



Request for Proposals: 2026+ BCMA Conference Locations

Showcase your community's museums, galleries, arts, and heritage to cultural professionals from every corner of the province by hosting the BC Museums Association's annual gathering. Each fall the BC Museums Association (BCMA) holds an internationally-recognized provincial conference in a British Columbian community, bringing together museum, heritage, arts, and cultural professionals and volunteers to connect, learn, network, and explore innovation in the sector.

Host communities will have the opportunity to showcase the work, community impact, and partnerships to an audience of between 100-400 delegates from across BC and beyond.

Vision for Future BCMA Gatherings (2026, 2027, and 2028)

Building on the success of recent gatherings that centered host communities and relationship-building, we strongly encourage applications that highlight cultural venues and local partnerships and seek to respond to the needs and priorities of local Indigenous communities.

We are open to creative and innovative suggestions from the arts, culture, and heritage sector that range from traditional conference experiences bringing people together in large hotel spaces, to non-conventional venues and event formats, to place-based digital/hybrid conference experiences, to new strategic partnerships with peer organizations, to smaller multi-day workshops in remote and rural communities. For the next three years, our goal is to experiment with new models, get feedback from members, and innovate our conference model to be more impactful, engaging, and accessible.

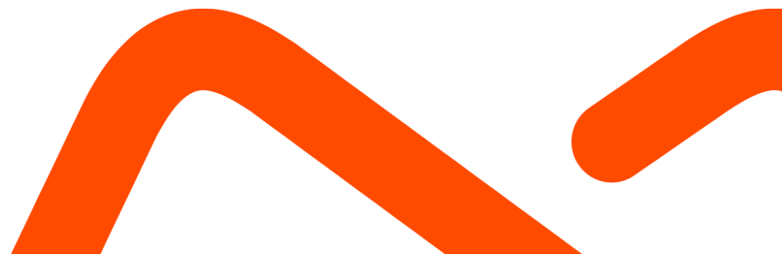
WHO WE ARE

A provincially incorporated society and registered charity, the British Columbia Museums Association (BCMA) supports a thriving arts, culture, and heritage sector through collaboration, networking, advocacy, innovation, and professional development. Since our founding in 1957, the BCMA has grown to include more than 450 members in every corner of British Columbia. When we say "museum" we mean institutions created in the public interest that engage their community, foster deeper understanding, and promote the enjoyment and sharing of authentic cultural or natural heritage.

The BCMA supports the professionals and volunteers who work in BC's cultural sector and we aim to improve the cultural literacy of all British Columbians. We collaborate with arts, culture, and heritage partners to engage with all levels of government to share stories and make them aware of the true impact our sector has in communities large and small across the province.

EVENT DETAILS

The BCMA's annual gathering typically takes place in the fall and runs over two or three days. For the next three years, we anticipate anywhere between 100-400 in-person attendees and digital audiences of



200-300, representing cultural institutions from across BC - typically staff from small to large cultural institutions, volunteers, students, and government agencies. To reflect the Association's geographically diverse membership, we attempt to hold our conference in locations across different regions of the province every time.

What's the Difference Between a "Conference" and a "Gathering?"

The term "conference" generally refers to conventional professional development events with 200+ delegates that are hosted in larger, more corporate venues like hotels and event centres. "Gathering"* better describes the type of smaller events that the BCMA has hosted inside arts, culture, or heritage venues and non-traditional spaces over the last few years. These have resonated with our members and their desire for learning and meaningful connection with colleagues from across the province providing invaluable place-based learning and activation of cultural spaces.

**credit to Taa.uu 'Yuwaans Nika Collison and the colleagues at the Haida Gwaii Museum for making us realize this*

FUNCTION SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

We strongly encourage ideas for venue spaces that create room for greater engagement with the local community and do not rely heavily on hotel meeting spaces.

When meetings take place in multiple venues, walking distance and venue accessibility should be considered along with weather patterns in the fall. Although some events can take place in a hotel venue, BCMA delegates prefer unique spaces within museums, galleries, heritage sites, cultural centres etc. We will gladly work with host communities to tailor our program to the location and available space.

Typical venues offer:

- lobby, foyer or pre-function space for delegate registration and exhibitors
- dining area/community space for breaks and networking
- storage and office space for the organizing team
- one event space with the capacity to hold all delegates
- several self-contained breakout spaces

A reliable, wired high-speed internet connection for live-streaming the event to virtual attendees would be preferable.

HOW TO APPLY

Please email us at bcma@museum.bc.ca to submit an expression of interest by January 31, 2025.

We will get back to you to set up a time to discuss all the details but you can help us by providing as much information as you have available in your initial email.

- Your contact information (name, email, phone, your organization)
- Brief background on the host community (1-2 sentences)
- Cultural institutions in your community and your community partners (i.e. library, community centre, First Nations band, Indigenous organizations, local tourism bureau)
- Some information on accommodation options and hotels in your community
- What dates are (un)available between September and November
- Why you would like to host a BCMA Conference

PAST HOST COMMUNITIES

2012 Kamloops

2013 Parksville

2014 Penticton

2015 New Westminster

2016 Whistler

2017 Victoria

2018 Kelowna

2019 Prince George

2020 Fully Virtual

2021 Virtual - presented by the City of Surrey

2022 Virtual in May and in-person in Victoria in November

2023 Saahlinda Naay - Haida Gwaii Museum and Haida Heritage Centre (hosted by the Haida Nation)

2024 Uda Dune Baiyoh - House of Ancestors in Prince George (hosted by the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation)