

## CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS

2026 Annual Conference

October 6-8, 2026

Douglass Student Center, Rutgers University,  
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Submit Proposals to the [Call for Session Proposal Application](#)  
[Extended Deadline: Monday, May 11 at 5:00 pm ET](#)

### About the Annual Conference

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums (MAAM) Annual Conference is dedicated to fostering excellence in museums by providing high-quality professional development, networking opportunities, and special events for museum professionals in the region.

This document is intended to provide comprehensive information for submitting a session proposal to the MAAM Annual Conference. It includes the following sections:

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### Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums Mission & Values

*Mission:* The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums empowers and connects those working in and supporting museums to build inclusive, sustainable, and resilient organizations essential to their communities.

*Values:*

**Inclusion, Equity, and Accessibility:** We champion inclusion, equity, and accessibility across the museum field to cultivate the well-being of both museum workers and the public.



The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums  
PO Box 4  
Cooperstown NY 13326  
info@midatlanticmuseums.org

**Empathy and Respect:** We approach our work with compassion and encourage thoughtful, transformational inclusion efforts within the field.

**Curiosity and Innovation:** We are dedicated to creating a culture of learning and creativity, where museums are safe spaces for dialogue and the exploration of new ideas—both for the public and within the museum profession.

**Stewardship and Public Service:** We advocate for the value of museums as essential to civic and cultural well-being, and support policies that promote their sustainability and service to the public good.

**Community and Collaboration:** We believe in the power of connection—among professionals, volunteers, and institutions—to build strong museums and communities.

**Professional Development and Excellence:** We are dedicated to advancing professional development opportunities that promote lifelong learning, growth, and inclusive practices in training and leadership development.

### Proposal Review Timeline

- A. *April 8:* Proposal Planning [Zoom Session](#)
- B. *May 4:* Session Proposals Due
- C. *May 5-June 14:* MAAM Annual Conference Programming Committee reviews and evaluates proposals
- D. *June 15:* Notification of Programming Committee decisions
- E. *Poster Presentation (students only) applications may be accepted on a rolling basis.*

### Proposal Guidelines

- A. Sessions can be between 45-75 minutes in length (exception QuickTakes) and should be in an in-person format; please allow a minimum of 15 minutes for Q&A in your session; hybrid (e.g. Zoom) presentations will not be accepted. If there are extenuating circumstances, and a remote presenter is essential, speakers are responsible for coordinating the technology and streaming platform on the session day.
- B. Submissions should be as complete as possible. While proposals missing certain details—such as a confirmed speaker for a particular slot—may still be



considered, providing all required information will help ensure your proposal is reviewed efficiently.

- C. Industry partners are welcome to submit proposals, but all sessions must include at least one museum professional as a session chair or speaker. This can include independent museum professionals or museum professionals in transition.
- D. At least one person in the session must be a member of MAAM or must become a member of MAAM before the preliminary program is released. Please click [here](#) to become a member of MAAM or contact Michelle Paulus-Baumgarten at info@midatlanticmuseums.org for more information.
- E. Please confirm that all of the proposed speakers are available for speaking during the October 6-8, 2026 conference dates before submitting a proposal. Selected sessions may be scheduled on any date of the conference. Assigned dates and times of selected sessions will be at the Program Committee's discretion. The committee is unable to take special requests for timing.
- F. Session proposals may address one or more of the following topics, but also may be submitted on a different topic. Presentations of ongoing projects or works in progress are welcome, as long as there are expressed key takeaways from project phases that have been completed.
  - a. Collections Stewardship (e.g. collection development plans)
  - b. Education & Programming (e.g. accessibility; visitor experience, community engagement, etc.)
  - c. Exhibitions (e.g. universal design; navigating challenging topics)
  - d. Fundraising & Revenue (e.g. event fundraising; sponsorship development; membership development; grant writing)
  - e. Leadership & Operations (e.g. board relations/governance; institutional identity; labor and unions; addressing inequalities in the field)
  - f. Marketing & Communications (e.g. social media engagement; event promotion, etc.)
  - g. Technology and its use in museums (e.g. mobile platforms; AI; use of technology in a social responsible way, and other #musetech topics)
  - h. Professional advice and support (e.g. how to advocate for yourself)
  - i. Diversifying Representation (e.g. inclusion, advocacy; decolonizing the museum; collaborating with diverse audiences and communities)
  - j. Sustainability (e.g. disaster planning; institutional financial sustainability; climate change, etc.)
  - k. Nuts and Bolts (emphasis on general how tos rather than specific case study)
- G. MAAM does not provide honorariums or travel reimbursement for session presenters or moderators; however, a discounted speaker registration rate is available. If a presenter



attends only their session, they are exempt from registration fees, but cannot participate in other sessions or activities. It is session moderators' responsibility to relay this policy to potential speakers.

