



2020 ASTC Annual Conference

RFP Guidelines

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BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

The basic requirements for an institution to be considered as a potential host are:

- Must be an ASTC member;
- Access to a theater and planetarium for demonstrations (preferred, not essential);
- Onsite location adequate for the Saturday Night Party (capacity of 1,000–1,200); and
- Able to host Museum Open House Day.

TIMELINE:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| ✓ All questionnaires and other components completed by potential host | May 1, 2017 |
| ✓ Completed proposal submissions reviewed and completed by committees | May 26, 2017 |
| ✓ Final recommendation by ASTC’s Board of Directors | July 26, 2017 |
| ✓ Selected host contacted | July 31, 2017 |

HOST CRITERIA

Location:

In considering potential sites, ASTC will look at some of the following areas (see below for a detailed description of each):

- Location (appeal to attendees; flights, including costs/frequency/international accessibility; walkability of host city; attractions, etc.)
- Ability of location to meet convention center/hotel meeting space and sleeping room requirements

ASTC seeks to rotate the conference geographically whenever possible. Locations of recent and future annual conferences are as follows:

2014: Raleigh, North Carolina, United States

2015: Montreal, Québec, Canada

2016: Tampa, Florida, United States

2017: San Jose, California, United States

2018: Hartford, Connecticut, United States

2019: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

An important factor is flight accessibility. Potential conference sites should have major domestic and international flight access. Related factors include major airline hubs in the vicinity (direct flights from most major U.S. cities preferred), the frequency of those flights, and the expense of getting to and from the location.

The science center should be relatively close to the convention center (either by walking, public transportation, or shuttle ride of less than 20 minutes).

The ASTC Annual Conference is normally held over a weekend during September or October, but not during conflicting holidays. The preferred pattern would be Thursday–Tuesday (the actual conference would be held Saturday–Tuesday).

Convention Center/Hotel Meeting Space and Sleeping Room Requirements:

Since the majority of the conference takes place at the convention center and the headquarters hotel, it is important that the potential site meet the space requirements.

Conveniences near the convention center, such as restaurants, cultural activities, and shopping, are also considered. Please see the *Convention and Visitors Bureau Summary* section for more details. If you are interested in submitting a response to the RFP, we will provide you with a link to a more detailed online document for your Convention and Visitors Bureau representative to complete so they can provide answers related to the meeting space needs for the ASTC Annual Conference. (Please keep in mind that it usually takes a Convention and Visitors Bureau representative at least three to four weeks to complete this information, so be sure to give them adequate time to do so.)

Potential dates:

The potential dates in 2020 during which ASTC would like to hold the conference are:

- October 3–6, 2020 (Saturday–Tuesday)
- October 17–20, 2020 (Saturday–Tuesday)
- October 24–27, 2020 (Saturday–Tuesday)

About the ASTC Annual Conference

The ASTC Annual Conference attracts nearly 2,000 attendees from science museums, nature centers, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, and botanical gardens, as well as natural history and children's museums from across North America and the world.

ASTC's Annual Conference is the premier professional development opportunity for the science center field. Science center executive, education, exhibition, marketing, communications, and development staff, among many others, attend the conference to network, learn, and be inspired. The conference aspires to ensure that current science knowledge and best practices are promoted, ultimately serving the public with lifelong learning through improved exhibits, better prepared science center staff, and engaging programming.

OBJECTIVES:

Conference objectives:

