

Emerging Research Ideas Forum (ERIF)

Guidelines for Authors

7th National HBCU Blockchain, FinTech, and AI Conference

November 8-10, 2026 | Nashville | Margaritaville Hotel

1. Overview and Purpose

The Emerging Research Ideas Forum is designed for authors who are developing promising early-stage research ideas in blockchain, fintech, crypto, digital assets, AI-enabled financial technologies, and related areas.

ERIF provides an opportunity to present a structured research idea, receive constructive feedback, identify potential collaborators, and strengthen the idea for future development into a full paper, grant proposal, curriculum project, or publishable research.

2. Who Should Submit

Submissions are welcome from faculty, doctoral students, graduate students, advanced undergraduate students working with faculty mentors, and industry-affiliated scholars.

This forum is especially appropriate for authors who have a well-developed **research idea** but do not yet have a completed full paper.

3. Appropriate Topics

Research ideas should relate to one or more of the conference focus areas, including blockchain, fintech, digital assets, AI/ML in financial systems, payments, cybersecurity related to financial systems, financial inclusion, FinTech regulation and policy, data analytics, FinTech in prediction markets, digital identity, tokenization, Web3, FinTech education, or related business and technology topics.

Interdisciplinary ideas are encouraged, especially projects that connect technology, business, policy, education, workforce development, financial systems, or societal impact.

4. Submission Requirements

Authors must submit a structured research idea abstract of approximately 3 to 4 pages. The abstract should be sufficiently developed to allow reviewers to evaluate the importance, clarity, feasibility, and potential contribution of the proposed research.

The submission should not be a short paragraph or informal concept note. It should present a clear research question, explain why the topic matters, and describe how the author plans to conduct the research.

5. Required Abstract Structure

Each 3 to 4 page abstract should include the following elements:

- 1. Title of the proposed research idea**
- 2. Research area or focus area**
- 3. Research problem, question, or hypothesis**
- 4. Brief background and motivation**
- 5. Explanation of why the topic matters to the conference field or audience**
- 6. Proposed research method or approach**
- 7. Potential data sources, evidence base, or materials to be analyzed**
- 8. Expected contribution to research, practice, policy, curriculum, or the HBCU research ecosystem**
- 9. Expected area of feedback requested from the audience**

6. Review and Selection Criteria

The review process for Emerging Research Ideas will be faster than the full paper review process, but submissions will still be reviewed for quality, relevance, and potential value. Reviewers will consider the following criteria:

1. Relevance to the conference focus areas
2. Clarity of the research question or problem
3. Significance, originality, or timeliness of the idea
4. Feasibility of the proposed method or approach
5. Potential for development into a full paper, grant proposal, curriculum module, or collaborative project
6. Value to the HBCU research, education, and workforce-development ecosystem

7. Presentation Format: Lightning Talks / Flash Talks

Selected ERIF presenters will deliver short, focused Lightning Talks, also commonly referred to as Flash Talks, designed to introduce the research idea and begin a productive conversation with the conference audience.

Each presentation will be limited to 5 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of Q&A and feedback. Presenters should use the time to clearly explain the research question, why the idea matters, the proposed approach, and the type of feedback or collaboration they are seeking. The purpose of the session is not to present completed research, but to start a meaningful exchange, connect with interested participants, and help authors strengthen their ideas for future development into full papers, grant proposals, curriculum projects, or collaborative research initiatives.

8. Presentation Format

Accepted authors will present their research ideas in a brief, interactive format designed to generate useful feedback and discussion.

Element	Guideline
Presentation length	5 minutes
Slides	Maximum of 3 slides
Recommended slide structure	1) Research question and motivation; 2) Proposed method and data/evidence; 3) Expected contribution and feedback requested
Feedback period	Approximately 5 minutes of audience or discussant feedback
Session size	Typically 6 to 8 presenters per session
Session length	Approximately 60 to 90 minutes
Audience	Faculty, researchers, doctoral students, graduate students, industry partners, policy professionals, and peers

9. Expectations for Presenters

Presenters should use their five minutes to clearly explain the research question, why the topic is important, how the research will be conducted, and what type of feedback would be most helpful.

Presenters should not attempt to deliver a full paper presentation. The goal is to share a focused, promising idea and receive feedback that can help strengthen the research design.

- Prepare no more than three slides.
- Focus on the research idea, method, and expected contribution.
- Clearly identify the feedback requested from the audience.
- Be prepared to revise or expand the idea after the conference based on feedback received.

10. Expectations for Audience Participants

Audience members are encouraged to provide constructive feedback that helps presenters improve their research ideas. Feedback may address the research question, theory, method, data sources, literature, feasibility, policy relevance, publication potential, or opportunities for collaboration.

The forum is intended to be collegial, developmental, and collaborative. Comments should be offered in a way that helps authors strengthen their work and move the project forward.

11. Proceedings, Program Listing, and Scholarships

Accepted Emerging Research Ideas may be listed in the conference program and presented during the Emerging Research Ideas Forum.

Emerging Research Ideas are not automatically included in the peer-reviewed conference proceedings but a short description will be in the conference Program booklet.

A limited number of partial scholarships for accepted Emerging Research Ideas may be considered, subject to available funding.

12. Submission Process

Authors should use the conference submission form and select “Emerging Research Idea” as the submission type. The form will request a 3 to 4 page structured abstract upload for this category.