



MINNESOTA ALLIANCE OF LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUMS

CONFERENCE SITE PROPOSAL GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

As one of its main efforts, the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MALHM) organizes an annual spring conference at various locations around the state. MALHM is seeking proposals to host future conferences.

BACKGROUND

Since 1991, the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MALHM) has been the voice of local history community in Minnesota. Together, history groups large and small support each other, foster professionalism in the field, and collaborate on important projects. MALHM serves 500+ local history groups through the state with professional training, awards for excellence, mutual assistance in times of disaster, and more.

Since 1992, MALHM has organized at least one annual conference or workshop at various locations across the state. Currently, an annual 3-day conference is held in April. The event has seen increasing attendance numbers in recent years, with a record 255 attendees in 2025.

BENEFITS OF HOSTING

- Connect with 200+ attendees looking to patronize local restaurants, shops, and other businesses
- Highlight local history organizations & facilities to peers
- Promote your community's culture and attractions...and inspire return trips!

**PREFERRED
FUTURE
CONFERENCE
DATES**

April 25–27, 2028

April 24–26, 2029

April 23–25, 2030

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Communities should consider their available resources before submitting a proposal. MALHM welcomes proposals from local history or official tourism organizations, but the primary proposal contact should be a local history representative. A host committee will have almost a year to plan for the conference in conjunction with MALHM.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact Liz Koele, Alliance Coordinator, liz@mnhistoryalliance.org

DEADLINE

Proposals are due to the Alliance Coordinator by **September 30, 2026**.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

To submit a proposal, complete the Annual Conference Proposal Form and supply a written event proposal that includes the following information as outlined below. Send all material to the Alliance Coordinator (liz@mnhistoryalliance.org).

Unless otherwise specified in this document or negotiated after awarding the proposal, MALHM will collect all fees and pay vendors directly. MALHM will also make all final decisions for fees collected from attendees to support the conference.

CONFERENCE FACILITIES

Conference facilities need to provide a minimum of four (4) rooms to use for concurrent sessions, which could include a ballroom space for meals and general sessions. The main conference space needs to be able to accommodate up to 250-275 people seated at tables comfortably. When the concurrent session rooms are in use, they should be able to comfortably seat 1/4 to 1/3 of attendees in a classroom-style setup (tables with chairs).

A space for a vendor hall is also required– it may be included in the ballroom space or in a nearby separate room or area. The space should be able to hold a minimum of 25 vendors comfortably with a table (6' or 8' depending on site availability) and two chairs.

Each concurrent session room and ballroom should have the following available: lectern or podium, projector and screen large enough to be visible to the entire room, and audio equipment. If the conference site provides computers, that would be preferred but not required. MALHM can provide some of this equipment, but it would be preferred if the Host Committee can ensure that all equipment is available upon arrival.

Facility Requirements:

- Ballroom space to accommodate 250-275 people
- Four (4) rooms for concurrent sessions, able to seat 1/4 to 1/3 of attendees
- Vendor hall space for 25+ vendors (can be included in ballroom or nearby space)
- Equipment for rooms (audio, projector, screen, etc.)



Duluth Conference 2024 ballroom and breakout room

LODGING

Lodging facilities should be able to accommodate 200-250 attendees in single or double rooms. It's preferred that lodging and conference facilities be adjacent, but not required. Lodging may also be provided at multiple facilities, but this should be clear in the proposal. Attendees will book directly with lodging facilities and will be responsible for all charges incurred.

Complimentary shuttle service to off-site events or for taking attendees around the community is preferred, but not required.

Each host community is asked to provide three (3) complimentary suites as part of their proposal to be used for MALHM staff.

Lodging Requirements:

- Lodging for 200-250 attendees in single or double rooms**
- Three (3) complimentary suites for MALHM staff**
- Complimentary shuttle service (preferred, but not required)**

MEALS

The Host Committee is to plan for providing breakfast and lunch on Wednesday and Thursday. This is paid as part of the registration cost for attendees. It is strongly preferred that the conference facility offer in-house catering, but if no on-site options are available, the proposal should include contact information for outside catering vendors for the selection committee to review. Information is to be provided on meal options and costs as part of the proposal. MALHM will make final decisions regarding meal selection and vendor choice.

Drinks (coffee, juice– morning only, pop, water, and hot tea) should be made available throughout the day in the ballroom and replenished as needed. During morning break periods, pastries and fruit should be available in the ballroom. Afternoon breaks should have a snack or dessert available.



Duluth Conference 2024 lunch buffet

Meal Requirements:

- Catering & meal options and costs for breakfasts, morning breaks, & lunches (Wednesday and Thursday), and afternoon break (Wednesday)**

NETWORKING EVENTS

Networking opportunities are a key component of the Annual Conference. Proposals should include mixer events on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Each mixer should include light refreshments and a full bar. Past practice has been that the host sites or host committee cover all costs, which have been consistently between \$600-\$750 per mixer. It is up to the hosts to determine the number of complimentary drink tickets allowed per guest, with a cash bar to follow thereafter. The host site or committee are not required to provide these events in-kind, but it would be strongly preferred. Regardless, the proposal should make clear who is responsible for mixer costs.

The Tuesday mixer is a time for attendees to catch up with each other upon arriving to the host site. It can be held at a local restaurant, bar, or other location as designated by the Host Committee, but attendees prefer a local history museum, historic house, or historic site if possible. Responsibility for ensuring that reservations are secured for this event will be that of the Host Committee. Attendance: typically 40-60% of conference attendees.

