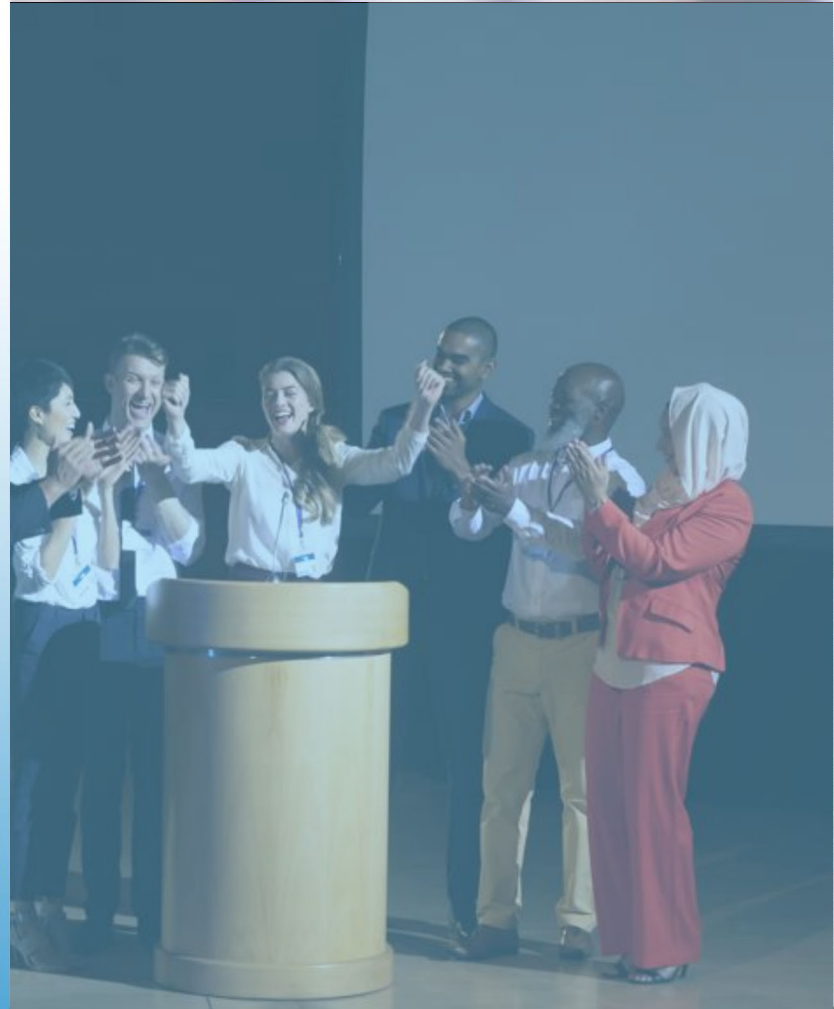




How To Earn Your CSP®



A GUIDE FOR
NATIONAL SPEAKERS
ASSOCIATION
CERTIFIED SPEAKING
PROFESSIONAL™

APPLICANTS 2024





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A circular gold medal with a blue ribbon. The medal features the NSA logo and the text "NSA CSP" and "NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION".

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation as issued by the National Speakers Association (NSA) of the United States.

This Guide provides the application timelines and deadlines for applying for the CSP and outlines the application process including the necessary requirements to advance through each phase of the selection process.

The CSP designation affirms the detailed, thorough, and comprehensive certification process with both external and internal reviews for the speaking profession. It also ensures competency as a certified professional as a speaker, trainer, facilitator, consultant, or coach.

Note that the CSP credential is a significant designation, and as such, it is difficult to obtain. The requirements are stringent and must be specifically adhered to. Please read this guide completely to ensure a smooth application process.

This is your opportunity to elevate your impact, influence, & income!





Who We Are and Why Earn the CSP

Who We Are

National Speakers Association (NSA) Mission: Empowering Professional Speakers to Thrive and Influence. We elevate excellence, share expertise, and challenge one another to improve.

NSA confers the CSP Designation. With this designation, meeting professionals seeking the best-in-class speakers will see your commitment to the professional and know you have top-notch speaking ability with a track record of professionalism and success.