- **Produce an outstanding event:** Provide a productive and enjoyable conference that serves as a source for professional development and inspiration to the field.
- **Growth in participation:** The ASTC Annual Conference, held ideally each October, is the premier professional development event for science center and museum professionals. The number of participants has risen steadily from just over 100 in 1980 to an average of 1,700 between 2011 and 2016. This goal goes hand in hand with expanding other revenue-generating areas of the conference, such as increasing our exhibitor and sponsor participation.
- **Efficient revenue generation:** Net revenue from the Annual Conference accounts for 40% of ASTC's overall operating budget and allows ASTC to develop and provide member benefits and other programs (outreach, Youth Inspired Challenge, minigrants, professional development opportunities, and more).
- **Inspire** attendees, both personally and professionally, through exciting and engaging speakers and experiences.
- **Build capacity** through high-quality sessions that build upon what individuals and organizations already know to generate new abilities.
- **Strengthen relationships** that connect people and organizations in ways that advance informal science educations.
- **Highlight innovations and excellence** in every aspect of informal science education and museum practice.
- **Focus on reflection and feedback** that strengthen the field by learning from our past successes and challenges.
- **Highlight benefits of membership** and seek feedback to constantly improve service to the field.
- **Emphasize the importance of community outreach** by working closely with the host to provide local examples as well as showcasing others in the science museum field.

Science Center Objectives:

- **Increase community partnerships/programs:** This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your leadership in your community. At events like the Leadership Reception, community leaders and others important to your institution will have the opportunity to network with science center CEOs from around the world. The 2016 Annual Conference was found to have brought more than \$1.4 million in revenue to the host city of Tampa, which certainly boosted the host's profile in the city.
- **Showcase your projects and programs to the field:** As with hosting anything, this will be your chance for your institution to shine among your colleagues, and showcase your exhibitions, programs, unique features, and innovations.
- **Energize your staff:** Hosting an Annual Conference is a team-building experience that helps energize host staff, as well as expose them to education sessions which will further their professional development.
- **Receive complimentary registrations:** ASTC provides 50 complimentary full conference registrations for the host institution's paid staff members, for the entire conference program (five for the year before hosting and 45 for actual hosted year). ASTC also provides the host with two guest rooms for three nights of lodging at a conference hotel.
- **Increase fundraising and attract more grants:** With nearly 2,000 attendees from the science museum field, your institution will have the opportunity to showcase its projects and programs. NSF and IMLS, as well as other government agencies and private funders, are present at the conference.
- **Increase press coverage:** By working with ASTC and sponsors, your center has a greater opportunity for media coverage. Recent conferences have seen local, national, and industry media coverage.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Considerable emphasis has been put on clarifying ASTC and the host institution's commitments so as to enable the smoothest possible working relationship between the participating organizations. The responsibilities outlined below include logistical and financial obligations.

ASTC's Responsibilities:

- **Marketing:** ASTC is responsible for marketing the Annual Conference through printed pieces (Save the Date postcard, and final conference program), digital marketing (website, broadcast emails, conference app, social media), and through its partnerships (with AAAS, AAM, etc). Supplemental marketing by the host is welcomed and encouraged and this can include posting information on their website.
- **Events and sessions:** Those that take place at the convention center and headquarters hotel are the responsibility of ASTC. This includes all logistical needs, speakers, signage, food and beverage, etc.
 - **Concurrent educational sessions at the convention center/hotel**
 - **Pre- and post-conference workshops at the convention center/hotel**
 - **Conference events at the convention center/hotel**
 - **Governing Member Directors Reception**
 - **Keynote speaker(s):** ASTC will work to obtain keynote speaker(s). It is hoped that there will be little to no speaker fees incurred by ASTC. If the host has a strong relationship with a potential keynote speaker and one that will not incur costs either by ASTC or the host, then ASTC would be interested to hear the host's recommendation.
- **Programming:** ASTC's Conference Program Planning Committee, working with ASTC staff, selects all concurrent educational sessions. The Committee also determines the conference tracks and any other methods of organization/classification.
- **Signage:** ASTC has assumed this responsibility, since the majority of the signage is needed at the convention center and the hotel. If the host wishes to produce signage for events in the host institution, ASTC will provide the design elements so the host can produce its onsite signage consistent with conference branding.
- **Fundraising:** ASTC will be responsible for leading national and international fundraising efforts, and soliciting contributions to enhance the whole conference experience and will work with the host institution to ensure there is no conflict by either partner in approaching potential sponsors.

