Frequently Asked Questions: First-Time Attendee Guide

2019 National Council on Public History (NCPH) Annual Meeting

Before the Conference

Q: When should I arrive?

A: The conference kicks off with a full slate of workshops and an opening reception on Wednesday, March 27, so we suggest arriving late Tuesday or early Wednesday. Information for air, car, and rail travel can be found in the conference *Program*, on page 6. If you're looking to share a ride locally or from the airport, post offers and requests on our **rideshare board**.

Q: Where should I stay?

A: NCPH has reserved a **discounted room block** at the **Marriott Hartford Downtown** at a rate of $179/night for a single or double room. Parking at the hotel $3 hourly and $19 daily. Valet parking is $23 daily. There are also two free electric car charging stations. The discounted room rate is available through March 6, 2019 or when the block fills, so the earlier you book, the better.

Tip: Sharing a room with one or more people can be an effective way to keep down costs at the conference. Post requests and offers to the **room share discussion board**.

Q: What does my conference registration include?

A: A full conference registration includes access to all working groups and sessions, the exhibit hall, public plenary, poster session and other non-ticketed events. Registrants also receive a conference *Program* and badge.

Special opportunities such as workshops, tours, and meal events may require additional fees. Visit the **NCPH Annual Meeting webpage** for more information on registration rates.

For other questions on registration, see our **General Registration FAQ**.

Q: What should I wear?

A: In general, the dress code for conference events is business casual. Be sure to dress in layers; conference centers often range from drafty to stuffy. There is no need to bring a full suit. Tours are likely to be more casual, and comfortable shoes are recommended.

While late March weather in Hartford usually requires you be prepared for just about anything, a typical day ranges from 35 to 50°F, rarely dipping below 25°F or reaching above 60°F. On average, there is a 25 percent chance of precipitation (usually rain rather than snow) on any given day. Typical rainfall for the entire month is around four inches.
Tip: Tours happen rain or shine, so bring a coat and umbrella.

Q: What should I bring?

A: We recommend bringing business cards and résumés for networking. If you plan to use electronics during the day, remember to bring chargers with you. Some attendees also bring a reusable water bottle and snacks with them to stay fresh during the day. In an effort to go green, NCPH does not provide attendees with tote bags, so plan to bring one along.

Tip: **123Print** and **VistaPrint** are two quick, easy, and affordable options for business cards.

Q: Where can I acquire funding for the conference?

A: To learn about potential cash prizes and travel grants, consult the **NCPH awards** page. Most award nominations must be received by December 1, 2018, but Student Project and Student Travel Award nominations are not due until January 1, 2019. Students should contact their advisor, department, student government, or other campus associations to find out if they provide travel grants for conference attendance. Professionals should consult their employers for available funding opportunities.

To save on registration costs, be sure to register during the **early bird registration period**, which ends March 7, 2019. NCPH also offers a limited amount of volunteer spots for student members. Conference volunteers receive free registration, but space is limited, so apply early. The application will open in early December. Check the **volunteering page** on the website for updates.

During the Conference

Q: Where do I check in on the first day?

A: Registration is open from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm on Wednesday, March 27 (check pages 2-3 on the *Program* for registration times all other days) in the Ballroom C Foyer, on Level 6 of the Connecticut Convention Center. Give yourself enough time on your first day to register and pick up your conference *Program* and badge. Be prepared to wait in line at registration, especially Wednesday evening and Thursday morning.

Q: What types of activities are available?

A: There are four basic types of activities: Sessions, Working Groups, Workshops, and Tours. All topics and presenters are listed in the conference *Program*. Generally, conference sessions last for 90 minutes.

Check activity times closely. The final conference *Program* you'll receive at check-in lists times and locations for all conference events. Times and locations occasionally shift after the *Program* is printed, so make sure to check the onsite Errata sheet for updates.

Tip: You can use the Schedule-at-a-Glance section of the *Program* (pages 2-3) to choose which sessions and events you would like to attend. Also keep an eye out in the spring for our mobile app!

