



# 2026 and 2027 ASTC Annual Conference Request for Proposals (RFP)

A completed proposal will include:

- ✓ **Convention Visitors Bureau Questionnaire**
- ✓ **Host Questionnaire**
- ✓ **Letters of Intent from Host/Co-host**

All items should be submitted by **June 24, 2024**

## Overview

This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks proposals from ASTC Science Center and Museum Members in North America—in partnership with their local convention and visitors bureau and other local partners—to host the **ASTC Annual Conference in Fall of 2026 and/or 2027**. We especially encourage two or more ASTC member institutions in the same geographic region to submit a joint proposal to serve as co-hosts for the conference.<sup>1</sup>

ASTC endeavors to have the conference location move around in North America to highlight different regions and members—and to maximize convenience for geographically distributed participants. Although we will consider proposals from any region of North America, following recent conferences in Charlotte, North Carolina (2023) and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (2022), and looking ahead to the 2024 conference in Chicago, Illinois and 2025 conference in San Francisco, California, ASTC is specifically seeking hosts in the following regions for 2026 and/or 2027:

- The Southern United States
- The Northeastern United States
- Canada
- Mexico

Proposals may be submitted by any ASTC Science Center and Museum Member(s) in good standing, including science centers, technology museums, natural history museums, children’s museums, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, nature centers, and botanical gardens<sup>2</sup> in the United States, Canada, or Mexico. Proposals are generally jointly submitted by the host institution(s) and the local convention and visitors bureau, which coordinates conference and hotel facilities.

Proposals may be submitted for consideration for either or both 2026 and 2027; proposers may indicate their preference in the proposal form.

Please read below for all of the details and do not hesitate to contact the ASTC Conference Team at [conference@astc.org](mailto:conference@astc.org) if you have questions.

## About the ASTC Annual Conference

The Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference is one of the premier professional development events for science and technology centers and museums, as well as the broader science engagement field. With between 1,400–1,700 professionals anticipated at future conferences, the ASTC Annual Conference brings the full diversity of our membership together with other professionals working in science communication, science engagement, informal STEM learning, and the broader intersection between science and technology and society.

The ASTC Annual Conference attracts attendees from science museums, natural history museums, children’s museums, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, nature centers, and botanical gardens, as well as other science engagement professionals from across North America and the world. ASTC’s 2023

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, “host” will refer to one or multiple host institution(s).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document, “science center” or “museum” may be used as a shorthand to refer to the full breadth of ASTC’s membership.

Annual Conference, for example, attracted attendees from 33 countries, and 69% of attendees were ASTC members.

## Conference Goals

The ASTC conference will **equip and inspire**—via content and memorable, participatory experiences—**science center and museum professionals** at the executive and staff levels to do their jobs better in order to **deliver excellence in their institutions and value in their communities**.

The conference will build our field’s capacity by:

- **Fostering new collaborations and networks** among science centers and with stakeholders.
- Building from the collaborative nature of this field to **exchange and scale what works**—informed by evidence from evaluation and research—and to learn from failures.
- **Sourcing new ideas and opportunities** from the communities we serve and from outside our field—and forging relationships and partnerships with community leaders and across sectors.
- **Influencing how the world sees our field** and demonstrating our ability to deliver societal value and impact.

ASTC’s Annual Conference is held in alignment and in support of the **association’s work to create strategic opportunities, develop intellectual capital, and assemble resources to support our members** in realizing their missions and engaging their communities. ASTC launched an updated strategic framework in 2022 to advance our shared vision of increasing understanding of and engagement with science and technology among all people. Read more about ASTC’s strategy at [www.astc.org/strategy](http://www.astc.org/strategy).

ASTC’s Annual Conference also supports and advances multiple aspects of ASTC’s commitment to equity and justice. The conference provides a platform for ASTC to champion our members’ work to create a more equitable and just society and to make the case for the importance of increasing public engagement with science in order to advance a more equitable and just world. The conference also offers ASTC with an opportunity to model inclusive behavior through our programs and events.

Read more about ASTC’s commitment to equity and justice at [www.astc.org/equity](http://www.astc.org/equity) and see below for how ASTC and the Annual Conference Hosts will jointly commit to an inclusive conference site, venue, and practices.

## Host Objectives

ASTC members propose hosting our association’s annual conference for a wide variety of reasons. Your objectives may include some of the goals below, as well as your own.

- **Increase community partnerships/programs:** Hosting the ASTC Annual Conference is an excellent opportunity to showcase your leadership in your community and to build closer relationships with other local partners—including, but not limited to, other ASTC members. At events like the Leadership Reception, community leaders and others important to your institution will have the opportunity to network with science center leaders from around the world.
- **Showcase capital assets, projects and programs to the field:** This will be an ideal chance for your institution to shine among your colleagues, including a unique opportunity to showcase your exhibitions, programs, distinguishing features, and innovations.
- **Energize your staff:** Hosting the ASTC Annual Conference is a team-building experience that helps energize host staff, as well as provide an opportunity for them to learn from conference sessions that will further their professional development without the need to travel.
- **Increase fundraising and attract donors, sponsors, and collaborators:** Your institution will have the opportunity to showcase the value of science and technology centers and museums generally—and your institution in particular. You will have an ideal platform to highlight your projects and programs to a wide variety of audiences, stakeholders, and potential partners within and beyond your local community.
- **Increase press coverage and local attention:** By working with ASTC and conference sponsors, your science center has a greater opportunity for media coverage and enhanced visibility with local government leaders and more. Recent conferences have seen significant local news coverage, as well as both national and industry media pickup, in addition to helping foster stronger ties with elected officials.

