Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Contents

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Call for Proposals

The American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo is the largest, most diverse gathering of museum professionals in the world! The annual meeting draws more than 5,000 attendees from throughout the U.S. and over 50 other countries. Sessions presented during the annual meeting address subject matters of concern to those working in, with, or for museums of all types, and in every functional role.

The success of the Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo reflects the time, talent, and commitment of those who share their knowledge and experiences with their peers. In submitting a proposal, you are contributing to the advancement, professional development, and enrichment of your colleagues. We have developed these guidelines to help make your submission a success.

What is the Program Committee Looking For?

Each year, the program committee receives more abstracts than it can accept. The program committee is looking for proposals that:

- Help the audience understand the relevance of the topic to their professional and personal development needs
- Offer practical and relevant examples and how to apply them
- Include audience discussion and participation
- Encourage the audience to learn different perspectives on events, issues, and topics
- Are relevant to a diverse range of disciplines, cultural perspectives, geographic locations and/or museum size

Proposals may NOT be accepted based on the following criteria:
- Narrow – Topic is too narrowly focused to have broad appeal.
- Underdeveloped – Topic did not offer any new insights or innovation in the area.
- Unclear – Proposal description lacks clarity and/or specificity.
- Lacking Diversity – Proposal content lacks applicability to a diverse range of disciplines, cultural perspectives, geographic locations and/or museum size.

Proposal Assistance & Resources

AAM's Professional Networks are available to help with the development of your session proposal. They are also a valuable resource for questions regarding the content and evaluation criteria. The contact information for the Professional Networks is available on the Annual Meeting proposal submission site on the Content Assistance page.

For help writing your session title and session description, use these resources:

- [How to Write Killer Conference Session Titles That Attract Attendees](#)
- [How to Write Conference Session Descriptions That Whet the Appetite](#)
- [Creating Better Conference Materials: Writing Session Descriptions for Dummies](#)

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I submit my proposal?
All proposals must be submitted via our online submission portal, Conference Harvester. The online submission form requires you to create an account. If you presented in 2019, please use your existing Conference Harvester credentials. If you've forgotten your password, the system can send you a reminder.

Can I submit my proposal without using the submission system?
Proposals should be submitted via our online submission portal, which is WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility compliant. AAM staff are also able to assist if you are having problems using the submission system.

Can I submit more than one proposal?
Yes, you are welcome to submit multiple proposals for different tracks. In order to promote diversity in perspectives, the Program Committee will limit each person's participation to two sessions. Check with your panelists to ensure they are available to participate in your proposed session.

When do I need to complete my submission?
We must receive your submission by midnight (11:59 p.m. ET) September 23, 2019.

When will I find out if my proposal has been accepted?
All submitters and speakers will be notified via email in early December.

Do I have to register for the conference if my proposal is accepted?
Yes, accepted speakers receive discounted registration for the conference.

I can't attend in person; can I present virtually?
We are exploring this possibility for the future, but currently not something that we are able to accommodate.

How will my proposal be evaluated?
During the first round of evaluation, your proposal will go through a blind peer-reviewed submission and review process with each proposal receiving between 3-5 reviews. The review teams will evaluate each proposal against a rubric and make selection recommendations through consensus.

Evaluations will be based on:
- Articulated, defined, and actionable content.
- Clear, relevant learning objectives that are appropriate to the audience selected.
- Diverse perspectives – a range of disciplines (history, art, science, etc.), and diverse contexts (multicultural, international, museum size, etc.).
- Engaging content and/or experience – guiding attendees to analyze, demonstrate, display, discuss, summarize, reflect on, and articulate their thoughts as it relates to your content.

In the second round of evaluation, proposals that receive the highest scores will then be evaluated by the Program Committee for inclusion in the program.

Missing or incorrect information will make the presentation ineligible for review.

More questions?
Contact meetings@aam-us.org

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Creating Your Proposal
Whether you choose a suggested topic or decide to submit your own idea, here are the instructions to follow.

Getting Started

Step 1: Log In/Create Account

- If you submitted a proposal in 2019, you can use the same log in information.
- Can't remember your log in? Click on "Lost Access Key".
- Otherwise, create an account by clicking "Join Now".

Step 2: Create a Profile
- Enter your name, institution, email address and other contact information. Please read the privacy notice, sign your name, and hit 'Enter" to continue.
- You will not be able to submit your proposal if you do not accept the privacy notice.

Step 3: Create a New Proposal
- Enter your proposal title (75 characters max).
- Select your proposal type (session or poster).
- Select your topic choice (select only one).
- Hit "Continue".

Step 4: Complete Tasks
Complete each of the required tasks.

Step 5: Submit Your Proposal by September 23, 2019
You may begin the process and return to your saved proposal before submitting your proposal any time up until the deadline.
- The 'Save' button will save your presentation.
- The 'Submit' button will submit your presentation, changes will not be able to be made once you hit submit.

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Crafting Your Proposal

Remember to save your proposal frequently!

Task 1: Craft Your Proposal

Select track, format type, format time, enter a web/app/program book description and a detailed description. **Your detailed description MUST include information about your proposal participants and their institution WITHOUT including presenter or institution names, or titles.** Example: A senior-level administrator from a government art museum or an early-career curator from a mid-sized historic museum.

You will also enter your topic idea if you did not choose from the list of suggested topics.

Select the track area that best represents the content of your proposal. The following tracks are available for your selection in the system:
- Boards & Governance
- Collections & Curatorial Practice
- Community Engagement
- DEAI
- Education/Audience Research & Evaluation
- Exhibition Planning & Design
- Finance, Management & Administration
- HR & Professional Development
- Marketing & Communications
- Technology & Innovation

Select format type
- **Case Study**: A presentation focusing on a real or hypothetical situation or problem that invites participants to discuss potential solutions and outcomes.
- **Lecture**: A presentation with no more than 3 presenters.
- **Interactive Lecture**: A lecture with heavy audience participation.
- **Panel**: A presentation with a moderator facilitating a discussion with no more than 3 panelists (includes Q&A).
- **Open Forum/Roundtable Discussion**: A facilitated group discussion that focuses on a single topic. This can also be a used for a town hall.
- **Posters**: A visual presentation that is displayed for the duration of the meeting with 1 combined 2-hour presentation session time.

Task 2: Learning Objectives
Provide three (3) learning objectives that are clear, measurable, and achievable that you want attendees to recall after leaving your presentation.

See the table from Blooms Taxonomy in **Appendix B** to help you write your learning objectives.

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Task 3: Content Filters
Help attendees discover your presentation by providing additional information on the audience your session is best suited for.

> **Professional Networks*:** Of these 19 Professional Networks, organized around job responsibilities and areas of common interest, select all that are related to your presentation.
>
> **Level of Expertise*:** Is your session geared towards museum professionals at a particular stage in their career? The levels you select should be appropriate for your idea.
>
> **Session Highlights:** Does your session feature a presenter or presenters from underrepresented voices or emerging professionals?

Task 4: Presenter Profile
- Create the list of presenters for this submission.
- Enter the First Name, Last Name, Email, and Role.
- Presenters will need to enter their contact information and bio in order to complete this task.

<p style="text-align:center; color:red">***IMPORTANT STEP***</p>

- Each presenter and moderator will need to login individually to the submittal site to enter their personal details and confirm their participation in the proposal.
- The submitter cannot submit the proposal without the acceptance of participation of all proposed presenters/moderators.

Task 5: Session Submitter Agreement
Review and accept the session agreement.

Before You Hit Submit
- Review your proposal.
- Make sure all tasks are complete.
- Review your profile and email address.
- Confirm your presenters are on board and available.
- Consider having presenters review.

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

What is the Program Committee Looking For?

Proposals that can:
- Help the audience understand the relevance of the topic to their professional and personal development needs
- Offer practical and relevant examples and how to apply them
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- Encourage the audience to learn different perspectives on events, issues, and topics
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Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Scoring System

All session proposals will be reviewed and scored during the first round by the National Program Committee using a 30-point scale. Those with the top scores will move on to a second round of review completed by the National Program Committee. These rankings will be used by the Committee to select sessions for the final program. Reviewers will rate proposals using the 1-5-point scoring system based on the following criteria:

Rating scale

Value	Description
1	does not meet criteria
2	needs improvements
3	not specified or unclear
4	meets criteria
5	exceptional

Max Value	Criteria
5	The proposal content is clear and can be presented in an effective and meaningful way.
5	The learning objectives are clear, relevant to the topic presented, and appropriate to the audience.
5	The proposal provides attendees with relevant, timely and applicable content.
5	The proposal is aligned with the format proposed.
5	The proposal offers diverse perspectives or content (history, art, science, etc.), and diverse contexts (multicultural, international, museum size, etc).
5	I would recommend this session or poster to an attendee interested in the subject matter.
30 points	**Highest possible score**

Review Process Timeline

Presentation Submission Deadline	September 23, 2019
National Program Committee reviews and rates presentations	September – October 2019
National Program Committee develops final program	End of October 2019
Submitters receive notification. *Contacting AAM before this time will delay the notification process*	December 2019

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide
Appendix A – Session Formats

Listen and Learn
- **Lecture:** A presentation with **no more** than 3 presenters (includes Q&A).
- **Panel:** A presentation with a moderator facilitating a discussion between **no more** than 3 panelists (includes Q&A). Moderators cannot serve as panelists.

Participate and Share
- **Interactive Lecture:** A lecture with heavy audience participation.
- **Case Study:** A presentation focusing on a real or hypothetical situation or problem that invites participants to discuss potential solutions and outcomes.
- **Open Forum/Roundtable Discussion:** A facilitated group discussion that focuses on a single topic. This format can also be used for a town hall.
- **Poster:** A visual presentation that is displayed for the duration of the meeting with 1 combined 2-hour presentation session time.

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Appendix B – Writing Learning Objectives

Learning Level	Definition	Learning objectives might include…
Basic	presents introductory concepts and general understanding of the topic; learners have minimal to no prerequisite knowledge and limited previous experience with course material.	define; describe; examine; identify; label; list; match; name; read; recall; recognize; record; reproduce; select; state; tell; view; write
Intermediate	presents detailed, in-depth materials and instruction; learners have some prerequisite knowledge and the course provides the ability to apply information to practice.	analyze; assess; associate; classify; cite; contrast; compare; describe; differentiate; discuss; distinguish; estimate; explain; generalize; give examples; interpret; paraphrase; restate; select; summarize
Advanced	presents sufficient material and opportunities to gain new knowledge, practice application, apply information, and complete a definitive action; learners have pre-existing knowledge and experience applying this information to practice.	apply; articulate; assess; calculate; change; chart; classify; compute; construct; control; create; demonstrate; design; determine; develop; establish; illustrate; implement; instruct; interview; operationalize; participate; prepare; produce; project; provide; report; select; show; solve; teach; transfer; use; utilize
Expert	presents detailed training on specific topics with opportunities to be fully engaged with materials and activities, and to demonstrate a mastery of content through course work; learners have extensive prior knowledge or experience with the topic.	analyze; appraise; assess; break down; calculate; categorize; classify; compare; conclude; connect; construct; contrast; correlate; decide; design; develop; diagram; differentiate; discriminate; distinguish; evaluate; explain; focus; judge; justify; illustrate; infer; integrate; limit; measure; modify; outline; plan; point out; predict; prioritize; produce; rank; rate; rearrange; research; rewrite; select; separate; subdivide; substitute; validate

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Tracks and Topic Ideas

Theme: A Bridge to the Future

2020 Tracks
1. Marketing & Communications
2. DEAI
3. Exhibition Planning & Design
4. Education/Audience Research & Evaluation
5. Collections & Curatorial Practice
6. HR & Professional Development
7. Technology & Innovation
8. Boards & Governance
9. Community Engagement
10. Finance, Management & Administration

**2020 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo
Topic Suggestions**

Audience Research & Evaluation
- Has your museum embraced a culture of evaluation? What innovative ways has your museum used to engage and study visitors pre- and post visit? How have you made use of technology platforms, case studies, or other modes of evaluation?
- How can we use data to develop or improve our exhibits? How has data informed content or curatorial decisions, choices in interpretation, and exhibit design?
- How can we look outside the museum field to find new models for evaluation?

