

***AASLH Annual Meeting Call for Session Proposals  
In Partnership with the Arkansas Museum Association***

**Proposals Due: December 18, 2020**

Location: Little Rock, AR

Meeting Dates: September 22-25, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) in partnership with the Arkansas Museums Association will present its 2021 annual meeting in Little Rock, AR, from September 22-25.

**The Theme: Doing History/Doing Justice**

***What do we owe to one another?*** This question sits at the heart of the concept of justice, an notion so central to our society that we find it in centuries-old founding documents as well as in current headlines and protest signs. In this extraordinary era, marked by profound reckoning with our complicated past, history institutions are uniquely positioned to engage in doing justice -- to public understandings of our past, and as active agents in the world today.

The work of history institutions is justice work. Historic sites, museums, and archives help bring complexity and nuance to questions of right and wrong. Our work helps establish relevant facts, provides access to evidence, and weigh competing claims for rights, freedoms, access, ownership, and duty to one another. We raise a range of perspectives and challenge ourselves and our audiences to evaluate and reconcile conflicting views. Far beyond matters of laws and courts alone, the call to uphold justice asks us to think about the meanings of belonging, fairness, responsibility, and equality; to acknowledge and redress historical wrongs and dismantle harmful myths; and to consider the impact of our actions today on the future of our world.

The theme of justice resonates throughout Arkansas' history. At the 2021 Annual Meeting, centered in Little Rock, AR, we can witness the interactions between judicial procedure and social justice at the steps of Central High School, where the Little Rock Nine fought for their right to equal education. We can explore restorative justice through Rowher Japanese Relocation Center, where World War II detainees, after a decades-long campaign, secured reparations and commemoration. We can visit the Clinton Presidential Library to study the Good Friday Peace Accords, examining the processes of history, accountability, and reconciliation that brought an end to long, violent conflict in Northern Ireland.

**Doing Justice TO, AS, and IN History**

This meeting will take an active orientation – how do history organizations and practitioners DO justice? We will look at how we do our work and how people are impacted by our work, unpacking the notion of “justice” in all its dimensions. The program committee seeks proposals that follow a three-part framework: doing justice TO history, AS history and IN history.

**Doing justice TO history** can mean revealing formerly hidden stories, creating new access to historical resources, reframing narratives, or recentering overlooked historical players. We are inspired by examples like:

- Jamestown Settlement, where the recent exhibit *Tenacity* foregrounded the stories of individual women whose influences on the colony's development had never been fully told
- *Revolutionary Spaces*, the merger of Boston's Old South Meeting House and Old State House, combining resources to do justice to stories of national origin

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- *The Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry*, an online archive documenting African American work in equine trades, by the International Museum of the Horse

**Doing Justice AS history** means taking on the topic of justice as a focus, through explorations of law, court processes, fights for equality and civil rights, and social justice. Examples include:

- History Colorado, where the exhibit *Women/Work/Justice* explores “the intersection of human, civil, and economic rights” for women in the workforce, from advocating for safety to organizing for better wages and working conditions
- The *Gideon v. Wainwright* exhibit at Bay County Museum in Florida, spotlighting the landmark 1963 Supreme Court case that guaranteed the right to legal representation without charge
- The Wisconsin Historical Society’s “Social Action” collection, archiving material related to movements for free speech, students’ rights, GI rights and resistance, and more

**Doing Justice IN history** means recognizing our organizations as historical actors in their own right, playing roles in unfolding events. As Ken Yellis and Avi Decker write on the AASLH Blog, “If we have something to say, we should say it. If there is something we can do or give, we must do and give. If there’s a way to get involved, we should embrace it.” We will explore how museums are responding to the present moment, not just externally, but internally as well: What does justice look like *within* history organizations? We’ll explore strategies to build internal racial equity, consider stakeholders in planning and content development, and rethink fundraising strategies. Examples of this work:

- Greensboro History Museum’s “History Happening Now” initiative, inviting residents to record responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, racial justice uprisings, and other current events
- The History Museum of Mobile, which accepted of a statue of Confederate Navy Admiral Raphael Semmes, removed from a city park after it became a target of protests
- The Chicago History Museum, where student activists are partnering with museum staff to increase the representation of LatinX stories in collections and exhibitions.

## **“What time is it on the clock of the world?”**

Activist Grace Lee Boggs (1915-2015) often opened conversations with this question. By asking it, we situate ourselves in history, placing our present into a longer context of cycles of change and continuity. In recent years of social tension, strain, and unrest, the “clock of our world” has been ringing with a wake-up call that asks all people to understand and engage with the histories that have so largely defined our present moment. For history organizations, it is time to look thoughtfully at ourselves and our roles in these processes. Together, in our 2021 meeting, we have the opportunity to consider how our work intersects with justice, and what we as museums owe – to the past, to our field, and most importantly, to our communities.

