

GEORGIA HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY COUNCIL ACTION PLAN, 2024-2027

Purpose

The Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC) Action Plan identifies specific, actionable, impactful steps to improve the care and use of our state's records. Our goals are designed to be realistic ones for a volunteer board working with the support of the Georgia Archives and key partners, and with a base level of NHPRC operational funding.

Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council

The Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board was created in 1993 by act of the Georgia General Assembly. In 2013, the Georgia General Assembly changed GHRAB to The Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC). The Council is a continuation of and successor in interest to the former Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board.

Per legislation, the purpose of the Council is to advise the Board of Regents and the Georgia Archives; to serve as the state advisory body required by federal granting agencies; and to encourage cooperative efforts to improve the condition of Georgia's historical records.

The Council consists of 12 members appointed by the Governor. A majority of the members shall have recognized experience in the administration of government records, historical records, or archives or in a field of research or activity that makes extensive use of historical records. The Council shall be as broadly representative as possible of the public and private archival and research communities and organizations in the state. Terms are for three-years, except that each member serves until a successor is appointed. Members are eligible for reappointment. The Council may hire temporary staff for specific activities if funds are available. The director of the Georgia Archives serves as Georgia Historical Records Coordinator and assists the Council in its activities.

Previous Activities

During its history, GHRAC has awarded significant funding to local governments and other repositories statewide for records management and disaster preparedness projects. The purpose for these grants was to assist local governments with the maintenance of records related to official governmental actions, as well as real estate transactions (deeds, plats), probate court records (wills, trusts, estates), and other records of importance to the people of the municipality or county. The Council administered a successful and highly useful "Circuit Rider Archivist" program to guide local governments and other repositories, and it has developed an annual awards program highlighting excellence in the preservation and use of records.

Mission

The mission of the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council per its bylaws is to:

- Promote the educational use of Georgia's historical records;
- Evaluate and improve the conditions of records;
- Encourage statewide planning for preservation and access;
- Foster cooperation and collaboration among users and keepers of Georgia's historical records; and
- Advise the University System of Georgia and the Georgia Archives on issues concerning records.

Actions

1. GHRAC Awards Program.

Encourage and acknowledge excellent work in preservation and access through awards in the following categories: Legislative and local history advocacy, archival program development, documenting Georgia's history, and research using the holdings of archives.

Promote the educational use of records by acknowledging annually excellent examples of teaching and learning with archival material. The Council will present awards to individuals, organizations, and institutions that integrate primary sources into classrooms or school district curricula. Recipients will demonstrate how the use of records in teaching improves student academic performance, enhances community involvement, or models innovative and creative pedagogical techniques. GHRAC also will present awards to students (grades 6-12, undergraduate, and graduate) for their meritorious use of primary sources.

The Chancellor of the University System of Georgia or designee will preside over the GHRAC Awards presentations. This goal continues what has become the Council's signature annual event, consistently well-attended. The Governor, First Lady, and numerous state legislators have participated in past years.

2. Regrants Program.

Offer approximately ten implementation regrants each year to local governments, libraries, and educational organizations, to develop and/or implement projects that identify, preserve, and provide access to historical records. Any local repository with permanently valuable archival materials that are available, without charge, to the public on a regularly scheduled basis will be eligible to apply. Preference will be given to underserved communities. Funding will be available for activities such as purchasing archival supplies and equipment; creating or adding to existing online finding aids and catalogs; developing virtual archives; hiring consultants to identify needs and priorities for improving efforts to organize, describe, preserve, and improve access to collections; and engaging contract services to assist with efforts such as the digitization of records.

3. Professional Education and Training.

Key to preservation and use is a robust continuing education program for those charged with the care of our state's essential records. GHRAC will advance this goal through the following activities:

- a. Support the Georgia Archives' efforts to provide archival and disaster preparedness training through additional funding and outreach;

- b. Implement Georgia Archives Institute scholarship program to cover tuition and travel costs of attendance for the nationally-recognized Institute by stewards of local records.

4. Consultation Services.

Starting in 2026, offer archival/records consultation services to local repositories in need of guidance. Provide small amounts of archival supplies, particularly when needed to support small and start-up efforts.

5. Advise the University System of Georgia and the Georgia Archives

GHRAC offer input and advice as needed.