



# Call for Session Proposals Conference 2019: *As a Whole:* **Well-being, Health, and Museums** September 19 - 21, 2019 Edmonton, Alberta

Museums are vital participants in creating vibrant communities. Cultural institutions are places of learning and sharing, inquiry and innovation, discussion and exploration, and dialogue and debate. They embrace their roles as trusted places where meaningful connections are made, both between individuals and with the most pressing issues in society today.

Society's understanding of *being well* is shifting from simply the lack of physical illness to a more holistic, community-wide form of wellness.<sup>1</sup> Cultural activities, such as visiting museums or engaging with cultural heritage, are seen as essential to individual and societal well-being.<sup>2</sup> And yet, Canadian household time and money spent on culture is at its lowest point since 1994.<sup>3</sup> Globally, significant health and wellness issues – increased obesity, growing rates of Alzheimer's, higher social isolation, etc. – have seen museums take a greater role in providing wellness opportunities for their communities. Museums are natural actors in health and well-being initiatives as they aim to provide safe spaces for cultural dialogue, community interaction, and education.<sup>4</sup>

The Alberta Museums Association's (AMA) 2019 Conference will delve into, contemplate, and champion the roles and actions museums take in providing, fostering, and embracing well-being, both internally and externally. Delegates will examine how collections, programming, partnerships, and exhibitions can broaden the museum's impact on their local community and internal teams. Museums' role in strategic, operational health and well-being activities, and services outside the museum walls may also be addressed. Potential sessions could explore themes such as:

- Programming related to healthy lifestyles and psychological well-being
- Exhibiting well-being and sustainability
- Providing safe spaces for dialogue, growth, and change in society
- Positive reconciliation efforts with Indigenous and minority populations
- Museums as sustainable entities

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<sup>1</sup> *How are Canadians Really Doing?* The 2016 CIW National Report, (Waterloo, On, Canadian Index of Wellbeing and University of Waterloo, 2016), p. 11; "The Changing Definition of Wellness," EBSO Benefits Blog, July 12, 2018. Accessed November 19, 2018. <https://blog.ebsobenefits.com/2018/07/12/the-changing-definition-of-wellness/>.

<sup>2</sup> Jocelyn Dodd and Ceri Jones, *Mind, body, spirit: How museums impact health and wellbeing*, (Leicester, Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester, 2014), pp. 4-6.

<sup>3</sup> *How are Canadians Really Doing?*, pp. 60-63.

<sup>4</sup> Menachem Wecker, "Why museums should be a safe space to discuss why #BlackLivesMatter," *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 29, 2015. Accessed November 19, 2018. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-museums-should-be-safe-space-discuss-why-black-lives-matter-180955114/>.

- Human resource management for healthy staff and volunteers
- Resiliency in the face of environmental disasters
- Educating and exhibiting difficult societal topics
- Partnerships with primary care providers
- Specialty programming for seniors, youth, or disability groups, etc.
- Collecting and exhibiting for the sake of community well-being

All session proposals are reviewed by the Conference Program Committee. The AMA Secretariat is happy to provide feedback on proposals before they are submitted for review. Contact [learning@museums.ab.ca](mailto:learning@museums.ab.ca) with your ideas and questions.

Complete the online session proposal form by February 11, 2019. For more information about the AMA and its Annual Conference, please visit [our website](#).