

HOLDING THE LINE

NCPH ANNUAL MEETING
ST. LOUIS, MO | APRIL 21-24, 2027



St. Louis, Missouri, c. 1859. A. Janicke & Co., St. Louis., Hagen & Pfau. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b49640>.

The City of St. Louis sits at the confluence of the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers. It also occupies a space where America’s long-running histories of repression and resistance meet. From the Gateway to the West to the sacred city of Cahokia; from the injustice of Dred Scott to the Black Lives Matter movement in Ferguson; from the currents of America’s historic waterway to the May 2025 tornado that laid bare the growing pressures of climate change. In these and other ways, St. Louis sits at the nexus of many of the nation’s most pressing issues, both past and present.

In a city shaped by histories of conflict, resistance, and reinvention, our 2027 theme asks how the field of public history can “hold the line.” How do we, as a collective of practitioners, confront a moment of repression and resistance in the places where we work and live? What does it mean to maintain professional responsibility in a politically charged environment? How do we sustain or even rethink our ethical practices in a time of crisis? Are our disciplinary principles adequate to meet this moment? If not, how should they—and we—change?

If St. Louis reveals the tensions that have animated American history, the city also illuminates creative forms of resistance and practices of community building. From the blues of Miles Davis and the ragtime of Scott Joplin to the poetry of Maya Angelou, the films of Josephine Baker, the labor organizing of Peter McGuire, and the Depression-era photography of Walker Evans, this region offers a rich tradition of civic responses to inequality and upheaval. In that spirit, we invite proposals for sessions, working groups, workshops, performances, films, or other conference activities that explore what it means to ‘hold the line.’

PRESENTATION FORMATS INCLUDE:

- **ROUNDTABLE (90 mins):** Roundtables are typically about half presentation and half discussion among presenters and the audience. Presenters should bring targeted questions to pose to others at the table in order to learn from and with each other.
- **STRUCTURED CONVERSATION (90 mins):** These facilitated, participant-driven discussions are designed to prioritize audience dialogue and may contain little or no formal presentation component.
- **COMMUNITY VIEWPOINTS (90 mins):** A session that features a variety of stakeholder and collaborator perspectives across stages of the project's development, with a particular focus on community participants and grassroots collaborators.
- **WORKING GROUP (2 hrs):** Facilitators and up to 12 discussants grapple with a shared concern. Before and during the meeting, working groups articulate a purpose they are working toward or a problem they are actively trying to solve and aim to create an end product. Proposals are submitted by facilitators, who will seek discussants after acceptance.
- **WORKSHOP (4 or 8 hrs):** A half- or full-day workshop is a more intensive and skills-based deep-dive into a topic that includes concrete practical tools and lessons for a smaller group of attendees (recommended 15-30 people).

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

OPTIONAL EARLY TOPIC PROPOSALS: Consider submitting an optional early topic proposal by May 5, 2026, to gather suggestions on your topic, seek collaborators or co-presenters, and get feedback from the 2027 Program Committee and members of the NCPH community. Respondents will contact the original submitter directly with their ideas or offers, and the submitter may choose to select additional participants, refine the proposal, and complete a full proposal form online by the June deadline.

<https://ncph.org/conference/ncph-2027/call-for-proposals/topic-proposal-submission-form/>

FINAL PROPOSALS: Submit your fully formed session, working group, or workshop proposal online by June 15, 2026, via <https://ncph.org/conference/ncph-2027/call-for-proposals/>.

(Please note that working group and workshop proposal forms are separate from the main session proposal form.)

While individuals are not prohibited from presenting in consecutive years at the meeting, session proposals that include new voices will receive preference. Additionally, participants may be presenting members of only one session, but may also be discussants in Working Groups or serve as chair/facilitator on a second session.

QUESTIONS? Please email Program Manager Meghan Hillman at meghillm@iu.edu.