The Wednesday mixer has become a highlight of the Annual Conference. This event is always held at a local history organization's facility. Attendees should be able to casually explore the facility and grounds while networking. Trivia or other activities have also been attendee favorites in the past. Attendance: typically 60-80% of conference attendees.

Networking Events Requirements:

- Tuesday evening mixer location**
- Wednesday evening mixer location**

HOST COMMITTEE

Proposals should identify members or organizations that have agreed to serve on the Conference Host Committee. The size of this group is dependent on what the host community feels it will need to deliver on the promises of its proposal. The Alliance Coordinator will serve as the liaison between the Host Committee and MALHM, and should be included in committee meetings. A local history organization representative is required to serve in the capacity of committee chair.

Host Committee Requirement:

- Identify members of proposed Host Committee**



*Lake Superior Railroad Museum Wednesday mixer
Duluth Conference 2024*

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Community support in the form of sponsorships (monetary or in-kind) and promotional items are welcomed as part of the proposal. Each host community should use this opportunity to highlight its hospitality and support of local history. As described below, sponsorships and promotional items are not required as part of submitting a proposal, but will be given consideration when selecting a host community:

Sponsorships (monetary or in-kind) – The Host Committee may solicit sponsorships, in coordination with the Alliance Coordinator, to assist MALHM in covering the costs associated with the conference and its events. Any sponsorship that has been secured or will be solicited as part of the proposal should be included. All monetary sponsorships should be made out and addressed to MALHM. MALHM is a designated 501(c)(3) charitable organization, which allows for some contributions to be tax deductible as allowed by IRS regulations. MALHM begins soliciting sponsorships in November prior to the conference, and can provide a list of benefits and other material for the Host Committee to use when contacting local sponsors. NOTE: If the Host Committee states as part of its proposal that it will secure a certain level of sponsorship, this will be binding and required of the Host Committee if the proposal is accepted. Any shortage of sponsorship funds in this amount will be the responsibility of the sponsoring organization(s) and/or Host Committee to provide to MALHM by April 1st of the conference year.

Promotional Items – The Host Committee may provide a promotional item that reflects the community for attendees to receive upon checking in for registration. This item would go beyond the standard welcome bags or packets provided by official tourism organizations. Examples include, but are not limited to: tumblers, mugs, or other items.

Community Support Additions:

- Ideas for promotional item or welcome gift (optional)**
- Local sponsorships (optional)**

HOW TO SUBMIT

All proposals must be sent as a single PDF file to the Alliance Coordinator (liz@mnhistoryalliance.org). Proposals will be acknowledged upon receipt. The Alliance Coordinator will open the document to make sure it is readable, but will not check for completeness. MALHM reserves the right to reject all proposals and reopen the process to new or revised proposals.

MALHM is looking to schedule conference locations several years in advance, with the goal of announcing the 2028 location at the 2027 Conference & Annual Meeting. **Proposals are due to the Alliance Coordinator by September 30, 2026.**

POTENTIAL CONFERENCE SITES & VENUES

MALHM has completed some preliminary research on locations that have the required facility and lodging space to host the conference. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but includes several potential leads for those interested in hosting the conference. Regardless of their presence on this list, MALHM welcomes proposals from any communities and facilities that meet the stated requirements.

Bemidji

- Sandford Center

Brainerd

- Madden's on Gull Lake
- Breezy Point Resort

Duluth

- Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center (2024)

Mankato

- Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center

Moorhead

- Moorhead Area Conference Center

Rochester

- Mayo Civic Center

St. Cloud

- St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center
- The Park Event Center



Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MALHM)

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EXAMPLE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

May be adjusted by MALHM.

Tuesday (Pre-Conference Event)

9:30-10 AM	Registration & check-in
10 AM-1:30 PM	Welcome, tours of local sites, lunch on your own
1:30-3:30 PM	Afternoon sessions, break
4-7 PM	Dinner on your own, vendor hall move-in
7-9 PM	Evening mixer at designated location

Wednesday

7-8 AM	MALHM setup, vendor hall move-in
8-9 AM	Conference registration outside ballroom, breakfast
8 AM-4:30 PM	Vendor Hall open
9-9:15 AM	Welcoming remarks in ballroom
9:20-10:20 AM	Session I (3-4 tracks)
10:20-10:40 AM	Morning break in ballroom
10:40-11:40 AM	Session II (3-4 tracks)
11:40 AM -1 PM	Lunch, lightning meetups
1-1:30 PM	Annual Meeting in ballroom
1:40-2:40 PM	Session III (3-4 tracks)
2:40-3 PM	Afternoon break in ballroom
3-4 PM	Session IV (3-4 tracks)
4-7 PM	Dinner on your own
7-9 PM	Evening mixer at a local history organization

Thursday

7-8 AM	MALHM setup
8-9 AM	Conference registration outside ballroom, breakfast
8 AM - 3 PM	Vendor Hall open
9-9:15 AM	Welcoming remarks in ballroom
9:20-10:20 AM	Session V (3-4 tracks)
10:20-10:40 AM	Morning break in ballroom
10:40-11:40 AM	Session VI (3-4 tracks)
11:40 AM-12:45 PM	Lunch
12:45 PM-1:30 PM	Minnesota History Awards in ballroom
After 2PM	Attendees explore community on their own or return home