FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE FAQs

When should I arrive?
The conference kicks off on Saturday, April 24 with interactive preconference workshops, which are included in the registration fee. The official start of the conference is Sunday, April 25, with the opening session beginning at 8 a.m. If you plan to attend the full day of preconference workshops, we recommend arriving by Friday, April 23. Alternatively, if you're starting with the opening session, arriving on Saturday, April 24 is ideal. This will ensure you have enough time to check in to the hotel, familiarize yourself with the Greater Columbus Convention Center, and pick up your badge before the first session begins. Check out the full conference program to determine the date that is best for you.

Where should I stay?
HSPA has secured discounted hotel blocks with Hilton Columbus Downtown and Hyatt Regency Columbus. You can book your hotel through the conference page on the HSPA conference website.

What does my conference registration include?
Each full registration fee includes access to all learning activities from Saturday, April 24, through Tuesday, April 27, and admission to the expo, lunches, and the opening reception. Please note that pre-conference activities on Saturday, April 24, are offered on a first-come-first-served basis.

What should I bring?
The dress code is business casual, and comfortable shoes are a must! We suggest packing a light sweater or two, as meeting rooms can be chilly. We recommend you pack a few business cards and have a notebook and pens to take notes.

Do I have to attend each session?
Attendance at each session is not mandatory, nor is it possible. We recommend trying to attend as many sessions as your schedule allows. The conference program is designed for each attendee to be able to participate in all general sessions and the flexibility to choose from various concurrent sessions based on what topic interests you most.

Do I have to pay for each session?
No, your conference registration includes access to all learning activities from Saturday, April 24, through Tuesday, April 27, 2027.

Can I bring a spouse or guest to an event or session?
To access sessions, special events, and meals, guests attending the conference must register as an attendee in full or purchase a daily pass(es) on-site. The daily rate for the conference is $300 and must be purchased on-site at the main registration desk. The opening reception on Sunday night will be available to purchase separately for guests on-site for a fee of $125.

Are there events tailored to first-time attendees?
HSPA's mentoring program will match first-time attendees with seasoned conference attendees. Attendees will receive an email with information on how to participate in the program.

How can I network while at the Conference?
Networking is one of the most valuable benefits of attending the conference and expo. Whether walking between sessions, grabbing coffee in the morning, or sitting beside somebody new before a presentation starts—always be willing to meet new people! Keep a few easy lead-in prompts on hand to strike up a conversation; "What did you think about that General Session?", "Where are you from?", "Is this your first time in Columbus?" The Opening Reception is a great place to meet new people and connect on the first day of the conference. The daily lunches and Table Topic sessions are another easy way to introduce yourself and speak with a small group of fellow attendees.

How can/should I spend my evening?
Sessions and workshops end at 5 p.m. each evening, and our Opening Reception takes place Sunday night from 6:30–8:30 p.m. We highly recommend attending our Opening Reception. It's a great place to network with fellow attendees and have fun! You will have free time in the evenings, and we suggest you take advantage of this time to explore Columbus with your fellow attendees.

If I hold a certification from CBSPD, can I attend the HSPA conference and obtain credit?
Yes, all are welcome at the conference. The conference is approved for CBSPD credit. Stop by the registration desk to obtain a copy of the 2027 approval codes.

When should I expect to receive my credits for attending the Conference?
Your continuing education (CE) credits from the conference sessions will be automatically applied to your account each night. You do not need to report your CE credits to HSPA from the sessions. If you attend vendor education in the exhibit hall, you will need to upload your certificates to your account for review. You will receive a confirmation email to your primary email on account confirming the total of CE credits, and CE may be verified and tracked online at *https://dashboard.myhspa.org/certification*
For your records, you may print a transcript and certificate of attendance. These do not need to be reported to HSPA.

Does HSPA have a courtesy pickup at the airport?
No, HSPA does not offer a pickup service or a shuttle at the John Glenn Columbus International Airport. We recommend either taking the COTA (Central Ohio Transit Authority), a taxi, Uber or Lyft to the hotels. The airport is located 7 miles northeast of the Greater Columbus Convention Center. If you plan to rent a car, please note that you will be responsible for on-site parking.

What if I have dietary restrictions? Are there alternatives available at the lunches?
Yes, HSPA is working closely with Greater Columbus Convention Center to meet everyone's dietary restrictions. To help us plan accordingly, please indicate your allergen on the conference registration form. All meals have vegan, gluten-free, and vegetarian options.

Do we get a copy of the speaker presentations?
Paper handouts are not provided by HSPA, but registered attendees will be able to download the presentations from the HSPA mobile app or from the HSPA website.
Please note: Presentations are only available when provided by the speakers. Pre-conference workshops, discussion groups, and keynote speaker presentations are not included.

Is there a tour before the opening ceremony to ensure I go to the correct sessions?
HSPA does not offer a formal tour, but we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the Greater Columbus Convention Center, adjacent hotels and the conference floor plan before the opening session begins. You can find a copy of the conference map within the Mobile App and in the Conference Program. We recommend planning which sessions you'd like to attend before the conference starts to help map out your days. You can also stop by the registration booth anytime; we will be happy to help guide you in the right direction!

Are there interpreters available?
No, HSPA does not offer interpreters for the conference sessions. If you indicate a special accommodation on your registration form, we will work closely with you to make the conference as fully accessible as possible.

Can I record a session with audio or video?
No, recording (in any manner) educational sessions or events or disseminating copyrighted material is not permitted. Recording content within any HSPA-occupied spaces (including hallways) without expressed written permission from HSPA is considered a violation of our code of conduct and may result in removal from the conference.

Are shuttles available if I am not staying at a preferred hotel?
No, HSPA does NOT provide shuttles to and from other hotels or the airport for attendees.

Is there information for medical assistance in the area?
In the event of a medical emergency on-site, remain calm and dial 9-1-1. Greater Columbus Convention Center staff will be available throughout the conference to help guide you to the best assistance in the local area if needed.

Does HSPA share attendee information?
By registering as an attendee, you agree to receive periodic emails and mailings from exhibiting companies directly related to exhibits and social events for HSPA 2027. Additionally, the QR code on your badge allows participating exhibitors to collect your registration details on request.