- **Sessions** feature three to six speakers and generally have room for fifty seated attendees. Attending sessions is included with your conference registration so you do not need to sign up in advance. Some sessions feature scholars presenting a paper or a case study; others are composed of practitioners in the field reflecting on a problem/solution they have encountered or engaging with each other and the audience in a structured conversation format. Tweeting during the session is encouraged, unless the presenter specifies otherwise; Twitter handles will be provided in the Presenter Index at the back of the final *Program* to facilitate this. If you choose to leave a session, please be courteous as you exit. Everyone is welcome to ask questions! If a speaker is an expert in a subject related to your field of study, consider taking the opportunity to meet them after the session.

- **Working groups** are designed to facilitate extended conversations on particular topics in a seminar-like style and run for two hours. They feature a group of ten to fifteen discussants, selected in October. Each participant prepares a case statement to share with the working group. These case statements are circulated and discussed among participants prior to the group's meeting at the conference and everyone is prepared to participate actively in the discussion. Working groups are open to other conference-goers (unless otherwise noted), but we ask that they respect the facilitators' need to potentially limit audience participation. Read more about this year's working groups **here**.

- **Workshops** feature outside presenters giving a "how-to" talk on a specific topic and are usually hands-on and participatory. Note that these sessions usually require additional fees and it's best to sign up before the conference. Workshops are generally longer than a typical conference session, often lasting a full morning or afternoon. Please see the preliminary *Program* (pages 20-21) for details on this year's workshops.

- **Tours** are organized by the Local Arrangements Committee to take participants to points of interest in Hartford and further afield. Most tours are between two and four hours long. These events require advance registration and additional fees. Spaces can fill up quickly, so it's best to register before you come. The list of tours is available in the preliminary conference *Program* (pages 18-19).

Q: Do I have to attend each session?

A: No, you do not need to attend each session. There are sessions occurring concurrently in every timeslot, so you couldn't attend each session even if you wanted to. You should consult your *Program* ahead of time to plan a schedule of the sessions that most appeal to you. It's tempting to pack your schedule full, but you may get as much benefit from taking a break to interact and network with other public historians.

Q: Do I have to pay for each session?

A: Breakout sessions, such as panels and working groups, are included with conference registration. Other events like trips and workshops require an extra fee. Some events, including Speed Networking, are free but require you to sign up in advance of the conference.

Q: Can I bring my spouse or a guest to an evening event or tour?

A: Yes. Guest registrations and tickets to select events can be purchased for non-public historians who would not otherwise attend the conference. Guests can be added in the online registration system with a guest fee of $38.

Q: Why is my name not on the conference participant list?

A: During the registration process, every attendee is asked if they want to omit their personal information from the participant list. If you choose this option, you will still be registered for the conference but will not be listed. Be sure to check your email for your confirmation. If you cannot find it, please email **ncph@iupui.edu** or call (317) 274-2716.

Q: Are there any events tailored to first-time attendees or graduate students?

A: There are several special events to help new conference attendees network with other professionals and graduate students. See some recommendations below. For more information, check the ***Program***.

On Wednesday, March 27, consider participating in:

- The **First Time Attendee and Conference Connections Meet-Up** is free with your ticket to the Opening Reception. Both events will be located in the Connecticut Convention Center.

- Meet and mingle with fellow attendees with the **New Professional and Graduate Student Social**. Keep an eye out for more details about this event—including location and ticket price—coming soon!

On Thursday, March 28, remember:

- **Speed Networking** connects graduate students with professionals in a relaxed setting to learn about the careers available to public historians. Sign up in advance with your conference registration, as spots go fast. Check out **our video** for more information.

- **Out to Lunch** is designed to help public history professionals meet fellow colleagues in an informal setting. Prior to the event, attendees will be placed in groups of 4-5, which will then meet for lunch at a restaurant of their choosing. For more information, visit the **Eat and Engage** page on the conference website.

- Check out the NCPH Members Meeting at 1 PM to meet some of NCPH's leadership and learn the latest news for the organization.

- At the **Poster Session** attendees, many of them graduate students, present their work in an informal setting. The deadline to submit a poster for 2019 has passed, but this is a great opportunity to see what your peers are working on and find inspiration for future projects and conference participants.

And on Friday, March 29:

- **Out to Lunch – *Grad Student Edition*** is designed to help public history graduate students meet fellow students in an informal setting. Prior to the event, attendees will be placed in groups of 4-5, which will then meet for lunch at a restaurant of their choosing. For more information, visit the **Eat and Engage** page.