Collections Management (or Stewardship)
- How might changes in collections procedures or policies open the possibility for easier deaccessioning in ways that benefit the museum?
- What has your museum done to update photography policies to embrace social media and if not, why?
- Are there new types of collections policies that can emphasize visitor engagement with collections?

Community Engagement
- What practices in research access, storage, lending, intellectual property policies, and data management is your museum engaged in to help foster community engagement?

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

- How can museums and other cultural institutions work together at the local level to further each other's programming? How should these collaborations be funded, and in what capacity should local government be involved?
- Often, local audiences are the most difficult to sustain a good connection with. How can museums engage their local audience so that the local audience feels compelled to frequently visit the museum?

Culturally Specific Museums

- How can culturally specific museums stay relevant when the communities they serve are displaced?
- What are successful collaborative models between culturally specific and mainstream museums?
- How do culturally specific museums advocate for their communities and introduce new narratives?

Decolonizing the Museum

- Decolonizing is not only about objects. How can we use a decolonizing lens to reflect on all museum practices? What mistakes has your organization made that you have learned and grown from?
- How does your decolonizing work fit within larger decolonizing efforts field-wide?
- How do museum studies programs teach and prepare students for decolonizing the Museum?
- What are the best practices related to repatriation as part of the decolonizing museums?

Disaster Preparedness

- How is your museum moving beyond the basics to prepare for the full range of disaster response such as: self-care, facilities, finance, collections, cybersecurity threats, etc.?
- Has your small institution developed an emergency response plan that includes collections as well as people? How does climate change affect such policies and practices?

Environmental Sustainability

- How are museums successfully implementing more sustainable practices across the institution?

Exhibitions

- With interests and demographic shifts occurring at a rate of change like never-before, how long should an exhibit expect to last? Should individual components of a larger exhibit be changed frequently to freshen a timeless topic, or should the entire exhibitions change with the ebb and flow of a changing world? Trends in the long-term development of exhibitions should be explored here.

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

- Does a non-hierarchical approach to exhibition development (cross-discipline collaboration, multiple departments, community input) impact accessibility to diverse audiences?
- How can/should exhibitions respond to current events, politics, climate change, and other potentially difficult or divisive topics? What is the role of museums in shaping conversations around these concepts? How can exhibitions empower visitors to take action in their communities?

Expanding Ideas of Interpretation and Accessibility
- If we think more broadly about making exhibit content accessible to diverse audiences, how might that change the way we approach interpretive media?
- What engaging and compelling experiences does your museum offer online visitors? If designed to be stand-alone experiences, how have you made these the most effective?

Financial Sustainability
- What do sustainable business models look like as philanthropy and consumers change?
- How are you successfully leveraging your museum's assets to attract corporate sponsorship and support for your museum's programs and events? How has your organization grown its portfolio of revenue streams?

For-Profit Museums
- The rise of pop-up commercial museums that privilege the visitor experience over education, exhibitions and collections, and what this means to the traditional nonprofit museum. Also, different governance models for traditional museums that include a for-profit structure - does it matter to the visitor and is it worthwhile to pursue?

Inclusive Practices in Action
- How do your museum's inclusive practices fit within larger DEAI efforts field-wide?
- How is your museum a voice to new audiences to make them feel welcomed at that museum?

Intersectional Inclusion through Queer Exhibitions and Museums
- What programs do you know that have been successful in implementing broadly intersectional narratives?

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- What programs do you know that have been successful in implementing broadly intersectional narratives?

LGBTQIA + Inclusion beyond the L and the G

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

- How does your museum include staff, visitors, and volunteers from communities often left out of LGBTQIA+ initiatives and narratives?
- What practical guides and tools are available for starting this work?

