



AASLH Committee Handbook

Spring 2021

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1. Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals of AASLH

Mission:

AASLH provides leadership and resources to help the history community thrive and make the past more meaningful to all people.

Vision: History organizations everywhere will prosper, tell everyone's story, and be central to important conversations in their communities. As a result, the public will use historical thinking skills to actively engage with and address contemporary issues and to value history for its relevance to modern life.

Values:

- We believe history matters. History connects people to each other and to something larger than themselves. People need history to understand the world around them and develop solutions for the future.
- We believe everyone makes history. Relevant history is inclusive history.
- Creativity and innovation inform our work as an organization, and collaborative partnerships and practices are key to advancing our mission.
- We are transparent in how we conduct our work as an association and as historians.
- We value investing in individuals and organizations and youth along their personal and professional paths.

Goals:

Build and support a more inclusive and equitable history community.

Promote the relevance of history.

Advance history practice through professional development for all levels of the field.

Connect the history community to field-wide questions and each other.

2. Role of the Committees

AASLH has three types of committees with varying levels of responsibilities. A list of committees with charter statements are listed below of this document.

- a. **Standing Committees:** The [AASLH bylaws](#) specify eight standing committees of the Association (committee descriptions are on pages 11-13 of the bylaws). Committee members serve a two-year term renewable for another two years. Terms begin on October 1. After the second term is completed, the committee member must step down for at least one full year before rejoining the committee. Committee members may accept the role of chair and start a new two- or four-year term as chair without taking a one-year break.
- b. **Affinity Community Committees:** These committees represent specific portions of the AASLH membership. Committee members work with and advise their AASLH staff liaison on the development of programs and services for the group. Depending upon their own interest and time availability, a committee member may agree to chair or work on a

special project that the committee chooses to undertake. Committee members serve a two-year term renewable for another two years. Terms begin on October 1. After the second term is completed, the committee member must step down for at least one full year before rejoining the committee. Committee members may accept the role of chair and start a new two- or four-year term as chair without taking a one-year break. During their term(s), they will assist the committee chair with the goals and activities of the group, as determined by the Affinity Group Committee.

- c. **Task Forces and Ad Hoc Committees:** These committees are created by AASLH staff or Council for a specific goal and for a specific defined time-period that may vary from AASLH's standing and affinity committee terms. Task Forces and Ad Hoc committees may request to become affinity committees when their specific charges are complete. These requests will be sent to the CEO and Council Chair for consideration.

Committee Charter: Each committee is required to have a charter statement. The charter will be included in the committee member job description document (Appendix A) and follow a template provided by AASLH staff. It will also be placed on the AASLH website.

3. Role of Committee Chairs

The committee chair (or co-chairs) sets the tone for the committee and its work by:

Committee Meetings:

- Schedules and leads committee meetings a minimum of four times per year; one in-person meeting is held each year and may be held at the AASLH annual meeting.
- Meets with staff liaison to set agenda for each conference call meeting and distributes agenda to committee members at least one week in advance of meetings.
- Ensures that minutes of committee meetings and records of community activities are kept and made available to committee members and AASLH staff. This role can also be fulfilled by appointing a committee secretary or asking for a volunteer or appointing someone at the start of each meeting.
- Works with committee and staff liaison to develop annual goals for committee.

Committee Recruitment & Nominations:

- Works with committee members, AASLH staff, and the Leadership Nominating Committee to recruit new members as people rotate off the committee, including securing a suitable replacement for committee chair as term nears completion.
- If committee chooses, identify secretary and vice chair to help with maintaining minutes, communication, and succession planning.
- Actively seeks opportunities for partnerships/collaborations that benefit the community and raise its national profile.

Representation

- Works with staff liaison to review and update committee charter on the AASLH website.
- Reports community activities annually to AASLH Council via staff liaison.

- Attends or appoint a representative to attend committee chairs meeting at Annual Meeting and any additional committee chair meetings throughout the year.
- If possible, attends any community events during the conference. Travel costs and other expenses including conference registration are paid by the chair. Other travel during the year is generally not expected.

