CALL FOR *Session Proposals*

The Inaugural LIMA/LIHS Conference:
From Collection to Connection
PRESENTED BY LONG ISLAND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION & LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Monday, Dec 7, 2026
Held at the Long Island Children's Museum | Garden City

ABOUT THE EVENT

The Long Island Museum Association (LIMA) and Long Island Historical Societies (LIHS) are excited to present our first joint conference - and we'd love for you to be part of it!

Long Island is home to an extraordinary community of museums, historical societies, archives, and cultural organizations. This new conference is an opportunity to learn from one another, celebrate our work, and strengthen our region together.

2026 THEME

Museums are constantly discovering new ways to use collections as a starting point for learning, conversation, and community connection. This conference is an opportunity to share practical ideas about building creative connections and approaches with colleagues from across Long Island.

Whether you're creating educational programs, rethinking exhibitions, caring for collections, managing memberships, or building community partnerships, we want to hear what's working and what you've learned along the way. Maybe you even have a fail-forward to share!

You don't need a major project, a perfect success story, or a national audience - just an honest experience worth sharing with fellow museum professionals who are in the same shoes!

DATES

August 1: Call for Proposals Opens
September 11: Proposal Deadline
October 16: Presenter Notifications
December 7: Conference

SUGGESTED TOPICS

We're looking for sessions that are practical, engaging, and relevant to museums of all sizes. Possible topics include:

- **Museum Basics:** Practical "how-to" sessions for everyday museum work, including collections care, exhibitions, education, governance, fundraising, marketing, and operations.
- **Collections:** Collections care, documentation, digitization, conservation, storage, and using collections to tell meaningful stories.
- **Education:** School programs, family learning, community engagement, accessibility, evaluation, and audience development.
- **Exhibitions & Interpretation:** Exhibition design, storytelling, difficult histories, visitor engagement, and interpretive planning.
- **Fundraising & Sustainability:** Development, grants, memberships, earned income, special events, sponsorships, and financial resilience.
- **Leadership & Operations:** Board development, strategic planning, staffing, volunteers, and museum management.
- **Marketing, Communications & Technology:** Communications, social media, branding, websites, digital engagement, and emerging technology.
- **Community Partnerships & Inclusion:** Inclusive interpretation, multilingual initiatives, accessibility, and working with community partners.
- **Innovation & Collaboration**: Fresh ideas that cross traditional museum roles, including marketing partnerships, interdisciplinary programming, and inventive solutions to common challenges.

Have an idea that doesn't fit a category?

We welcome cross-disciplinary ideas and fresh perspectives inspired by other fields and industries that could strengthen museums.

SESSION FORMATS

Panel Discussion (60-75 minutes) Bring together two to four presenters to explore a relevant topic from different perspectives. Share case studies, compare approaches, and invite audience questions.

Panel ideas might include:

- *Telling better stories: creating exhibitions that connect with today's visitors*
- *Making collections more relevant to connect with audiences*
- *What membership strategies are working?*
- *Building partnerships with local businesses*
- *What new programs are bringing people through the door?*
- *Fail-forwards that taught an important lesson*
- *Recruiting, training, and retaining an engaged volunteer team*
- *Lessons learned from capital projects and renovations*
- *Social media and digital storytelling: what's working now*
- *Rethinking the museum store*

Roundtable (60-75 minutes) Lead a conversation more than a presentation. Invite participants to exchange ideas, troubleshoot common challenges, and learn from one another's experiences.

Roundtable ideas might include:

- *Visitor feedback: how are museums listening and responding?*
- *Using collections in new ways: ideas for programs, exhibits, and outreach*
- *What's working? Sharing successful events and engagement strategies*
- *Creating sustainable museum schedules: staffing and coverage challenges*
- *Making the most of limited exhibit space and collections storage*
- *Building stronger relationships with boards and volunteers*
- *What helps retain museum memberships?*
- *Fundraising challenges and creative solutions*
- *Social media realities: what platforms, strategies, and content are effective?*
- *Sharing resources: what can Long Island museums do together?*

SESSION FORMATS

Workshop (Approx. 60 minutes) Workshops help participants learn practical skills, create useful tools, and leave with ideas they can apply in their own museums. Sessions may take a variety of approaches, but should culminate in a participatory element where participants can follow along, such as brainstorming, guided practice, discussion, hands-on activity, or other opportunities for participants to step into the learner's role.

