



NCPH Advocacy Committee of the Board Policy

Adopted by Board September 19, 2015

Revised and adopted October 28, 2017

Revised and adopted December 7, 2023

I. Preamble

As part of its mission, the NCPH commits to publicly advocating for history, historians, and the diverse practitioners of history, including but not limited to, educators, interpreters, museum professionals, and historic preservationists. This document defines parameters for NCPH's Advocacy Committee to provide guidance on committee activities in furtherance of the NCPH advocacy goals. These parameters are:

- the objectives for NCPH's Advocacy Committee activities;
- the types of issues for which NCPH's Advocacy Committee will advocate; and,
- the procedures for the Advocacy Committee, including mechanisms for deciding when and how to engage in public advocacy statements.

The Advocacy Committee of the Board consists of the members of the Executive Committee plus additional non-voting members with special skills and interests in advocacy issues. The voting members of the Advocacy Committee of the Board have the authority to speak on behalf of the organization. The committee reports to the Board of Directors on advocacy activities, which may include issuing public statements of interest or concern to our members and within the issue areas identified below in this document; supporting other organizations that mobilize support for funding history museums, historic sites, history education, historic preservation, and accessibility of historical resources; supporting open dialogue and informed discussion about history's relationship to contemporary debates; and asserting the importance of professional public history practice. A list of past Advocacy actions of the organization can be found at: <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/advocacy/>. The current make-up of the committee can be found at: <https://ncph.org/about/governance-committees/board-of-directors-and-committees/>.

Additionally, the Long-Range Plan (LRP) for the organization addresses a five-year point of focus for advocacy work. The current Long-Range plan can be found at:

<https://ncph.org/about/governance-committees/>. Some LRP-specific work that the Advocacy Committee will work towards during the 2023-2028 plan period are:

- a) Create a formal process for requesting assistance/statements from NCPH related to advocacy (Pillar III, Goal A, Activity 3)
- b) Partner with established advocacy and lobbying programs like Museum Advocacy Day,

- the National Trust for Historic Preservation, etc. (Pillar III, Goal D, Activity 1)
- c) Develop/revise a position paper on the necessity of protecting accurate, inclusive views on history at public institutions (Pillar III, Goal D, Activity 2)

II. Advocacy Committee Objectives

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

Scope: NCPH's Advocacy Committee 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, as drafted and/or vetted by the Advocacy Committee, relating to appropriate issues our organization identifies, as well as those brought forward by sister organizations relating to specific matters that require quick response.

Objective B: Support Advocacy Committee members and the larger NCPH membership around advocacy efforts

Scope:

- Encourage and/or support AC and NCPH members to suggest issues for public statements.
- Encourage and/or support AC to suggest larger advocacy efforts (beyond public statements) to the Board.
- Provide resources for NCPH members as they think about their personal advocacy efforts.
- Encourage creative thinking around other activities of AC as guided by the Long Range Plan and member interest.
- Support open dialogue and transparency around Advocacy Committee's activities.
- Provide resources for NCPH members to facilitate individual advocacy efforts.

III. Issue areas

NCPH's Advocacy Committee will evaluate public advocacy statements addressing:

Issues within the field of public history:

- Promote the value and interests of the diverse practitioners of public history and advocate for their work as labor;
- Preservation and accessibility of historical resources; and

- Funding of historical organizations, history museums, historic sites, and history education.

The Advocacy Committee most often will provide a response to broader contemporary issues when they impact:

- Open dialogue and informed discussion about history's relationship to contemporary debates.
- Safety, well-being, and human rights, especially if our ability to serve members is impacted.
- Workplace equity, safety, and justice.
- Institutional violations of field-wide best practices.
- How history is used, mis-used, or could be used in the public sphere. Typically, this must have pressing national or global implications.

The Advocacy Committee can also decline to provide a response under the following conditions:

- When committee members lack the capacity to consider an issue fully before issuing a statement or deciding on a course of action.
- When an issue is primarily local in nature and its implications for public history, broadly speaking, are unclear.
- When the committee cannot come to an agreement or consensus.

NCPH will support the issue areas above as they are suggested, produced, and approved by the Advocacy Committee of the Board. NCPH will respond to issues that raise concerns shared by a wide diversity of public history practitioners and have implications for the broader public history field.

IV. Advocacy Committee Procedures

Composition

The Advocacy Committee of the Board consists of the members of the Executive Committee plus additional non-voting members with special skills and interests in advocacy issues.