## Minimum Host Requirements

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

- Must be an ASTC Science Center and Museum Member in good standing (including science centers, technology museums, natural history museums, children’s museums, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, nature centers, and botanical gardens), based in the United States, Canada, or Mexico
- Can meet the minimum financial, in-kind, and staffing obligations of the host (see pg. 9 below)
- Have an onsite location adequate for attendee social events (alone or in collaboration with co-hosts)

Share ASTC’s commitment to climate and environmental sustainability and to diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity

## Host Criteria

### Location

In considering potential sites, ASTC will look at a combination of the following factors:

- Location's appeal to potential attendees (accessibility of flights, including costs, frequency, and international accessibility; local attractions; etc.)
- Ability of venues to supply meeting room and hotel sleeping room requirements
- Total cost of attendance, including hotel room rates, affordability of flights, and general cost of attendee out-of-pocket expenses (local transportation, meals, etc.)
- Capacity of host institution(s)
- Opportunity to highlight diverse geographic locations, institutions, and institution types

ASTC seeks to rotate the conference geographically whenever possible. Locations of recent and future annual conferences are as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- 2019: Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- 2020: Virtual
- 2021: Virtual
- 2022: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States
- 2023: Charlotte, North Carolina, United States
- 2024: Chicago, Illinois, United States
- 2025: San Francisco, California, United States

The host institution(s) should be relatively close to the meeting venue and hotels (either by walking, public transportation, or shuttle ride of less than 30 minutes).

The ASTC Annual Conference is traditionally held in the (Northern Hemisphere) Fall avoiding major civic and religious holidays. While the conference has historically most often been held Saturday–Tuesday, all viable date options will be considered in September or October.

### Meeting Space and Sleeping Room Requirements

It is important that the potential conference venue meets the space requirements. Please see the table in *the Meeting Space and Sleeping Room Requirements* section below for more details. ASTC is open to considering convention centers, hotels, and any other venue type that is able to meet our requirements and provide an outstanding attendee experience. Conveniences near the conference

---

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.astc.org/conferences-and-events/past-conferences/> for a list of past conference locations over the last several decades.

venue, such as restaurants, shopping, and other attractions—as well as ease of transportation from local airport(s), train station(s), and host institution(s)— are also considered.

## Health and Safety Guidelines

Facilities and venues spaces are required to work with ASTC to ensure high-standard health and safety protocols, such as those issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other applicable public health authorities. In particular, we appreciate conference facilities where indoor air quality, circulation, and filtration have been maximized to the extent possible. Host institution(s), conference venues, and hotels will be asked to provide information on their approach to health and safety as a part of the proposal process and will be expected to keep ASTC updated on changes to health and safety procedures and guidelines throughout the planning process.

## Commitment to Climate and Environmental Sustainability

The third pillar of [ASTC's strategy](#) commits the association to building a more equitable and sustainable future, and specifically to supporting our members in leading with their communities on addressing climate change and biodiversity, equity and justice, and other critical issues.

In alignment with our strategy, ASTC is seeking to ensure that the Annual Conference host institution(s) and conference sites—including convention centers, hotels, and other event venues—are prioritizing climate-friendly and environmentally sustainable practices wherever possible. These policies and practices may include, but aren't limited to: sourcing renewable energy; encouraging use of public transit, walking, and other low-carbon transport to and around conference venues; sourcing sustainable food products and donating leftover food; recycling and composting; reusing materials from the exhibit hall, signage, etc.

Host institution(s) and conference venues will be asked to provide information about their sustainability practices during the proposal process and will work with ASTC to communicate sustainability practices to conference attendees before and during the conference.

## Commitment to Diversity, Accessibility, Inclusion, and Equity

As an organization with a deeply-held [commitment](#) to diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity (DAIE), and in alignment with ASTC's strategic framework, ASTC also looks to ensure that the conference will be held in an environment that will allow clear demonstration of those values.

ASTC believes science engagement is for everyone and knows that ASTC members work hard to welcome all people, regardless of their alignment for or against any individual legislation, policy, or government regulation. Therefore, regardless of any current or anticipated policies or legislation impacting the conference state/province or locality, ASTC, our host institution(s), conference venues, and our participants will work together to uphold our conference [Code of Conduct](#) and ensure that the conference provides a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment to connect, learn, and grow together.

As ASTC reviews proposals, it will consider whether the host institution, conference facilities, and specific conference vendors are able to create safe and welcoming spaces that uphold ASTC's values, regardless of the broader political or policy context, including relevant policies and legislation that may be in effect at the state/provincial or local levels. In practice, this means that ASTC Annual Conference host institution(s), facilities, and vendors will need to:

- Create a welcoming environment for the full diversity of ASTC attendees
- Have facilities that are as accessible as possible, including having all-gender restrooms
- Have their own commitments to advancing diversity, equity, and justice that are relevant to their specific to the geographic region, the city and specific convention facilities (convention center, hotel, etc.) and host institution(s). These commitments may include public statements (e.g. land acknowledgements), initiatives efforts aimed at increasing organizational leadership and workforce diversity and inclusion (including among vendors and partners), efforts to center community priorities and make content, programs, and services more culturally sustaining.

