



Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums
Building Museums™ Symposium
2027 Call for Session Proposals
March 17-19, 2027

CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS

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The Biltmore Los Angeles | Los Angeles, CA

[Application Deadline](#): Monday, September 14, 2026, by 5:00 pm ET

About Building Museums™ Symposium

MAAM's Building Museums™ Symposium is a national symposium on the process, promise, and pitfalls of planning and managing museum capital building projects. The symposium is for museum leaders, architects, planners, project managers, technical experts, and those who plan to implement new construction, renovation, preservation, or expansion projects for museums. The three-day symposium will consist of various types of presentations: keynotes, workshops, breakout sessions, behind-the-scenes tours, and social events.

Museum and allied design and construction professionals are invited to submit proposals for [Breakout Sessions](#) and—new this year—[Workshop Sessions](#).

1. [Breakout Sessions](#)

Breakout sessions typically are case studies or panel discussions on the experience of a team regarding a specific building project or multiple projects. The focus is generally on completed or nearly completed projects but can include discussions of projects still in earlier planning phases. 22-25 sessions will be scheduled for Thursday and Friday. Sessions are 75 minutes long.

2. [Workshop Sessions](#) *NEW IN 2027*

Workshop sessions focus on one aspect of museum building, project phase, or specialty consideration. They provide in-depth insight into goals, key activities, measures of success, and typical pitfalls. The sessions include presentations, group discussions, and participatory exercises and are led by multi-disciplinary teams of professionals, such as architects or designers, owner representatives, business planners, construction professionals, engineers, and clients. Two to four Workshop sessions will be scheduled on Thursday and Friday of the conference, for either single or double periods, from 75 minutes to two-and-a-half hours per session.

Call for Breakout Session Proposals

- 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 can also include technical processes or components of such a project.
- Strong sessions share “real-world” experiences including discussion of project challenges, mistakes, and triumphs, as well as specific budget and timeline information.
- Proposals should feature a diverse range of speakers and perspectives, share lived experiences and lessons learned, stimulate questions and conversations among attendees, and align with MAAM's Mission & Values (see below).
- Sessions can be in a variety of formats, such as case studies, panel discussions, or roundtable discussions.
- 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. For projects that are larger in scale, relating that experience to smaller projects adds value to the symposium’s participants.
- Session proposals should address one or more of the following topics as they relate to museum building project(s), whether new construction or renovation:
 - Budget and business planning
 - Collections care within exhibitions, and in storage, and in facility design
 - Community engagement
 - Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion (DEAI) opportunities
 - Exhibition projects only to the extent that they address significant integration and modification to building systems
 - Food service & retail
 - Fundraising
 - Historic preservation
 - Infrastructure
 - Landscape architecture
 - Post-opening challenges
 - Pre-construction processes
 - Project communication, internal and external
 - Project team development and leadership roles
 - Strategic and comprehensive planning
 - Sustainable design
 - Technical disciplines such as daylighting, acoustic design, building envelope, etc.
 - Visitor experience

- Submissions must include photographs of completed project(s) and/or renderings of planned projects and links to relevant websites.
- Session proposals must meet the continuing education and professional development needs of the museum community and the allied professional design and construction industry.

Call for Workshop Session Proposals

The Workshop sessions introduce an in-depth interactive opportunity to examine the Why and the How of the processes of building museums. The sessions' primary audience will be museum clients; however, consultants, vendors, and contractors will be welcome to participate.

A typical session will likely begin with a presentation from the organizers on the definition of the phase, its goals, and its key milestones, followed by one or more exercise prompts for attendee participation. After a debrief of the exercise, the panel might wrap up with additional content on successful strategies and next steps. The participatory exercises should guide toward practical decision-making and might be ones that attendees take home to their institution to aid their own project development. With MAAM's support, after the conference, each Workshop cohort may voluntarily come back together again, virtually, for peer support as the information learned is digested and utilized.

- The Building Museums™ Program Committee seeks Workshops that allow attendees to explore the project development aspects that are most relevant to their work over the forthcoming year, hear from experts, and share their own expertise, ask questions, and network. This series of Workshops is in addition to the full-day "Ready, Aim, Build!" program which will again be held on Wednesday, March 17.
- Workshop session presenters are expected to prepare a clear and rigorous presentation and to share their slide deck and any worksheets with the attendees as a handout or digital document. A minimum of three separate project roles must be present on the presenter panel (client, architect, owner representative/project management, construction professional, and others). Building Museum organizers will work with the panel in several meetings from November to February to ensure that the sessions are content rich and meaningfully participatory, as well as to coordinate among the multiple panels to ensure comprehensiveness without repetition.
- Workshop sessions should focus on one aspect of project development. Below are some suggested topics and subtopics:
 - Project set up
 - Pre Design analyses (strategic plan, business plan, program, etc.)
 - Design team selection
 - Budgeting
 - Project management

- Programming
- Fundraising
- Design
 - Concept design
 - Schematic design
 - Design development
- Specialty considerations
 - Accessibility
 - Digital infrastructure
 - Exhibition coordination
 - Sustainability
- Construction
 - Procurement
 - Documentation
 - Construction
- Move in and Close Out
 - Preparing for operations
 - Post-occupancy (Day 2)
- The Committee expects to schedule these sessions in sequential order, so that if conference attendees join more than one Workshop session, they will see continuity from one program to the next.
- If you have questions about this new program, please reach out to Kahla DeSmit at director@midatlanticmuseums.org who can direct you to a Program Committee member for discussion.

