

Local Preservation

A service of the National Park Service
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE 'SHPO'

Each state, territory, and the District of Columbia, have a "State Historic Preservation Officer" (SHPO). The SHPO in your state can provide many important services to local governments and historic preservation commissions.

What do SHPO's do?

The National Historic Preservation Act establishes certain SHPO responsibilities. These include:

- ❖ ensuring comprehensive statewide historic preservation planning
- ❖ conducting a statewide survey to identify historic properties
- ❖ nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places
- ❖ administering the federal historic preservation and grants-in-aid program within the State
- ❖ assisting local governments in developing historic preservation programs and in becoming certified to participate in the national program
- ❖ advising and assisting in federal, state, and local historic preservation projects
- ❖ participating in the review of federal, state, and local undertakings that may affect historic properties
- ❖ providing public information, education, training, and technical assistance in historic preservation.

Under National Park Service (NPS) regulations, SHPO's may also participate in NPS certification of properties and projects for historic preservation tax incentives (See "What are the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives?").

In addition, SHPO's carry out duties under State laws, and seek to advance the interests of historic preservation generally in their States. For example, many SHPO's:

- ❖ conduct preservation conferences and workshops
- ❖ distribute State grants and loans for preservation
- ❖ maintain and interpret State-owned historic properties
- ❖ conduct programs to acquire and administer historic preservation easements

- ❖ administer state legislation to protect historic properties from non-federal construction and land-use projects
- ❖ administer state legislation relating to archeological resources, shipwrecks, and other special kinds of historic properties
- ❖ publish newsletters, scholarly publications, and popular books and brochures
- ❖ administer state history museums and conservation laboratories
- ❖ develop and support state and local preservation statutes
- ❖ help state and local education authorities use preservation in primary and secondary curricula, and in public education generally
- ❖ provide technical assistance to owners of historic properties

How does the SHPO fit into State government?

The SHPO is designated by the governor. In some States he or she serves directly in the Governor's cabinet or executive office. In other States the SHPO may be an official in an archive or history office, a planning department, a conservation department, parks, and recreation department, a state historical society, or a state museum.

Who assists the SHPO?

Under NPS regulations, each SHPO must be assisted by a staff of appropriate preservation professionals, in most cases including historians, architectural historians, historical architects, and archeologists. Many SHPO's are also assisted by academic institutions, historical and archeological societies, and other preservation-oriented groups through contracts or cooperative agreements.

Who funds the SHPO?

Most SHPO's receive their primary funding from their state legislatures. In addition, NPS provides SHPO's with grants-in-aid from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), a special fund created by the National Historic Preservation Act. HPF grants must be matched with non-federal funds or in-kind contributions.

What role does the SHPO play in the Certified Local Government Program?

One of the SHPO's important duties is to assist NPS in certifying local governments for special participation in the national historic preservation program. Another SHPO responsibility is to "pass through" at least 10% of each year's HPF grant-in-aid to local governments that have been certified (Certified Local Governments or CLGs), and to provide technical assistance to such governments. Certification is done in accordance with NPS regulations and guidelines available from the SHPO.

Who is my SHPO?

For an up-to-date list of SHPO's, with addresses and telephone numbers, contact:

The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
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444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 332
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