Host's Responsibilities:

- **Events** as well as any sessions that take place during Museum Open House Day are the responsibility of the host, to include all costs associated with these events. Examples:
 - **Saturday Evening Event** (estimated attendance: 1,000–1,200 people)
 - **Open House Day** (estimated attendance: up to 1,000 people)
 - **Leadership Reception** (estimated attendance: 150–200 people)
 - **Pre-conference and post-conference tours** (working with local destination management company (DMC))
- **Fundraising:** Working with ASTC, leading local fundraising efforts and soliciting contributions to enhance whole conference experience.
- **Programming:** The host institution collaborates with the Conference Program Planning Committee to advise ASTC staff on speakers, pre- and post-conference tours, and special educational and social events.
- **Transportation** from the convention center to the host institution for events.
- **Volunteers:** ASTC will have less than 20 staff onsite during the conference. Because of ASTC's strong commitment to customer service, we look to the host institution to provide volunteers to support different aspects of the conference. Total volunteers needed range from 75 to 100.
- **Information about the host city:** ASTC relies on the host institution to provide information to attendees about the conference city (welcome flyer with local restaurants/maps of popular areas, discounts for attendees at certain locations, etc.).
- **Staffing:** At least two years prior to the conference, assign a staff member/team to coordinate local arrangements, continuing until/throughout the conference. The host will be represented by at least one staff person on ASTC's Conference Program Planning Committee (CPPC), to attend three CPPC meetings each year (one in January/February and two during the conference itself), starting two years prior to the 2020 conference and run for one year following.
- **Financial Responsibilities and Opportunities:** As detailed in the objectives section, the ASTC Annual Conference provides great benefits to attendees and host institutions. The Annual Conference is essential to ASTC's sustainability, providing 40% of ASTC's operating budget each year. Therefore, a major consideration of the ASTC Board of Directors and related committees when selecting the best site is potential net revenue for the association.

Please see the Host Museum and Financial Questionnaire for a summary of estimated expenses based on past hosts' actual expenses, as well as a fundraising questionnaire.

FINANCIALS:

ASTC's Annual Conference provides a considerable amount of the Association's operating revenue each year, enabling ASTC to deliver essential programs and services to benefit our members and the field at large. Beyond revenue from registration and exhibits, ASTC maximizes profits from the conference as a result of sponsorship. A number of companies with whom ASTC has sustained, important partnerships see the annual conference as the best opportunity for visibility among our members and the field and also as their preferred way to give back.

Each region delivers new and exciting opportunities for sponsorship and fundraising for the host and ASTC to pursue in collaboration. These corporate sponsors or private foundations can be approached to finance new initiatives, offset host expenses, and support ASTC. These supporters can be:

- existing funders with whom the host institution already has a close relationship, and can request additional support from, or
- regionally based funders, new to the host, for whom the conference activities provide the right fit.

In keeping with its sponsorship policy, ASTC and the host institution will share a list of current/previous sponsors indicating those that ASTC will pursue and those that the host institution will pursue. ASTC's list includes sponsors from the prior three conferences, as well as any other existing programmatic sponsors with whom ASTC is working.

The host museum will be responsible for seeking sponsorship to support the Saturday Night Party and Museum Open House Day (with the exception of theater and the planetarium demonstrations).

ASTC will be responsible for seeking sponsorship to support all other programs and events in the headquarters hotel and convention center, as well as any products disseminated to conference attendees.

While Friday evening's Leadership Reception is the host museum's responsibility, ASTC will also seek sponsorship support to cover transportation costs.

Those companies responsible for traveling exhibitions held at the host museum during the ASTC Annual Conference may be approached for sponsorship by the host museum unless they are on the list of current/previous ASTC sponsors. In those instances, the host museum should work with ASTC on negotiating a joint or expanded sponsorship agreement.

Recognition of host sponsors:

Sponsors will be recognized in the ASTC printed materials and other selected mediums.

In order to meet the sponsor fulfillment obligations, the person responsible for handling conference sponsors secured by the host institution will need to adhere to the ASTC Annual Conference deadlines.