- H. MAAM does not reimburse speakers for any supplies, copies, or equipment. MAAM will supply basic A/V support: a projector, a screen, a microphone, and a podium. Session speakers are responsible for providing a laptop computer (and adapters as necessary) to support digital presentation materials; WIFI for streaming is NOT guaranteed. For additional equipment needs, contact MAAM, but please note that some requests may not be possible or may incur extra fees for the presenter(s).
- I. Feel free to review these [Tips and Tricks for Session Development](#).

### Types of Sessions

- A. **Panel (75 minutes):** Conference panels feature 3-4 presenters sharing diverse perspectives on a museum-related theme. Panels may include individual presentations, a moderated discussion, and audience Q&A, aiming to spark dynamic conversations and explore key issues. A moderator is recommended for managing time and questions. Proposals should reflect varied voices and experiences. Single-institution case studies are acceptable.
- B. **Discussion/Roundtable (75 minutes):** Discussion sessions are designed to foster dialogue and idea exchange, often incorporating small group activities. Proposals should outline prompts and guiding questions, with one to three presenters facilitating.
- C. **Workshops (75-150 minutes):** Workshops offer skill-building training with actionable steps and takeaways, such as templates or resources. Sessions are hands-on, lasting 90-150 minutes (scheduled on pre-conference day) or fitting into a 75-minute breakout(s) on day two or three of the conference. Workshops may require an additional registration fee for attendees (depending on facility needs), and presenters provide materials. Topics might include evaluation, repatriation, collections care, recruitment, digital collections, fundraising, exhibit development, accessibility, or career advising.
- D. **Town Hall (75 minutes):** Town Halls are open forums for discussing key museum issues. Facilitators guide conversations, encouraging diverse perspectives and audience participation to share insights and generate ideas.
- E. **Quick Takes (10 minutes or less during a dedicated breakout session):** Quick Takes are short, high-impact presentations that deliver fresh ideas, practical insights, and real-world solutions in a concise, engaging format. MAAM will reserve one or more breakout sessions specifically for Quick Takes, with each 75-minute session featuring a curated series of brief presentations offered back-to-back. Each Quick Take is a standalone presentation of 10 minutes or less, submitted by an individual or small team.



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Association of **Museums**

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info@midatlanticmuseums.org

MAAM will group accepted Quick Takes into a single breakout session, allowing attendees to sample a range of innovative projects, tools, challenges, and approaches shaping museum practice today. Quick Takes are ideal for sharing emerging trends, creative problem-solving strategies, and lessons learned from the field.

- F. **Poster Presentations (students only):** Poster Presentations showcase student projects and research from museum studies or related programs, emphasizing museum-based topics. This format offers students a professional presentation experience and a chance to share academic trends and projects. Undergraduate and graduate students, and those who have graduated within one year of the previous annual conference, are eligible to submit. Presentations may occur during coffee breaks or other Affinity Group meeting times, where presenters discuss their work to single or small groups of attendees using visual or material aids. MAAM may make changes to this format based on the number of submissions. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

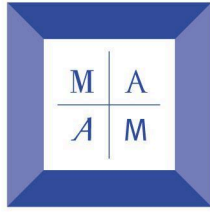
### Program Selection Criteria

The Program Committee will make final selections based on a point system and will take into consideration the overall conference diversity of subject matter, museum types and sizes, geographic locations, disciplines, and perspectives represented among the presenters to create a cohesive and well rounded conference program.

- A. The proposal is complete and concise.
- B. The session topic/description is timely and/or relevant to many types of museum professionals; it is engaging and clear.
- C. The session's key takeaways are clearly defined and reflect the session description.
- D. The selected speakers are knowledgeable and represent diverse voices, museum sizes, and professional levels.
- E. The session topic provides useful information, content and key takeaways that can be easily adapted or implemented by a museum and/or institutional peers.

### Program Selection Process

The MAAM Annual Conference Program Committee consists of representatives from the MAAM board of directors, emerging museum professionals, MAAM members, and a representative from our local arrangements committee.



The Program Committee will review session submissions in May 2026, following the May 4 submission deadline. After reviewing and developing the schedule for the conference, we will notify designated contacts for selected sessions by June 15, 2026; this timeline is subject to change. The Program Committee reserves the right to request modifications to the submitted programs.

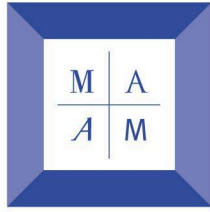
### Session Proposal Outline

Please follow the outline below in proposing your session and submit this information to the online form. Review these [tips for Session Development](#).