Host institutions, facilities, and their community representatives, including the convention and visitors bureau, will need to attest to their alignment with ASTC's values and provide details on how they will ensure a safe, welcoming, and values-aligned experience for our conference attendees.

## ASTC Responsibilities

The following is a partial list of responsibilities that ASTC will undertake in planning for the ASTC Annual Conference:

- **Marketing:** ASTC is responsible for marketing the Annual Conference through print and digital media and through its partnerships. Supplemental marketing by the host is encouraged, and ASTC anticipates working with the host(s) to develop and deploy an integrated local, national, and international marketing plan. For example, this can include sharing information and encouraging partners in the region to play a role in the conference and benefiting from local expertise to highlight the region.
- **Events and sessions:** All events and sessions that take place at the primary conference venue and conference hotel(s) are the responsibility of ASTC. This includes all logistical needs, speakers, signage, food and beverage, etc.
  - Conference events at the conference venue and hotels
  - Plenary sessions and keynote speaker(s)
  - Exhibit hall and related events and programming
  - Concurrent educational sessions
  - Pre- and post-conference workshops (ASTC will work with the host institution(s) on workshops that will take place at host's facility)
  - Other ASTC-organized receptions and events
- **Programming:** ASTC's Conference Program Planning Committee (CPPC), working with ASTC staff, selects sessions from among those submitted in response to the annual Call for

Proposals. The Committee also determines the conference tracks and any other methods of organization/classification. Up to two representatives of the host institution(s) will be invited to serve on the CPPC to help shape the program and bring in local expertise.

- **Signage:** If the host(s) wishes to produce signage for events at the host institution(s), 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. ASTC will work with the host institution(s) to ensure collaborative fundraising efforts and shared benefits wherever possible (see below for more details).

## Host Responsibilities

The following is a partial list of responsibilities that the host institution(s) will be expected to undertake in planning for the ASTC Annual Conference:

- **Marketing:** The host institution(s) will work with ASTC team on:
  - identifying the most appealing experiences conference attendees could find at the host institution(s), at local partner locations, and throughout the local community, and sourcing details and marketing collateral to support those in ASTC communications;
  - sharing ASTC conference details with local partners and networks working in science education, communication, and engagement who may be interested in participating in the ASTC conference;
  - determining what, if any, help might be available from your team in covering the days of the conference on social media; and
  - pursuing the possibility of event coverage in your local media.
- **Events:** Events, sessions, and workshops at the host institution(s) and in the community, are the responsibility of the host, to include all costs associated with these events, unless otherwise noted. Key events for which the host institution(s) is responsible include:
  - **Social Events** such as a party for conference attendees (estimated attendance: 1,000–1,200 people)
  - **A half-day to full day of experiences and programming at local host institution(s) for all conference attendees** (“Museum Experience Day”). **ASTC is open to discussing other options** (estimated attendance: up to 800 people, generally on the last day of the conference);
  - **Leadership Reception** (estimated attendance: up to 200 people, including both ASTC association leaders and community leaders and supporters of the host institutions, at a location identified by the host institution(s) in close proximity to the conference location)
  - **Pre-conference and post-conference experiences and tours in the local community**, such as at other museums, cultural institutions, landmarks, universities, innovation spaces, notable community facilities, for example

- **Programming:** The host institution(s) will lead tours and experiences before and after the conference, during museum experience events, and/or social events and will host special educational and social events at the host institution(s). The host institution(s) is also encouraged to submit session proposals to highlight relevant topics and expertise of the host(s) and region.
- **Fundraising:** The host institution(s) will work with ASTC on local fundraising efforts and solicit contributions to enhance the whole conference experience (see below) and support host events.
- **Transportation** from the conference venue and/or conference hotels to the host institution(s) or other off-site locations for events; ASTC encourages host(s) to incorporate walking, public transportation, and other sustainable transportation sources instead of or in addition to buses.
- **Volunteers:** ASTC will have only about 20 staff onsite during the conference. Because of ASTC's strong commitment to customer service, we look to the host institution(s) to provide volunteers to support different aspects of the conference. In general, we anticipate approximately 150 volunteer slots over the conference, depending on the schedule. Note that all volunteers must be 18 or older.
- **Information about the host city:** ASTC relies on the host institution(s) and local convention and visitors bureau to provide information to attendees about the conference city (e.g., welcome flyer with local restaurants, maps of popular areas, discounts for attendees at certain locations, etc.).
- **Partnerships:** ASTC suggests collaborating with community partners to ensure a more well-rounded experience for conference attendees.

## Co-Hosting

If there are multiple ASTC Science Centers and Museum Members in the same geographic area, ASTC expects that all will play a role in organizing aspects of the Annual Conference, even if they are not formal co-hosts. The collaborating institutions will determine the optimal division of responsibilities among the host institutions, which will highlight the strengths and capabilities of each institution while ensuring a seamless experience for attendees.