The Value of Earning the CSP® Credential

- ▢ The CSP credential offers skills validation from clients, peers, meeting professionals, and other CSPs
- ▢ It adds opportunities to command greater fees, to develop new and sustainable connections, and to open the door to CSP/CPAE-exclusive educational sessions
- ▢ It also allows you to stand out from the crowd as much as on the platform, in the training room, or in the virtual studio
- ▢ The process of contacting clients while applying for the CSP can result in an unexpected increase in speaking contracts through repeat business and referrals
- ▢ The detailed application and review process raise applicant awareness of opportunities for improvement of their craft and business practices
- ▢ Attainment of the CSP opens the door to further education and networking with fellow achievers.
- ▢ CSP-only events and social media platforms offer enriching experiences that are targeted toward further business growth for those at the top of the speaking field
- ▢ The CSP has gained global recognition as an indicator of one's dedication to excellence in the field of speaking-

The CSP designation is the speaking profession's highest earned international measure of professional platform competence. Fewer than 800 speakers of NSA members worldwide have earned the CSP designation.

With support from NSA's CSP Committee, the CSP is conferred by the NSA Board of Directors upon those who meet the requirements.

The CSP Committee ensures the integrity and brand value of the CSP designation, sets policies and application requirements, provides guidance to those individuals who evaluate candidate's video submissions by showing them effective scoring benchmarks, and develops renewal guidelines.



Global Distinction. Our goal is to keep the CSP requirements equivalent and consistent worldwide. This will add to the brand and market value of the CSP in the international community.

In addition to NSA being a conferring body of the CSP designation, the Professional Speakers Australia (PSA) also confers the CSP designation. NSA and PSA are both members of the Global Speakers Federation (GSF), which is currently comprised of 17 professional speaking associations from around the world.

The Professional Speakers Association (PSA) of the United Kingdom and Ireland bestows upon its members the Fellowship of the Professional Speakers Association (FPSA), which is accepted by the GSF as equivalent to the CSP to apply for the Global Speaking Fellow designation.

Both the CSP and the FPSA require considerable evidence that the individual is a professional speaker. Earning the CSP or the FPSA designation is a prerequisite requirement for earning the international designation of Global Speaking Fellow, which is conferred by member associations.

The Global Speaking Fellow (no acronym used) designation certifies a speaker's ability to maintain a speaking business spanning countries, continents, economies, and cultures.

Harmonization. NSA served on a task force to harmonize or equalize the CSP standards and expectations with Professional Speakers Australia (Australia). Again, by elevating the brand globally, we are enhancing its value within the global marketplace.

Professional Competencies. The CSP designation is earned through certified competence in eight competencies and four professional categories. NSA Past President, John B. Molitor, PhD, CSP, defines a professional speaker as *"Someone who brings expertise, in an eloquent fashion, as part of a business (enterprise), and does so in an ethical manner."*

The primary categories for professional speakers are known as the Four Es; each of which includes sub-competencies:

- **Eloquence**, including Platform Mechanics, Performance Mastery and Engagement: Eloquent speakers are masters of the art of speaking. They gain and keep attention, are persuasive and impactful. They connect people to ideas with clarity and imagination.
- **Expertise**, including Content Development and Environmental Trends & Impact: Speakers impart knowledge, skill, and experience in their chosen field in a way that highlights their expertise.
- **Enterprise**, including Business Development, Strategic & Operational Business Management, and Product Development: Enterprising speakers have the business savvy to build and grow a successful speaking business.

4. **Ethics**, including *Professionalism*: Ethics are the foundation of any credible speaker. Members of the 17-member associations of the GSF demonstrate professional conduct in all they do. **An ethics statement will be a part of the application process.**

The CSP selection process is designed to measure and assess these competencies at various times in each of the selection Phases.

Code of Professional Ethics. A command of professional ethics for speakers is demonstrated in a variety of direct and subtle ways. The Code of Professional Ethics for speakers include eight principles: Representation, Professionalism, Research, Intellectual Property (IP), Respect and Collegiality, Confidentiality, Business Practices, and Diversity.

The following three ethical breaches will result in the denial of a CSP application:

- **Intellectual Property.** The most common violations include the use of others' stories, material, images, and videos without proper credit or permission. Professional speakers must know the legal and ethical requirements for using others' work. Using other speakers' materials does not serve you well.
- **Representation and Business Practices.** Asking a client or colleague to pay you to speak and then agreeing to return this fee is a tempting bit of fraud that has tripped up speakers seeking to pad their presentation count to qualify for the CSP. Honesty and integrity are measured in all we do, say, don't do, and don't say.
- **Requests for special consideration.** A request for special consideration, by yourself or by others on your behalf, including submission date extensions, exceptions to video policies and other infractions that seek to invalidate our process.





