



NCPH Advocacy Policy

Adopted by Board September 19, 2015

Revised and adopted October 28, 2017

I. Preamble

As part of its long-range plan (LRP), the NCPH commits to “be at the forefront of advocacy for history, historians, and practitioners; be more responsive to the needs and interests of stakeholders (members, partners, supporters); to support the historical and humanities communities in their advocacy efforts; and to work to raise the profile of public history amongst potential students, historians, cultural institutions, and other practitioners.” To this end, this policy defines parameters for NCPH’s advocacy to ensure it strategically deploys its unique resources to make the greatest impact within its capacity. These parameters are:

- the objectives for NCPH’s advocacy activities;
- the types of issues for which NCPH will advocate; and,
- the mechanisms for deciding when and how to engage in advocacy.

II. Advocacy Objectives

Objective A: Publicly support policies, positions, practices, or actions that will further the goals of public history practice. Publicly oppose policies, positions, practices, or actions that hinder or suppress public history practice.

Scope: NCPH should seek out broad issues within areas defined by the LRP, as well as its membership, and issue public statements expressing NCPH’s position (as determined by the Executive Committee) as well as framing these specific issues within the context of NCPH’s overall mandate.

NCPH should issue public statements relating to issues our organization identifies, as well as those brought forward by sister organizations relating to specific matters that require quick response.

Objective B: Bolster other organizations that mobilize support for funding history museums, historic sites, history interpretation and education, historic preservation, and accessibility of historical or archival resources

Scope: NCPH will continue to work with its sister organizations to mobilize support for museums, sites, programs and resources that form important elements of the field of public history.

Objective C: Support open dialogue and informed discussion about history's relationship to contemporary debates

Scope: NCPH will research existing forums connecting history to contemporary issues and identify strategic roles for NCPH to support or leverage these outlets for public history issues. NCPH may also identify contemporary debates that could benefit from "open dialogue" on their "relationship to history," and issue framing essays that historicize these issues from multiple perspectives, and open debate among members on blog or wider public.

Objective D: Assert the importance of professional public history practice

Scope: NCPH will continue to play a unique and proactive role in the promotion of the value and interests of the public history field.

III. Issue areas

NCPH will take a range of actions, prescribed within its LRP, to address:

Issues within the field of public history:

- Promotion of the value and interests of public history practitioners;
- Preservation and accessibility of historical resources;
- Funding of historical organizations, history museums, historic sites, and history education;

Broader contemporary issues:

- Open dialogue and informed discussion about history's relationship to contemporary debates.

"Advocacy" will take two distinct forms. NCPH will contribute its voice to public discussion in two distinct areas, playing a very different role in each:

- Issues within the field of public history: Here NCPH will conduct direct advocacy in support of specific positions;
- Broader contemporary issues: Here NPCH will invite public debate on open-ended questions, using historical resources to raise issues from a variety of perspectives. It may also advocate for more inclusive public debate on an issue.

NCPH will support the issue areas above through individual cases suggested, produced, and approved by the Advocacy Committee of the Board, that raise concerns shared by a wide diversity of public history practitioners and have implications for the broader public history field.

IV. Mechanisms for Advocacy

Advocacy Committee

Composition:

The Board will constitute an Advocacy Committee to oversee all advocacy efforts. The committee will consist of the Executive Committee plus several additional non-voting members with special skills and interests in advocacy issues (could be current Board members or Ad Hoc).

Reporting and Communication:

The Advocacy Committee will report to the full Board on any advocacy activities or plans at the spring and fall meetings. The Committee will meet once per year at the annual conference or shortly thereafter to plan advocacy activities for the coming year, identify strategic communications outlets for those activities, and decide how to communicate those activities to members. The NCPH Executive Office will communicate all advocacy activities to members through one or more of its communication outlets or forums and will maintain a page on the website outlining advocacy actions. During the year, the Committee will correspond by email or telephone around specific advocacy decisions.

Decision-making:

The Advocacy Committee will decide on each advocacy activity through a mechanism appropriate for that activity:

Issuance of Public Statements

- For statements requiring quick response that originate from outside organizations that have been previously approved for support by the Advocacy Committee: NCPH office will circulate statement to Advocacy Committee by email for comment; decision will be made by majority vote of Executive Committee.
- For statements originating from NCPH that allow for deeper consideration and slower development: Advocacy Committee identifies issue area (within parameters of advocacy policy) that NCPH should make a statement about; appoints member of Advocacy Committee to draft statement; member drafting statement circulates to

Advocacy Committee for review and comment; statement approved by majority vote of Executive Committee; Advocacy Committee identifies communications outlets for statement that will achieve the most strategic impact for NCPH.

Support for mobilization by other organizations

- Advocacy Committee researches organizations and assesses which will achieve the most strategic impact for NCPH and at what level of support. Advocacy Committee brings recommendations and proposed advocacy budget to the Board for approval at each fall meeting.

Dialogue and Discussion

- As part of its annual planning, the Advocacy Committee will identify a contemporary public issue, ways to frame it historically, and vehicle(s) through which to open dialogue on the issue (annual meeting session, *TPH*, etc.). The Committee will present its plan(s) to the Board for approval at each fall meeting. The Committee will liaise with organizers of the appropriate vehicles (e.g., annual meeting organizers, blog editors, *TPH* editors) to implement the plan(s).

Mechanisms for Action

Mechanisms for supporting the mobilization of organizations

- Continue to support the National Coalition for History (\$5,000 annually)
- Continue to support the National Humanities Alliance (about \$650 annually)
- Consider contributing to National History Day

Mechanisms for Dialogue and Discussion

Frame and facilitate dialogue on one contemporary public issues that could benefit from historical analysis through one or more of the following mechanisms per year:

- Offer session/keynote at each annual meeting that identifies a contemporary issue, provide historical perspective on it, and open dialogue.
- Include article/foreword/issue of *TPH* that analyzes a contemporary debate and provides historical perspective.
- Open blog for discussion of the issue among members.

Mechanisms for asserting the importance of professional public history practice

- Support the Seminar for Historical Administration, the annual three-week professional development seminar sponsored by AASLH, AAM, Colonial Williamsburg, the Indiana

Historical Society, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

- Maintain a presence at conferences and activities of sister organizations.
- Continue exercises in defining the term, “public history.”

V. Review and Revision

At each annual meeting, the NCPH Board will:

- review advocacy goals against objectives achieved and identify any adjustments necessary for the following fiscal year’s advocacy objectives;
- review the advocacy policy and identify any adjustments necessary based on the past year’s experience.