



NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PUBLIC HISTORY

Guide to Ad Hoc and Standing Committees and Task Forces

Developed March 2021 by the NCPH Governance Committee

Ad Hoc Committees

An ad hoc committee is generally understood to be temporary in nature. The Executive Committee and/or full Board establishes an ad hoc committee to perform a specific issue or project task. Once the task is completed, the committee disbands. The need or question addressed by the ad hoc committee generally originates with the Board.

Requests for the creation of an ad hoc committee must be reviewed and approved by the Board. If accepted, the Board will appoint an ad hoc committee with members drawn from NCPH membership. An ad hoc committee falls under the direction and discretion of the President and reports directly to the Board.

Task Forces

A member or self-identified segment of the membership of the National Council on Public History may identify an issue, problem, or need within the organization that requires attention. In response, they may present a proposal to the board to establish a task force. Task forces typically operate independently of the board, but it will communicate regularly with the Executive Director and the Board. Some task forces evolve from annual meeting working groups, but this is not a requirement for formation.

Upon completion of their work, the members of a task force should produce a brief (roughly 750 words) report for the membership that provides a description of the issue, the course of action taken by the task force to address the issue, and the task force outcomes. Upon the completion of their work task forces are typically disbanded.

Steps for Becoming a Standing Committee

If a taskforce or ad hoc committee determines that a need, problem, or issue is ongoing for the organization, and that it requires permanent attention, members should work with the Board to determine if it can be addressed by one or more of the existing committees with the addition of new language to existing committee charge(s).

In the rare event that the members of an ad hoc committee or task force and the Board determine that the need, problem, or issue cannot be addressed by an existing committee, they may recommend the creation of a new standing committee. In order to do so, the members of the task force or ad hoc committee must submit a white paper of under 2500 words with a bibliography. The white paper must justify the establishment of a permanent board committee by including: (1) A review of the work accomplished on the issue so far; (2) A statement of the

need for a standing committee, including evidence that this work is not being done by another committee and a review of similar committees in other organizations; (3) Evidence that the issue is one that requires permanent attention, including some discussion of history and context of the issue within NCPH; (4) Recommendations for the charge, duties, and member appointments of the proposed standing committee.

After reviewing the white paper, if the board agrees that the problem requires the creation of a new standing committee, it must vote to amend the bylaws.