Estimated Host Budget

EXPENSES		
Committee Meeting Expenses	\$5,000	Travel for at least one committee member to attend CPPC meetings the two years prior to the 2020 conference and the year following
Printing/Xerox	\$3,000	Volunteer handbooks, discount cards, etc.
Volunteers	\$7,000	T-shirts, food and beverage, etc.
Saturday Night Party	\$100,000	A quality event: food and beverage, fun, entertainment
Leadership Reception	\$10,000	A quality event: food and beverage, audio visual
Museum Day	\$5,000	Food and beverage, attendee maps or schedule
Busing	\$15,000	Busing for museum day and Saturday night party, if host museum is not within walking distance of conference hotels. Does not include shuttle bus service needed for additional events. Overall, bus costs could be offset with city partnerships/viable public transportation options (trains, shuttles, etc).

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$145,000

ASTC Operating Budget

EXPENSES	
Consultants	\$15,000
Marketing	\$5,000
Temporary Assistance	\$7,500
Travel & Subsistence	\$4,000
Conferences/Meetings	\$15,000
Conference Contracts	\$353,000
Printing & Duplicating	\$27,850
Telephone/Communication	\$300
Supplies	\$26,200
Postage & Delivery	\$4,100
Repairs/Equipment Rental	\$1,500
Legal & Accounting	\$500
Insurance - General	\$2,000
Credit Card Discount Fee	\$27,672
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES	\$489,622
Allocated Overhead	\$83,296 Includes salaries, benefits, and payroll taxes
TOTAL CONSOLIDATED EXPENSES	\$572,918

CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU SUMMARY:

Those institutions interested in hosting the ASTC Annual Conference will be given a link to a more detailed online document for your Convention and Visitors Bureau representative to complete so they can provide answers related to the meeting space and hotel needs.

ASTC may require a site inspection prior to making any final decisions. If your city is selected as a finalist, ASTC requests that the CVB secures three roundtrip airline tickets, necessary ground transportation, and hotel accommodations to enable the site visit for to finalize our decision. The site inspection team will consist of three ASTC representatives.

If you require assistance with communicating with your local bureau, ASTC can provide you with a representative. Please contact us via email at conference@astc.org.

Preferred Dates:

The ASTC Annual Conference is normally held over a weekend during September or October, but not during conflicting holidays. The preferred pattern would be Thursday-Tuesday (the actual conference would be held Saturday-Tuesday).

The potential dates in 2020 during which ASTC would like to hold the conference are:

- October 3-6, 2020 (Saturday-Tuesday)
- October 17-20, 2020 (Saturday-Tuesday)
- October 24-27, 2020 (Saturday-Tuesday)

Basic Conference Schedule:

- Wednesday: Staff move-in
- Thursday: Decorator move-in
- Friday: Registration opens/Preconference workshops/Board meeting/CEO Forum/Exhibitors move-in
- Saturday: Exhibit hall opens/Morning general session/Concurrent educational sessions
- Sunday: Exhibit hall open/Concurrent educational sessions
- Monday: Exhibitors and decorator move-out/ Concurrent educational sessions in morning and afternoon/ featured session and business meeting in late morning and afternoon
- Tuesday: Host museum has open house day, no meeting space required

CONVENTION CENTER:

The ASTC Annual Conference attracts nearly 2000 attendees over a five-day period. Overall, there are 10 blocks of up to 13 concurrent sessions, etc., the exhibit hall, and two general sessions. The food and beverage budget for the convention center has been around \$100K for the last few years, not including tax, since ASTC is normally tax exempt.

Preferred Meeting Space

Event/Workshop/Other	Day(s)	Time held	Required sq ft	Setup	Note
Exhibit hall	Thursday-Monday	24-hour hold	90,000 (minimum)		Flexible with required size.
Registration area	Thursday-Monday	24-hour hold	100 feet (linear) At least 100 feet wide.	Setup includes counters and self-serve kiosks	Up to 8 counters and kiosks. A nearby storage room that locks is also requested.
Concurrent sessions (13)	Thursday-Monday	24-hour hold	2,000-2,500	Combination of rounds and theater. Head table for up to 6. Two-four display tables around the perimeter. (some rooms may require a different setup)	Thursday is setup. Rooms should accommodate up to 200ppl.
Ad-hoc meeting rooms (8-10)	Thursday-Monday	24-hour hold	500-1,000 (minimum)	Varies	
General Session/Signature Session/Business Meeting	Friday-Monday	24-hour hold	25,000 (minimum)	Rounds for 1100 with stage and two large screens.	Friday is setup/rehearsal. Saturday is general session. Monday is signature session/business meeting.

