



Case Study 1

■ *A Mobile Low-Budget Exhibition Illuminating Stories of Campus Engagement*

Title: *Now is the Moment*

Organizers: Campus Compact, National Museum and Center for Service

Location & Dates: Compact24 National Conference, Denver, Colorado, April 7-10, 2024

Total Budget: \$1,764

Program Team and Partners: Urkovia Andrews, Georgia Southern University; Alexandra Byrum, University of Richmond; Leslie Lombre, University of San Francisco; Shelley Errington Nicholson, Greenfield Community College; Gina Lee-Olukoya, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Laura Weaver, Campus Compact; Ashley Sawyer, National Museum and Center for Service; Sarah Elsey, Colorado College; Danyel Addes, Colorado State University; Elizabeth L. Parmelee and Shayla Bischoff, Metropolitan State University of Denver; Gretchen Minekime, University of Colorado Boulder; and Arianna Pattek and Zach Ward, Serve Colorado

The Spark

In 2023, Campus Compact, in partnership with the National Museum and Center for Service, convened a [Campus Museums of Service Design Team](#) to support the creation of civic and community engagement exhibitions at colleges and universities across the country.

Creating an exhibition for Campus Compact's Compact24 National Conference in Denver, Colorado was an exciting opportunity to present an example for future campus exhibitions and to encourage member institutions to create community-engaged exhibitions.

The theme of the 2024 conference, "**Now Is the Moment,**" was the inspiration or spark for the exhibition. Wanting to tell local stories to enrich the conference experience and root participants in the Colorado region, the Design Team identified several regional universities as potential partners.

The planning team envisioned an exhibition that highlighted the ways campuses are "**meeting the moment**" to encourage conversation and new ideas. Colorado campuses and institutions were first invited to share stories of direct service, community-engaged learning and research, voter engagement, policy and governance, social entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, and partnerships with indigenous communities.

Community Context

Each year, the Campus Compact national conference welcomes hundreds of attendees from across the country from diverse institutions and roles. With this in mind, the planning team discussed the importance of terms—service versus civic and community engagement, their specific interpretations within higher education, and the evolution of their utilization. Ultimately, the planning team agreed to use the language of civic and community engagement when framing the exhibition.

The conference was to be held at the Hilton Denver City Center. The exhibition was not provided a designated space, but would be in the public gathering spaces for the conference. This location drove many of the design decisions. Ideas for interactive projects and larger installations were discussed, but in the end, a more portable exhibition display was chosen given the space parameters and the opportunity for each Project Team member to reuse their piece following the conference.

Exhibition Purpose

The Design Team identified four key goals:

- Amplify civic and community engagement stories from institutions and agencies across the country, especially in Colorado where the conference was being held
- Highlight different pathways of public service and community engagement
- Create community and a sense of collective action
- Provide inspiration for other campus exhibitions

Budget Details

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Retractable banners (sample)	12	\$120.00	\$1,440.00
Exhibition introduction panels	2	\$57.00	\$114.00
Postcards	500		\$210.00
Total			\$1,764.00

Exhibition Content & Design

Many Colorado colleges and universities jumped at the opportunity to participate. Additionally, the planning team reached out to Serve Colorado—the state’s commission on community service—and invited them to participate in the exhibition. Planning team members also showcased ways their institutions are partnering with community organizations to address locally identified concerns through engagement.

Each institution or agency was featured on a vertical, free-standing banner which included 1 to 2 examples of how they were “meeting the moment” with accompanying photographs and a QR code for further information.

Exhibition partners filled out an online form to share initial content for the exhibition, then Project Team members followed up with any questions, suggested edits, and panel drafts. Examples included a wide range of topics including voter registration, K-12 collaborations, and environmental research.

In order to achieve the goal of leveraging the exhibition for community-building and conversation, the planning team wanted to ensure that there was an interactive element of the exhibition. Many ideas were discussed from community art projects to maps. With space constraints, a digital platform was chosen. An [interactive Padlet](#) provided attendees an opportunity to share their own stories of how they are “meeting the moment.” Entries were plotted on the larger digital map.

* Banner Templates



Marketing

Postcards promoted the exhibition and the larger project at tables throughout the conference.

A Campus Exhibitions Workshop was also offered for conference participants to engage in dialogue about the exhibition and future projects.



Impact

One of the biggest advantages of creating a portable exhibition with pull-up banners was that each institution or agency could take their banner(s) home. This created opportunities for impact beyond the conference.

Conference attendees were seen engaging with the panels throughout the conference, but also walking by them. Both the constrained hallway spaces where the banners were installed and the fullness of the conference schedule impacted the success of the banners.

“Thank you for the wonderful panels! They are currently up in our office and we’re discussing bringing them with us to another conference in Minneapolis next week because they are just so amazing. We are so grateful for the partnership to create them!”

Arianna Pattek, Director of External Affairs, Serve Colorado

Lessons Learned

During the Campus Exhibitions Workshop, attendees discussed the banners. Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to read about different initiatives at other institutions, but a few participants suggested an approach with less text—a display that was more visual.

An example that embraced this philosophy is the installation *Double Happiness* by associate professor of studio art Amy Chan at the University of Virginia’s Shannon Library. In this project, which utilized a participatory design process, the installation evolved

from a collaboration between students, librarians, and the artist to increase Asian and Asian American cultural representation in the University spaces. *Double Happiness* is a series of phrases and their translation on vibrantly colored panels.

