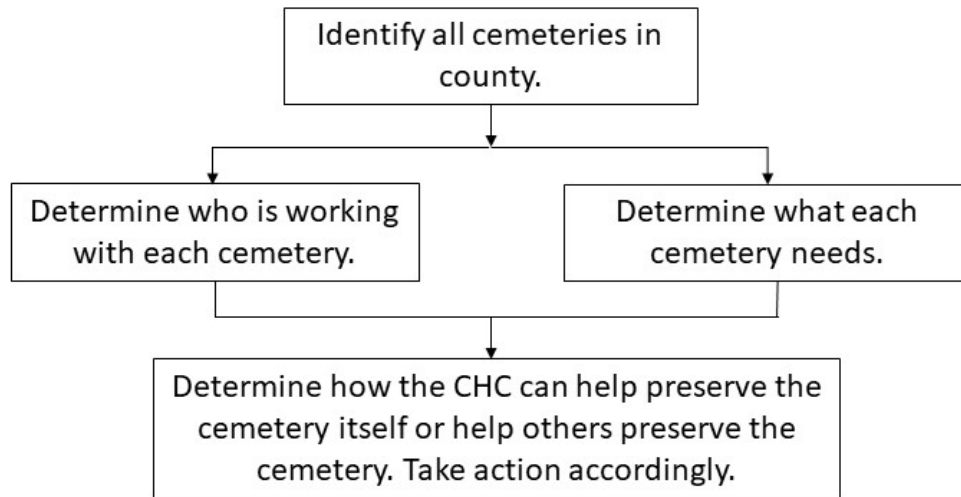


Cemetery Preservation Framework for CHCs with Suggested Activities

Chapter 318 of the Texas Local Government Code directs county commissioners courts to appoint a County Historical Commission (CHC) for the purpose of managing programs suggested by the commissioners court and the Texas Historical Commission (THC) for the preservation of the county's historic cultural resources. The THC's Cemetery Preservation program offers the following framework to help a CHC shape its cemetery-related program of work.



This framework emphasizes county-wide efforts versus individual cemetery projects. The THC recommends this approach because it encourages activities that benefit the greatest number of resources, and it helps prioritize those that are most endangered. It also helps a CHC align its cemetery-related work with the statutory assignments outlined by the local government code, including those that relate to historic resource surveys, conditions assessments, and public awareness and appreciation.

The framework recognizes that CHCs cannot (and should not) actively conduct preservation work at every cemetery in the county themselves. It allows for a CHC to intervene directly when a threat is imminent, but otherwise the framework focuses on meeting the collective needs of the county's cemeteries through increased awareness, communication, and collaboration.

The following page provides a list of suggested activities for each framework component:

IDENTIFY (HOW MANY & WHERE): CHCs know how many cemeteries exist in the county and where they are located.

- Maintain an inventory of known cemeteries.
- File an Existence of Cemetery Form or Notice of Unverified Cemetery and add the cemetery to the county inventory of cemeteries, as appropriate.
- Review and update this inventory regularly.
- Review the THC Historic Sites Atlas to make sure it includes all cemeteries on the inventory and notify THC if any cemeteries are missing.
- Share locational data with local planning offices.

CONNECT (Identify WHO): CHCs know who (if anyone) is responsible for each cemetery, or who's already working with the cemetery, and how to contact them.

- Identify responsible party for each cemetery; keep current contact information for each.
- Regularly contact these people to keep tabs on upcoming activities and meetings.
- Encourage posting signs with contact information.
- Conduct deed or other research to determine ownership/authority of abandoned or neglected sites.

ASSESS (Identify the NEED): CHCs know how to identify endangerment factors and assess needs of a cemetery.

- Assess physical and programmatic needs of each cemetery, or solicit this info from the cemetery trustees.
- Keep a master list of needs and threats and assign priorities.
- Prioritize urgent needs not being addressed by others.
- Maintain awareness of changing nature of threats.
- Stay up-to-date on current cemetery laws and preservation guidelines.

CULTIVATE (Take ACTION): CHCs know how to address a cemetery's preservation needs and/or support the work of others.

- Connect cemetery trustees with potential partners with ability to address needs.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to collaborate, when feasible.
- Cultivate new stewardship opportunities for abandoned or neglected sites by identifying and engaging both existing and potential stakeholders.
- Raise awareness of preservation standards and best practices.
- Promote resources available from THC, CHC, and other relevant partners.
- Implement programs that foster an understanding of cemeteries as cultural landscapes.
- Generate public awareness and appreciation for cemetery preservation by publicizing and promoting success stories.