

TENNESSEE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD (THRAB)

By-laws

Article I. NAME

The name of this organization is the Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board, also known as THRAB.

Article II. ORGANIZING AUTHORITY

THRAB is a state board, appointed by the Governor, under the authority of federal statutes and regulations governing the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) program of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), 55 U.S.C. 2501; 36 C.F.R. 1206.

Article III. MEMBERSHIP

The THRAB consists of at least seven (7) members. The executive director of the Tennessee Historical Commission and the administrator of the Tennessee State Library and Archives (State Librarian and Archivist) are ex officio voting members of the THRAB, formalized by gubernatorial appointment. The Governor also appoints additional members for three-year renewable terms; terms are staggered so that one-third of the Board is newly-appointed or reappointed each year. NHPRC regulations require that a majority of the members must have experience in the administration of historical records or in the field of research or activity that makes extensive use of such records. Members continue to serve expired terms until replaced or reappointed.

Article IV. OFFICERS

A. State Coordinator

The Governor appoints either the administrator of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Assistant State Archivist, or the executive director of the Tennessee Historical Commission as THRAB State Coordinator, as required by NHPRC regulation.¹ The State Coordinator shall represent the THRAB in state and national forums, and shall act as meeting convener and THRAB secretariat. The State Coordinator is a member of the THRAB and serves a renewable four-year term. The State Coordinator's employing agency shall serve as fiscal coordinator for the THRAB.

¹ "The governor of each state desiring to participate in the program appoints a State Historical Records Coordinator, who must be a full-time professional in charge of the state archival program or agency. If the state has another state-funded historical agency or agencies, the official in charge of those agencies must be a member of the State Historical Records Advisory Board. [Guidelines for State Historical Records Coordinators and State Historical Records Advisory Boards (1993)]

B. Deputy Coordinator

The duly appointed state coordinator may designate a deputy to assist in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the coordinator and to serve as an acting coordinator at the coordinator's direction or upon the coordinator's resignation or other inability to serve. The deputy coordinator should either be a member of the THRAB or an employee of the coordinator's agency and serves as secretary for the THRAB.

Article V. RECORDS DEFINED AND ENTITIES SERVED

The term "record" as used in these By-laws includes textual, non-textual, machine-readable, and other documentary materials, regardless of origin, physical form, or characteristics, normally considered archival.²

THRAB's program scope and interests relate, but are not limited, to records documenting the history and heritage of Tennessee and its people held by the following entities in Tennessee:

- State government
- Local governments
- Historical organizations
- Libraries
- Archives
- Individuals
- Business and industry
- Professional associations
- Cultural organizations
- Religions denominations
- Academic institutions
- Ethnic groups and organizations

Article VI. PURPOSES AND PROGRAM SCOPE

The Board will place special emphasis upon supporting and endorsing the following objectives:

- Develop and maintain a statement of goals and priorities for historical records programs in Tennessee;

² An internationally-accepted definition is: "A record is recorded information produced or received in initiation, conduct, or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context, and structure sufficient to provide evidence of that activity." [*Guide for Managing Electronic Records from an Archival Perspective*. Paris: International Council on Archives, 1997, page 22.]

- Advise on matters pertaining to collection and preservation of historically significant records, endorsing and supporting policies, programs, and projects that address established goals and priorities;
- Promote and publicize the NHPRC grant program, encouraging participation;
- Provide grant consultation, assisting grant applicants in preparing proposals;
- Develop grant applications to address historical records issues of statewide concern;
- Monitor legislation, reviewing proposed legislation concerning public or historical records administration and advising on its applicability and potential effects;
- Endorse or oppose pending legislation as warranted, and submit legislation when appropriate;
- Establish communications with associations and organizations having records management and/or archives interests, defining areas of mutual interest to support systematic collection of Tennessee historical records and preclude duplication of effort; Conduct studies to better define historical records conditions and problems in Tennessee, proposing solutions;
- Foster and support cooperative networks for conservation, bibliographic control, and public access for historical records;
- Sponsor, develop, and/or present conferences, seminars, and workshops on historical research topics;
- Expand educational opportunities, coordinating with academic institutions to develop or expand records management and archives course offerings;
- Promote programs designed to raise public awareness of historical records values, conditions, and needs.

Article VII. GRANT APPLICATION PRIORITIES

The Board supports the following priorities set by the NHPRC to increase access to and use of records:

- Development of education and promotional programs to encourage the use of archival records, including support for instructional manuals, brochures, other publications, model curricula, and training programs aimed at users and prospective users;
- Arrangement and description of historical records, including the creation of finding aids and other access tools, and the development of automated descriptive databases;
- Projects to improve access to archival records, including but not limited to projects that facilitate the exchange and dissemination of descriptive information about historical records;
 - development and use of descriptive standards and the resolution of bibliographic problems that limit access to historical records in original and published form;
 - removal of barriers to access for users of all types; and
 - improved distribution of information about historical records;
- Projects to increase and improve the distribution and use of microform, printed, and electronic editions and copies of archival collections;
- Projects to increase and enhance accessible documentation in previously under-documented subject fields.