Food and Beverage

Event/Workshop/Other	Day	Food and Beverage	Expected Number
Workshops (6-10)	Friday	Breakfast, Lunch, or Break	20-60ppl each
General Session(Keynote)	Saturday	Breakfast	1000-1100
Exhibit Hall	Saturday	Lunch	1000-1100
Exhibit Hall	Saturday	PM Break	1000
Exhibit Hall	Sunday	Beverage Break	750-1000
Exhibit Hall	Sunday	Lunch	1000-1100
Exhibit Hall	Sunday	Networking Reception	1000

HOTEL INFORMATION:

Number of hotels used

ASTC requires a total hotel room block of about 3,100 room nights. In the past, the room block has been divided anywhere between two and four hotels (we do not recommend more than four hotels).

Room Block

Tuesday:	5
Wednesday:	35
Thursday:	250
Friday:	700
Saturday:	800
Sunday:	750
Monday:	500
Tuesday:	100
Wednesday:	25

Total room nights: 3,165

Room Rate History

Historically, room rates have been \$150-\$195 (depends on city) per night (single occupancy), depending on the mix of properties used. Usually, this included a three- to four-star hotel as well as a budget property with a smaller room block. ASTC does request a 10% commission payable to ConferenceDirect as well as a \$5 rebate per room payable to ASTC.

Location:

All hotels proposed must be within three blocks of the convention center. Favorable cities will propose hotels across the street/connected to the convention center.

The hotel selected to be the headquarters hotel for the annual conference normally hosts not just the annual conference, but also serves as a gathering place for attendees to network and hold small meetings.

Space Request and Food and Beverage

ASTC food and beverage functions are included in the space request below, and these do not include additional outside meeting request. The breakdown is:

Schedule: Thursday - Tuesday

Block: require a 24-hour hold

Meeting and Event Space

Event/Workshop/Other	Day(s)	Time held	Required sq ft	Setup	Note
Staff office	Thursday-Tuesday	24-hour hold	500	Conference Style	Will require a rekey
Meeting/Event	Thursday-Tuesday	24-hour hold	1,000-1,500	Varies	
Meeting/Event	Friday-Tuesday	24-hour hold	1,000-1,500	Rounds	
Meeting/Event	Friday-Tuesday	24-hour hold	1,000-1,500	Rounds	
Meeting/Event	Friday-Tuesday	24-hour hold	1,000-1,500	Rounds	
Meeting/Event	Friday-Tuesday	24-hour hold	1,800-2,500	Varies	
Meeting/Event	Friday-Tuesday	24-hour hold	1,800-2,500	Varies	

Food and Beverage

Event/Workshop/Other	Day(s)	Setup	Expected Number
Diversity Meeting/Dinner	Thursday	U-shape	25
Diversity Workshop	Friday	U-shape	25
Board Meeting	Friday	U-Shape	50
CEO Forum	Friday	Rounds	100
Dinner Meeting	Friday	Rounds	50
Luncheon	Sunday	Rounds	75-100
Luncheon	Monday	Rounds	75-100

NEXT STEPS:

- ✓ Complete the Host Museum and Financial Questionnaire via electronic form.
- ✓ Complete Convention and Visitors Bureau Information with your local convention and visitors bureau representative.
- ✓ Complete and submit the Host Letter of Commitment to conference@astc.org
- ✓ Submit completed convention and visitors bureau questionnaire to **ConferenceDirect** (*ASTC uses ConferenceDirect for site selection, contract negotiation, and conference support services*) via link provided.