



Ontario Museum Association Annual Conference 2019
Hosted by the Brant Museums and Galleries Network
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About the Theme

The Ontario Museum Association (OMA) Annual Conference supports the goals outlined in its Ontario Museums 2025: Strategic Vision and Action Plan to create:

- Vibrant and Vital Museums
- Relevant and Meaningful Collections
- A Strong and Successful Sector
- An Effective and Collaborative Workforce.

The conference will further the goals of the OMA Strategic Plan, Towards 2025. The Conference also serves to strengthen the museum and heritage sector by providing:

- professional development and learning opportunities,
- information and inspiration to museums and museum professionals,
- and bringing the sector together in meaningful and productive discussions.

Building on the 2018 Conference theme of Collaborating for Impact: Not Business as Usual, the 2019 theme of Networks considers how collaborating broadly and in coordination with a network helps museums to realize their full potential. While collaborations are often thought of as two or more partners working together towards a specific project or goal, activating and engaging a network opens up countless new possibilities.

Networks eschew many of the characteristics of organizations that are the foundation of many modern workplaces: formal structure, top-down decision making and a focus on planning and goals. Instead, networks have a shared leadership, encourage healthy discussion and disagreement, and embrace different opinions as a natural part of their structure. A focus on innovation, experimentation and learning allows networks to invite a diversity of perspectives and encourages peers to share responsibility, take initiative, and act. Networks serve to connect stakeholders with each other and with experts on issues to develop a strategy, respond to a rapidly changing landscape, and successfully drive change.¹

Networks allow museums to engage with a variety of institutions and people who might not otherwise be engaged, reaching new audiences, creating new champions, and finding solutions.

¹ This description of networks draws from the Ontario Nonprofit Network's (ONN) document, [Networks + Action](#)

Propose a session!

Museums are stronger because of their involvement in local, provincial, and national networks. We invite you to contribute to our network by sharing a topic for discussion!

We want to hear from you! Share your successes and your lessons learned from failure.

OMA Conference Delegates place high value on sessions that provide case studies of successful programs with protocols for replication, learnings from unsuccessful initiatives, as well as interactive or hands-on activities that build tangible skills. For many participants, this is their annual training opportunity and they look to you to provide practical "take home" skills.

Proposals of all kinds are welcome and encouraged, but please note: special consideration will be given to sessions that provide delegates with practical take-away strategies that they can implement in their work. The following topics are of particular interest:

- Museums building a network and functioning within it
- Expanding networks in order to include organizations outside of the heritage sector
- Leveraging networks to work towards a big goal that would not have been possible independently

Proposals are encouraged from people who offer perspectives that reflect the diversity of the heritage and culture sector and the communities they serve. Looking beyond the primary conference theme, we also welcome proposals for sessions that address all areas of museum practice and that explore new and exciting aspects of the profession.

Questions to consider:

Networks 101:

- What makes an effective network?
- How do you start and maintain a network?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in a network?
- What areas of museum practice are best addressed as a network vs independently?
- How have you used the principles of networks in an unusual way?
- How do factors such as physical location, population, local demographics affect the functions or setup of a network?

Networks for Change:

- How has coordinated action through networks resulted in significant changes to policy, programming and public engagement?
- How do (or don't) networks foster diversity, intersectionality, and inclusion?

- How can museums actively engage in acts of truth and reconciliation with respect to Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and histories to build and strengthen networks and relationships?
- How does fostering larger museum networks nationally and internationally help to strengthen our collections, practices and institutions?
- How can collective action address significant issues that affect communities, such as climate change, health and wellness, systemic oppression, or poverty?

Networks within the Museum Sector:

- How do museums in your local area network manage event sharing?
- How do you work together to promote the entire museum community?
- How has your local network shared their collections with their community in new ways?
- How has your local network ensured that there isn't competition for the same scarce resources?
- What can we do as individual organizations to make ourselves more accessible for networking and collaboration with other institutions?
- How do you manage issues of collections management or ownership in a shared or networked collection?
- How can networks be used in long-term planning and audience development?

Networks Beyond the Museum Sector:

- What opportunities has working with networks outside the museum community created?
- What are ways that your organization or network has reciprocated and given back to your communities, and what have you learned from this exchange?
- How has engaging in networks expanded opportunities for partnerships and idea exchange?
- How can museums work better with the rest of the tourism sector, including partnerships with local and regional businesses?
- What unique aspects do museums bring to the experience-driven economy and destination development?
- What challenges and opportunities do cross-cultural networks offer to the museum community?
- What opportunities for working with partners outside the culture/heritage sector are not yet realized?
- In defining the culture and heritage sector, who is included or excluded? How can we bridge the gap?

Networks and Collections in the Digital Age:

- How has technology and the internet changed the way we network?
- What are some of the issues around digital ownership and intellectual property rights?
- How do we share our collections digitally in a meaningful way, both with the public and each other, while staying true to our mandates and practicing good stewardship of these collections?
- How are issues of ownership addressed in networks without formal structure, or in the digital environment where the rules are constantly shifting?

Diversity, Equity, Intersectionality, Accessibility and Inclusion

The Ontario Museum Association respects, values and celebrates the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make each person unique. The OMA believes the diversity among the broad range of people and museums we represent is a tremendous strength. We consider diversity and inclusion a driver of institutional excellence and seek out diversity of participation, thought, and action. It is OMA's aim that members, partners, key stakeholders, and programs reflect and embrace these core values.

