

# ***AASLH Annual Meeting Call for Session Proposals***

Proposals Due: November 17, 2014

Location: Louisville, KY

Meeting Dates: September 16-20, 2015

Dear Colleagues:

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) will present its 2015 annual meeting in Louisville, KY, from September 16-20.

## **The Theme: *The Power of Possibility***

Just as Louisville's growth and success spring from the barriers faced by Ohio River travelers at the Falls of the Ohio, the power of possibility allows the public history field to see opportunities instead of obstacles. Momentum is building once again! So, how do we demonstrate, encourage, and inspire the Power of Possibility within the realm of history organizations and far beyond?



We all know that history organizations continue to operate in a highly challenging environment. Those organizations that keep within the boundaries and simply repeat past procedures, programs, and operations continue to fall behind. Those who identify the spaces of possibility and adjust strategies make inroads to the future.

At our peril, we implement change by forcing the questions of either public programs or academic research, either contemplative or participatory experiences, content versus skills development, and either existing membership or new audiences. If we truly intend to survive and positively impact the future, we need to reject the exclusionary phrase “either/or” and move in the direction of “and.” We can be both creative and disciplined, consistent and fresh, informative and fun.

As they like to say in Louisville, “It’s possible here.” Join us as we find ways to blend what appear to be opposite extremes and we navigate boundaries and barriers, ultimately unlocking the Power of Possibility!

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

- ***Demonstrate innovative approaches*** to telling the stories of *ordinary people doing extraordinary things*
- ***Illustrate activity that is unusual, innovative and creative***—even if it didn’t work
- ***Introduce provocative ideas*** for discussion
- ***Encourage public involvement*** in our work, connecting history to everyday life
- ***Reflect and feature diverse*** settings and people
- ***Connect personal and community histories*** to larger themes
- ***Promote organizational review*** and revitalization

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

- 1) Achieve, nurture, and maintain relevance
- 2) Understand and respond to internal and external factors affecting your institution
- 3) Strengthen your organization in ways that account for these internal and external forces
- 4) Develop collaborative relationships enhancing your mission
- 5) Evaluate and quantify organizational impact
- 6) Leverage the possibilities of being a steward of historical truth and authenticity
- 7) Creatively market and promote your institution; reach new audiences
- 8) Understand and build your communities
- 9) Be a player in social change

## **Accepted Formats**

Proposals will be accepted in one of the following six formats:

- 1) Workshops
- 2) Roundtables
- 3) Conversation Starters
- 4) Laboratories
- 5) Current Issues Forum

## **Requirements**

Each session must have an organizer responsible for finding other speakers and coordinating logistics. All organizers must be affiliated with an institutional member or be an AASLH individual member. Topics for sessions should fall into at least one of the categories listed the Proposal Form.

**Proposals must be submitted online on the Call for Proposals form.** If you are unable to submit online send a message to [hawkins@aaslh.org](mailto:hawkins@aaslh.org). For more information, visit the AASLH website, [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org), or contact Bethany Hawkins at [Hawkins@aaslh.org](mailto:Hawkins@aaslh.org) or by phone at 615-320-3203.

**If you've got ideas but you're not up for submitting a formal proposal, don't despair! The 2015 session will include times for less formal presentations and discussions in an "UNconference" format.**

Sincerely,

Kyle McKoy

2015 Annual Meeting Program Chair

Vice President, Education and Exhibits, Indiana Historical Society

Indianapolis, IN

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## **Submitting a Session**

- 1) **Select a Topic:** AASLH meetings are an effective way to share your ideas or challenges while encouraging discussion of significant issues among your colleagues. Case studies will not be accepted unless they explicitly discuss lessons learned and why these lessons are important to the field.
- 2) **Choose a Format:** There are six different formats for AASLH annual meeting sessions. Select the one that best fits your topic.



- A **Workshop** teaches special skills in a small group setting. Workshops are led by experts and include appropriate printed materials. The workshop chair may set a limit for enrollment. Your proposal should specify the particular skills the workshop will teach, as well as the methods and techniques instructors will use. Workshops are scheduled for Wednesday as a pre-meeting event during the annual meeting or on Saturday as a post-meeting event. Workshops can be full- or half-day. Participants in workshop sessions pay fees which contribute to the conference budget. Workshop presenters contribute their presentations, as do all session panelists.
- A **Roundtable** considers a specific issue in an informal group discussion led by one or two session leaders (including the organizer). Discussion leaders should use effective techniques to stimulate maximum group participation. Roundtables are normally 75 minutes.
- A **Conversation Starter session** focuses heavily on participatory discussions. The moderator poses a predetermined question/situation/challenge and invites attendees to participate. Moderator monitors discussion to keep on track, more like "the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage."
- A **Lab** is an informal, hands-on educational experience that usually occurs off-site at a historic site or setting. It lasts approximately two to three hours including time for transportation. A nominal fee is charged for each lab to cover transportation costs to and from the site.
- A **Current Issues** forum is intended to introduce a current issue. One or two panelists provide remarks about its implications for historical organizations, and session attendees identify one or more questions that the field should address. Small groups then work to identify solutions or strategies to solve the problem and make a report to the full group.
- A **Panel** examines historical or professional problems/issues and includes one chair (who may serve as a speaker) and up to three panelists. This is not a show and tell session, but should provide take-aways for the attendees. Panelists often provide contrasting

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perspectives and represent varied institutions (i.e. budget, mission, location, etc.).  
Presenters should allow ample time for questions and answers.

- 3) **Select Your Organizer and Presenters:** Every session must have an organizer who is responsible for the organization and management of the session including logistics, requests for materials and equipment, communication with participants and AASLH staff, and leading the session itself. All session chairs must be affiliated with an institutional member OR be an individual member of AASLH. Most sessions include one chairperson and **up to two** presenters. If more than two presenters are listed, the program committee may accept the session but will remove presenters as it deems appropriate. *Note: No individual may serve in more than two sessions.*
- 4) **Prepare to answer a couple key questions:** Regardless of format, all sessions must address the following questions:
  - What are the key lessons from this topic and why are they important to the field?
  - What actions can the audience members take to put these lessons into practice? (In particular, consider how they could be scaled up or down).
- 5) **Complete the Online Session Proposal Form:** See the AASLH website at [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org) for details about submitting your proposal and be sure to peruse past AASLH programs for ideas about new session/event formats. Each proposal must include a completed proposal form, a list that identifies the chair and up to three presenters, a 50 word description of the session that will be used to describe the session in the annual meeting program, and a 250 word abstract outlining the session's core issues and significance to the field, and summarizes the main points to be covered.
- 6) **Submit your Proposal:** Submit your proposal via the AASLH website by the deadline (November 17, 2014) to Bethany Hawkins at AASLH. Session chairs will be notified of their proposal's status by February 27, 2015.
- 7) **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 full 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.
- 8) **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 request for a specific date or time; however we cannot guarantee that we can honor all requests.