Application Timeline

The **Timelines** and **Key Dates** for the Class of 2024 are:

- **September 1, 2023.** Applications can be submitted beginning September 1, 2023, when the online application becomes available. Applications submitted prior to September 1, 2023, will not be considered.
- **January 10, 2024.** Applications are due no later than Monday, January 10, 2024, by 11:59 pm PST. ***Applications received or incomplete after this deadline will not be considered.***

Overview of the Application Process

The CSP application process includes multiple assessments and evaluations in each of its four review Phases:

Phase 1 - Is the **Enterprise/Administrative phase** and includes a review of the following areas: Completion of the requisite number of presentations during five of the last 10 years, the necessary income levels derived from these presentations, and verification of your presentations. You will be required to describe your speaking business model on one page or less; a template will be provided. You will be asked to estimate the percentage of time spent in various speaking categories.

Phase 2 – Is the **Client Evaluation phase** and involves gathering information and assessments from a minimum of 20 external reviewers/clients who will independently complete an online and standardized evaluation of your speaking presentations.

Phase 3 – Is the **Video Review phase** and is the most challenging phase. A confidential evaluation of your video submission(s) is completed by three active speakers holding the CSP designation. Each will independently complete a standardized evaluation of your video.

Phase 4 - Is the **Final Decision** and vote by the NSA Board of Directors. To reach the final Phase, your application must pass each of the prior Phases. If you do not meet the requirements of a Phase, your application will not be advanced to the next Phase for consideration.

You will be notified at the end of Phase 1 and Phase 2 if you will be advanced to the next phase or if you did not meet the requirements to advance to the next phase. Once you are in Phase 3, video review, you will NOT be notified of your status until the announcement of the CSP Class of 2024.

Please be patient! The complete review process typically takes months to complete given the multiple assessments and evaluations that must be gathered and reviewed. If additional information is needed, you will be contacted. Contacting NSA about the status of your application will not make the process go any faster.



Application Process Details

Your application must pass each of the Phases to ensure you have met the requirements and to advance to the next Phase. Here is a detailed explanation of each of the four phases that are utilized in the CSP application and selection process:

Phase 1 - Is administrative and ensures the following: The professional education requirements have been met, a description of your speaking business model has been received, and documentation of your Enterprise on the presentation spreadsheet (see below) satisfies the presentation count and income requirements.

During this Phase, the following occurs:

- Initial Approval of Application - You must meet the educational requirements (see above) to apply for and maintain a CSP. The NSA CSP Committee reviews the applicant list to rule out speakers facing ethics violations.
- Application Review - NSA will notify you when your application has been received. The application is then reviewed to ensure that all prerequisites and requirements are satisfied.
- Clarification - NSA will email you if there are any questions regarding your application. Your responsibility is to respond to all questions completely and in a timely manner (not to exceed 5 business days).
- Verification - Randomly selected clients will be emailed or called to verify your presentation data.
- Notification - You will be notified whether your application is being put forward to the next Phase.

Phase 2 - Is external in nature and ensures that your reviewers/clients independently complete an online and standardized evaluation of your speaking presentations. There is a minimum requirement of 20 external reviewers.

During this Phase, the following occurs:

- External Reviewer/Client Evaluation – **Your responsibility is to send the required evaluation requests** (the template will be provided with an embedded link) to the reviewers/clients whom you have selected to provide evaluations, as indicated on your presentation spreadsheet.
- Client Evaluation Progress Updates - You will be given a deadline by which your external reviewers/clients must complete their online evaluation. Two weeks prior to that deadline, you will receive a status report indicating the number of reviewer/client evaluations submitted and a follow-up template that you can send to your clients who have not completed the online evaluation. The first 20 online evaluations received must satisfy the minimum score requirement to move your application forward.
- Notification - You will be notified whether your application is being put forward to the next Phase.



