

Mountain-Plains Museums Association

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

GUIDELINES

GENERAL

The Mountain-Plains Museums Association (MPMA) presents an annual conference to represent art museums, historical societies, science centers, natural history museums, childrens museums, zoos and botanical gardens from each of the ten states in the its region (Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming).

MPMA's conference presents sessions that are proposed from the field and are reviewed by a program committee. This committee is charged with soliciting session proposals and determining the sessions to be presented at the conference.

The program committee is interested in having sessions and workshops that address a wide range of subjects and the needs of our museum community. It encourages presenters to provide awareness and solutions for problems, raise new ideas and topics, share information of common concern, and spark imagination. It promotes open discussion with different points of view and opportunities to hear new voices from within and outside of our region. The program committee encourages presenters to consider a range of ethnic, geographic, gender and size/type of institutional representation when developing their session.

Many formats are used for sessions. The most common formats are:

- Panel - the most common format but not always the most effective since they often run long and leave little time for discussion; presenters provide brief remarks and a moderator oversees the session including moderating a question and answer period at the end; a maximum of three speakers is recommended for this format and at least fifteen minutes for a questions and answer period at the end of the session.
- Poster - presenters speak briefly (5 minutes or so) on their best new idea; this format allows for more speakers than in the panel format.
- Debate - this format presents a lively discussion on a controversial topic where opposing views are presented and then the debate is opened to everyone; this format requires a strong moderator.
- Roundtable - this format - often used at breakfast or lunch gatherings - breaks the audience into groups or "tables" where discussion occurs within a small group; thoughtful or thought-provoking leaders are placed at each table to open the dialogue; each table can pursue the same or different topic and may report to the entire group at the end of the session.
- Marketplace - this format creates a browsing area where one topic (e.g., traveling exhibits, programs for students) is the focus of presentations by 6-10 participants who may bring props to illustrate their points.

- Hands-on - this format provides a small group with a problem to solve or a case to discuss; the session ends with a discussion of the process.

SESSIONS

Sessions are for topics associated with the operation of museums and the enhancement of museum work as a profession. These sessions are intended to provide helpful information to volunteers and employees at museums and are non-commercial in nature.

1. Anyone may propose a session.
2. A submitter may propose more than one session but all might not be accepted if conference space is limited.
3. Submitters should give careful consideration to the #1 track selected on the proposal form as that track will be how the session is scheduled.
4. The conference program committee will review session proposals. This committee has the authority to accept, reject or consolidate session proposals.
5. Business solicitation is not encouraged in sessions.
6. Sessions will last no longer than the general time allotted to one session (usually 1 hour 15 minutes).
7. Double sessions are discouraged since the second one is usually poorly attended. If sessions are designed to last longer than the allotted time, they will be assigned to a another session period and may be referred to as part two, or as a continuation. This will allow a break to occur between sessions and provide a flexible schedule for attendees who may wish to attend only the first or second part of the session.
8. Presenters from within the museum community, including consultants who work with museums, are expected to register for the conference and pay registration fees if they are staying beyond their individual session.
9. MPMA does not pay honoraria or expenses for presenters.
10. Audio visual equipment is limited to LCD projectors. Televisions and video equipment may be available but at a cost to the presenter. Presenters wishing to use a MAC computer must bring their own cables. Neither the conference headquarters nor MPMA is responsible for equipment brought onto the premises by presenters. Internet access is not available. If you need it, there may be a charge to have it in your session room.
11. Extreme electrical needs must be approved in advanced. MPMA and the conference headquarters reserve the right to have equipment removed if electric requirements are extreme for the building or pose a hazard to the audience.
12. Each session must have a chair. The chair is responsible for developing a well-organized session. The chair coordinates the session and communicates session goals, format and content to the other speakers. The chair is encouraged to bring participants together in advance either in person or by conference call.

The chair is responsible for the following:

- Develops a session that is interesting and well organized and has appropriate speakers.
- Confirms speakers.
- Provides name, address and email address of each speaker to program chair.
- Communicates with speakers: tells them the goals, format and content of session as well as MPMA guidelines and last minute changes to the session; passes along information from the Program chair or other MPMA officials as appropriate.

- Encourages speakers to have handouts (50 -75 count).
- Provides 50-word description of session to be printed in the program.
- Introduces speakers and session content at the beginning of the session.
- Organizes the question and answer (Q&A) period at the end of the session.
- Acts as timekeeper to guard against speakers going too long and to provide for a Q& A period at the end of the session.
- Ensures speakers arrive to session on time and that session begins and ends on time.
- Organizes the session room, overseeing room volunteers, AV equipment, room lights, handouts.
- Thanks speakers after the conference has ended and sends out evaluations to all speakers.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops provide an opportunity to discuss a topic that relates to the profession of museums in a more in-depth format. Formats that include hands on and how to are given high priority.

1. Anyone may submit a proposal.
2. Successful proposals include hands on and how to formats.
3. Proposals should include what attendees will “take away” from the workshop
4. Workshops are three hours in length.
5. Workshops will be offered as pre-conference workshops.
6. A fee charged to attend a workshop will be determined by MPMA.
7. There will be no honorariums or travel expenses paid to workshop speakers.
8. A workshop that does not meet the minimum attendance requirement set by MPMA will be cancelled.
9. Workshops designed for a limited or specialized audience must be approved by MPMA.
10. Workshops located off-site from the conference headquarters must be approved by MPMA.
11. Transportation is not provided to workshops by MPMA.
12. The chair of a workshop not held at the conference headquarters is responsible for all arrangements for the workshop (transportation, food, chairs, audio visual equipment, volunteers and the like).
13. Costs to be incurred by the workshop and to be paid out of the workshop fee are to be negotiated with MPMA in advance of the workshop and before the conference program is printed. Costs not negotiated with MPMA or any amount over the negotiated amount will not be covered by MPMA. When costs are involved, MPMA will submit a contract to be signed by the workshop chair.
14. Session guidelines numbers 8 through 10 regarding chair responsibilities and audio visual equipment also apply to workshops.

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