## Financial Information

ASTC's conference is a major annual event during which ASTC members connect with one another to share knowledge, build skills, and collaborate. Operationally, ASTC's Annual Conference provides a portion of the Association's unrestricted operating revenue each year, enabling ASTC to deliver essential programs and services to benefit our members and the field at large.

Each conference delivers new and exciting opportunities for sponsorship and fundraising for the host institution(s) and ASTC to pursue in collaboration. These potential supporters can include:

- existing funders with whom the host institution(s) already have a close relationship, and the opportunity to request additional support; or
- funders who are new to the host and to ASTC, for whom the conference activities provide a strategic fit with their priorities.

In the spirit of collaboration and mutual benefit, ASTC and the host institution(s) will each share a list of current and prospective sponsors that each organization intends to pursue for conference sponsorship.

## **ASTC Fundraising Responsibilities**

Beyond revenue from registration and exhibits, ASTC secures conference sponsorships to support the overall cost of the conference and ensure that we can provide an experience greater than the value of the registration fees. Sponsors represent philanthropies, companies, and other entities with whom ASTC has important partnerships and see the annual conference as an excellent opportunity for visibility among ASTC members and the broader science-engagement field, as well as an opportunity to contribute to and support ASTC’s ongoing work. In many cases, these sponsorships defray specific fulfillment costs, such as meals and materials for conference attendees.

ASTC will be responsible for seeking sponsorship to support the overall conference, as well as specific programs and events that take place as a part of ASTC’s responsibilities described above.

## **Host Institution(s) Fundraising Responsibilities**

The host institution(s) will be responsible for seeking sponsorship or other funding—such as through grants or in-kind donations—as required by the host institution(s) to support their elements of the conference, most significantly the Leadership Reception, social gathering for all attendees, other experiences at host institution(s), and transportation between the host institution(s), Leadership Reception site, and the conference site, if required.

ASTC and the host institution(s) should explore opportunities to pursue sponsorships that support all aspects of the conference and provide funding that offset the expenses for both ASTC and the hosts’ responsibilities, as well as provide unique and valuable experiences for the attendees.

## **Recognition of Sponsors and Sponsorship Fulfillment**

Sponsors will be recognized in conference print and electronic materials and other relevant mediums. ASTC and the host institution(s) will work together to develop a mutually beneficial arrangement to recognize sponsors across all aspects of conference, while covering any of ASTC’s costs for sponsorship fulfillment activities within the conference.

Host institution(s) will need to develop their own sponsorship materials that communicate benefits and recognition opportunities for host institution-sponsors that are mutually agreed to by ASTC and the host(s). Host sponsor materials can be based on ASTC’s materials, and will have many universal recognition opportunities, but will be distinct to tailor to the different opportunities offered by ASTC and the hosts; for example, some sponsorable events and recognition opportunities will be exclusively offered by ASTC (e.g., presenting sponsorship of a plenary session) while others will be

exclusively offered by host(s) (e.g., presenting sponsorship of a social gathering at the host institution).

In order to meet the sponsor fulfillment obligations and to ensure appropriate recognition, individuals responsible for handling conference sponsors secured by the host institution(s) will need to adhere to the ASTC Annual Conference deadlines. In addition, ASTC’s costs for fulfilling any host institution(s) sponsorships will need to be recouped by ASTC—the clearest example of this is the cost to ASTC of providing a booth or other activation in the convention center, but may vary depending on the requests and requirements of the hosts’ sponsors.

## Estimated Host Expenses

The table below provides a summary of estimated host expenses. **These costs may vary significantly based on location**, but may provide a guideline of the kinds of expenses that the host institution(s) may expect to incur.

Social Gathering during the conference	\$150,000+	Food and beverage, entertainment, activities, etc.
Leadership Reception	\$20,000	Food and beverage, audio visual, venue (if off-site)
Conference Program Planning Committee Staff Participation Expenses	\$5,000 estimate for one person	Travel for up to at least one representative of the host institution to attend ASTC Conference Program Planning Committee meetings the year prior to the conference and the year following the conference <sup>4</sup>
Printing / Copying / Supplies	\$3,000	Volunteer handbooks, collateral, etc.
Volunteers / On-site staffing	\$7,000	T-shirts, food and beverage, other hospitality; may also support wages, stipends or other costs for on-site support needs
Other Experiences at Host institution(s)	\$10,000	Food and beverage, attendee maps or schedule, supplies
Transportation	\$15,000	Transportation for Leadership Reception and other events, if host museum is not within walking distance of conference hotels. Does not include shuttle bus service needed for additional events.
Staffing	Variable	We recognize that the host institution(s)’s staff time for planning and preparations, as well as support the week of the conference is one of the most valuable contributions the host makes to the event. While we cannot quantify this for you, we do acknowledge this commitment.

<sup>4</sup> The CPPC generally meets in the host city for the year of the conference.

**TOTAL EXPENSES            \$210,000+**

**Note:** ASTC will provide a limited number of full conference registrations for the host institution(s)'s paid staff members for the entire conference program. ASTC will work with host institutions to support other forms of conference participation for volunteers and additional staff, as appropriate.