Phase 3 - Is internal and ensures that your video submission is independently evaluated by several internal reviewers (who currently hold the CSP designation) by completing an online and standardized evaluation of your video. **They are instructed to only review your submission video; they will not browse the internet, your website, or your YouTube channel for other videos in the public domain.**

During this Phase, the following occurs:

- **Video Submission** - You will submit either one video 40-45 minutes in length or two videos of 20-25 minutes in length each. Submitted videos must be edited to the required length.
- **Video Evaluations** - Your video will be reviewed and evaluated by a number of internal reviewers who currently hold the CSP designation. Training videos will be reviewed by trainers; likewise, keynote videos will be reviewed by those who keynote. These reviewers will independently complete an online and standardized evaluation of your video submission using a format provided by NSA. The online evaluations must satisfy a pre-set cutoff score to move your application forward.
- **Notification** - You will **NOT be notified** whether your application is advancing to the next phase.

Phase 4 - Is the final review and decision by the NSA Board of Directors.

During this Phase, the following occurs:

- **Decision** - The decision to award the CSP is reached by a vote of the CSP Committee and by approval of the NSA Board.
- **Notification** - You will be notified via email of the final decision by the NSA CEO/President with a follow-up call from a member of the CSP Committee.





Application Requirements

CSP Application Interest Form: The online interest form is the first step in the application process. After completing the form, a member of the NSA staff will contact you to review the requirements to advance to Phase One.

Continuing Education Credits. In-person attendance at one live NSA or GSF national event is an application requirement. Like most professionals, speakers have continuing education requirements. These are essential to personal and professional growth as well as industry trend awareness.

CSP Application Coursework. Applicants must watch the video recordings of the three required CSP educational sessions: *How to Earn Your CSP (September 2022 release)*, *Business Ethics*, and *Professional Competencies*, presented by panels of experts. The videos are available to within the CSP Application Coursework (which will be sent to you upon entry to Phase One) . Viewing all three is integral to the application process.

NOTE: You will be required to validate your review of each of the videos with a post-test prior to proceeding to the next video in the sequence.

The individual post-tests must be completed for your application to proceed.

Application and Fee. The 2024 non-refundable application fee is \$375 (USD) for NSA members and \$950 (USD) for non-members. Fees for GSF Affiliate Members varies. * The fee for resubmission is \$100.

*Please refer to “International Applicants” herein on page 15 for details.

Presentation Spreadsheet/Client Form. This completed and supporting form must be emailed to NSA. Applicants may download the presentation/client spreadsheet from the [NSA | CSP Webpage](#)

The following data are required:

- Date
- Client organization name
- Client contact name
- Client contact email and phone
- Topic/title of presentation
- Notation of audience size
- Notation if presentation is virtual
- Fee paid or same-day sales income ***Minimum \$250 honorarium***
- Total income (fee paid + same day sales)
- Contact information for a minimum of 20 clients
- Qualifying presentations that are paid will count toward your presentation numbers.

Documenting a total of 250 paid presentations is critical for demonstrating professional competence. Unpaid or very low-paid presentations do not qualify.

To meet the presentation count, a 10-year span from January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2023, may be used. The years do not have to be consecutive but must be within the timeframe.

**The Presentation Spreadsheet must show ALL the following:**

- Income of **\$50,000 per year** for at least **five of the eligible years (not an average)**
- must be documented.
- Presentations must be **at least 20 minutes in length.**
- At least 75% of content must be your own spoken word.
- Podcasts, webinars, teleconferences, videoconferences, and/or hologram sessions
- qualify if the number of live viewers is known and documentable.
- Recorded presentations: Beginning with calendar year 2020 hybrid or virtual presentations will be accepted. A minimum of **25% of qualifying presentations must be in-person.**

The CSP process clearly defines “professional speaking.”

No matter how entertaining, effective, or innovative, non-qualifying presentations will not count toward your presentation numbers. The following **do not count** as paid professional speaking presentations:

- Board and Manager meetings
- Coaching
- Courtroom Testimony
- Emceeing (*i.e.*, standard lectern/platform introductions)
- More than 25% of the time is spent entertaining (*i.e.*, singing, dancing, juggling, auctioneering)
- Radio or TV Broadcasting
- Vistage or other Membership Group Chair Facilitation (Note: does not exclude Vistage speaking engagements)
- Entry level college courses that have pre-determined textbook content and presentation resources
- Any other presentation that does not demonstrate or include audience engagement/interaction

Client evaluation of your work:

On the Presentation Spreadsheet/Client Form, indicate a minimum of 20 clients willing to complete an online evaluation of your work. Clients should be familiar with your work and hold the decision-making authority to hire you for future presentations.