Additional non-voting members are appointed to the committee by the NCPH Vice-President each spring. Anyone interested in serving the organization in this way can complete the volunteer interest form here: <https://ncph.org/committee-service/> and indicate an interest in serving. Committee term lengths and expectations are available at <https://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/Expectations-of-NCPH-Committee-Members.pdf>.

The committee size is established at the discretion of the NCPH Chair and Vice-Chair, with input

from committee members.

Onboarding new committee members

New committee members will be provided a copy of the Advocacy Committee policy, examples of past letters, and an opportunity to meet with an existing member to review procedures and meeting schedules.

Chair/Co-Chair

The committee will be led by a chair or co-chairs that can be voting or non-voting members. Chairs and co-chairs serve one-year terms but are given the opportunity to renew if interested. The chair(s) have a broadly facilitative function, assisting with meeting coordination, committee discussion, and initiating and/or contributing to drafting of statements.

Chair(s) and committee members are selected by the NCPH Vice-President with input from the chair(s) and committee members just after the Annual Meeting each spring. Non-voting members of the Committee are eligible to serve as Chair(s).

Meetings

The Committee will meet once per year at the annual NCPH 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. During the year, the Committee will correspond by email, telephone, or virtual meeting platforms around specific advocacy decisions. The Committee will meet, at a minimum, quarterly via virtual meeting platforms.

Mechanisms for receiving requests for action

Any public historian can ask the organization to consider weighing in on an issue by emailing the board via board@ncph.org.

After that, the request is forwarded to the Advocacy Committee of the Board for discussion.

Members of this committee are listed at:

<https://ncph.org/about/governance-committees/board-of-directors-and-committees/>

Discussion and decisions to respond or not can take from a few days to a few weeks depending on the background research the committee might need to conduct, potential time to draft and edit language, and the need to conduct a vote with all members of the Board's Executive Committee weighing in.

A board representative or the executive director will then follow up on the outcome of the committee's discussion.

Mechanisms for decision-making

Statements Generated by Outside Organizations

For statements requiring quick response that originate from outside organizations, the NCPH office will circulate a statement to the Advocacy Committee by email for comment. After Advisory Committee consensus is obtained to endorse, the Executive Committee members of the Advisory Committee vote on the endorsement.

Statements Generated by the Advocacy Committee and/or NCPH Members

For statements originating from the Advocacy Committee:

- A member or members of the Advocacy Committee or NCPH identifies an issue area (within parameters of issues identified in the Advocacy Committee policy) that NCPH should make a statement about,
- A member or members of the Advocacy Committee volunteers to draft a statement, in the absence of a volunteer the chair(s) will draft or appoint someone to draft the statement, (in cases where the committee does not have necessary expertise in the area of concern the committee may recruit an NCPH member with necessary insight or expertise not on the committee to assist in drafting),
- All members of the Advocacy Committee will review and comment on the draft,
- The Advocacy Committee identifies communications outlets for the statement that will achieve the most strategic impact for NCPH, and
- The Executive Committee members (who also sit on the Advocacy Committee of the Board) vote on the statement.

Voting

A majority vote of the Executive Committee members will be the mechanism by which the Advocacy Committee endorses statements generated by outside organizations or issues statements drafted by the Advocacy Committee. Once endorsed, the statements will be transmitted to the NCPH staff for distribution. Executive Committee votes should only be taken after a consensus of the entire Advocacy Committee has come to a decision on endorsing proposed statements. Advocacy Committee members may determine the process by which consensus is determined, and it does not necessarily equate to unanimity.

Reporting and communication

The Advocacy Committee will report to the full Board on any Committee activities or plans at the spring and fall meetings and to the membership via *Public History News* each June and December. The NCPH Executive Office will communicate all Advocacy Committee activities to members through one or more of its communication outlets or forums and will maintain a page

on the website outlining advocacy actions.

V. Coordination with NCPH Long-Range Plan

Five-year changing special focuses for advocacy work will be outlined, with input from members and the board, in the current Long-Range Plan and will provide guidance for year-to-year work of the committee.

VI. Review and Revision

Biennially, in advance of the annual NCPH conference, the Advocacy Committee will:

- review the Advocacy Committee policy and identify any adjustments necessary based on the past year's experience and input from NCPH members, and
- forward any proposed revisions to the NCPH Board for review and adoption.