- Attend the **Public Plenary** in the evening. Conference attendees and members of the public are invited to join this free moderated conversation. The plenary, *Considering Coltsville: A Revolving Story,* will be about finding creative and innovative ways of telling inclusive stories. Read more on pages 16-17 of the ***Program***.

Stick around on Saturday, March 30:

- The conference continues through Saturday, and some of the best sessions are in the afternoon. Keep that in mind when making your travel plans and don't leave early!

- Come to the **Awards Breakfast and Keynote Address**. The event and address are open to all conference registrants, though a ticket is required for the breakfast meal. This year's keynote address will be delivered by Maisa Tisdale, president of the Mary and Eliza Freeman Center for History and Culture in nearby Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Q. How can I network while at the conference?

A: One of the most important aspects of attending the conference is the opportunity to network with academics, professionals in the field, and other graduate students.

The conference is an opportunity to network for potential interviews in the future, not a job interview. Be tactful in handing out your business cards and résumé. After sessions, most presenters linger, providing an excellent opportunity to connect. Another useful approach is to introduce yourself to the person you would like to meet and get their card. Then, if you want to pursue a conversation, you may contact them a few days later.

If someone you follow on Twitter is at the conference – consider introducing yourself. It's an easy way to start a conversation. Live tweet during the sessions (unless the presenters say otherwise) and engage with other attendees' tweets. See our social media guide on page 13 of the ***Program***.

Q: How should I spend my evenings?

A: Most days, sessions and workshops end at 5:00 pm; evening events last until about 7:00 pm. Our "Dine Arounds," which stretch later into the evening on Thursday, March 28, facilitate small group discussions on pre-determined topics over dinner at local restaurants. You can sign up for a Dine Around at the registration desk on the first day of the conference.

You will have free time in the evenings, and we recommend that you take advantage of this time to explore Hartford and get to know fellow attendees. Find a list of recommended restaurants and things to do in the conference *Program* starting on page 8.

Tweet to #ncph2019! If you're enjoying a particular session or event, let other people know about it. Attendees who don't have a Twitter account can still follow real-time conference discussions online. Twitter is also a great way to find fellow attendees who share your interests.

After the Conference

Follow up with your new contacts. Send an email to those you've networked with. Follow them on Twitter and connect with them on LinkedIn.

Complete the post-conference survey. NCPH emails a post-conference survey to all registrants. This survey is important because it helps us improve future conferences. Please take a few minutes to share your experiences.

Q: How can I present next year?

A: The deadline for submitting a proposal for the 2020 annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia is July 15, 2019. You can find session participants through networking or by submitting an early topic proposal by June 1. If you are interested in presenting next year, make the most of the conference by making contacts with potential presenters through the various social events and by contacting this year's speakers. Please keep in mind that proposals which present a diversity of voices and experiences are more likely to be successful.

Presenting a poster at the Poster Session is a great way for new professionals to present research or   projects at NCPH. The deadline for submitting a poster session proposal for Atlanta will be in October 2019.

Q: Where can I learn more about attending conferences?

A: There are many links that provide additional information on attending conferences. Here are a few worth investigating:

- ProfHacker has a comprehensive collection of articles on preparing for, attending, and live-tweeting conferences.
- About Live-Tweeting
  - Ernesto Priego, "Live-Tweeting at Academic Conferences: 10 Rules of Thumb"
  - American Historical Association, "The Dos and Don'ts of Live Tweeting at an Academic Conference: An Update"

- Juraj Holub, "10 Easy Tips for Live Tweeting at Events"
  - Tips and Survival Guides
    - Megan MacKenzie, "Survival Guide for Grad Students: The Essential Clothing, Food, Shelter, and Networking Dos and Don'ts"
    - Janice Klein, "Packing Shoes for Conferences and Other Somewhat Serious Thoughts on Professional Footwear"
    - Leslie Ye, "14 Helpful Tips for Getting the Most Out of a Conference"
    - Elisabeth Pain, "How to Get the Most Out of Attending Conferences"
    - Ethan Morris, "5 Tips for Making the Most Out of Your First Conference"
    - https://medium.com/@LyndhurstGroup/name-badge-faces-out-other-conference-suggestions-beatty-s-maxim-5-f59785674dcf

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Do you have other questions about lodging, transportation, Hartford, or the conference?
Please visit our **conference homepage** for answers to all of your questions. You may also contact us via email: **ncph@iupui.edu** or phone: (317) 274-2716.