

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*

November 1, 2020

**Re: County Historical Commission (CHC) Appointments**

**Dear County Judges and Commissioners:**

CHC appointments are professional commitments to represent the county's interests related to historic and cultural heritage. During 2019, CHCs reported having contributed 444,800 hours of service to counties across Texas, which carries a monetary value of \$11 million using rates published on [independentsector.org](http://independentsector.org).

This extraordinary contribution is thanks to the dedicated and productive individuals who are appointed by county commissioners courts. **Now is the time to identify potential appointees** who will contribute consistently during the 2021–2022 term of service. Consider how your county can benefit from a CHC comprised of experienced and active appointees.

Chapter 318 of the Texas Local Government Code directs county commissioners courts to make CHC appointments in January of odd-numbered years for a two-year term. To ensure a smooth transition between terms, **consider approving 2021–2022 appointments by December 31 with a start date of January 1, 2021.**

We encourage you to appoint and reappoint individuals who have the knowledge and skills to perform successfully, even though the current pandemic may require that appointees shift the focus of their service to some degree.

**The enclosed flyers provide supplemental information** on recommended appointee criteria and submitting appointee rosters to our agency as required by state statutes. This information will help you appoint individuals who can assist county officials in efforts to preserve historic resources, encourage heritage tourism, and revitalize communities.

Thank you in advance for sharing contact information for CHC appointees for the 2021–2022 term of service.



Amy Hammons, Coordinator  
County Historical Commission Outreach Program

Enclosed: CHC Organizational Flyers 1 & 2, 2019 CHC Annual Report Summary



Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 318, enables county commissioners courts to appoint individuals to serve on county historical commissions (CHC). Section 318.003(d) directs county commissioners courts to provide to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) with a list of appointees and their mailing addresses. The information below will help county officials and staff submit accurate information to the THC.

*Fort Bend CHC representatives receive a Distinguished Service Award (DSA) certificate from Judge KP George for the 2018 year of service.*



### Prior to Submitting Appointments

Before selecting appointees, please verify that potential appointees and those proposed for reappointment are willing and able to serve. Ensuring an active level of commitment is of particular importance during our current pandemic. Social distancing policies and preferences may require that appointees shift the focus of their service. Please work with CHC appointees to determine preservation activities that the county and appointees feel confident pursuing.

As of October 2020, a number of CHCs have resumed indoor and outdoor activities. To support these efforts, THC staff have provided recommendations for preservation-related work that can be accomplished within social distancing guidelines: [www.thc.texas.gov/thc-recommendations-chcs-2020-interim](http://www.thc.texas.gov/thc-recommendations-chcs-2020-interim). This web material also highlights ongoing CHC efforts to demonstrate how appointees continue to preserve and protect resources during the pandemic.

### Ensuring Accurate Appointee Contact Information

Please gather the names, physical addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses for each appointee and enter the information into the roster template provided here: [www.thc.texas.gov/chc-appointments](http://www.thc.texas.gov/chc-appointments). Submitting appointee information using this Microsoft Excel template enables our agency to merge data from 254 counties, creating a mass mailing list to promote opportunities and services that contribute to the livelihood of your county.

### Submitting 2021-2022 CHC Appointee Rosters

Please ask county staff to complete the CHC roster template noted above and email the completed roster to CHC Outreach Specialist, Nano Calderon—512-463-9052, [nano.calderon@thc.texas.gov](mailto:nano.calderon@thc.texas.gov).

*Brazos CHC is one of several CHCs that use virtual platforms to conduct commission meetings, provide committee updates, and interact with public.*



**Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 318**, enables county commissioners courts to appoint individuals to serve on county historical commissions (CHC). Visit the following webpage to reference a record copy of these statutes: [www.statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/LG/htm/LG.318.htm](http://www.statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/LG/htm/LG.318.htm). The statutes provide minimal direction for appointee criteria and appointment methodology. This flyer comments on both issues in response to county official inquiries.

### **Statutory Directives for CHC Composition**

- CHC must be composed of at least 7 county residents; statutes do not include a maximum number of appointees.
- Appointees serve a two-year term, ideally beginning in January of odd-numbered years.
- Appointees must broadly reflect the age, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the county.
- Appointees must have an interest in historic preservation and an understanding of local history and resources.

### **Appointment Methodology**

Statutes do not address the exact methodology for appointing CHCs. Our research shows that this process varies somewhat from county to county. Some county officials interview individuals seeking the appointment and others defer to recommendations from existing CHC appointees. Whatever method your county selects, please consider the following recommendations prior to appointment. Applying statutory criteria along with our recommended criteria along ensures that appointees are active, work well with others, and leave a positive impression with the public.

### **Recommended Appointee Criteria**

Please appoint individuals who can contribute in a variety of ways despite the current pandemic. If possible, appoint individuals who have Internet access (home, CHC office, or public hub), can leave home to perform site visits, and will maintain a positive attitude. Appointees should be able to meet the following recommended criteria.

- Able and committed to attend full commission meetings; statutes require at least 4 meetings per year.
- Able and willing to volunteer time to plan and manage projects, programs, and events.
- Able to receive/respond to public inquiries about county historic resources in a timely manner.
- Able and willing to attend preservation education opportunities outside of his/her county.
- Able to provide site visits to historic properties around the county to update property inventories and provide current information on site conditions to THC staff.



*Comal CHC appointees perform conditions assessments summer 2020.*

The Texas Historical Commission received reports from 185 County Historical Commissions (CHC) for the 2019 year of service. Below are primary reporting statistics that demonstrate the breadth and value of CHC services.

- **444,808 CHC volunteer hours represents work of 213 employees and has a monetary value of \$11,311,467.\***
- **Return on investment**—for every \$1 counties invested in CHCs, \$9.87 worth of service was returned by CHCs.
- CHCs supplemented county money with \$347,636 from grants, donations, and fundraisers.

Financial data from 2019 CHC annual reports	Average allocation	Reporting Totals
Annual county allocation—122 CHCs received 2019 allocation:	\$6,353	\$775,033
County money allotted for museums—21 CHCs provided amounts:	\$13,151	\$276,171
Any other money issued by the county:		\$94,493
<b>Total county monies invested:</b>		<b>\$1,145,697</b>

**General information about Texas CHCs based on 2019 CHC reports**

- Average size of reporting CHCs is 18 appointees and usually hold six meetings per year.
- CHCs provide an average of 2,404 volunteer hours per year; reports show zero hours upwards to 20,000 hours.
- CHCs participate in a wide range of activities, some of which are noted below.

Select preservation activity based on 185 CHC reports for 2019 year of service	# of participating CHCs
Visit sites to monitor the physical condition of subject markers in your county	114
Visit sites to monitor the physical condition of cemeteries in your county	115
Visit sites to monitor the physical condition of designated properties (RTHL, NR)	61
Used the THC website information to educate appointees	99
Made concerted efforts to improve online presence of CHC and/or county	91
Provided educational events/presentations to adult audiences outside your CHC	93
Provided educational events/presentations to youth/schools	76
CHC appointees volunteered at a historic site that is open to the public at large	88
Provided tours of historic buildings and/or sites within the county	66

\* Current estimated volunteer hourly rate is \$25.43 as per independentsector.org.

Reporting data as of 6/1/20