4. Role of AASLH Staff

Each committee is assigned a staff liaison to support and advise the committee. They help advise the committee and provide regular updates on AASLH programs and initiatives.

Responsibilities include:

- Meeting with the committee chair to set meeting agenda.
- Assisting with scheduling meetings as needed.
- Reporting to the committee about AASLH events and strategic plans.
- Seeking feedback from the committee about relevant AASLH programs and services.
- Reporting committee activities to CEO and Council.
- Keeps committee roster up to date.
- Ensures that committee webpages are current.
- Maintains committee information in Your Membership (AASLH's database)

5. Role of Committee Members

Committee members work with and advise the AASLH staff liaison on the development of programs and services. Depending upon their own interest and time availability, a committee member may agree to chair or work on a special project that the committee chooses to undertake. During their term(s), they will assist the committee chair with the goals and activities of the group.

Responsibilities

- Meet with the committee a minimum of four times per year; one in-person meeting may be held each year at the AASLH annual meeting.
- Submit agenda items to chair for calls and other meetings of issues relevant to the committee.
- Carry out the projects and other work of the committee, as directed by the chair.
- Provide feedback and information to AASLH about current issues and research related to the committee's focus.
- Suggest volunteers from community to serve on AASLH Council or AASLH committees. These should be presented for consideration to the staff liaison.

6. Nomination Process

Committees should discuss prospective committee members in June/July (for terms beginning October 1). Committees submit names for prospective members to their staff liaison by August 1. The Committee Chair should reach out to the individual to confirm they are willing to serve prior to officially submitting their name for consideration.

The staff liaison will submit the names to the President and CEO and Chair of AASLH Council. The final approval for all committee appointments lies with the Chair of AASLH Council. They may also add individuals to committees at their discretion.

Following approval by the Chair of Council, the AASLH staff liaison will send an official welcome to new committee members confirming their participation and outlining expectations. The staff liaison will also send thank you letters on behalf of AASLH to members with committee terms ending. By October 31, the staff liaison will update the committee rosters and website pages with current committee member lists.

7. Committee Yearly Calendar

AASLH operates on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year, but committee terms start October 1 and expire on September 30 coordinating the committee year with the annual conferences traditionally held in September. Most of the committees meet at least quarterly with the exception of the Audit Committee, Host Committee, and Program Committee.

- **October-November** – Committee terms begin on October 1. Committees welcome new members and set quarterly meeting schedule. Start planning session proposals for next annual conferences. Start planning committee’s yearly goals. Make recommendations for members of Council and Leadership Nominating Committee.
- **December** – Submit annual meeting session proposals
- **January** – Committee chair and staff liaison review committee charter and finalize committee goals.
- **February** – Submit report of committee activities to Council
- **March** – Review goals and submit any requests for funding to AASLH.
- **April** – Submit any additional programming for the annual conferences (committee meetings, meals, happy hours, tours, etc.)
- **May-June** – Finalize all plans for annual onsite and online conferences.
- **July** – Prepare a list of recommendations for new committee members. This includes putting out a public call if desired.
- **August** – Submit final list of recommendations for new committee members to staff liaison for review by CEO and Council Chair. Staff liaison will send formal letters to new committee members and thank you notes to retiring members.
- **September** – Conduct annual meeting activities including committee meeting if desired.

Committee Chairs Meetings

Committee Chair meetings will be held quarterly and arranged by AASLH. They will be held before the 15th of the months of October, January, April, and July and be announced through the Basecamp Committee Chairs group.

8. Committee Meetings and Finances

The committee chair is responsible for scheduling meetings. Committees are encouraged to schedule all their meetings at the beginning of the year to improve attendance. It is easier for new members to get involved if they know when you’ll be meeting in advance. Meeting should

be held at least quarterly. Minutes of meetings should be submitted to your staff liaison following each meeting.

AASLH staff prepares a budget each spring for Council to review at their June meeting. Most committees do not have a line item in the budget as their activities are covered by program areas such as the annual conferences or professional development. If your committee will require specific funding, work closely with your staff liaison to submit a proposed budget for review in April. Due to the strategic goals of the organizations, not all requests can be funded. Committees will be informed in June if their request is approved or not.

9. Community Center, Communication, Social Media, and Virtual Events

Community Center

The AASLH Community Center is a site dedicated to supporting discussion among members and nonmembers, connecting them to each other, to issues and questions in the field, and to AASLH. Each Affinity Community has its own separate community forum that includes a discussion page and library page. If your committee is not affiliated with an Affinity Community and you are interested in creating a discussion forum, email Alex Collins at collins@aslh.org.

Affinity Committees are expected to participate in the forums and to designate at least two community moderators. Moderator duties include keeping an eye on unanswered posts, possibly bringing other committee members into conversations who might be able to provide resources, notifying the committee's AASLH staff contact of inappropriate behavior, and seeding the discussion when necessary to keep the forum active.

The AASLH Community Center is a great place to share resources, get inspiration for blog posts or virtual events, and to connect with potential committee members.

If you have issues logging into the Community Center, please reach out to info@aslh.org.

Communication

AASLH communicates with members through the weekly newsletter Dispatch, direct emails to the database, and AASLH News in *History News*. AASLH also sends a monthly email to the Council for State Museum Associations (COSMA) with news items they can share with their members.

Most committee communication will be conducted via email or AASLH's Basecamp. Committees are also strongly encouraged to communicate directly to AASLH members through the Community Forums, Dispatch, and the AASLH Blog. Committee members can also send information to their contacts or organizations not covered by the COSMA list. For more information, contact your committee's staff liaison.

Social Media

AASLH prefers that committees communicate with interested colleagues through the Community Forums. If a committee would also like a Facebook page or official Twitter, they should work with their staff liaison. AASLH will set up any social media accounts and serve as

official owner. Committees should assign a moderator to assure the account is active and block any inappropriate members or content. All design must be approved by AASLH's Senior Manager, Marketing and Membership.

Virtual Events

If your committee would like to organize a webinar, small group discussion, closed meeting/training, or a happy hour, please complete the "Virtual Program Proposal Form." (See below.) You will be contacted within two weeks of your submission by a member of the AASLH Professional Development team. Be sure to notify your AASLH staff contact when organizing a virtual event and prior to completing the form.

Please note webinars are only scheduled on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM EASTERN. Small group discussions, closed trainings or meetings, and happy hours can be scheduled outside those days and time.

You will be asked to provide 3 dates that work for ALL speakers involved to schedule the program. AASLH Professional Development staff will select the date that works best with the current program schedule. The earliest date choice must be at least 45 days after the submission date.

Virtual Program Proposal Form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W897XH8>

10. Sunseting a Committee

Sometimes, an AASLH committee will come to the point where they are no longer living up to their charter or have become ineffective or obsolete. AASLH staff will reach out to the chair of these committees to discuss next steps. The committee must create a plan for action with a timetable and submit it to AASLH staff to continue serving as an official AASLH committee. AASLH encourages committees to be proactive about deciding whether it is time to sunset their committee if they have met their goals, are not creating new ones, and their committee and audience are not growing. According to [Eileen Morgan Johnson](#), committee need to consider four golden rules:

- Not every committee has a right to exist forever.
- A committee must have real work and goals to be of value to the association and the committee members.
- Even standing committees can be changed through bylaw amendments.
- Don't create a committee when a task force or study group will do.

The final decision to sunset a standing committee lies with AASLH Council. The President and CEO and Council Chair have the final decision to sunset Affinity Committees and Task Forces/Ad Hoc Committees.

11. List of Committees with Charters

A list of current committee members is located on the AASLH website at <https://aaslh.org/about/committees/>.