From [*Inclusion2025: A Practitioner's Guide to Inclusive Museums*](#): "By reckoning with their own legacies of oppression, museums have the potential to positively disrupt dominant social narratives and spark discussion on issues of access, diversity, inclusion and equity – extending their impact far beyond their physical space. As institutions realize their potential reach, the moral imperative of embodying diversity and inclusion becomes all the more clear. That is, as leaders making a positive impact on the lives of communities and individuals, museums have the power to create empathy, foster dialogue and cross-cultural learning, reduce social and economic barriers that negatively affect well-being, promote understanding and respect, and meet local needs in a way that builds stronger communities."

Audience

The OMA Conference attracts delegates working in all areas of museum practice throughout the province and from a wide variety of institutions:

- Small Museums
- Volunteer-run Museums
- Large Museums
- Municipal, Provincial, or National Museums
- Historic Sites
- Art Galleries
- Archives

- Libraries
- Heritage Institutions
- Historic Sites
- Cultural and Knowledge Centres
- Government Agencies
- Cultural Tourism Sector
- Emerging Museum Professionals
- Volunteer Museum Professionals
- Museum Sector Leaders
- Museum Studies Students
- Suppliers and Vendors

Individuals who would like to present at the Conference are invited to submit proposals and related materials by completing the form at members.museumsonario.ca by March 1, 2019.

How to submit a proposal

Proposals must be submitted using the [online submission form](#) by Friday, March 1, 2019.

Please be prepared with the following information before completing the online form.

- Title of Proposal (max 8 words)
- Session Organizer information – name, institution, address, email, phone number
- Presenter information – names, institutions, addresses, emails, phone numbers, biographies
- Session format (select from list of options below)
- Session length (Including Q & A: 20 minutes, 45 minutes, 60 minutes; Ignite Session: 5 Minutes)
- Proposal (2500 character limit). Should include:
 - Main issues or topics to be addressed
 - Focus and intent of the proposal
 - Relationship to theme
 - Objectives you wish to achieve
 - Proposed approach to engage the audience (e.g. roundtable discussion, interactive activity.) Please note: all session formats except Ignites will include a question and answer portion unless otherwise specified.
 - How the session reflects issues of diversity, equity, accessibility, or inclusion
 - Other information that the reviewers may find of interest (e.g. has this content been presented elsewhere, did the program win an award, is the session informed by research or data, does the session build, reflect on, or support other museum-related initiatives)

- Brief session description: 2 sentence description (max 350 characters) that provides a succinct description of the session. This description will appear on the OMA website, mobile app and other published conference materials. The Program Committee and OMA reserve the right to edit approved session descriptions.

The standard audio-visual (A/V) set-up for all session formats consists of an LCD projector, laptop with audio & speakers, screen and microphones. Special A/V requests and session formats will be considered, but not guaranteed.

Session organizers may also include letters of support and other related materials if available (e.g. brochures, presentation slides, handouts, publications, photographs, etc.). These additional materials will assist the conference program committee to plan the best program possible and should not include anything that must be returned to the session organizer.

Session Formats

Sessions are between 5 and 60 minutes long and may be structured in any of the following ways, or by another means of delivery that is well thought out and described:

- **Panel Discussion:** Three to five speakers give short formal presentations followed by commentary and/or group discussion. Each session should have a moderator to introduce speakers, facilitate discussion, and keep the session on schedule.
- **Presentation, Case Study:** One or two speakers presenting on a single topic or experience.
- **Presentation, How-To Session:** One or two speakers presenting a step-by-step process of anything related to museum practice (ie: projects, collaborations, creation of other museum assets).
- **Workshop:** One or two speakers lead participants through a hands-on or interactive activity, giving participants the opportunity to ask questions, try new approaches, and receive feedback from the presenters.
- **Ignite:** One or two speakers on any topic in a rapid, timed presentation format: 5 minutes and 20 slides that advance automatically every fifteen seconds.
- **Other:** interviews, debates, roundtable discussions, etc. Please explain.
- **Provide suggestions to the Program Committee:** Suggest a topic and relevant speakers you would like to hear from at conference. Think Big! Who are some sector super-stars you would like to hear from? Submitting a suggestion does not guarantee that the



suggested speakers will be approached. Please visit [this form](#) to submit your suggestions rather than submitting a conference proposal.

Session Organizers and Presenters

Session organizers are responsible for organizing the session and relaying session information. The OMA maintains contact only with the session organizer, who is responsible for relaying information about scheduling and setup information, and for ensuring that session presenters are aware of deadlines to complete the speaker agreement and register.

The OMA and its members appreciate the contribution that presenters make in sharing their professional knowledge and expertise to strengthen the museum sector; however, all presenters are expected to register and pay for the conference at the presenter rate. The OMA cannot pay for expenses for session speakers. All sessions and presentations may be filmed, recorded, photographed and used by the OMA in the delivery of its Programs.

All presenters must register and pay for the conference before the deadline outlined in the speaker agreement (to be sent following acceptance of your proposal). To encourage participation of community and other external partners (those working outside of the culture/heritage sector) who will only attend their session, registration fees may be waived at the discretion of the OMA Executive Director.

Selection Criteria and Schedule

Proposals will be reviewed for:

- Relevance to the conference theme
- Relevance to professional development needs of the sector and OMA Members
- Clarity of content and learning objectives
- Diversity of perspectives and presenters
- Practical and relevant examples and how to apply them in multiple settings

The program committee reserves the right to make suggestions to improve proposals. This might include adding or changing speakers, expanding your topic to include other examples, or merging your session with one that is similar. This is done in an effort to provide the best overall program for conference attendees.

Proposals are due by 11:59pm on Friday, March 1, 2019. Session organizers will be contacted by the end of May 2019.