

The Role of a CHC Appointee

Recommendations and Reminders for New and Seasoned Appointees

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The County Historical Commission (CHC) Outreach program receives calls each week asking for in-person presentations. Outreach staff conducted eight CHC orientations this year, providing training to more than 200 appointees from more than 60 counties. Didn't make an orientation? Don't worry, because there are plenty of opportunities for appointees to self-educate. Here are some suggestions for new and seasoned appointees that will increase your understanding of a CHC's mission:

- 1. Read the CHC statute.** Texas Local Government Code Chapter 318 enables county commissioners courts to establish CHCs. The statute is brief, but provides parameters to which CHCs must adhere. To find this statute, search for "Role of a CHC Appointee" on the Texas Historical Commission (THC) website (thc.texas.gov).
- 2. Read CHC bylaws.** Most CHCs have bylaws to provide organizational structure that complies with the CHC statute and offers general guidelines that help CHCs conduct business appropriately. If your CHC has bylaws, make sure all appointees read them and refer to them as needed.

3. Read CHC reports.

Most CHCs file an annual report each year with the THC. Contact your CHC chair to access copies of the reports for the last few years—this will provide a well-rounded understanding of your CHC's accomplishments and areas needing improvement.

- 4. Read other CHC reports.** The THC's website provides summaries of past reporting, as well as report highlights from active CHCs. To find this information, visit thc.texas.gov/improve-chc-annual-reports.

- 5. Take Open Meetings training.** Political appointees in Texas are directed to receive training in Texas open government laws. Free online training is provided at texasattorneygeneral.gov (search for "open government training").

- 6. Commit to participate.** CHC statutes direct their organizations



CHC appointees recently gathered at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site for training from THC staff, including site educator Rachel Galan, at left.

to initiate and conduct programs—CHCs should be working commissions. This necessitates that all appointees be working commissioners rather than letting a few appointees carry the workload.

- 7. Seek preservation solutions.** CHC statutes specify that CHC programs should result in the preservation of historic cultural resources. A CHC's job requires more than marking sites throughout the county. CHCs are stewards of county resources, requiring knowledge of their physical conditions and methods by which these places can be saved. ★

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