are identified, they should provide the organizers with one–page abstracts that preview their 3–5-minute opening remarks. Discussion Group organizers should share all discussants’ abstracts with each other before the Annual Meeting to allow all discussants to anticipate others planned remarks. Discussion Group organizers should also convene with the discussants a Zoom meeting in advance of the event to finalize plans.

As with other Annual Meeting programs, conference attendees who are not invited discussants are welcome to attend the Discussion Group as audience members, and the moderator should reserve at least 30 minutes of the program for audience members to participate in the discussion.

Organizers will serve as moderators of the Discussion Group unless another moderator is identified in the proposal. Organizers are responsible for ensuring timely communication among the discussants before the Annual Meeting, including disseminating any abstracts or other materials.

Discussion Group proposals are due August 8, 2025 and should be submitted using the [online submission form](#). Questions may be directed to events@aals.org.

Symposium Proposals

Proposals Due: August 8, 2025

Symposium programs are full-day or half-day programs that conduct an in-depth exploration of a topic of academic and practical interest to the profession. The Committee is particularly interested in programs that connect to the annual meeting theme.

The Committee encourages Symposium organizers to arrange for the publication of the papers in a journal or edited volume.

If the Symposium is published in a student-edited law review, the AALS will waive the registration fee for up to two student editors from that law review to attend the Annual Meeting.

Because Symposium sessions will run simultaneously with other programs during the Annual Meeting, attendees may attend panels more sporadically than is common for traditional symposia. For that reason, organizers should think of each symposium panel as a self-contained event and must be attentive to ensuring diversity, including viewpoint diversity, in each session.

Additional Submission Guidelines

In addition to following the General Submission Guidelines set forth above, Symposium proposals should include:

- An abstract of no more than 750 words about the Symposium program and its anticipated contribution to legal scholarship.
- A 250-word-or-less abstract for each proposed Symposium paper.
- A description of any publication arrangement (or potential arrangement) for the program in a journal or edited volume.

Additional Selection Guidelines

In reviewing Symposium proposals, in addition to applying its General Selection Guidelines, the Program Committee will consider the quality of the paper abstracts, the likelihood that the resulting papers will substantially contribute to the scholarship in the field, the success of the proposal in achieving diversity for each Symposium session and across the whole of the Symposium, and the proposal's relationship to the conference's annual theme.

Symposium program proposals are due August 8, 2025, and should be submitted using the [online submission form](#). Questions may be directed to events@aals.org

Hot Topic Program Proposals

Proposals Due: November 7, 2025.

Hot Topic programs focus on topics that emerge too late in the year to be included in other types of programs. Hot Topic program proposals that are selected by the Committee will be assigned a program time slot by AALS staff. Due to constraints for scheduling late in the year and close to the time of the meeting, program times cannot be changed to accommodate specific speakers.

Hot Topic program organizers should check the preliminary Annual Meeting program on the AALS website to be sure that there is no substantial replication of the substance of a proposed hot topic program by a program already on the schedule.

Additional Submission Guidelines

In addition to adhering to the General Submission Guidelines mentioned above, Hot Topic proposals should include:

- An explanation of why the topic is considered "hot."
- Why was it not possible to submit the proposal in one of the other program categories with an earlier deadline.

Additional Selection Guidelines

In reviewing Hot Topic proposals, in addition to applying its General Selection Guidelines, the Program Committee will pay particular attention to (1) the timeliness of the proposal's subject matter, and (2) whether the proposal's topic substantially replicates an Annual Meeting program already on the schedule. We note that if past years are any indicator, we typically receive significantly more strong submissions for "Hot Topic" programs than we can schedule, so please recognize the competition for these hot topic sessions.

Hot Topic Program proposals are due November 7, 2025. Proposals should be submitted using the [online submission form](#). Questions may be directed to events@aals.org