July 18-21, 2018
Chicago

**Fostering Transparency
Strengthening Public Trust**

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2018 AMM-IAM JOINT CONFERENCE
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Association of Midwest Museums and Illinois Association of Museums are pleased to announce the Call for Proposals for *Fostering Transparency, Strengthening Public Trust*, to be held in Chicago, IL on July 18-21, 2018, concurrently with the Visitor Studies Association Conference.

We are seeking proposals for sessions, poster presentations and half-day, hands-on workshops.

★Online submission only at ammconference.org★
★Proposals due December 11, 2017★

About the Conferences

The Association of Midwest Museums (AMM) is partnering with the Illinois Association of Museums (IAM) and Visitor Studies Association (VSA) to offer a wider variety of sessions and networking opportunities in one of America's greatest cities.

Two conferences - the AMM-IAM Conference and the VSA Conference - will be held concurrently and share a theme, keynote speaker, exhibit hall, and one evening event. Each conference will feature its own track of workshops and breakout sessions.

This Call for Proposals is for the AMM-IAM Conference only. Learn more at ammconference.org.

About the Theme

Museums, cultural centers, zoos and other informal learning institutions have long grappled with questions like "how do we remain relevant to our communities?" and "what is our value and the value of informal learning to society?" However, the geopolitical, social, and environmental events of the last several years have made these questions particularly urgent ones, and we are beginning to see more and more institutions actively reckoning with the need to respond.

As many organizations turn inward to evaluate the resources and experiences they offer, we are reminded that places of informal learning are perceived as offering more trustworthy information than other public sources, particularly in a climate of uncertainty and polarization.[1]

Historical, scientific, artistic, and cultural museums are well-positioned to offer experiences that engage people intellectually, but there is a growing desire for these experiences to effectively promote empathy and understanding to help bridge the widening divides between us. Right now, there is a greater opportunity and need for museums to strengthen their position of public trust.[2]

Our organizations can do this by finding ways to maintain transparency, foster dialogue with the communities we serve, and ensure that we respond to those communities authentically and responsibly. At the same time, our organizations must also interrogate the ways in which and extent to which our choices about collection, interpretation, collaboration, and governance have earned--or jeopardized--the trust of many diverse publics.

AMM, IAM and VSA invite our respective memberships to work together to answer critical questions about how, across a range of accountabilities and circumstances, we can fulfill our institutional missions with renewed perspective, rigor, and courage:

- In what ways can or have museums and cultural centers earn the trust of their publics and why is this important?

- How are informal learning institutions uniquely positioned to leverage public trust, and what responsibilities come with that role?

- How do the missions and visions of informal learning institutions support -- or not support -- public trust? In what ways are institutions accountable to various publics?

- What are successful models for building public trust in terms of strategic directions, institutional decision-making, and planning for sustainability?

- How does public trust in informal learning institutions affect audiences' expectations for and takeaways from interpretation?

- How are museums and other informal learning institutions using their resources and collections to help their communities make meaning of locally important issues?

- When and how should informal learning institutions take a stand on polarizing or controversial issues? What effect might this have on public trust?

- What do we need to know about our target audiences to communicate with them in ways that are understood as trustworthy, responsible, and appropriately thorough?

- What strategies can informal learning institutions use to respond to community - and even nationwide - concerns?

- What steps can informal learning institutions take to better position themselves as visible, trusted resources for authentic collaboration with community members?

- How can informal learning institutions more effectively build partnership and trust with audiences who have traditionally been excluded from informal learning spaces?

[1] *People Trust Museums More Than Newspapers. Here Is Why That Matters Right Now (DATA)* by *Colleen Dilenschneider, Know Your Own Bone*

[2] *Museum Facts, American Alliance of Museums*

Propose a Session, Poster, or Workshop

We invite individuals from our museum communities to consider proposing sessions and workshops that address the a range of topics related to the conference theme, *Fostering Transparency, Strengthening Public Trust*. For example:

- Museums as cultural or historical authorities
- Building a diverse workforce; addressing internal inclusion, equity and access needs
- Strategies for developing cultural competency among staff
- Role of museums in social justice
- Developing external relationships and engaging diverse communities to ensure trust
- Interpreting and understanding demographics
- Adapting fundraising plans during periods of changing economic or political climates
- Managing internal and external changes
- Implications of ticketing solutions and pricing structures on access, audience development, and visitation dynamics
- Recruitment and assessment tools and resources
- Innovations in exhibit design, development and fabrication
- Developing business models that are financially sustainable and reflective of resources that exist in communities
- Audience research breakthroughs

