



Monday, October 12, 2026: Choose Your Learning Path

Preconference Workshops + Conference Kickoff

Monday sets the tone for the conference with a dynamic day of learning and connection. The day begins with pre-conference workshops and transitions into the official kickoff, featuring engaging sessions, cross-sector networking, and an evening Awards Recognition Reception—a signature event celebrating excellence across organizations and communities.

7:30 AM - 4:30 PM CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS

8:30 AM - 12:00 PM Preconference Workshops
Find your rhythm. Choose the learning path that best fits your organization's performance excellence journey.

Build your foundation **Baldrige 101: Building a Foundation for Performance Excellence**

Join **Michael Garner** for an introduction to the Baldrige Excellence Framework. Whether you're new to Baldrige or looking for a solid foundation, this interactive workshop will explore the core concepts, values, and practical applications that drive organizational excellence.

Deepen your journey **Baldrige 201: Taking Your Performance Excellence Journey to the Next Level**

Join **Margot Hoffman** for a deeper exploration of the Baldrige Excellence Framework. Designed for those with prior Baldrige experience, this interactive workshop examines advanced concepts, strategic applications, and practical approaches to accelerating organizational performance.

Note: Baldrige 101 and 201 are concurrent sessions designed for different experience levels.

Strengthen your processes **Lean Six Sigma in Action: A Hands-On LEGO® Simulation**

Join **Edwin Boon** for an interactive LEGO® simulation that brings Lean Six Sigma principles to life through hands-on problem-solving, teamwork, and process improvement.

Lead your people **Leadership Fluidity: Leading People Through Change with Confidence**

Join **Jovan Glasgow** for an engaging workshop on leading the human side of change with clarity, emotional intelligence, and confidence. Learn practical strategies to help your people navigate uncertainty, embrace change, and turn potential into performance. Continue your leadership journey as Jovan returns to deliver the conference's Closing Keynote.

Expand your impact

Building the Foundation for Community Impact

Join **Stephanie Norling** and **Christel Gollnick** for an interactive workshop that explores how cross-sector partnerships, shared purpose, and collaboration create lasting, measurable community impact.

12:45 - 1:15 PM

CONFERENCE KICK-OFF!

Welcome to New Orleans—let the Rhythm of Excellence begin! Join us as we officially open the conference, share what's ahead, and begin two inspiring days of learning and connection.

1:15 - 2:15 PM

Opening Keynote

More than a keynote—an experience. Join Michael Gold, Ph.D., and members of New Orleans' acclaimed Astral Project as the principles of jazz come to life through music, storytelling, and audience engagement—setting the rhythm for two unforgettable days of learning and excellence.

2:30 - 3:15 PM

Breakout Session - Round 1

Choose from five concurrent breakout sessions featuring award recipients, thought leaders, and practitioners sharing innovative practices, leadership insights, and real-world success stories from organizations and communities advancing performance excellence.

3:30 - 4:15 PM

Breakout Sessions - Round 2

Session details coming soon.

4:30-5:00 PM

Celebration Kick-Off

Gather in the main ballroom for a welcome toast and an engaging story from Stephanie Norling as we transition from a day of learning to an evening celebrating excellence.

5:00 - 6:30 PM

The Alliance for Performance Excellence and Communities of Excellence & Resilience Recognition Reception

A signature event honoring top-tier organizations and communities recognized through Alliance programs and Communities of Resilience and Excellence, while offering a valuable opportunity to connect with peers, program leaders, and fellow attendees.

Open bar, light refreshments



Tuesday, October 13, 2026: Keep the Rhythm Going

Conference Day

Tuesday builds on the conference's momentum with a panel discussion, breakout sessions, and ongoing opportunities for cross-sector connections. The day culminates in a keynote luncheon and conference wrap-up, bringing the experience to a meaningful and engaging close.

7:00 - 8:00 AM	Breakfast / Networking
	Please be sure to visit our exhibitors.
8:00 - 9:45 AM	One Big Idea and Panel Discussion - Award Winners and Finalists
	What does it actually look like to pursue excellence—not as a finish line, but as a practice? Through a series of dynamic spotlight presentations, Baldrige National Quality Award Recipients and Finalists will share defining moments, hard-won lessons, and unexpected insights from their performance excellence journeys. Following a brief stretch break, the conversation continues with a moderated panel discussion, allowing attendees to explore common themes, ask questions, and leave inspired to set their own Rhythm of Excellence.
10:00 - 10:45 AM	Breakout Sessions - Round 3
	Choose from five concurrent breakout sessions featuring award recipients, thought leaders, and practitioners sharing innovative practices, leadership insights, and real-world success stories from organizations and communities advancing performance excellence.
11:00 - 11:45 AM	Breakout Sessions - Round 4
	Session details coming soon.
12:00 - 12:45 PM	Breakout Sessions - Round 5
	Session details coming soon.
12:45 - 2:30 PM	Lunch & Closing Keynote
	Enjoy lunch and conversation with fellow attendees before Jovan Glasgow returns to deliver a powerful Closing Keynote that will challenge you to think differently, lead boldly, and leave inspired to put your conference experience into action.


