



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES

Women's Leadership Forum

Hilton Cleveland Downtown – Cleveland, OH

September 27-28, 2026

- Daily Schedule of Events -

Sunday, September 27

8:00 am – 8:30 am	Breakfast
8:30 am – 9:45 am	Opening Remarks and Leadership Panel <i>This panel will feature current leaders of A/E firms who will discuss not only the journey to running their firms, but also current obstacles and the direction they see the industry going</i>
9:45 am – 10:00 am	Break
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Building the Leadership Bench: Workforce Development as a Firmwide Strategy <i>Examine how you can identify and prepare future leaders earlier, create more intentional career pathways, strengthen mentorship and sponsorship, and ensure that employees have access to the experiences, feedback, and visibility needed to advance.</i>
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Open Roundtable Brainstorming and Discussions ○ <i>Strengthening leadership pipelines</i> ○ <i>Building more adaptive, inclusive, and high-performing firms</i> ○ <i>Retaining mid-career women</i> ○ <i>Making flexibility work in client-driven environments</i> ○ <i>Supporting emerging leaders</i>
12:00 pm – 12:40 pm	Luncheon
12:40 pm – 1:00 pm	Sponsor Presentation <i>Mary Erchul, ACEC Business Insurance Trust</i>
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Leadership Workshop Part 1: Building Your Leadership Influence <i>As professionals advance in their careers, leadership success depends on more than technical expertise. This session focuses</i>

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on developing the mindset, communication skills, leadership presence, and self-awareness needed to increase your effectiveness and prepare for greater leadership responsibilities.

Laurie Foster, Foster Group Strategies

2:00 pm – 2:15 pm

Break

2:15 pm – 3:15 pm

Leadership Workshop Part 2: Navigating Your Leadership Journey

The workshop continues with a focus on practical strategies for increasing organizational visibility, strengthening strategic relationships, making effective decisions, and positioning yourself for long-term career growth.

Laurie Foster, Foster Group Strategies

3:15 pm – 5:00 pm

Navigating Menopause at Work

Menopause affects nearly half the workforce and can significantly influence employees' well-being and performance during critical career years. This session offers practical guidance for managing symptoms at work, supporting colleagues and employees, and creating workplace policies that promote retention and inclusion.

Dr. Victoria Verlezza, People & Culture Strategist

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Opening Reception for All Forums

Monday, September 28

8:00 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast

8:30am – 10:30 am

Leadership Path: Sponsorship, Visibility, and Advancement

Hear from senior leaders and rising professionals as they discuss the difference between mentorship and sponsorship, creating visibility without self-promotion discomfort, the role of supervisors, principals, and executives, and how firms can make advancement pathways clearer.

9:30am – 9:45 am

Break

10:30 am – 11:00 am

Open Roundtable Discussions and Report Out

11:00 am

Forum Adjourns

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