



Hosted by the Connecticut Science Center
September 29–October 2, 2018 in Hartford, Connecticut

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference is the premier professional development event for the science center and museum field. The conference reaches up to 1,800 science center and museum professionals at all career stages, representing the organizational and geographic diversity of the field.

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

—Richard Buckminster Fuller

"There is a simpler way to organize human endeavor. It requires a new way of being in the world. It requires being in the world without fear. Being in the world with play and creativity. Seeking after what's possible. Being willing to learn and be surprised."

—Margaret J. Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers

Conference Theme: Reinvention

Connecticut is home to many innovative and resourceful inventions that revolutionized modern life: the first patented sewing machine, the first truly portable typewriter, the first commercial FM radio station, and the earliest artificial heart (made from an Erector set!). This inventive spirit is a vital part of science centers and their work to inspire, expand, improve, and evolve in ways that are meaningful and relevant for their communities.

Science centers keep inventiveness alive by taking risks, accepting failure, learning from mistakes, trying new things, and challenging barriers. Science centers, young and old, continuously reinvent themselves to grow alongside or ahead of new technologies, new discoveries, new audiences, and new funding sources. How have we embodied the reinventive spirit to meet the needs of those we serve, and those we want to serve, in a changing world?





At the **2018 ASTC Annual Conference**, join professionals from science centers around the world as we share how we endeavor to reinvent the work we do by

- Using resources and technology in unexpected ways
- Drawing ideas and insights from outside of the museum world
- Taking risks, embracing failure, and seeking constructive feedback in an often risk-averse field
- Becoming “must see” destinations for new and emerging audiences
- Creating flexible, sustainable organizations that continue to evolve
- Considering how diversity, inclusion, community, and global perspectives have become an integral part of our role, and our daily conversations

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The ASTC Annual Conference is itself in a process of reinvention—transforming into a new, more relevant, and multi-disciplinary experience for professionals in the science center and museum field. Based on attendee evaluations and member surveys, we are initiating some changes to the conference. Please read through this document for details about modifications to the conference program, tracks, and formats that will take place for ASTC 2018.

Conference Goals

The program of the ASTC Annual Conference is designed to

- **Inspire** attendees, both personally and professionally, through engaging dialogue and exciting speakers
- **Build** capacity through intense, focused sessions that share knowledge and push us to new ways of thinking
- **Strengthen** relationships that connect people and organizations in ways that advance our field
- **Focus** on strengthening the field by learning from past failures or challenges
- **Create** flexible, sustainable organizations that continue to evolve

By submitting a proposal, you are contributing to the professional development of your colleagues and advancing the field. Please reflect the conference goals in your proposal.

Multiple Perspectives

Strong sessions benefit from a diverse panel of speakers, and ASTC is interested in promoting topics, viewpoints, and speakers representing diverse perspectives in as many sessions as possible. We encourage you to think about all types of diversity when composing your session and strongly recommend that proposals include speakers who represent the broad array of our organizations, their staffs, and the communities we serve around the world. For assistance in refining topics or identifying potential speakers to add to your session, please write to conference@astc.org.

What's New?

Intensives: Full-day, intensive workshops will take place on the Friday before the conference. These new workshops will be created, designed, and delivered by a group of experts in the field and are an opportunity for conference attendees to participate in focused learning experiences for one full day. Intensives offer a chance for participants to connect and network with peers along occupational and topical interests. Intensives will focus on topics within the three tracks: Leadership and Professional Development, Business Operations, and Content and Design. While preconference workshops are not part of the 2018 general call for sessions, we encourage you to contact conference@astc.org with suggestions about compelling topics for the Intensives. They will be held on Friday, September 29, 2018. Preregistration is required. Attendee fees include meals and transportation, if necessary. Sessions topics will be announced and promoted prior to open registration.

Conference Tracks

NEW: Fewer Tracks, Connected Content

At the heart of the science center field is a group of dedicated people—staff, volunteers, board members, and other community stakeholders. The three conference tracks for 2018 reflect the people, the essential operating components, and the audience-directed activities of ASTC members. They create a more connected and streamlined approach to session content, and offer equivalent prominence and importance to the respective topics. Proposals that focus on operational aspects of science center practice are especially encouraged.

Leadership and Professional Development: Sessions in this track focus on developing skills and expertise in the field. They can include topics like leadership, organizational governance, career development, volunteer engagement, strategic planning, and future directions for the field.

Business Operations: Sessions in this track emphasize the essential components of a successful organization. Topics can be related to administration; buildings and operations systems; communications, public relations, and marketing; development and member relations; community relations; income generation; and human resources management.

Content and Design: This track includes sessions about the content and design of audience-directed activity: community engagement and outreach, education and programming, exhibits and environments, immersive media and experiences (planetariums, large-format films, stereoscopic theaters, simulators, etc.), and research and evaluation.

Proposal Types

Sessions: Concurrent Sessions are 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) long. Flash Sessions are 10 minutes long, and will be combined by the review panel into three 75-minute sessions placed throughout the conference.

Posters: Want to share project results, exhibition advances, or new ideas in a graphic format? Select this presentation style to have your poster included in timed groupings that will be placed in visible conference areas for extended intervals. Presenters are expected to attend their designated session time to engage with their colleagues.



Session Formats

Select the format that is most appropriate for your topic and will best involve the audience and create the most effective learning opportunity. All sessions are non-commercial and avoid endorsement of services or products.

