



The 2025 conference delegates were asked what topics they'd like to see in 2026, and below is a list of the top 10 trending responses. These topics represent a strong intersection of innovation, resource management, community engagement, and leadership in public service, particularly within the parks and recreation sector. It reflects a mix of forward-thinking technology (AI applications), practical operational strategies (small district management, facility maintenance), and human-centered approaches (mental health, volunteerism, leadership).

1. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Parks & Recreation**
 - Applications of AI in marketing, operations, and project management
 - Ethical concerns and legal implications of AI
 - Hands-on workshops for using AI tools like ChatGPT and automation
2. **Small District & Limited Resources Management**
 - How to manage programming with limited staff and budgets
 - Innovative financing and sponsorship strategies
 - Best practices for multi-role staff in small agencies
3. **Community Engagement & Volunteerism**
 - Strengthening relationships with local communities
 - Strategies for recruiting and retaining volunteers
 - Case studies on successful community-driven projects
4. **Recreation Trends & Programming Innovation**
 - New and emerging trends in youth, teen, and adult recreation
 - Engaging middle school-aged participants in non-athletic programs
 - The rise of shorter, more flexible recreational programs
5. **Mental Health & Workplace Well-being**
 - Addressing mental health challenges in public service roles
 - Work-life balance and burnout prevention strategies
 - Supporting part-time and seasonal staff with mental health challenges
6. **Sustainability & Environmental Initiatives**
 - Environmental policy and conservation efforts in parks and recreation
 - Implementing green infrastructure and sustainable landscaping
 - Reducing the environmental impact of facilities and events
7. **Marketing, Branding, & Social Media**
 - Best practices for marketing small park districts
 - Utilizing AI and automation for digital marketing
 - Graphic design and branding workshops for non-designers
8. **Leadership & Staff Development**
 - Building strong leadership skills at all levels
 - Strategies for motivating and engaging staff
 - Effective communication and conflict resolution in teams
9. **Facility & Maintenance Management**
 - Addressing the needs of maintenance staff in training and conference sessions
 - Best practices for facility operations, cleaning, and security
 - Sustainability in facility design and management
10. **Legal, Risk Management, & Policy Updates**
 - Latest updates on HR policies, labor laws, and tax levies
 - Risk management strategies for park operations and large events
 - Legal considerations for AI, accessibility, and inclusion initiatives