In the spirit of this theme, the Program Committee seeks proposals that:

- Highlight one or more of the three ways organizations can address justice TO, AS, and IN history
- Represent a variety of formats, including unconventional and experimental formats, that engage annual meeting attendees in fun, inspiring, serious, and outcome-oriented learning.

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- Empower and inspire our professional community to use the tools of history to actively engage with critical questions of our time
- Look both inward and outward, considering the humanity of those who work within the field and the quality of our relationships with our constituencies

In crafting your proposal, consider what your colleagues can learn from you, your institution, and others as you strive to:

- Foster financial and organizational sustainability
- Build diversity and inclusion within the profession, AASLH, and our audiences
- Exemplify creativity and an experimental spirit
- Promote the relevance of history: understanding the past and applying lessons to the present.

**Requirements**

Each session must have an organizer responsible for finding session presenters and coordinating logistics. All organizers must be affiliated with an institutional member or be an AASLH individual member. Topics for sessions should fit at least one of the categories listed on page one of the Proposal Form. **Proposals must be submitted on a Call for Proposals form through AASLH's online submission system.** To access the form, click here. For more information, visit the AASLH website, [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org), or contact Bethany Hawkins at [Hawkins@aslh.org](mailto:Hawkins@aslh.org) or by phone at 615-320-3203.

Sincerely,

Michelle Moon  
2021 Annual Meeting Program Chair

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- 1) **Select a Title:** Be creative and memorable.
- 2) **The 2021 AASLH Annual Meeting will probably be a hybrid with both virtual and in-person content.** Are your speakers willing to participate in a:
  - Virtual Meeting
  - In-Person Meeting in Little Rock
  - Both
- 3) **What will your session DO?** In one sentence, describe to the program committee how your session will impact its attendees. For example, if you chose “inspire,” WHO do you want to inspire at the 2020 conference?
  - Inspire (Who?)
  - Reveal (What?)
  - Nurture (How?)
  - Interrogate (What?)
  - Restore (How?)
  - Challenge (What?)
  - Connect (Who?)
  - Develop (What?)
- 4) **This session addresses issues related to:** AASLH Council outlined four values/aspirations for the association and the field we serve. Please check which value your session will address. Go to <https://aaslh.org/aaslh-aspirations/> to read more about the four aspirations.
  - History Relevance
  - Diversity and Inclusion
  - Creative and Experimental
  - Stability and Transparency
- 5) **Relevance to theme:** In one sentence, describe how the content of your session shows history in action, clearly engaging with the theme “Doing History/Doing Justice.” Note whether your proposal deals with justice TO history, AS history, and/or IN history.
- 6) **Session Description and Abstract:** Describe the goals of your session, specifically describing its content and expected outcomes for attendees. Highlight the central issues the proposal addresses, why they are significant to the work of state and local history, and how the content supports the theme. Be as clear and concise as possible.
- 7) **Format:** We encourage you to choose the most engaging format appropriate for your topic. Please read the description of each carefully before choosing.
  - **Experiential (75 minutes)** - Do a program – don’t just talk about it. Immerse your colleagues in a playful (or dark) experience exploring your topic.

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- **Growing Capacity (75 minutes):** Attendees learn and practice new skills, examine emerging research, or explore learnings from adjacent fields
  - **Idea Studio (75 minutes)** – Informed and inspired by a prompt or topic area, attendees work together interactively to develop new ideas and creative solutions for their sites, in their communities, or in the field at large
  - **Conversation Provocation (75 minutes)** – Audience members engage in discussion/debate. One facilitator poses a predetermined question and encourages attendees to participate. The facilitator manages the discussion as a guide on the side, not a sage on the stage.
  - **Panel / Roundtable (75 minutes)** One chair and up to three panelists examine complex historical or professional issues in discussion before an audience. These should go beyond “show and tell” presentations and instead be information-rich, emphasize practical takeaways, and include discussion of the complexity of the issues. Panelists should provide contrasting perspectives, represent a diversity of identities, and draw from varied institutions (in budget, mission, location, etc.). Ample time must be allowed for audience discussion.
  - **Workshops (full- or half-day sessions on Wednesday or Saturday)** - These long-form, in-depth sessions are designed to teach special skills in a small group setting and may occur on or off-site. Proposals should detail the specific skills the workshop will teach as well as the methods and techniques instructors will use. Workshops should include takeaway resource materials (handouts, samples, reading lists, tools/props, etc). Workshops may have up to four instructors. Participants in workshop sessions pay fees which contribute to the conference budget and presenters and panelists all contribute their presentations in-kind.
- 8) **Select Presenters:** AASLH requires that you, as the person submitting the session, serve as the session organizer. The organizer is responsible for logistics, requests for materials and equipment, communication with participants and AASLH staff, and leading the session itself. *Session chairs must be affiliated with an AASLH institutional member or hold an individual membership.* In order to involve as many people as possible in the meeting, no one can participate in more than **one session**.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