Standing Committees

Audit: The Council Chair shall appoint an Audit Committee of three members who do not serve on Council, one of whom shall be appointed chair. Neither the chair nor any members of the Audit Committee shall serve on the Finance Committee. All actions of the Audit Committee shall be reported to the Council; Council must accept the annual audit from the auditor. The responsibilities of the Audit Committee shall be:

- to select an independent certified public accountant to conduct the annual audit of the Association's external financial statements,
- to review the annual audit,
- to review systems of internal controls and oversee compliance by management of applicable policies and procedures, and
- to make reports and recommendations to the Council regarding the audit and other related matters

National Awards: The responsibilities of the Awards Committee shall be:

- to conduct the Association's awards program by soliciting and evaluating nominations for awards that recognize excellence at the local and state levels, and
- to make awards according to standards recommended by the committee and established by the Council.
- When an Award of Distinction is proposed, the Awards Committee shall forward its recommendation to the Council for approval.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion: The responsibilities of the Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Committee Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall be:

- to advise, teach and advocate for the acceptance of all voices and views including but not limited to those that represent race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics in the Association's policies, programs, management, and governance;
- to engage the Association with a more inclusive audience by initiating new collaborations and partnerships reflective of current issues and trends about diversity and inclusion;
- to advise the Association's Council, committees and staff to ensure that the Association advocates and practices diversity and inclusion; and
- to sponsor and coordinate related activities and educational programs.

Finance: The Finance Committee shall meet prior to and prepare financial reports for each Council meeting. All actions of the Finance Committee shall be reported to the Council. The Treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee. Neither the chair nor any members of the Finance Committee shall serve on the Audit Committee. The responsibilities of the Finance Committee shall be:

- to review and approve all budgets and financial reports of the Association;
- to advise the Council on significant financial matters and decisions;
- to monitor the administration, collection and disbursement of the financial resources of the Association; and

- to make financial reports and recommendations to the Council.

Governance: The responsibilities of the Governance Committee shall be:

- to continually evaluate the effectiveness of the Council and its policies and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the Association's Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Standards of Council Conduct;
- to evaluate the need and plans for the continuing education of Council members; and
- to develop and provide, in collaboration with the Leadership Nominating Committee, the resources for identifying, recruiting, educating, cultivating, utilizing, and monitoring the leadership of a high-functioning national organization that models best practices for its members and the field.
- The Vice Chair shall serve as a voting member of the Governance Committee

Investment: . The responsibility of the Investment Committee shall be to review and recommend, for approval by the Council, policies and strategies for investment of the Association's endowment funds and any other funds that the Council may designate. The Investment Committee shall meet quarterly and report all actions to the Council on the performance of the investment accounts. Because of specialized expertise and long-term guidance required for successful investment management, Investment Committee members shall not be subject to the term limits that apply to other committees. The Treasurer shall serve as a member of, but shall not chair, the Investment Committee.

Leadership Nominating: The responsibilities of the Leadership Nominating Committee shall be to recruit, review and nominate future members of both the Council and the Leadership Nominating Committee to meet the current and anticipated needs of the Association and ensure a diverse and qualified leadership. The Leadership Nominating Committee shall include 10 voting members: nine members who are elected by the membership on a staggered basis, with three members elected by the membership each year, along with the chair of the Governance Committee. The Council Chair and the President/CEO of the Association shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members. In the year prior to the Vice Chair's assumption of the Chair role, the Vice Chair also shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member. Members of the Leadership Nominating Committee shall be elected for one three-year term.

Standards and Ethics: The responsibilities of the Standards and Ethics Committee shall be:

- to review and recommend standards and related guidelines for the operation of and ethical considerations associated with historical organizations as well as for the Association;
- to oversee the Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs); and
- to recommend standards, related guidelines, and ethical statements related to such matters for adoption by the Council

Affinity Committees

Educators and Interpreters: AASLH's Educators & Interpreters Community addresses the needs of educators and interpreters in history museums and history organizations as they seek to increase appreciation of community history. The Educators and Interpreters Community is

committed to helping paid and unpaid history professionals create quality educational programming and experiences. By promoting best practices, sharing resources, and providing opportunities to network, the community creates a foundation upon which all professionals can build and grow as they explore museum and informal learning, educational theory, and interpretive techniques.

Emerging History Professionals: The AASLH Emerging History Professionals (EHP) Affinity Community supports, connects, and unites the newest generation of state and local history practitioners.