Broader topics have been requested in post-conference surveys, and we encourage you to also consider preparing sessions that address the following needs in our professional community:

- Leadership challenges
- Project management
- Strategic plan development
- Development and fundraising solutions
- Collections practices
- Research breakthroughs

Consider your Audience

Attendees to the AMM-IAM Conference will include leaders and other professionals from various types of museums - from historic houses to science centers - as well as a host of other organizations and companies. Most of them will be from the Midwest region, in particular Illinois and markets surrounding Chicago.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed for their relevance to the conference theme, relevance to professional development needs in the industry, clarity of content and learning objectives, and diversity of perspectives and presenters. The program committee reserves the right to make suggestions to improve proposals. This might include adding or changing speakers, expanding your topic to include other examples, or merging your session with one that is similar. This is done in an effort to provide the best overall line-up for conference attendees.

Schedule

Proposals are due by December 11, 2017. The 2018 Conference Planning Committee will send notifications by early January 2018.

How to Submit a Proposal

Proposals must be submitted using the online submission form.

Please be prepared with the following information before completing the online form. The form does not allow you to save draft proposals.

- Session Chair Information - name, company, address, email, and phone information
- Presenter Information - list of presenters, including name, company, and email address
- Format - select from a list of options (described below)
- Proposal Narrative - detailed description of the focus of your session
- Learning Outcomes - a few statements that capture what participants will know or be able to do as a result of your session; Limit 100 words
- Brief Description - Provide a short, punchy description of your session that can be used in conference promotions.

Session Chairs and Presenters

Sessions are scheduled to provide an enticing and balanced conference program. Presenters may be a mix of museum professionals, students, and service providers. At least ONE museum representative must be on your panel.

Session Chairs are responsible for organizing the session and relaying session information. AMM maintains contact ONLY with the Session Chair. Session Chairs will receive relevant schedule and setup information as it is available. Communications will come from admin@midwestmuseums.org and info@midwestmuseums.org.

Presenters must be confirmed at the time of submission. If your session is selected for the program, your presenters must be able to confirm their availability to present any day of the conference from July 18-21, 2018. Presenters are required to register and pay the conference registration fee at the early bird rate.

Session Formats and Setup

Sessions are 75 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes) long. Conference sessions may be structured in any of the following ways, or by another means of delivery that is well thought out and described:

- **Poster:** Choose this option if you would like to use a poster-board sized display to share research, case studies, and student projects. Posters will be located in a "free flow" space where attendees can engage one-on-one with presenters. AMM will provide easels or tables for displays.

- **Panel:** Choose this more traditional session format if you have multiple presenters who plan share information using slideshow presentations but do not need attendees to divide into groups or have hands-on work space. Room will be arranged in theater format, with chairs facing forward.

- **Roundtable:** Choose this session format if you have slideshow presentations, but also require that attendees break into small groups for discussion or require table space for attendees to work on hands-on activities. Rooms will be set up with multiple round tables that seat 6-8 people.

- **Debate:** Choose this session if you wish to encourage and demonstrate dialogue. Seek lively, knowledgeable speakers to present opposing views. Ensure that you have a strong debate moderator (Session Chair).

- **Pre-Conference Workshop:** Consider proposing skill-building, hands-on workshops. Workshops must be accomplishable within 3-4 hours, though the committee is willing to consider proposals for all-day workshops. Workshop space is very limited. AMM will secure venues for workshops that can accommodate roundtable or classroom setups.

Presentations should be limited to no more than 3 speakers plus a Session Chair to ensure adequate time for presentations.

All breakout session rooms will be equipped with projector, screen, microphone, audio hookup, and 6 ft table. Presenters are expected to bring their own laptops and adapter/connector cables. AMM will connect you to hotel AV staff for additional technology needs.

Questions to Consider While Preparing a Proposal

- Proposals must be clear, concise and fully describe the point of your session. *What is the focus or big idea?*

- Specify educational outcomes. *What will attendees learn or accomplish during the session or workshop? What practical knowledge, industry advances, tools, or tips are presented?*

- Ideal presentations connect to the conference theme. *Does your project, research, or lesson relate to topics such as audience development and community engagement?*

- Think creatively about your presentation format. *What format will best support your content? Will your presentation prompt dialogue?*

- Be clear about the relevance of your content to a variety of audiences. *Are key issues or trends addressed? Do you have innovative ideas, practices, or partnerships? Is your topic universally relevant, across disciplines and even roles?*

- Case studies should exemplify best practices, lessons-learned, or impact on community. *What happened? How was it evaluated? What were key internal or external factors at play?*

Prepare your session information and submit your proposal using the online form.