

# How Recent Federal Actions Impact Local Preservation Commissions

The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) is committed to supporting local preservation programs across the nation. While federal policy changes may seem distant from the day-to-day work of local preservation commissions, they have significant implications for communities nationwide.

The framework of historic preservation in the United States is outlined in the [National Historic Preservation Act \(NHPA\)](#), which defines the roles of local, state, and federal governments in protecting America's historic and cultural heritage. For local preservation programs, the NHPA provides critical resources and opportunities that empower them to identify and preserve the places that make their communities special.

Recent federal actions have introduced significant challenges to this preservation framework, directly impacting local preservation programs in several ways:

**Actions That Erase Certain Histories:** Preservation at the national level influences preservation efforts at the state and local levels. When federal resources—such as websites, databases, and guidelines—remove or omit aspects of America's diverse history, it sets a troubling precedent for local preservation programs.

As stated in NAPC's [Core Values and Principles Statement](#), NAPC believes that strong local preservation programs:

- ☐ Meaningfully engage with people in their community, particularly groups and individuals who have been left out of discussions about significance and preservation.
- ☐ Seek new information and regularly update existing information about older and historic places in their communities, including histories previously absent from dominant historical narratives.

Executive orders and other federal policy changes could restrict local communities and commissions from telling their own histories by limiting funding or withholding critical resources. These actions may also hinder a community's efforts to ensure that all voices and histories are acknowledged in historic preservation efforts.

**Limiting Public Involvement in Federal Projects:** The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) is responsible for overseeing the Section 106 review process of the NHPA and providing guidance to the President and Congress on historic preservation policy. NAPC is an appointed Observer on the ACHP, serving to inform and advise on local preservation programs and commissions. Recent federal actions and policy changes could limit opportunities for local commissions and the public to participate in the Section 106 process, weakening their ability to advocate for historic resources. One notable development is the Executive Order declaring a National Energy Emergency, which directs all executive departments and agencies, including the ACHP, to identify and utilize any lawful emergency authorities at their disposal. In accordance with this directive, the ACHP is offering guidance on the availability and application of emergency provisions within Section 106 regulations. For more information, see the [Section 106 Emergency Provisions and Executive Order Declaring a National Energy Emergency](#).

**National Park Service (NPS) Staffing Reductions:** Many local historic preservation programs are Certified Local Governments (CLG), a designation created by the NHPA and administered by the National Park Service. This popular program provides grant funding for local governments to implement preservation activities that represent their communities, but they must meet federal requirements. Reduced staffing levels would slow the approval of new CLGs, the administration of federal grant programs, and the review of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, creating delays in vital preservation efforts. These reductions have the potential to affect local preservation programs in several ways:

- ☐ **Challenges to the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program:** Delays in approving new CLGs may limit communities' access to grant funds. Current CLGs may also experience delays or loss of access to essential training and technical assistance provided by NPS.
- ☐ **Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Administration:** NPS staffing shortages may result in delays affecting State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs). These offices rely on HPF funds to provide training, technical assistance, and sub-grants to CLGs, which directly support preservation and community revitalization efforts.
- ☐ **Delays in the National Register of Historic Places Process:** Processing delays may prevent historic properties or districts from being listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which in turn obstructs access to Historic Tax Credits—an essential incentive for rehabilitation projects.

NAPC will continue to monitor policy developments and their potential effects on local preservation programs. We are dedicated to keeping our community informed and equipped to navigate these changes.

As always, NAPC encourages local preservationists to stay engaged and advocate for policies that support the preservation of our shared heritage. We will continue working alongside our partners to ensure that local preservation programs have the resources and support they need to thrive.



## Additional Resources

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Learn more about the relationship between local preservation programs and federal laws and programs:

[The National Historic Preservation Act & Local Commissions](#)

[The Historic Preservation Fund & Local Commissions](#)

[Preservation at Every Level](#)

[NAPC's Resource Library](#)

[NAPC's Advocacy Webpage](#)

[NAPC's Core Values and Principles Statement](#)