Field Services Alliance: The Field Services Alliance (FSA) is an organized group of individuals, offices, and agencies that provide training, guidance, and other forms of assistance to local historical societies, archives, libraries, and museums in their respective states or regions. The Field Services Alliance exists to create a forum to share information, provide mutual support and collegiality, and promote scholarship among those who, on a statewide or regional level, offer educational services to local historical organizations and other who practice history.

Historic House Museums: AASLH's Historic House Museum Committee provides advice and direction for the development of programs and services that benefit historic house museums; and to ensure that AASLH's programs and services for these organizations are high quality, address identified needs of the membership, and reflect current issues and thinking in the field.

Military History: Military history is an important subset of the history field. The AASLH Military History Committee provides advice and direction for the development of programs and services that benefit U.S. history institutions with a military focus as well as museums/historic sites with military items in their collections. The Military History Community is made up of a dedicated network of professionals committed to providing the best resources for those interested in the care of military artifacts and interpretation of military history at their sites. Almost every history organization in the country has some affiliation with or attachment to military history. We are here to help ensure that AASLH's programs and services for these organizations are high quality, address identified needs of the membership, and reflect current issues and thinking in the field.

Religious History: The Religious History Affinity Community provides a forum in which the history of all faith communities may be shared, understood, and appreciated. Additionally, the group serves as a resource for sharing best practices in research, interpretation, and exhibition of religious history, particularly for those organizations with minimal experience in these areas. Membership in the community is open to any member of the AASLH community, particularly those with an interest in religious history. The group seeks a broad representation of faith communities, institutions, and geographic locals in order to enhance and diversify its membership.

Small Museums: The Small Museums Community assists America's small museums in their endeavors, helping to make them stronger and more responsive to their communities. The Committee encourages small museums to share successful strategies in workshops and national meetings and demonstrate what the field can learn from small museums. Through its programming and initiatives, AASLH plans to strengthen the small museum, an important steward of local and national history.

Women's History: The Women's History Affinity Community is comprised of those who are interested in presenting and encouraging accurate, compelling, diverse, and often controversial women's history. The affinity community encourages thoughtful scholarship, curriculum,

interpretive content, public and educational programs, and shares best practices and strategies for including women's history in sites and locations of all sizes. The group also strives to encourage and promote women's leadership in the museum and historical fields.

Task Forces and Ad Hoc Committees

250th Anniversary Coordinating Committee: AASLH has organized a coordinating committee to facilitate communication and coordination among national stakeholders as preparations for the Semiquincentennial proceed.

Annual Meeting Host Committee: This committee serves a dual purpose. The first purpose is to work with AASLH to further the field of state and local history through supporting the educational efforts of the Annual Meeting. The second purpose is to work closely with AASLH staff to ensure the success of the Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting Program Committee: This committee develops the content for sessions and workshops that relate to the theme developed by AASLH staff, Program, and Host chairs. Travel to one Program Committee meeting is required.

Emeritus Council: Created in 2015, this group is a means to keep the AASLH Council and staff in closer communication with individuals who know the association, its needs, and its history well. The Emeritus Council consists of all those who have served on the AASLH Council, and currently includes about 150 people. From time to time the AASLH President & CEO and Council seek advice and service from members of the Emeritus Council; for example, with AASLH's awards, bylaw revisions, advocacy, and strategic planning.

History in Our Parks: The purpose of the History in Our Parks Task Force is to identify the unique needs and challenges of parks and recreation agencies that care for historic and cultural resources while operating within a system that is not geared towards heritage preservation. In doing this, the task force seeks to gather data on the number of parks and recreation agencies (municipal, county, and others) that care for historic and cultural resources (museums, historic sites, collections, archeological sites, cemeteries, landscapes, etc.), initiate an assessment of their needs and challenges, and explore how AASLH can help through networking, training, and collaborative efforts with other organizations.

Other Committees

Climate and Sustainability: The purpose of the Climate Sustainability Committee is to survey current and needed practice to make recommendations to the AASLH Council on how to support and guide the field as it incorporates environmental sustainability and climate work, internally and externally, to reflect standards of responsible stewardship.