- Attendees of self-sponsored presentations or public seminars may be included if the
- attendee roster(s) from the event(s) is included when submitting one's application.
- The hiring authority must appear on the roster.
- Applicants are encouraged to include more than 20 clients to ensure that 20
- completed evaluation forms are received by the due date.
- Applicants should have their clients' consent to list them as an evaluator.

Please note that clients are more likely to complete the online evaluation if you contact them directly. Explain that you are applying for a certification of speaking excellence.

Provide the link in your letter and let them know that it should take about five minutes to complete.

The online client survey typically asks for evaluations in the following areas:

- Demonstrated eloquence and audience engagement when presenting and/or performing.
- Displayed professionalism from platform.
- Conveyed topic in a way that was believable and meaningful to the audience.
- Demonstrated a unique perspective on their topic.
- Reflected expertise and knowledge on the topic area.
- Displayed an overall performance that would be enthusiastically recommended to others.

Video Submission. The video is the most crucial element of the CSP Application. Your paperwork can be great, but your video can still disqualify you.

The submitted video must be in your current area of expertise, your own content, and reflect your best work. If you are a keynoter, submit a video of your keynote. If you are a trainer, submit a video of your training session. Video submitted must have been recorded within the past 5 years. Any music, pictures, or other media must be properly licensed. Referenced material, such as books, studies, or quotes, must be properly cited. The video must meet the definition of eloquence – articulate speech, no cursing, no filler words, and no typos in slides.

The most frequent reasons for failing the video review phase include videos that do not meet the time requirements, successfully demonstrate platform skills, expertise, audience engagement, and ethics, **or are accompanied by special requests.** Note that the video does not have to be professionally recorded. **It is your responsibility to ensure that the video is well-lit, easy to hear, tracks your movements, and shows audience engagement.**

One of the biggest hurdles in this application process is when an applicant's video does not show the candidate in context. Submit a video that shows you **engaging the audience with a point that supports the key concepts of your presentation.**

Presentations read from teleprompters, slides, or handheld notes, and staged videos with a fake audience do not represent CSP-worthy speaking skills.

There are two video submission options. For *Option 1*, submit **two 20 to 25 minute** videos. For *Option 2*, submit **one 40-to-45-minute video.** Videos can be raw footage. It is essential that the individuals reviewing your video can both see and hear you speaking. The audio track must be easily understood. Submitted videos **must** be trimmed to meet the required time limits. A reviewer will not watch a designated segment of your submission. It is **your responsibility** to share the content that (a) meets the criteria, and (b) reflects most positively on you as a speaker.

The audio track must be continuous with one exception: You may cut audience portions if you make a statement on the video, note this in the description section when uploading your video to YouTube, and indicating that the camera and audio will be off while the audience engages in an exercise. For example, if you give directions to the audience, such as, "You have 10 minutes of work time," then cut back in when you say, "It's been 10 minutes. Let's discuss your work." Making note of audio cuts avoids the chances of your video being disqualified and dispels any questions of possible ethics violations.



The visual portion may be shot using multiple camera angles to show the speaker, the audience, and the slide deck or other visual aids, if the audio is uninterrupted.

Non-English speakers must provide a written transcript in English of the audio track. Videos will be reviewed by speakers of your language whenever possible.

You may ask a seasoned speaker (or two) to review your footage prior to submission but beware of asking friends and new CSPs. The first can be too generous and the latter can be too harsh. Choose seasoned CSPs who can be direct and offer constructive feedback.

Current CSP Committee members are not eligible for pre-submission video reviews.

Video Evaluation. Each video submission is independently evaluated by three reviewers who will complete a standardized evaluation of your video. Reviewers are selected by NSA from a pool of volunteers who hold the CSP designation. All reviewers are required to sign a confidentiality statement prohibiting them from discussing the reviews. Videos are evaluated based on eloquence, platform mechanics, performance mastery and audience engagement. **Again, they will review only those videos that meet time requirements and are a timely part of your official application.**

Video Scoring. The video score is based on the Professional Competencies of Expertise, Eloquence, and Ethics. An applicant must receive a total average video score that is greater than a pre-set cutoff score.

Speaker Business Income Models. Speakers may use various business models to qualify to become a CSP. Guidelines are provided below to assist applicants with documenting income from various business models such as individuals who put on their own events, salaried speakers, and contracted speakers. As part of your application, you will complete a short form describing your speaker business income model.