## Meeting Space and Sleeping Room Requirements

### Sample Conference Schedule

Move-In Day	Staff move-in to convention center
Setup Day	Decorator move-in to convention center
Pre-Conference Workshops and Meetings Day <i>at convention center</i>	Exhibitor move-in to convention center Registration opens Preconference workshops Other meetings and events
Conference Day 1 <i>at convention center</i>	Exhibit Hall opens Opening Plenary and Breakfast Concurrent sessions Networking Lunch Social event(s)
Conference Day 2 <i>at convention center</i>	Exhibit Hall opens General Session Concurrent Sessions Networking Lunch Social event(s)
Conference Day 3 <i>at convention center</i>	General Session Concurrent Sessions Exhibitor move-out Social event(s)
Day 4 <i>at host institution(s) or elsewhere in community</i>	Museums Experience Day Meetings, events, and workshops Day at the museum and sponsored theater and planetarium day

We welcome the suggestion of alternate schedules if there is a better fit for the host institution(s) or conference location.

### Conference Venue Requirements

The ASTC Annual Conference attracts 1,400–1,700 attendees over a five-day period. Overall, the conference will utilize up to 10 blocks of up to 10 concurrent sessions, the exhibit hall, and three general sessions.

Event/ Workshop / Other*	Day(s)	Time held	Required sq ft	Setup	Note
Exhibit hall	Setup Day – Day 3	24-hour hold	90,000 (minimum) Minimum ceiling height of 30'	10'x10' booths	Flexible with required size
Registration area	Setup Day – Day 3	24-hour hold	100 feet (linear) At least 100 feet deep	Counters	Set per general contractor
Multipurpose Rooms (12)	Setup Day – Day 3	24-hour hold	500-1,500 (minimum each)	Varies	
Breakout/Session Rooms (10)	Set up Day-Day 3	24-hour hold	2,000 (minimum)	Rounds of 8 (for minimum 100ppl) (subject to change)	Allowing for AV, etc.
General Sessions	Pre-Conference Day (setup) – Day 3	24-hour hold	25,000 (minimum)		Food and beverage in this room or prefunction area

\*Open to utilizing space at adjoining conference hotel(s)

## Food and Beverage Requirements

The following are the major food and beverage requirements of the primary conference activities. ASTC’s food and beverage budget for the convention center has been approximately \$225,000 for the last few years (not including tax, since ASTC is normally tax exempt). ASTC also orders food and beverage separately for smaller events and meetings throughout the conference, both at the convention center and conference hotel(s).

Day	Food and Beverage	Expected Number
(Pre-Conference Day)	Breakfast, Lunch, or Break	Up to 200 people
Conference Day 1	Breakfast	900–1000
Conference Day 1	Lunch	1000–1100
Conference Day 1	Break	900
Conference Day 2	Continental Breakfast	900–1000
Conference Day 2	Lunch	1000–1100

Conference Day 3	Continental Breakfast	900
Conference Day 3	Lunch	800

## Hotel and Sleeping Room Requirements

ASTC requires a total hotel room block of about 2,800 room nights. We recommend these room nights be accommodated in no more than three hotels, to include at least one budget-friendly property.

### **Current Room Block Pattern**

Move-In:	40
Setup:	310
Pre-Conference:	620
Day 1:	700
Day 2:	650
Day 3:	430
Day 4:	120
Move-Out:	10

Total room nights: 2880

### **Sleeping Rooms-Current Room Block Pattern (flexible)**

Rate range \$200 and \$300 - 70-75% of block  
 Rate range \$199 and below - 25-30% of block

### **Room Rate History**

Historically, room rates have been \$150–\$250 (depending 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. Historically, ASTC and our event management partners have received a 10% commission as well as a \$5–10 per-room rebate payable to ASTC.

### **Location**

All hotels proposed should 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.

## **Next Steps**

- ✓ Review guidelines with internal staff

- ✓ Contact your local Convention and Visitors Bureau
- ✓ Share the online Convention Visitors Bureau and Conference Venue 2025 ASTC Request for Proposal Questionnaire and ensure that it is completed by **June 24, 2024**.

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact [conference@astc.org](mailto:conference@astc.org).

ASTC will review all submitted proposals and will request additional information as required. ASTC may contact the host institution(s), convention authority, and any named entities throughout the proposal evaluation process. ASTC may request revisions to proposals and other materials prior to final evaluation and selection.

## Appendix A: Host Questionnaire

Host applicants will be asked the following question on the [Host Questionnaire](#). Questions will display depending on the model selected on the first page of the questionnaire (a single host institution, a host institution with collaborators, and a host consortium). The questionnaire should be filled out by a single point-of-contact, regardless of host model.

### Introduction

1. Please provide the contact information for the proposal submitter. This person will serve as the main point-of-contact for the proposal.
  - a. First name:
  - b. Last name:
  - c. Institution:
  - d. Job Title:
  - e. Street Address 1:
  - f. Street Address 2:
  - g. City:
  - h. Country:
    - i. Canada
    - ii. Mexico
    - iii. United States
    - iv. Other (please specify)
  - i. State (if applicable)
  - j. Zip Code (if applicable)
  - k. Email Address
  - l. Phone Number
2. Which of the following best describes the host arrangement for this proposal?
  - a. There is a single host institution.
  - b. There is a single host institution that intends to collaborate with or otherwise involve other ASTC members in the area.
  - c. There is a consortium of host institutions that will co-host together.
3. Which year(s) would like to be considered for?
  - a. 2026
  - b. 2027
4. The conference traditionally takes place in the (Northern Hemisphere) Fall avoiding major civic and religious holidays, most often in September and/or October. Please share any details you have about date(s) for the conference in your area (for example, if you have already identified viable date ranges).

