



2019 OLA-WLA Conference: Tips for a Great Program Proposal

IMPORTANT DATES

- *Program Proposal Submission Acceptance Dates:*
Friday, September 14 — Monday, October 29, 2018 (closes 12:00PM)
- *Program Proposal Status Notification Date:*
Monday, November 19, 2018

GENERAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- The conference theme is “**Charting the Unknown Together.**”
- Program “sponsorship” is defined as **verbally agreed-upon support from the chair of a particular internal group for a specific program proposal PRIOR to its submission. Such support may be financial, logistical, or through content/speaker contributions.** While sponsorship is optional, an expression of financial, logistical, or content support from an OLA or WLA (or both) internal group indicates endorsement, which is meaningful to the Conference Committee. Those submitting programs with associated costs should anticipate that financial support must be self-arranged.
- The Program Contact for the proposed program agrees to respond to communication with the Conference Planners in a timely manner, and to follow through with directions as instructed. Program Contacts will be notified of the status of the proposals by November 19.
- Due to the large number of submissions, it's unlikely every proposal will be accepted. With cooperation and approval from program submitters, the Conference Committee reserves the right to combine proposals, reorganize content, or make other changes as deemed appropriate.

PROGRAM LENGTHS AND FORMATS (*Note: A call for Poster Sessions will be issued separately.*)

Preconference Sessions

Preconference sessions are either **3 or 4 hours (half day) or 8 hours (full day)**.

Main Conference Sessions

Concurrent sessions are **all 75-minutes long**. Programs allow participants to develop skills related to a specific topic, focus on interactive learning, and use a variety of presentation styles. Generally, programs can incorporate:

- **Oral presentations:** In lecture-style format, one or two speakers present on a given topic, allowing for audience Q&A.
- **Panel discussions:** Two or more speakers give their individual views on a given topic and discuss their opinions with one another and the audience, under the guidance of a moderator.

- **Interactive workshops:** Hands-on participation with a focus on increasing attendees' competence of a specific learning objective. Opportunities for practice and feedback should be included.
- **Breakout groups:** Audience divides up into smaller groups for brainstorming/discussion on a particular aspect of the broader program topic.
- **Role playing/audience interaction:** Presenters include audience members in role-playing exercises or other types of demonstrations.
- **Dedicated time for Q&A:** An intentional block of time for audience question/answer period, often following speaker presentations. Advisable for all programs but not always feasible.

Tips for a Great Proposal

*(*Adapted from guidelines provided by the American Library Association and the Florida Library Association)*

1. Choose a topic that's timely and creative. Innovative program ideas, case studies of new trends, or discussions of hot topics are often compelling. Avoid topics that have been covered many times in the past unless your proposal has a unique slant.
2. Consider your audience. Make it clear which types of libraries/library workers might find your program interesting. Programs don't necessarily need to be universally appealing, but if you can make it more inclusive, you're encouraged to do so.
3. Consider ways to engage the audience. Could you incorporate small group discussion, audience participation, or a hands-on activity?
4. Give yourself plenty of time to write the proposal. Ask a colleague to read through it for clarity and any suggestions for improvement.
5. Be clear but succinct. Include what you intend to cover in your presentation and what participants will take away from your program. Focus on the outcomes for attendees rather than wordy descriptions.
6. Select an interesting title...but don't be too cute. Capture our attention but still indicate the general topic. Consider several different titles and run them by your colleagues to see which they find most enticing. Clever titles (and descriptions) may fail to communicate the content's real value.
7. Start with concrete benefits for attending the session, and something that gets the reader's attention:
 - a. "Are you responsible for [topic] in your library? You will leave this session with five new ideas you can implement that will help you..."
 - b. "Learn about recent developments in [topic] and how they affect your work. [Speaker] will use case studies from six school libraries..."
 - c. "Get strategies for streamlining your [something] so it takes less time each day."

Include just enough details to help someone decide if they want or need to attend that session.
8. Avoid starting a sentence such as, "In this session, five panelists will talk about [repeat of session title]."
9. Avoid generalizations that everyone already knows such as, "In libraries today, technology is increasingly important" or "Librarians are busy people."