- A. **Contact Information:** Include the name, pronouns, title, museum/institution/firm, and full contact information of the person submitting this session proposal. Typically, this is the same person who will chair or facilitate the session, but that is not a requirement.
- B. **Approximate size of represented Museum(s)/Institution(s)/Firm(s):** small (0-5 employees); mid-sized (6-20 employees); mid-sized to large (20+ employees); independent; student
- C. **Session Title:** Provide a short, captivating title that describes your session as it should appear in the event program (20 words or less). Please note that MAAM and the Program Committee reserve the right to edit suggested titles to ensure accuracy and maximize audience interest.
- D. **Session Description:** A summary of your session, as it should appear in the event program and promotions (100 words or less).
- E. **Session Takeaways:** List 2-4 specific, concrete key takeaways, in a bulleted or numbered list, that you want attendees to take away from the session, as it should appear in the event program. What do you expect people to learn from your session? *Note: We understand that not everyone is familiar with formal learning objective formatting. The exact wording isn't as important as clearly conveying the main ideas or takeaways you want participants to leave with.*
- F. **Session Justification:** 250 words or less Use this space to tell the Program Committee why this session is important and should be included in the Annual Conference Program; this will not be included in the event program.
- G. **Session Format:** Sessions should include no more than a single moderator/session chair and additional 3 participants/presenters (maximum of 4 individuals). Session format should be chosen based on what will maximize audience engagement and interaction.
  - a. Panel (moderator and up to 3 presenters)
  - b. Discussion/Roundtable



- c. Workshop (at least 2 presenters)
  - d. Town Hall
  - e. Quick Takes
  - f. Poster Presentation (students only)
- H. **Session Topics:** Sessions may appeal to a broad or select audience, depending upon the topic. For your proposal, choose the track that most closely relates to the focus of your session (select 1).
- a. Collections Stewardship
  - b. Education & Programming
  - c. Exhibitions
  - d. Fundraising & Revenue
  - e. Leadership & Operations
  - f. Marketing & Communications
  - g. Technology
  - h. Nuts and Bolts
  - i. Other (please specify)
- I. **Targeted Audience Career Level:** Sessions are open to everyone, but please indicate your ideal attendee (select 1):
- a. Student
  - b. Emerging Professional (5 years or fewer in the field)
  - c. Mid-Career Professional (6-15 years in the field)
  - d. Senior Level Professional (16 or more years in the field)
- J. **For Workshops only:**
- a. Please describe the hands-on, participatory elements that you will include.
  - b. How will the hands-on and participatory elements support your key takeaways and how can these be applied across a range of museum types, sizes, and budgets?
  - c. How much time do you anticipate the workshop will require? Please note the final decision on session length rests with the Programming Committee.
- K. **Session Chair Contact Information:** Name, preferred pronouns, email; brief bio (75 words or less)
- L. **Speaker information:** Name, title/institution/location; phone number and email address; pronouns; brief bio (75 words or less)
- a. Please indicate if you need assistance identifying additional speakers. Proposals that only include the proposer with multiple unfilled spots are unlikely to be selected. MAAM is happy to assist in diversifying and



strengthening panels that are mostly confirmed but may benefit from an additional perspective. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to secure and finalize your panel. If requesting assistance, please ensure ample time for outreach and coordination.

- M. Alignment with MAAM's Mission & Values: Please briefly describe how this session aligns with the values of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums and how you plan to include diverse voices within the session.
- N. The name of the speaker that is a MAAM Member (or will become a member). For more information, visit:  
<http://midatlanticmuseums.org/membership/membership-levels/>
- O. Acknowledgement: Review and confirm your understanding of the presentation commitment. Sessions may be recorded and made available to conference attendees post conference. MAAM will communicate any special instructions regarding recordings. By participating as session presenter, you consent to having your session recorded. Please contact MAAM with specific questions.
- It is my responsibility as session contact to communicate all logistical information to session speakers.
  - Speakers will not use the session as a platform for promoting products or services.
  - All speakers must register for the conference. If a presenter attends only their own session, they are exempt from registration fees but may not participate in other sessions or conference activities; they are still required to register.
  - Speakers are confirmed and available to present on any dates noted for the program.
  - Speakers understand that they may be asked to share session materials and resources in the conference program and are open to the request.
  - Speakers agree to abide by the conference [Code of Conduct and Health Policy](#)
  - At least one person on the panel must be a member of MAAM or must become a member of MAAM before the preliminary program is released.
  - All sessions must include at least one museum professional. This can include independent museum professionals or museum professionals in transition.

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