Workshop ideas might include:

- *Brainstorming new interpretive angles of displayed objects*
- *Using Escape-Room concepts to create new teen experiences*
- *Creating refreshed exhibit labels that are engaging, accessible, and visitor-friendly*
- *Writing stronger e-newsletters*
- *Developing a visitor evaluation strategy*
- *Learning object handling and packing techniques*
- *Planning a successful fundraising appeal*
- *Writing a stronger grant proposal*
- *Important elements in developing a volunteer training guide*

Skill Share: Show & Tell (Approx. 30 minutes): Show us something that works in a demo-style session! Demonstrate or model one successful activity, lesson, outreach program, collections technique, exhibit component, educational craft, or hands-on exercise that attendees can experience. Model what you do and explain why it works! If appropriate to your topic, invite participants to join in.

Skill Share examples might include:

- *A creative way to use replicas, reproductions, or props*
- *A hands-on demonstration of an educational game or activity*
- *A successful volunteer training strategy*
- *A favorite icebreaker or discussion technique for tours*
- *A "hack" or shortcut that saves your staff time*
- *How to create a custom display mount using archival-quality materials*
- *Museum activity that earns scout badges*
- *A creative way to use storytelling in tours or programs*

SESSION FORMATS

Quick Takes (10 minutes) Share a bite-sized but useful approach, marketing strategy, creative solution, lesson learned, or fresh idea in a fast-paced, mini presentation.

Quick Take examples might include:

- *Simple exhibit label upgrade*
- *New staff scheduling system that works*
- *One accessibility improvement that made a difference*
- *Favorite tool, template, or software your team can't live without*
- *Creative membership perk that increased engagement*
- *Low-cost program idea*
- *Giving Tuesday email that generated unexpected results*
- *Successful "before and after" refresh*
- *Social media post that drove new views*
- *Museum store product that became a best seller*

PRESENTER INFORMATION

- The conference will be held **in person.**
- Virtual presentations will be considered only in exceptional circumstances.
- Please **confirm that all proposed presenters are available on Monday, December 7** before submitting your proposal.
- Presenters receive a discounted conference registration. (Those attending only their own session may do so at no charge.)

- **Who Can Present?**
  - We welcome **museum professionals**, **educators**, **historians**, **consultants**, **students**, and **industry partners** at **all stages of their careers**.
  - You do not need to be an expert in your field - just someone with an idea, story, or perspective to share that would benefit the museum community!
  - Sessions led by consultants or vendors must include at least one museum professional as a co-presenter.
  - While the conference serves the needs of Long Island's museum community, we also welcome proposals and perspectives from colleagues beyond the region.

- **Technology** We'll provide a projector, screen, and microphone. Presenters should bring their own laptop and any necessary adapters.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Use our online form at: https://forms.gle/y3wfYPgwNhoHcRKv6

The form will ask the following questions. You may wish to draft your responses in a separate document before copying and pasting them into the form. Note character limits.

- **Session Title** *20 words or fewer*
- **Session Description**
  650 characters or fewer (about 100 words)
- **Why This Session Matters**
  What inspired this session? What challenge or opportunity does your session address? 1,500 characters max (about 250 words)
- **Learning Outcomes**
  What will attendees know or be able to do after attending? Tip: Avoid broad statements - be specific! For example, instead of "Increase Museum Visitation," consider: "Identify strategies for attracting repeat visitation for teens in an afterschool museum program."
- **Audience** *Who will benefit most from this session? Multiple choice answers.*
- **How will you encourage attendees to participate?** *Multiple choice answers.*
  We encourage every participation to include a participatory element if appropriate: discussion, quick game, small group activity, hands-on demo, Q & A, live polling, etc
- **Has this session been presented before?** *If yes, where and when?*
- **Do any presenters have accessibility needs?**
- **Speaker Biography** *Brief bio for each presenter (500 characters, or about 75 words)*

Proposal Deadline is Friday, September 11, 2026