Following the publication of *The Volunteer Challenge: Final Report of the State-wide Assessment of Historical Records in Tennessee* in 1993, the Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board established the following additional priorities which will be given special consideration in soliciting, supporting, and endorsing grant proposals that:

- Support archival programs that encourage use of historical records;
- Gather and disseminated basic information on archival activities such as space planning and funding;
- Develop collection management strategies, including policies on acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, and description;
- Improve archival conservation services and training programs on conservation;
- Preserve records found to be in imminent jeopardy;

- Encourage cooperative ventures for conservation, consultation, and purchase of archival equipment and supplies;
- Encourage and support disaster planning;
- Provide continuing education opportunities for archivists and records administrators;
- Involve archival professionals in the design, testing, and use of new records storage systems;
- Develop standards for institutional self-evaluation;
- Promote public awareness of historical records through educational programs, printed materials, and outreach programs.

Article VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS ON GRANT APPLICATIONS

THRAB shall follow procedures established by the NHPRC for grant application review. In addition, all grant proposals must be submitted to the Tennessee Historical Records Coordinator at least sixty (60) days in advance of the deadline for submission to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

In Board review and discussion of each grant application, the State Coordinator or presiding chair of the meeting shall seek, identify, and articulate a Board consensus, ask if there are any objections to the articulated consensus, and upon finding none shall declare the project recommended by the Board. If this consensus process fails, the Coordinator, presiding officer, or any member may seek a vote on the articulated consensus, and if the consensus is supported by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting, the project shall be declared recommended by the Board. If the project fails to achieve either a consensus or two-thirds majority of support, it shall be declared to have failed. The Board may then, by the same method of business, discuss and choose an appropriate response to the applicant of the failed proposal.

Article IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In accordance with TCA 12-4-101, the Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board (THRAB) members who are staff at an applicant institution or who are otherwise formally involved with a proposed project shall not submit an individual evaluation or summary of the project grant application. For purposes of this policy, formal involvement includes anyone in an administrative or policy-making position, such as a member of a board of directors or an administrative officer of a parent institution. It also includes any member who has received compensation, for example as a consultant, from an applicant. Board members shall declare any conflict of interest publicly and for the record at the Board meeting at

which the grant application is considered, and shall excuse himself or herself from that meeting while the Board discusses the merits of the proposal.

In those instances when the State Coordinator is involved with a proposed project, the Coordinator shall assign responsibility for collection of individual evaluations and preparation of the summary statement to the Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission or the State Librarian and Archivist, whichever is appropriate. In the event of a joint application from the State Library and Archives and the Historical Commission, the Coordinator shall assign responsibility to another THRAB member who is not an officer of either agency.

In the event that fewer than seven THRAB members remain unaffected by this policy as applied to any grant application, the State Coordinator shall appoint a review committee consisting of at least seven persons to evaluate the proposal. The review committee shall consist of those Board members unaffected by this policy and other individuals chosen by these unaffected Board members.

Article X. MEETINGS AND RECORDS

The THRAB shall meet at least three times each year to review grant applications and conduct other business. Other meetings may be called at the initiation of the State Coordinator or by any two other THRAB members. All meetings shall be subject to provisions of the Tennessee Open Meetings Law (TCA 8-44-102). THRAB records shall be maintained by the State Coordinator and subject to provisions of the Tennessee Open Records Law (TCA §10-7-503).

Article XI. QUORUM

A simple majority of THRAB members shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of meeting and conducting business.

Article XII. COMMITTEES

The State Coordinator shall appoint such committees as are necessary to effect the purposes and program scope of the THRAB.

Article XIII. RULES OF ORDER

Except as herein provided otherwise, Roberts Rules of Order, latest edition, shall serve as parliamentary authority for the THRAB, subject to Tennessee statutes and regulations.

Article XIV. AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Proposed amendments to these by-laws must be sent to all THRAB members at least thirty (30) days in advance of a scheduled meeting. Discussion of proposed

amendments shall appear as a separate item on the meeting's agenda. Passage of amendments shall require a two-thirds vote of THRAB members present and voting.

A by-laws review committee consisting of the State Coordinator, Deputy State Coordinator and a third member selected by the Coordinator shall meet every other year to recommend needed by-law revisions to the THRAB.

Tennessee Historical Records Advisory Board (THRAB) By-laws revisions:

15 September 1989

24 January 1994

14 March 1994

7 March 1995

22 July 1999 [current edition]