### Single Host Questions

1. What qualities do [institution] and your community have that makes you the ideal location to host an ASTC annual conference?
2. Please summarize [institution] 's plans for the next one to three years, and briefly explain how might this affect the conference. (Examples: significant construction or expansion, unique partnerships, site issues, etc.)
3. Are there any unique or special community actions or events that will happen at [institution] or in the city during the proposed conference dates, or annually during September or October, that will draw attendees to the site and enhance their experience during conference? And/or, are there any events that may cause city hotels to be heavily booked/sold out? If yes, please describe here.
4. What does [institution] have to offer to attendees that is outstanding, an example of excellence, or regarded as a model for the field that you are looking forward to highlighting if you host the ASTC annual conference (e.g., community engagement, programs, exhibitions, processes, partnerships, visitor services, architecture, physical design or location)?
5. Typically, our conference schedule includes three days of concurrent sessions, preceded by one day of pre-conference intensives and followed by Museum Experience Day. If selected will you adhere to this schedule, or would you suggest an alternative schedule? Please describe your scheduling preferences here.
6. Please describe and provide evidence for [institution]'s commitment to climate and sustainability (if any) as described in the Request for Proposals.
7. ASTC strives to create a welcoming environment for all attendees, and recognizes that you may have your own commitment to this value that is specific to your institution and/or geographic region. Please describe and provide evidence for [institution]'s commitment to this value (if any) as described in the Request for Proposals.
8. How might [institution] leverage community partnerships to incorporate broader learning and engagement opportunities for conference attendees (e.g. partnerships with other regional formal and informal STEM learning organizations)?
9. How has [institution] been involved with ASTC in the past?
10. Has [institution] served as a conference host in the past?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
11. Which year(s) (if applicable)?
12. Did [institution] open for the first time in the last 12 months?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
13. Is [institution] currently open to the public for admission?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
14. Will [institution] be open to the public for admission at least 12 months before the conference you are proposing to host?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

15. The host institution is responsible for coordinating the conference volunteers. Do you have enough staff, volunteer base or community support to provide this service? ASTC estimates approximately 150 volunteer slots will be needed across the conference.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
16. Please provide any comments you wish ASTC to know regarding volunteers.
17. Is [institution] large enough to accommodate up to 1,600 people for an Evening Event, Museum Experience Day, and other programming?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
18. Please provide any comments you wish ASTC to know regarding institution size.
19. Which of the following facilities and features are present at [institution]?
  - a. Planetarium
  - b. Large-format theater
  - c. Classrooms and/or meeting rooms
  - d. Other (please specify):
20. Please provide additional details regarding these facilities and features that ASTC should consider (e.g. capacity, special features, etc.).
21. Please provide information about [institution]'s health and safety policies and procedures.
22. If you are selected as a host, do you agree to adhere to the health and safety guidelines outlined in the Request for Proposals?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

### Single Host with Regional Collaborators Questions

1. What qualities does [institution] and your community have that makes you the ideal location to host an ASTC annual conference?
2. Please describe how [institution] plans to co-host, collaborate with, or otherwise involve other ASTC institutions in your area.
3. Please provide a point of contact for each collaborating institution in your area.
4. Please summarize [institution]'s plans for the next one to three years, and briefly explain how might this affect the conference. (Examples: significant construction or expansion, unique partnerships, site issues, etc.)
5. Are there any unique or special community actions or events that will happen at [institution] or in the city during the proposed conference dates, or annually during September or October, that will draw attendees to the site and enhance their experience during conference? And/or, are there any events that may cause city hotels to be heavily booked/sold out? If yes, please describe here.
6. What does [institution] have to offer to attendees that is outstanding, an example of excellence, or regarded as a model for the field that you are looking forward to highlighting if you host the ASTC annual conference (e.g., community engagement, programs, exhibitions, processes, partnerships, visitor services, architecture, physical design or location)?

7. Typically, our conference schedule includes three days of concurrent sessions, preceded by one day of pre-conference intensives and followed by Museum Experience Day. If selected will you adhere to this schedule, or would you suggest an alternative schedule? Please describe your scheduling preferences here.
8. Please describe and provide evidence for [institution]'s commitment to climate and sustainability (if any) as described in the Request for Proposals.
9. ASTC strives to create a welcoming environment for all attendees, and recognizes that you may have your own commitment to this value that is specific to your institution and/or geographic region. Please describe and provide evidence for [institution]'s commitment to this value (if any) as described in the Request for Proposals.
10. How might [institution] leverage community partnerships to incorporate broader learning and engagement opportunities for conference attendees (e.g. partnerships with other regional formal and informal STEM learning organizations)?
11. How has [institution] been involved with ASTC in the past?
12. Has [institution] served as a conference host in the past?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
13. Which year(s) (if applicable)?
14. Have any of the collaborating institutions been an ASTC conference host in the past?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
15. Which year(s) (if applicable)?
16. Did [institution] open for the first time in the last 12 months?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
17. Is [institution] currently open to the public for admission?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
18. Will [institution] be open to the public for admission at least 12 months before the conference you are proposing to host?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
19. The host institution is responsible for coordinating the conference volunteers. Do you have enough staff, volunteer base or community support to provide this service? ASTC estimates approximately 150 volunteer slots will be needed across the conference.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
20. Please provide any comments you wish ASTC to know regarding volunteers.
21. Is [institution] large enough to accommodate up to 1,600 people for an Evening Event, Museum Experience Day, and other programming?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