1. **Complete the Session Proposal Form online:**
  - [Submit all session proposals here.](#)
  - [Download a hard copy of the form here.](#)
2. **Submit your Proposal:** Submit your proposal online by December 18. Session chairs will be notified of their proposal’s status by February 20, 2021.
3. **Registration Fees & Cost:** Organizers and presenters must register for at least one day of the annual meeting. Speakers are encouraged to take advantage of their attendance and register for the full meeting. Discounts are not given for meeting registration. AASLH does not pay travel costs or honoraria for any session chairs or presenters. Session chairs are responsible for making sure that all presenters register for the annual meeting.
4. **Scheduled Sessions:** AASLH planning staff will assign all session times and dates. Submission of a proposal indicates your willingness to accept the schedule as assigned. You may submit a

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request for a specific date or time; however, due to the complexity of the schedule we cannot guarantee to honor all requests.

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<b>Session Title:</b>		
<b>What will your session DO? (check one):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Inspire (Who?) <input type="checkbox"/> Reveal (What?) <input type="checkbox"/> Nurture (How?) <input type="checkbox"/> Interrogate (What?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Restore (How?) <input type="checkbox"/> Challenge (What?) <input type="checkbox"/> Connect (Who?) <input type="checkbox"/> Develop (What?)
<b>In one sentence, describe how you will address the question in parenthesis above. For example, if you chose "Inspire," WHO do you want to inspire at the 2021 conference?</b>		
<b>In one sentence, describe how your proposal engages with the conference theme. How does your proposal show history in action, doing justice TO, AS, and/or IN history?</b>		
<b>The session addresses issues related to:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> History Relevance <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity and Inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Creative and Experimental <input type="checkbox"/> Stability and Transparency	
<b>Short Session Description (50 words or less):</b> <i>If accepted, this description will be used in the printed annual meeting program guide. Please do not use bullet points.</i>		
<b>Session Abstract (250 words or less):</b> The abstract should address the following questions:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does your session address the theme of Doing History/Doing Justice?</li> <li>• What are the key takeaways for attendees?</li> </ul>		
<b>What is your target audience of history professionals?</b>	a. Directors/CEOs b. Administration (Finance, Marketing, Volunteer Coordination, Fundraising, H.R., Facilities) c. Programming (Education, Exhibitions, Partnerships, Public Programs, etc.)	

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	<p>d. Archivists/Librarians  e. Collections (Preservation/Conservation, Collections Management, etc.)  f. Historians/Curators/Subject Matter Specialists/Teachers  g. General Audience  h. Other: _____</p>
<p><b>Now that you have thought about what you want to do with your session, what format is best? (check one):</b>  <i>See full Call for Proposals form for definition of each category and minimum number of presenters for each format.</i></p>	<p>___ Experiential  ___ Growing Capacity  ___ Idea Studio  ___ Conversation Provocation  ___ Panel/Roundtable  ___ Workshop, Half-Day  ___ Workshop, Full Day</p>
<p><b>Session Organizer Name:</b></p>	
<p><b>Title:</b></p>	
<p><b>Institution:</b></p>	
<p><b>Mailing Address:</b></p>	
<p><b>City, State, Zip:</b></p>	
<p><b>Phone:</b></p>	
<p><b>Email:</b></p>	
<p><b>Check One:</b></p>	<p>___ Organizer will moderate only.  ___ Organizer will moderate and speak</p>
<p><b>Describe organizer's expertise. <i>Limit 125 words</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Describe what you bring to the session <i>Limit 125 words</i></b></p>	



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**Other session participants:** (Please fully list all participants including addresses, phone, e-mail, etc. Failure to submit complete information may cause a delay in the review of the proposal.)

**Presenter 1**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Describe speaker's expertise. <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	
<b>Describe what this speaker brings to the session <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	

**Presenter 2**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Describe speaker's expertise. <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	
<b>Describe what this speaker brings to the session <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	

**Presenter 3**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Describe speaker's expertise. <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	
<b>Describe what this speaker brings to the session <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	

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**Presenter 4 (if necessary)**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Describe speaker's expertise. <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	
<b>Describe what this speaker brings to the session <i>Limit 125 words</i></b>	

**Session Proposal Submitted by:**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Institution:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	

Complete the online session proposal form, including the description, abstract, and presenter information for the organizer and panelists via the AASLH website. Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed. ***Deadline to submit session proposals is December 18, 2020.***

***Submit Proposals at [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org).***