

CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS

2026 Building Museums™ Symposium

March 11-13, 2026

Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor, Baltimore, MD

Submit Proposals to the  [Call for Session Proposal Application](#)
Submission Deadline: Monday, September 22, 2025, by 5:00PM EST

I. About Building Museums™

The MAAM Building Museums™ Symposium is a national symposium on the process, promise, and pitfalls of planning and managing museum capital building projects. This symposium is for museum leaders, architects, planners, project managers, engineers, and other technical experts, and those who plan to implement new construction, renovation, preservation, or expansion projects for museums. The three-day symposium offers keynotes, workshops, breakout sessions, behind-the-scenes tours, and social events. Museum and allied building design and construction professionals are invited to submit diverse program topics and presentations for consideration.

II. Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums Mission & Values

Mission: The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums sparks dialogue among museum and industry professionals to build sustainable and inclusive museums for their communities.

Inclusion & Equity: MAAM commits to shaping a museum field that values and includes diverse voices.

Empathy: MAAM commits to the idea that people matter to museums and supports museums as places to learn to value others.

Curiosity & Innovation: MAAM commits to evaluating and questioning current practices and integrating a wide range of perspectives to effect thoughtful change within the field.

III. Types of Sessions

The Building Museums™ Program Committee has established two proposal tracks: *Breakout Session* (case study, panel discussion, round table, etc.) and Workshop 2.0:

A. Breakout Sessions

1. Typically include a case study or panel discussion on the experiences of the team regarding a specific project or multiple projects.
2. There are often discussions of completed or nearly completed projects and include a variety of team members.
3. May include discussions of projects still in planning phases with a specific focus on a unique project process.

B. Workshop 2.0 Sessions

1. These focused, standalone workshops are designed to dive deeper into the complex topics surrounding museum planning, design, and construction.
2. These sessions are intended to build on the primer of technical information presented in the day-long, Ready Aim Build Workshop (listed below):
 - a) Developing Internal and External Team Members – Team Formation
 - b) Pre-Design Plans and Process
 - c) Best Practices in the Design Phase of a Capital Project
 - d) Reflecting on Lessons Learned
 - e) Conceptual Programming, Scheduling and Budgeting
 - f) Community Assessment and Engagement
3. These sessions are strongly encouraged to follow a hands-on, participatory format, such as workshops, roundtable discussions, or other interactive approaches.
4. The Program Committee may work with the proposers to refine the focus of the conversation/presentation to ensure alignment with the standards of the conference.

NOTE TO ALL SUBMITTERS: Promotion and marketing of your companies and a focus on services provided during these sessions is not permitted. Listing of firms and presenters is limited to introductory and closing slides in the presentation. Participants are invited to present at the Conference for educational purposes only. All sessions must include at least one museum staff member,

IV. Proposal Recommendations

- A. The Building Museums™ Program Committee seeks sessions that provide a clear and focused discussion of issues encountered on either a specific project, group of projects, or specific phases of a museum capital improvement project. This may include technical processes or components of such projects.
- B. Strong sessions share “real world” experiences including discussion of project challenges, mistakes, and triumphs, as well as specific budget and timeline information.

- This can include projects ranging from the design and planning phases to construction phases and completed buildings.
- C. Proposals should include a diverse range of participants to exchange views; present lived experiences and lessons learned; stimulate questions and conversations among the attendees; and align with MAAM's Mission & Values.
 - D. Sessions will typically be 75 minutes in length and can be in a variety of formats, such as case studies, panel discussions, round table discussions, or other formats.
 - E. Session proposals may address local, urban, suburban, regional, or national issues and come from organizations of all sizes and types. Presentations on smaller scale projects are encouraged, and, for projects that are larger in scale, relating that experience to smaller projects adds value to the symposium's expected audience.
 - F. Successful session proposals should address one or more of the following topics as they relate to your capital building project(s):
 - 1. Budget and business planning
 - 2. Collections care within exhibitions, in storage, and in facility design
 - 3. Community engagement in connection to building projects
 - 4. Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion (DEAI) initiatives in museum building projects
 - 5. Design and pre-construction processes
 - 6. Exhibition projects -in relationship to integration with and modification to building systems
 - 7. Existing infrastructure and historic preservation
 - 8. Food service & retail
 - 9. Fundraising
 - 10. Landscape architecture
 - 11. Leadership roles in museum building projects
 - 12. Post-opening challenges
 - 13. Project communication, internal and external
 - 14. Strategic and master planning
 - 15. Sustainable design
 - 16. Developing a project team
 - 17. Technical disciplines such as daylighting, acoustic design, building envelopes, etc.
 - 18. Visitor experience
 - G. Submissions must include photographs of completed project(s) and/or renderings of planned projects and links to relevant websites.
 - H. Successful session proposals will meet the continuing education and professional development needs of the museum community and the allied professional design and

construction industry. Programs that are perceived as a sales pitch, either for products or services, or focus on a proprietary product or installation will not be accepted.