Museums as a Place of Dialogue, Activism, and Social Justice

- Can museums play a role in buffering the effects of a deteriorating democracy? How can museums become a beacon for defending democratic values and championing civic knowledge? What can museums do to empower the communities they serve and to enhance civic action?
- When has your museum's mission incorporated social justice and/or action? Concrete examples from institutions about programs/decisions that engage this and how they came to do those programs/make those decisions (for example: registering people to vote during an exhibition about the founding fathers, hosting an art-driven event or program that also includes tabling by local service organizations, a museum education department providing credit recovery workshops and fast track GED programs)
- What are best practices for curators to engage in social justice work with museum communities? Lessons learned?
- What steps are needed to protect artist's rights in deaccession?
- Can deaccessioning be an act of museum activism?
- How can museums act as safe places during times of crisis and/or tragedy?

Museum Studies or Museum Professional Training

- How are museum studies programs and the field collaborating in the creation of a more equitable system?
- How can the field build a network of collaboration between museums and museum studies programs beyond the internship (existing examples and future opportunities)?

Perception and Evolution of the American Story

- How can cultural institutions regain the national spotlight? How can cultural institutions be places where un-filtered stories are told, so that visitors can fully understand the gravity of past and current events of the American story? Can a cultural institution actively solicit change, or should they be a thought leader and provide a reference for others to lead the way as the American story evolves?

Planning for Advancement

- What makes up the basic tool kit for museums of any size to build a successful fundraising effort? How can museums of any size implement a successful fundraising campaign effort?
- What trends are informing museums' development plans?
- What case studies or examples demonstrate that achieving endowment growth has supported expansion and/or greater mission outcomes?

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Reshaping the Board & Trustees
- What concrete steps has your museum or board taken to put diversity, equity, accessibility, or inclusion initiatives into action?
- What tangible approaches has your museum applied to getting reluctant boards (and funders) to support DEAI programming that shines a light on privilege?
- How can you connect staff members who normally have no contact with the board to the board's workings? How can you provide board members with a fuller picture of your staff and their contributions?

Satellite Museums
- Does your museum have a satellite site/branch? Is your satellite site a temporary space? How/does your institution remain engaged with the satellite community at the end of your physical presence in this space?
- How does your satellite site engage with established organizations in your new location? How do you build partnerships that allow you to expand and contribute to this community?

Teens in Museums
- How has your museum created opportunities for teens that go beyond a single program and lead to lifelong engagement and mentorship?
- How do we foster teens' growth as lifelong learners of the arts?
- What methods does your museum employ that prove that museums can become

The Workplace in Transition
- How is your museum engaging in succession planning? How are you preparing your staff for successful management and leadership roles?
- In an era of shrinking resources, how are museums innovating to provide the necessary human resources to fulfill their mission now and into the future?
- Can consultants serve as catalysts for developing new practices in museums?

Traveling exhibits
- How can traveling exhibitions create revenue, drive attendance, and increase awareness of a Museum?
- Are there unique community partners that could help showcase a traveling exhibit? Share your tips and lessons learned
- What tips can you provide on borrowing exhibitions from international museums or from the international community?

Visitor Engagement
- What are the necessary elements for a successful audience engagement strategy? How do you define metrics of success in engagement?
- How can museums best develop a continuous relationship with visitors to convert them to lifelong donors?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in inviting visitor/community engagement in the curatorial or exhibition process?

Call for Proposals - Submission Guide

Visitor Experiences
- How are you creating and designing your visitor experiences? Whether it's an interactive experience, using digital technologies, engaging through social media, or designing welcoming and inclusive experiences; share your lessons learned, best practices, and tips.
- How are you designing welcoming and inclusive experiences? Have you developed best practices regarding sensory friendly work?
- How are you extending the experience via the museum store?
- Have you developed innovative and successful programs to engage millennial audiences, families with young children, evening events, theatrical programming, or immersive experiences?

Visitor Services
- What practices in research access, storage, lending, intellectual property policies, and data management is your museum engaged in to help foster community engagement?

Volunteer Management & Training
- What are the protocols and routines for achieving a healthy relationship between an organization and its volunteers? And vice, versa?
- How can museums effectively recruit volunteers from evolving demographics, and which methods of retainment prove to be the most successful for each group?
- Does your museum utilize volunteers in collection management? How do volunteers thrive in the complex ecosystem of collections management?
- How can we best structure trainings to support inclusive work environments and visitorship?
- What are best practices in docent and educator training (how can it be used to reshape a docent program or support new education experiences)?