If your salary or compensation model is unique, submit a brief written description of your business model to NSA to request a review and a ruling by the CSP Committee **before** you apply to ensure the work that you do qualifies for purposes of the CSP application.

Documented Income. An applicant's presentation spreadsheet must document income of at least \$50,000 (USD) per year, or the international equivalent, for at least five years. These five years do not have to be consecutive. This income must be actual earned income and not an average of the total years documented. A speaker may meet the requirements of presentation count and income in less than ten years. Some speakers may need to use up to 10 years to document presentation count and income.

"The speaker fee represents an economic relationship between speaker and client," according to Tim Durkin, CSP. This speaks to the spirit of fee integrity. Fees are to be paid by the client and kept by the speaker. Paying yourself for a presentation does not qualify nor does asking someone to hire you with the agreement that the money will be returned to them. These are ethical violations.



Qualifying presentations must show fees that are consistent or increasing as a sign of professional growth. Including low fees (e.g., less than \$250) calls into question a speaker's presentation count for purposes of the CSP application.

Self-Sponsored Presentations. To show income earned from self-sponsored presentations, use the total gross income from the presentation admission price and/or same-day sales of products and services. Include print or digital promotional items such as flyers, screen shots, or brochures as supporting documentation. These materials must include the date of the event, your name as presenter, the topic of the presentation, and the cost to the attendee.

Same-Day Sales of Products and Services. Regardless of the business income model adopted by an applicant, same-day sales of products and services because of speaking count toward the calculation of income for a presentation. This includes digital products, DVDs, coaching, books, or upcoming webinars. Income earned from any service or product purchased the day of the live presentation **before midnight** may be counted.

Salaried or Contracted Speakers. Speakers who are salaried or contracted employees must document fees by using the percentage of their gross annual salary dedicated to live presenting divided by the number of presentations given per each of the qualifying years.

For example, as a professor, if you have \$100,000 annual salary and spend 50% of your time on-stage or on-screen during the given year, \$50,000 can be applied toward your application. If during that year, you delivered 100 presentations, you would show each presentation had a "fee paid" or income earned of \$500 (i.e., \$50,000 from speaking divided by 100 presentations=\$500 per presentation). Research, travel, and other preparation time do not count toward this percentage.



Employer Verification Letter. Salaried or contracted speakers must provide an Employer Verification Letter from an immediate supervisor on company letterhead verifying the following:

- Applicant's position with the company
- Years of employment for each of the qualifying years included in the Presentation
- Spreadsheet
- Gross salary for each of the qualifying years included in the Presentation
- Spreadsheet



International Applicants. The income requirement for GSF applicants is based on your home country's income equivalent to \$50,000 (US) dollars. Individual entries on the Presentation Spreadsheet should be completed in your home currency.

Meeting the income requirement for GSF applicants is calculated in the following manner:

- On the spreadsheet, convert the total income for the year in your home currency into US dollars using the year-end currency conversion rate.
- The year-end conversion rate can be found at <https://fiscaldata.treasury.gov/currency-exchange-rates-converter/> or other internationally recognized source of conversion rates.
- Indicate the source of the conversion rate on the spreadsheet.
- If the converted total annual income exceeds \$50,000 USD for five out of ten years, you will have met the requirement.



CSP Renewal. Earning the CSP designation is a demanding process. Keeping your CSP designation is much easier than re-applying. The requirements are:

- Renew every five years.
- Earn 24 NSA / GSF education credits in each five-year renewal period.
- Pay a \$200 administrative fee.
- Complete the CSP Applicant Oath.
- Complete NSA's CSP Application Coursework

CSP Emeritus. (*fka* "Lifetime CSP") status is available for speakers aged 65 and older who have **1)** renewed their CSP designation at least once; **2)** have completed the CSP Application Oath and **3)** paid the designated fee (*as of 2024, is \$100*).



Spirit of NSA

"Don't worry about how we divide up the pie; there is enough for everybody. Let's just build a bigger pie!"

- Cavett Robert, CSP, CPAE, NSA Founder

Speakers everywhere do better when each of us shines. NSA Founder, Cavett Robert, CSP, CPAE, believed everyone can get a piece of an ever-growing pie if we work together. Speakers who demonstrate generous character and respect for NSA / GSF colleagues grow the speaking industry in reputation and brand value.



Authorship and Acknowledgements

On behalf of NSA's CSP Committee and the CSP community, we thank everyone for their contributions to the initial and updated versions of this document:

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