



EVALUATION25

Engaging Community, Sharing Leadership

Kansas City, MO November 10-14, 2025

MAXIMIZE YOUR EVALUATION 2025 EXPERIENCE

You've arrived at the home of evaluation professionals! AEA's Evaluation 2025 conference is more than just an event; it's your space to grow, connect, and feel inspired by a community that truly understands you. Let's make sure you receive the most out of every moment.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Set Your Intentions

(Pro tip: Look back at the Justification Kit)

What do you hope to take back to your team? What kind of leader do you want to become? Set goals that will support both your personal growth and your organization's success.

Chart Your Course

Take a moment to explore the session lineup and networking opportunities. Between plenaries, presidential strand, ignite sessions, and more to choose from, you have a lot of flexibility in the topics you can explore. Download the AEA Events app to plan your conference experience.

DURING THE MEETING

Lean Into the Community

You're among friends here. Whether it's your first time attending or your 10th, you'll find a supportive network of fellow evaluation professionals who understand your challenges and want to see you succeed. Introduce yourself, ask questions, share your story.

Be Fully Present

Choose sessions that speak to your goals and passions. Silence the noise, take notes, and focus on absorbing the insights shared by your peers and presenters. This is your time.

Capture What Matters

As you learn, jot down the moments that spark ideas or solutions. Start building a post-conference plan that you can bring home and share.

Make Space for Joy

Take time to laugh, explore Kansas City, and connect with old and new friends. From the Plenaries to the Exhibit Hall, there's something unforgettable around every corner.

AFTER THE MEETING

Keep the Conversation Going

Stay connected with the people you met – on LinkedIn, in the AEA community, and beyond. These relationships are part of your professional support system.

Make an Action Plan

While the ideas are still fresh, sketch out what you want to try, test, or transform in your daily practice. Don't wait for perfection; take the first step and build from there.

Schedule Time to Reflect

Block an hour on your calendar to debrief yourself. What stood out? What are your top priorities? Revisit your notes in a month and celebrate what you've already begun to implement.

JAZZ UP YOUR OWN KANSAS CITY ADVENTURE



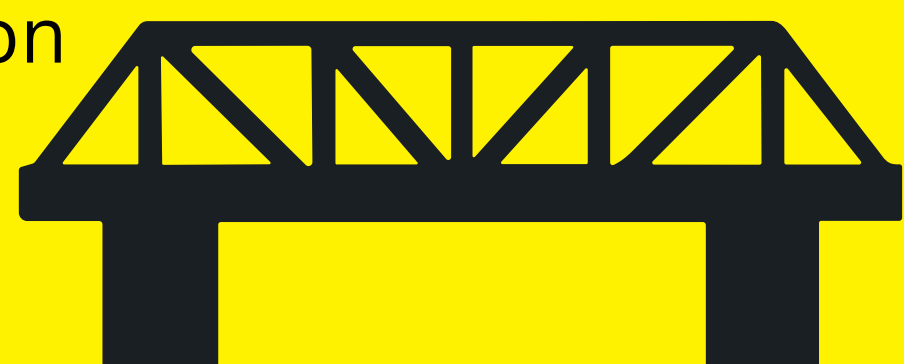
Welcome to the Heart of the Midwest – where innovation, connection, and culture meet. Whether you're here to grow, explore, or be inspired, Kansas City has something for every kind of evaluator.



THE CONNECTOR'S JOURNEY

For the social butterflies and network builders who thrive on making new connections.

- Network at the Power & Light District, a lively area full of dining and entertainment options.
- Explore Crossroads Arts District
- Build connections at the Poster Exhibit & Meet the Authors Reception
- Savor KC BBQ



THE CHANGEMAKER'S PATH

For those who come to be inspired, sharpen their skills.

- Attend inspiring plenaries
- Strengthen skills in workshops
- Reflect in Loose Park
- Visit Union Station



THE CULTURE & CURIOSITY TRAIL

For curious minds and culture lovers.

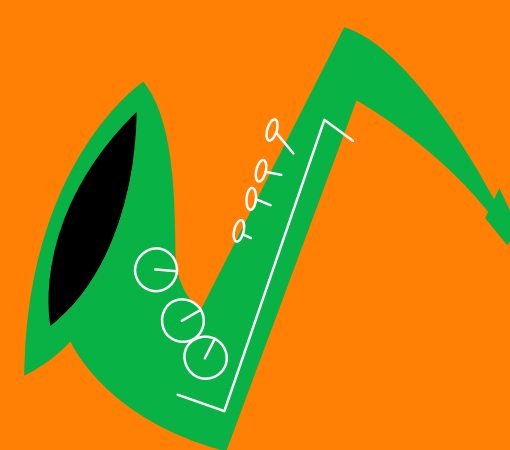
- Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
- Jazz at 18th & Vine
- Poster sessions & TIG meetups
- City Market



THE EXPLORER'S ESCAPE

For independent spirits who love discovering hidden gems.

- Walk Riverfront Heritage Trail
- Small-group meetups
- KC Streetcar ride
- Neighborhood discoveries





FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE NETWORKING GUIDE

As a first-time attendee, you're stepping into a community built on support, knowledge-sharing, and professional growth. This guide will help you feel confident connecting with other evaluation professionals.

QUICK TIPS

Introduce Yourself and Ask Questions

AEA members are friendly – don't hesitate to say hello first and be curious.

Attend the Poster Exhibit & Meet the Authors Reception

Engage with fellow evaluators and authors about their work and build connections off of shared findings and interests. This is an excellent opportunity to meet luminaries and thought leaders in the field

Start Small

Chat during breaks or meals – quick conversations can be valuable. Consider joining the AEA Buddy Program.

Visit the Exhibit Hall

Meet vendors and peers, and discuss helpful solutions.

If Possible, Attend a Workshop

While workshops require additional registration, they offer a hands-on environment, perfect for getting to know fellow attendees.

Join Social Events

Networking doesn't have to be formal – mix, mingle, and have fun outside of sessions too. Consider attending the TIG Fair to learn more about getting involved within AEA.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

"Which session has given you the most practical takeaways?"

"What brought you to the Evaluation Conference this year?"

"Are you involved in AEA outside of attending the Evaluation Conference?"

"Have you spotted any interesting restaurants nearby?"

"How are you or your organization approaching ongoing challenges in evaluation?"

"What's a change you made this year that had a surprisingly large impact on your evaluation practice?"

"What's one professional habit or routine that's helped you be successful long-term?"

"How has AEA helped you grow as a leader and professional over the years?"

HELPFUL REMINDERS

Relax and Be Yourself

Everyone at Evaluation 2025 values open conversation and shared learning.

Exchange Contact Info

Keep track of who you meet and follow up with them after the conference to keep the conversation going.

Keep Notes

Jot down notes of who you met and what you talked about to make follow-up easier.

EVALUATION25: WHAT TO WEAR

The Evaluation Conference tends to be a fairly casual or business casual affair. You're welcome to wear what you feel most comfortable in. We've provided examples from past conferences below in case you need outfit inspiration while packing your bags.

Suits, dress pants, and blazers are not required but welcome if you prefer a more formal look.



Jeans, chinos, skirts, and dresses are all common at the Evaluation Conference.



Comfortable shoes are highly encouraged for traversing the large convention center space.



Light jackets, sweaters, and scarves are helpful to take on and off as needed in various spaces, which may vary in temperature.

Above all, remember to be yourself and have fun.