22. Please provide any comments you wish ASTC to know regarding institution size.
23. Which of the following facilities and features are present at [institution]?
  - a. Planetarium
  - b. Large-format theater
  - c. Classrooms and/or meeting rooms
  - d. Other (please specify):
24. Please provide additional details regarding these facilities and features that ASTC should consider (e.g. capacity, special features, etc.).
25. Please provide information about [institution]'s health and safety policies and procedures.
26. If you are selected as a host, do you agree to adhere to the health and safety guidelines outlined in the Request for Proposals?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

### Host Consortium Questions

1. Please provide a point of contact for each consortium member in your area.
2. Please describe how your co-hosting consortium arrangement will work. For example:
  - Are there aspects of the conference program that will be captained by particular institutions?
  - How will you handle joint fundraising?
  - Where will major non-convention center events of the conference take place (i.e. host party, Leadership Reception, Museum Experience Day)?
3. What qualities do your host consortium and community have that makes you the ideal location to host an ASTC annual conference?
4. Please summarize each consortium member's plans for the next one to three years, and briefly explain how might this affect the conference. (Examples: significant construction or expansion, unique partnerships, site issues, etc.)
5. Are there any unique or special community actions or events that will happen at any of the consortium members or in the city during the proposed conference dates, or annually during September or October, that will draw attendees to the site and enhance their experience during conference? And/or, are there any events that may cause city hotels to be heavily booked/sold out? If yes, please describe those here.
6. What does your consortium (as a collective, and/or as individual institutions) have to offer to attendees that is outstanding, an example of excellence, or regarded as a model for the field that you are looking forward to highlighting if you host the ASTC annual conference (e.g., community engagement, programs, exhibitions, processes, partnerships, visitor services, architecture, physical design or location)?
7. Typically, our conference schedule includes three days of concurrent sessions, preceded by one day of pre-conference intensives and followed by Museum Experience Day. If selected will you adhere to this schedule, or would you suggest an alternative schedule? Please describe your scheduling preferences here.

8. Please describe and provide evidence for each consortium member's commitment to climate and sustainability (if any) as described in the Request for Proposals.
9. ASTC strives to create a welcoming environment for all attendees, and recognizes that you may have your own commitment to this value that is specific to your institution and/or geographic region. Please describe and provide evidence for each consortium member's commitment to this value (if any) as described in the Request for Proposals.
10. How might the host consortium leverage community partnerships to incorporate broader learning and engagement opportunities for conference attendees (e.g. partnerships with other regional formal and informal STEM learning organizations)?
11. How has each consortium member been involved with ASTC in the past?
12. Have any consortium members served as a conference host in the past?
13. Which year(s) (if applicable)?
14. Have any consortium members opened for the first time in the last 12 months?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
15. Are all consortium members currently open to the public for admission?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
16. Will all consortium members be open to the public for admission at least 12 months before the conference you are proposing to host?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
17. The host institution is responsible for coordinating the conference volunteers. Between all consortium members, do you have enough staff, volunteer base or community support to provide this service? ASTC estimates approximately 150 volunteer slots will be needed across the conference.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
18. Please provide any comments you wish ASTC to know regarding volunteers.
19. Is there at least one consortium member large enough to accommodate up to 1,600 people for an Evening Event, Museum Experience Day, and other programming?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
20. Please provide any comments you wish ASTC to know regarding institution size.
21. Which of the following facilities and features are present at consortium members?
  - a. Planetarium
  - b. Large-format theater
  - c. Classrooms and/or meeting space
  - d. Other (please specify):
22. Please provide additional details regarding these facilities and features that ASTC should consider (e.g. capacity, special features, etc.).

23. Please provide information about consortium member's health and safety policies and procedures for those institutions that will have conference attendees onsite as part of programming (e.g. Museum Experience Day).
24. If you are selected as a host, do you agree to adhere to the health and safety guidelines outlined in the Request for Proposals?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

## Letters of Intent and Financial Questionnaire

1. Please download, complete, and re-upload the [ASTC Conference Host Letter of Intent 2026-2027](#). If you are applying as a consortium, you will need to upload a letter for each participating institution (please save all letters as a single file and upload).
2. Will the host(s) be able to support the event based on the estimated expenses (\$210,000+) outlined in the Request for Proposals?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. To help alleviate costs, ASTC and the host(s) rely on sponsors and/or local support. Please highlight sponsors, revenue generating opportunities, or other opportunities for cost alleviation for ASTC and/or the host(s). For example:
  - Existing host resources
  - Incentives from your city and/or region
  - Sponsors or supporters who have already expressed interest in the event
  - Innovative models for funding
4. Is there anything else that ASTC should know about your financial commitment to the conference, if selected?