Required Information for Session Proposals ([Breakout Sessions](#) and [Workshops](#))

1. Breakout Session or Workshop
2. Proposer's Contact Information
Include the name, title, museum/institution/firm, and email of the person submitting the proposal. This individual may serve as the session chair or facilitator but is not required to do so.
3. Museum/Project Information
For workshops, as applicable.
 - Name and location of museum(s) or project(s) represented
 - Size of museum(s): small (1–10 employees); mid-sized (11–50); large (51–250); extra-large (251+)
 - Project phase and overall project budget: small (under \$10M); mid-sized (\$10M to \$30M); large (\$30M+)

4. Session Title

MAAM and the Building Museums™ Program Committee reserve the right to edit titles for clarity and audience engagement.

5. Program Abstract (250 words maximum)

Describe the content of the session, its relevance to Building Museums™, and intended key takeaways or outcomes.

6. Learning Objectives

Provide four learning objectives describing what attendees will be able to do after the session. Learning objectives are required for Continuing Education credit eligibility through the American Institute of Architects. Indicate alignment with [AIA standards](#), including, if applicable, Health, Safety, and Wellness credits.

7. Alignment with MAAM's Mission and Values

Briefly describe how the session reflects MAAM's mission and values and how diverse perspectives will be incorporated.

8. Audience Experience Level

Indicate whether the session is targeted to entry, intermediate, or advanced participants.

9. Panelists/Speakers

Identify the moderator/facilitator and all proposed speakers. Include name, pronouns, title, museum/institution/firm, and full contact information.

10. Audio/Visual Acknowledgment

MAAM provides basic A/V support (projector, microphone, podium). Presenters must supply their own laptop and presentation materials.

11. Acknowledgement

Confirm understanding of the commitment to present at the Symposium and comply with program requirements.

Additional Requirements for Breakout Sessions

- **Photos/Renderings:** As a single pdf of 25 MB or less, provide 5 to 10 images representing the project, including photographs, renderings, drawings, and/or related graphics. Include links to relevant project websites. Images may be used for conference promotion.

Additional Requirements for Workshops

- **Workshop Focus:** Identify the project phase, sub-phase, or specific topic to be explored.
- **Participatory Activities:** Provide a brief description of proposed interactive exercises.
- **Leader Qualifications:** Summarize the relevant qualifications of the workshop leaders.
- **Session Length:** Indicate preferred duration (single period of 75 minutes or double period of 2.5 hours).
- **Number of Participants:** Specify the maximum number of participants, in addition to presenters.

- **Materials and Logistics:** Acknowledge that presenters are responsible for supplying any materials required for participatory exercises.
- **Workshop Commitment:** Confirm willingness to participate in advance coordination meetings with Building Museums™ organizers, provide presentation materials to attendees, incorporate interactive exercises, and participate in a post-conference virtual session. Acknowledge that scheduling (day and time) will be determined by conference organizers.

Speakers

Session proposals that include diverse speakers who represent multiple disciplines (museum leadership and/or staff, designers, planners, conservators, contractors, etc.) are highly encouraged.

Breakout Session proposals typically consist of four speakers including the moderator/facilitator. Workshop Sessions might include more leaders, particularly if proposed as a double session. At least one panelist must be or plan to become a member of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums. Breakout Sessions MUST also include the participation of a museum staff member; for Workshop sessions, the participation of a museum staff member is not required but is encouraged. Panels should include key members directly involved in the project or topic with expertise to speak to relevant content areas, i.e., projects that impact collections preservation should include a conservator or collections manager.

Program submissions must include the names, institutions, and positions of all proposed speakers (and all panelists must commit to attending the March 17-19, 2027, conference). Scheduling the dates and times of selected sessions is at the Program Committee's discretion.

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 financial reimbursement or assistance to speakers for travel or hotel expenses.

Program Selection Process

- Proposals will be evaluated on the strength of their abstract, relevance to the symposium attendees, and clarity of the submission.
- Proposals will be evaluated on the diversity of speakers, including diversity of experience, race, gender, and institutional role among other factors.
- Successful submissions:
 - Proposals that meet the continuing education and professional development needs of the museum community and the allied professional design and construction industry.
 - Exhibition content and design may be included in a proposal only if the presentation focuses on how the exhibition is integrated into the overall building project.

- Proposals that are perceived as sales pitches, either for products or services, or that focus on a proprietary product or installation will not be accepted.
- The symposium 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.
- The Program Committee will conduct their review and expect to notify those selected for Workshops in October 2026 and those selected for Breakout sessions in November 2026. The Program Committee reserves the right to request modifications to the submitted programs and may combine multiple submissions into a single program.
- 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. Speakers are responsible for notifying the Program Committee of any change in title or employment so we can publish this updated information in the final symposium program.

Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums Mission & Values

Proposals should align with MAAM's mission and 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.
- *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 development opportunities that promote lifelong learning, growth, and inclusive practices in training and leadership development.

Submit **BREAKOUT** and **WORKSHOP** proposals here: [Call for Session Proposal Application](#)

Submission Deadline: Monday, September 14, 2026, by 5:00 pm ET