ASTC virtual

2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 5–7, 2021

astc.org/2021

Call for Proposals

ASTC Association of Science and Technology Centers

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ASTC *Virtual* 2021 Annual Conference
October 5–7, 2021

The Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference is one of the premier annual events for science-engagement professionals across North America and around the world. Each year, this event brings together thousands of science and technology center and museum and allied professionals working in science communication, STEM learning, and the broader intersections between science, technology, and society.

The ASTC *Virtual* 2021 Annual Conference theme is *Reflection, Recognition, and Renewal*. It is vital to reflect on the crises experienced by science and technology centers and museums, the broader science engagement and science learning field, and the communities we serve. We recognize the significant losses that have happened over the past year, as well as the tremendous creativity and innovations. Together, we move forward and seek opportunities for renewal. Renewal does not assume we will continue with activities just as before. Instead, it is a call to refocus on what is working, expand promising experiments, replace what has not been working, and rebuild with equity at the core.

This year's conference will be held online **Tuesday, October 5–Thursday, October 7, 2021**, with Preconference ASTC Intensives held between Tuesday, September 28 and Friday, October 1, 2021. The conference will again be virtual, acknowledging that even as there are improvements in the public health crisis, the road to financial recovery for individuals and organizations will be long. It also builds on the success of the 2020 virtual conference, which had the largest participation in ASTC history: more than 2,600 participants.

The virtual format offers a great deal of flexibility in shaping the conference, including the opportunity to continue to engage with the content and each other beyond the live event. We expect to have a broader range of conference attendees, with an ability to include voices from across—and beyond—our organizations and deep within the communities we serve.

2021 Proposals

The ASTC Conference Program Planning Committee (CPPC) will develop a program of concurrent sessions and Preconference ASTC Intensives based upon proposals submitted in response to this call and additional topical and timely content curated by the CPPC and ASTC.

Proposals for the ASTC *Virtual* 2021 Annual Conference must be submitted online via the submission portal by **June 18, 2021**. You will be notified of final selections by August 12, 2021.

Submissions may address any topic relevant to science and technology centers and museums and the broader fields of informal science learning and public engagement with science. We especially encourage you to think about current circumstances, capabilities, and priorities in the field, including consideration of one or more of the following topics:

➔ **Addressing Inequities in Society**, including those related to race, gender, disability, or wealth.

➔ **Confronting the Climate Crisis**, including the opportunities for and responsibilities of science centers.

➔ **Creating a Better Future** for our institutions and fulfilling our missions with the communities we are meant to serve.

➔ **Rebuilding and Reimagining our Businesses** after many months of greatly reduced income, smaller staffs, and closing our physical doors to the community.

Commitment to Engaging Diverse Perspectives

Strong proposals will take advantage of the virtual format by including speakers who might not normally be able attend, such as community members, frontline staff, volunteers, and board members. Proposals with presenters from outside the science center field who can speak to highly relevant topics are encouraged. Affiliation with an ASTC-member organization is *not* required to submit a session proposal nor to be a presenter. The proposal should clearly describe how the presenters are well-positioned to facilitate the session topic.

ASTC is committed to incorporating diverse perspectives within each session and across the entire conference. You will be asked to provide two short statements as a part of your proposal that describe how your session represents diverse perspectives, individually and organizationally. There is no single way to address this requirement, but consider the following dimensions of diversity:

❖ Range of personal identities (e.g., age, ethnicity, race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, ability, nationality)

❖ Variety of career stages and job roles

❖ Organizations of all types, sizes, and geographies

❖ Variety of perspectives and topical viewpoints

❖ Content explicitly focused on diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity

Your session's articulated commitment to diversity will be considered during the review process.

> Please note that the submission form will also ask for you to optionally self-identify on several demographic questions that will be used by ASTC, in aggregate, to assess our performance against our stated values. **These additional questions are optional and will *not* be used in the review of your proposal.**

Session Types

All sessions are encouraged to include mechanisms for audience engagement, including polls, live and asynchronous chat, resource-sharing via the online platform, breakout or roundtable discussions following presentations, and other online engagement tools. Please remember that although the virtual format of the 2021 Annual Conference offers new opportunities for audience engagement, it also poses limits on what is possible.

This year, based on feedback from the 2020 virtual meeting, concurrent sessions will be shorter (limited to 45 minutes with a maximum of four presenters), with extended discussions available for some sessions. Some sessions may incorporate pre-recorded content while still allowing presenters to engage with participants in real time through chat, polls, and other tools.

Concurrent Session: A 45-minute session on a specific topic designed to share knowledge and develop skills and expertise among participants. This is the primary type of session at the ASTC conference. This could include a panel with up to four presenters, a debate, a fireside chat, or other format that can work well in a virtual environment. *During the submission process, you may request the opportunity for additional time for extended discussion to occur immediately after the Concurrent Session.*

Lightning Talk: A 10-minute presentation especially suited for reporting project results or presenting program outcomes. Ideally, lightning talks feature one presenter, with a maximum of two. Individual talks will be combined by the CPPC into collections based on theme.

Virtual Poster: In a virtual format, posters can incorporate both graphical formats as well as pre-recorded video content up to 5 minutes in length. The conference schedule will include designated times for presenters to engage live with participants. In addition, virtual posters will be available to all participants for the duration of the conference—and beyond—with the opportunity for asynchronous conversation.

Preconference ASTC Intensive: Full-day (5–8 hours) or half-day (1–4 hours) workshop created, designed, and delivered by experts in the field offering in-depth learning, concrete takeaways, and an opportunity to connect with peers along occupational and topical interests. Intensives will be held virtually Tuesday, September 28 through Friday, October 1, 2021. Unlike most other conference sessions, recordings of Preconference ASTC Intensives will generally not be available on-demand to session registrants nor to conference participants as a whole, due to their highly interactive nature.

Quick Guide to Submitting

The ASTC Conference Program Planning Committee, along with the ASTC staff, evaluates all proposals submitted for the conference. The information you include in your submission will be used for the review process, to help ASTC organize the conference, and to help promote your session. As part of the online submission process, you will be asked to provide some descriptive phrases that will help ASTC staff effectively develop a conference program that is easy for attendees to navigate.

Proposals must be submitted via the portal by June 18, 2021. Additional resources for preparing a proposal are on the ASTC website. A myASTC account is required to submit a session proposal. If you do not already have a myASTC profile, you may create one at *myASTC.astc.org*.

Submit a Session Proposal

Please note, due to the limited number of concurrent sessions, **speakers are generally limited to presenting at up to two sessions** during the 2021 Annual Conference. In addition, **each concurrent session proposal may have a maximum of four presenters**.

You will be notified of final selections by August 12, 2021.