Café: A moderated session that opens with short presentations of three to five minutes per presenter (maximum of three presenters), followed by roundtable discussions so that the audience can interact with presenters. A session leader articulates the issues and facilitates both the discussion and wrap-up.

Forum: An open discussion on specific issues with one or more session leaders to moderate group conversation.

Panel: A session with three to four presenters in a moderated panel discussion, followed by 15–20 minutes of Q&A. Diverse panels should consider each participating institution's geography, size, type, and budget.

Hands-on, Minds-on Exploration: A program for a limited number of participants around a specific theme, emphasizing participation and interactivity, with one or more hands-on activities; 60 maximum participants.

Flash Session: A short (10-minute) presentation especially suited for reporting project results or presenting program outcomes. Individual presentations will be combined by the program committee into a limited number of collective sessions based on theme or topic.

Posters: The poster session is a visual presentation of an author's work—using graphs, photographs, diagrams, and any sample educational materials developed—on a poster board. Presenters are expected to attend their designated session time to engage with their colleagues.



How Do I Submit A Successful Conference Proposal?

- Read through this Call for Proposals completely.
- Identify which of the three tracks will be the focus of your session.
- Align your topic with the conference theme and goals.
- Recruit your presenters and ensure their input and confirmation.
- Get creative! We're looking for interactive, energetic, and relevant topics and discussions.
- Be bold! Try something you haven't seen before.
- Ask questions—ASTC staff and the Conference Program Planning Committee are here to help you submit the best proposal possible.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Session Leader/Contact: Each proposal must identify ONE session leader (contact) who will be responsible for the organization and management of the session, including logistics, requests for audiovisual equipment, communication with presenters and ASTC staff, and leading the session itself. All correspondence related to the proposal will be directed to the session leader listed on the submitted form. *NOTE: Individuals are limited to participating in three accepted sessions; you may be asked to replace a presenter who is listed for more than three accepted sessions.*

Registration Fees: Session leaders and presenters must register for the annual conference. Session presenters may receive a free pass only for the sessions in which they are participating upon advance request and approval of the ASTC Conference Department. If presenters do not work at an ASTC-member institution—and wish to attend other sessions, participate in events, and visit the Exhibit Hall—they may register at the discounted, ASTC-member rate. Session leaders are responsible for making sure all of their presenters register for the conference and pay for any workshop that has a fee.

Session Room Logistics: All session rooms will have a projector and screen, microphones, sound, and internet connection. The room set-up will be a combination of round tables and theater-style seating.

Requests for other options for room furnishings and layout or other needs **MUST** be indicated in the "Special Needs, Requests, and Comments" section of the online form. It is possible that requests cannot be accommodated, and may result in non-acceptance of the session.

Proposal Criteria: Prepare session content beforehand to ensure completeness, adherence to word limits, and avoidance of typographical errors. Please note that special characters (e.g., #, @, &) and bullet points are not supported in the online proposal form. Incomplete session proposals will not be considered for review.

Session proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria

- The topic is of high intellectual merit and contributes to the advancement of the field.
- Session content demonstrates timely, strategic, and/or innovative thinking.
- The description clearly articulates attendees' experiences and/or takeaways.
- Speakers and panelists are appropriate for the session and represent multiple perspectives. It is encouraged that session participants are from more than one organization or institution, and should include diversity with respect to each participating institution's geography, size, type, and budget.
- Session actively involves the audience, in a manner appropriate to the session format and content.

Please contact Nina Humes, ASTC's conference manager, with any questions about the proposal process or form, at nhumes@astc.org.



Online Proposal Form Overview

Conference Track: Select the appropriate conference track.

Session Topic: Select the topic (within the track) that best fits the session.

Session Title: 15-word maximum. Be descriptive but concise.

Session Summary: 50-word maximum. This paragraph will serve as your session's entry in the online conference program, printed conference programs, and conference app. Please be clear about what you will cover and ensure your summary is free of grammatical errors and typos.

Session Description: 200-word maximum. Describe the session in more detail for the Conference Program Planning Committee. What topics will be covered? What will happen during the session? What will people do? What will they take away from the session? What are your learning goals?

Presenters: List information for all presenters, making sure that their names, titles, organizations, and contact information is correct.

Session Format: Choose a session format that is appropriate for the intended audience and session content.

Special Needs, Requests, and Comments: Use this section to request options for room furnishings and layout or other needs, request additional AV equipment, or explain a special circumstance that the reviewers should know about as they evaluate your session proposal.

Enter Your Proposal Online

- Go to www.astc.org/conference/future-conferences to submit your proposal.
- Cut and paste your proposal into the appropriate fields of the online form.
- After you submit, print a copy of the confirmation (which will include your personal web link, login ID number, and password) to edit your proposal during the submission period. If you need to make changes to your proposal after the submission deadline, please email conference@astc.org with your changes.

Dates to Remember

Session proposal submission deadline is Friday, December 15, 2017.

Notification of acceptance to the program will be sent in March 2018.

What Is the Conference Program Planning Committee (CPPC) and What Do They Do?

The CPPC is responsible for strategically leading the ASTC Annual Conference, including reviewing proposals for future conference sites, setting the overall goals for the direction of the conference, reviewing session proposals, and ensuring that the structure and content of ASTC Annual Conferences are closely aligned with ASTC's strategic priorities as well as responsive to the diverse needs and capabilities of its members. If you have questions or ideas for the CPPC, please write to conference@astc.org.

