

Working to restore NHPRC's FY2008 appropriations Guidelines for visits to Congressional home offices

Experienced advocates say that nothing works better than an in-person meeting with a member of Congress and his or her staff to draw attention to important issues. Take advantage of Congressional recesses to connect with your Congressional representatives. Or pay a visit to home office staff even if the representative or senator isn't in town. It can lay an important foundation for future contacts and support.

Making an appointment to see the member of Congress (or staff)

Use the following calendar to determine when your member is most likely to be available. Of course, many members of Congress also return to their home districts on weekend while Congress is in session.

The **US House of Representatives** has scheduled these district work periods in 2007:

Spring District Work Period	April 2-13
Memorial Day District Work Period	May 28 - June 1
Independence Day District Work Period	July 2 - 6
Summer District Work Period	August 6 - August 31

The **US Senate** is not in session (and therefore may be in home districts) during the following dates in 2007:

April 2-9
May 28-June 1
July 2 - 6
August 6- September 3

You can **find contact information for home district staff** through each member's home page at either www.senate.gov or www.house.gov.

What are we asking for?

From members of the House Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government: Please see that \$10 million dollars is provided to NHPRC to fund national grants for historical records and documentary editing programs and \$2 million dollars for administration.

What to take with you (to leave with the member or his staff)

[Issue Brief on NHPRC](http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/shrab/saveNHPRC/issuebrief.pdf)—Lee White of the National Coalition for History prepared this version for Humanities Advocacy Day to advocate for restoring FY2008 funding for NHPRC. (<http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/shrab/saveNHPRC/issuebrief.pdf>)

[Fact sheet outlining NHPRC's positive impact on your state](http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/shrab/saveNHPRC/savenhprcforsc.htm#lists)—we may already have one available for you or you can adapt your own using the existing ones as models. (<http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/shrab/saveNHPRC/savenhprcforsc.htm#lists>)

Safeguarding a Nation's Identity, the executive summary of CoSA's Emergency Preparedness report—describes why records are important and links good recordkeeping to safeguarding the property and citizenship rights of individuals and to the ongoing operations of governments. (<http://www.statearchivists.org/prepare/index.htm>) By extension, we believe this demonstrates why NHPRC funding—one of the few sources of funds that can be used to address concerns identified in the report—is important to the nation and its citizens. We printed enough copies to distribute to every member of Congress and believe the best way to get it there is through personal visits like these. Contact Vicki Walch to have more mailed to you (vwalch@statearchivists.org or phone 319-338-0248).

Here is some additional information that you might use to prepare for home district office visits or for future letters to your Representatives or Senators:

- 1. Why NHPRC is important (general):** NHPRC makes grants each year to institutions across the country to preserve historical records, publish historical papers, and to make historical materials more accessible. These grants help state and local organizations
 - edit and publish historical documents
 - develop archival programs
 - promote the preservation and use of historical records
 - promote regional and national coordination in addressing major archival issues

NHPRC provides critical funding to address the challenges of electronic record nationwide and in all kinds of organizations: state and local governments, colleges and universities, cultural organizations, and businesses.

While the National Archives concentrates on federal records, the NHPRC helps archivists, documentary editors, and historians to make similar records available in state and local governments, colleges and universities, historical societies and other cultural organizations nationwide. These non-federal records are equally essential to telling our national story and to the daily functioning of our democracy and economy (for example, records of corporate organizations and real estate transactions).

NHPRC delivers critical support to records-related emergency planning efforts in public and private institutions, including the development and implementation of practices designed to protect records essential to continuity of operations planning in state and local governments;

NHPRC grants sustain the work of biographers, classroom teachers, documentary filmmakers, journalists, lawyers, land surveyors, historians, genealogists, community historians, museum exhibit designers by supporting the preservation of records and their availability through archival research center and documentary editions.

NHPRC grants are a good investment. They require the investment of significant matching funds. The average non-federal contribution is almost 50%.

- 2. Why we need funding to support state re-grants.** Much of the American record—evidence of births, education, marriage (and divorce), property held, obligations satisfied and criminal conduct—is held at the state and local level. Our state and local governments and history organizations preserve the records that protect our rights.

Our nation has recognized the importance of history by its support of national institutions—the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution. However, this support is not adequate to reach the rest of our nation’s archives being held in state and local governments, historical societies, archives, and library history collections. More resources need to be directed to states and localities to ensure essential care so that documents and archival records in many forms can be readily used for a host of purposes by the people of this nation.

- 3. Why is NHPRC important to our state/region?** Provide the Congress member with specific examples of NHPRC’s contributions to your home state, region, or community. This might include the number of grants given by NHPRC to your state and the value they have brought to documenting and making accessible the state’s heritage, particularly how users in the state/district have made use of them.

For a list of NHPRC grants, see the NHPRC website:

<http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/projects/states-territories/> (or in South Carolina: <http://www.state.sc.us/scdah/shrab/saveNHPRC/savenhprcforsc.htm#lists>)

Use tangible examples to make your case if at all possible. For example:

- Teachers in the A-Plus School District used records on the Erie Canal to teach students how to recognize fact and opinion, and to draw conclusions from contradictory eye-witness accounts. An NHPRC grant enabled the A-Plus Historical Society to preserve the records and create guides to help teachers use them in their classrooms. This type of educational use supports the learning standards initiated as part of the No Child Left Behind efforts in this state.
- Filmmaker Sol Celluloid used photographs and film preserved and made accessible through an NHPRC grant to the Transparent Visual Archives for a path-breaking documentary on the experiences of soldiers from State X during D-Day in World War II.

A final note

We would greatly appreciate receiving information about any visits you make or arrange or copies of any individual or organizational letters sent to members of Congress. Please send such items via email to savearchives@statearchivists.org , fax them to CoSA at 319-354-2526 or by US Postal service to Council of State Archivists, 308 E Burlington St #189, Iowa City IA 52240

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