Editorial Advisory Board: The Editorial Advisory Board aids in the publication of books in the AASLH series with [Rowman & Littlefield Press](#). The committee is charged to seek out and review proposals for the AASLH series of books, to think critically about the needs of the field, and to bring to the committee any new, interesting, and/or innovative research for possible publication. The committee meets quarterly via conference call to review proposals and reader reports, make recommendations on publications, and brainstorm possible book ideas.

Nomenclature: The Nomenclature Committee serves to promote Nomenclature, to assist with its adoption, and to maintain and develop Nomenclature to ensure that it remains responsive to the needs of the profession. The [Nomenclature website](http://www.nomenclature.info) (www.nomenclature.info) offers the most up-to-date version of the Nomenclature standard, as well as a user guide, terminology

submission forms, and other helpful resources. Terminology is available in both English and French.

12. AASLH Staff Information

All AASLH staff can be reached by calling 615-320-3203. Email addresses and committee assignments are below.

Aja Bain, Programs and Publications Manager, abain@aslh.org

Editorial Advisory Board

Educators and Interpreters

Nomenclature

Religious History

Ashley Bouknight, Senior Manager, Professional Development, bouknight@aslh.org

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

Standards and Ethics

Women's History

Alex Collins, Professional Development Manager, collins@aslh.org

Field Services Alliance

Small Museums

John Dichtl, President and CEO, dichtl@aslh.org

Audit

Emeritus Council

Finance

Governance

Investment

Leadership Nominating

State Historical Administrators Meeting (SHAM)

Bethany Hawkins, Chief of Operations, hawkins@aslh.org

Annual Meeting Host

Annual Meeting Program

Historic House

National Awards

John Marks, Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives, and Director, Public History Research Lab, marks@aslh.org

250th Anniversary Coordinating Committee

History in Our Parks

Rebecca Mendez, Membership and Office Coordinator, mendez@aslh.org

Administrative support for all committees. Please contact through your staff liaison.

Aubrey Menich, Professional Development Coordinator, menich@aslh.org
Climate and Sustainability
Emerging History Professionals

Rey Regenstreif-Harms, Membership and Development Manager, regenstreif-harms@aslh.org
Military History

Albert Samuels, Senior Manager, Marketing and Membership, samuels@aslh.org
Marketing support for all committees. Please contact through your staff liaison.

Appendix A
American Association for State and Local History
[Name of Committee]
Job Description for Committee Members
Template April 2021

Committee Charter:

[Insert charter for committee]

Committee member's job description:

Committee members work with and advise the AASLH staff liaison on the development of programs and services for the group. Depending upon his/her own interest and time availability, a committee member may agree to chair or work on a special project that the committee chooses to undertake. Committee members serve a two-year term renewable for another two years. After the second term is completed, the committee member must step down for at least one full year before rejoining the committee. During their term(s), they will assist the committee chair with the goals and activities of the group, as determined by the Affinity Group Committee.

Activities of the committee:

[Updated each January with annual goals.]

Committee Requirements

- **Committee meets four to six times per year—one meeting is held each year at the AASLH annual meeting, the rest are held via conference call.**
- Time required for committee meetings is approximately one hour per meeting (4-6 hours per year). Additional time may be required for work on special projects.
- Committee members are asked but not required to attend the committee meeting and group event held at the AASLH annual meeting each year. Other travel is generally not required.
- Committee members pay their travel costs and registration fee if they choose to attend the AASLH annual meeting.

Committee Requirements

Estimated number of committee meetings per year: Committee meets four to six times per year—one meeting is held each year at the AASLH annual meeting, the rest are held via Microsoft Teams.

Estimated time commitment required: Time required for committee meetings is approximately one hour per meeting (4-6 hours per year). Additional time may be required for work on special projects.

Amount of travel required: Committee members are asked but not required to attend the committee meeting and group event held at the AASLH annual meeting each year. Other travel is generally not required.

Expenses required: Committee members are asked to pay their travel costs and registration fee if they choose to attend the AASLH annual meeting.

AASLH staff liaison to the committee: [Insert staff contact information.]