## Appendix B: Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) Questionnaire

Host applicants should work with their CVB representative(s) to complete the [CVB Questionnaire](#). The questionnaire should be filled out by a single point-of-contact, regardless of host model.

1. The information below is a complement to the Host Institution form and details information from the convention center, hotels, and local transportation providers. Please note that ASTC may use a third-party vendor for Site Selection, Contract Negotiation, and Conference Management Services. 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 round trip airline tickets, necessary ground transportation, and hotel accommodations to enable the site visit to finalize our decision. If in-person travel is not an option, ASTC will request a virtual site visit.

2. Please list the city you are applying on behalf of here.
3. List potential venues that could act as the conference venue based on the space requirements outlined in the Request for Proposals. The rest of this questionnaire will only ask for information about the top (first) choice venue.
  - a. First choice:
  - b. Second choice:
  - c. Third choice:
4. Please provide contact information for the Convention Visitor's Bureau (CVB).
  - a. Name
  - b. Title:
  - c. Organization:
  - d. Email Address
  - e. Phone Number:
5. Please list any websites that will provide more information about your city.
6. What incentives does your city/organization offer to help offset costs? For example, transportation subsidy, reduced hotel room rates, etc.
7. What is the closest major airport(s) to your city?
8. Does your airport have international flight access?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
9. Please describe transit options and average costs to/from the airport/convention center (rideshare/taxi, bus, shuttle, etc.).
10. What public transportation options will attendees have to get around the city? What are the average costs?
  - a. Bus:

- b. Light rail:
  - c. Subway:
  - d. Shuttle:
  - e. Rideshare:
  - f. Other (please specify):
11. Please describe the parking options near your top choice of conference venue (e.g. proximity, cost, safety/security, etc.).
  12. How far is the proposed host museum from the top choice conference venue? If responding on behalf of a consortium, please describe the distance from all consortium members.
  13. What public transportation options are available to and from the museum? If responding on behalf of a consortium, please describe the distance from all consortium members.
  14. Based on the suggested conference dates in the Request for Proposals, are there any construction projects/renovations happening at the top choice conference venue immediately before or during our conference?
  15. Please explain the project(s) and their projected date(s) of impact and completion (if applicable).
  16. Please describe the general area around the top choice conference venue. For example, what local businesses and attractions are within walking distance?
  17. What other attractions are there within your city?
    - a. Aquarium
    - b. Zoo
    - c. Sports arena
    - d. Amusement park
    - e. Outdoor activities
    - f. Non-science center museum (e.g. art museum, history museum, etc.)
    - g. Other (please specify):
  18. Please upload a map detailing the surrounding area of the museum, top choice conference venue, and proposed hotels.
  19. Are there any new/future projects in the area around the conference venue that will enhance the attendee's experience?
  20. As described in the Request for Proposals, ASTC is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment to connect, learn, and grow together. These values are reflected in the facilities that we select each year for our annual conference. For the following questions, please describe the top choice conference venue's policies and practices toward these different areas (if applicable):
    - a. Health and safety policies and practices:
    - b. Overall creating a safe and welcoming environment:
    - c. Climate and environmental sustainability policies and practices:
  21. Does your city have any current or planned initiatives related to the above (for example, a citywide recycling improvement program)?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No

22. Please describe the initiative(s) here (if applicable).
23. Are there gender inclusive restrooms in the top choice conference venue?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
24. Is there a lactation space in the top choice conference venue?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
25. In addition to standard ADA compliance, does the top choice venue offer special ADA services?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
26. Please list out all proposed hotels, possible rates, and the hotel distances from the conference venue. Please indicate which hotel would serve as the headquarters hotel. Refer to the Request for Proposals for specific hotel requirements.
27. Can the top choice conference venue meet the room requirements described in the Request for Proposals?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
28. Please explain how you plan to accommodate the size requirements (if applicable).
29. When was the last renovation of the top choice conference venue, and what was done?
30. Is the conference venue scheduled to undergo any renovations around the proposed dates of our conference?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
31. Please describe the planned renovations, including how they may impact the conference itself (if applicable).
32. Based on the requested space (see Meeting Room Requirements table in the Request for Proposals), what are the room rental fees for the proposed year(s) of the conference?
33. Please describe the food and beverage options at the top choice conference venue, including accommodations for dietary needs (vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free, Halal, etc.).
34. What are the projected food and beverage costs for a conference of our size for the proposed year(s) of the conference? If an increase from current rates is anticipated, please include the percentage increase.
35. Is WiFi available in the top choice conference venue?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
36. Is it complimentary (if applicable)?
37. Please list any exclusive in-house services or vendors.
38. Is the top choice convention venue a union property?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

39. Please provide any specifics regarding labor and/or other union-driven requirements (if applicable).
40. What certifications/accreditations does the top choice conference venue have (safety, cleaning (GBAC), green (LEED), etc.)?
41. What, if any, other groups or organizations are scheduled to be at the top choice conference venue during the proposed dates?
42. Please use this space to provide any other information that you would like ASTC to know as we determine the final locations of our annual conference in 2026 and 2027.