- I. Each session proposal must provide at least four clear learning objectives for attendees to comply with AIA learning unit requirements. See below, VI: Session Proposal Outline, for more on this.

V. Speakers

- A. Session proposals that include diverse speakers who represent multiple disciplines (museum leadership and/or staff, designers, planners, conservators, contractors, etc.) are highly encouraged.
- B. Session proposals typically consist of four speakers, including the moderator/facilitator. Each session must consist of at least one museum staff member, and at least one speaker is required to be or plan to become a member of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums. Panels should include key members directly involved in the project with expertise to speak to relevant content areas, i.e., projects that impact collections preservation should include a conservator or collections manager.
- C. Program submissions must include the names and positions of all proposed speakers (and all panelists should be committed to attending the conference on March 12-13, 2026). Scheduling of your sessions could be on either date of the session schedule at the discretion of the Program Committee.
- D. Speaker Registration: All Building Museums™ speakers are expected to register at the discounted speaker rate that will be publicized with the preliminary program release. MAAM is unable to provide any financial reimbursement or assistance to speakers who wish to be compensated for travel or hotel expenses.

VI. Program Selection Process

- A. Proposals will be evaluated on the strength of their abstract and its relevance to the expected range of symposium attendees. A clear, concise, and well-written submission along with accompanying photographs or renderings that define the issues and topics of your session will be the most helpful in the selection process.
- B. Proposals will also be evaluated on the diversity of speakers, including diversity of thought, experience, race, gender, institutional role, and place in career, among other factors.
- C. The symposium's Program Committee consists of representatives from the larger MAAM Building Museums™ Committee and includes a broad spectrum of individuals with experience and expertise found on a typical museum project.
- D. The Program Committee will review session submissions by November 2025. After developing the schedule for the symposium, we will notify submitters of selected sessions in November 2025. The Program Committee reserves the right to request

modifications to the submitted programs and may combine multiple submissions into a single program.

- E. Moderator/facilitators must confirm that all the proposed speakers are available for the Building Museums™ Symposium dates *before* submitting a proposal. If a session is accepted, the contact person will be informed of the exact date and time of their session and should expect to accommodate modifications to the program requested by the Program Committee. The speakers are responsible for notifying the Program Committee of any change in title or place of employment for inclusion in the final symposium program.

VII. Request for Session Proposal Outline: Please follow the outline below in proposing your session and submit this information to the online form linked below.

- A. Contact Information: Include the name, pronouns, title, institution or 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. Name of Museum(s) and Location(s).
- C. Project Phase: Briefly describe the project's budget, what phase your project is in, and if this project was previously presented at Building Museums™.
- D. Session Type: Indicate the session type proposed for your session: Breakout Session (case study, panel, etc.) or Workshop 2.0
- E. Title: Provide a short, captivating title that describes your session objective(s) and its intended benefits. The Program Committee reserves the right to edit suggested titles to ensure accuracy and maximum audience interest.
- F. Program Abstract: A 250-word or less session description should specify the content of the presentation, how it relates to the Symposium themes/topics, the educational benefits of the session, the intended audience, and the intended outcomes or takeaways from attending the session.
- G. Learning Objectives: List at least four learning objectives. A learning objective is an explicit statement of what the audience member can do after attending the session. For example, "attendees will learn to leverage public funding to entice private donors." Learning objectives allow MAAM to offer Continuing Education credits through the American Institute of Architects for attendees. Review [how to write AIA Standards](#) and identify if your [course aligns with Health, Safety, & Wellness credits](#).
- H. Alignment with MAAM's Mission & Values: 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.
- I. Photos/Renderings of the Project(s): Provide 5 to 10 images representing the project you are presenting. These can be photographs, renderings, architectural plans, or other graphics representing your built or planned project. Share links to any websites

- affiliated with the project. *Images may be used in the conference program and/or promotional materials.*
- J. Audience Experience Level: Specify your targeted audience for the session—entry, intermediate, advanced. While all sessions are open to all attendees, this information can guide attendees through their conference experience.
 - K. Audio/Visual Needs: MAAM will supply basic A/V support: one projector, one wired microphone, and a podium. Equipment beyond this may be secured by the presenters. Session speakers are responsible for providing a laptop computer to support digital presentation materials. Indicate any special A/V needs or plans.
 - L. Panelists/Speakers: Identify the moderator/facilitator and all proposed speakers including the following information for each: name, pronouns, title, institution, email, followed by brief bio, which should describe their role on the project and professional accomplishments (100-words or less).
 - M. 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.

Submit proposals here: [Call for Session Proposal Application](#)

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