



Identify and Preserve Historic Properties

Identify Properties

Communities across New York State have a rich history that deserves to be preserved for future generations. As a historian, you have a responsibility to become involved in the preservation of those treasures. It's likely the most notable properties in your muni have been identified and possibly restored. There may be others that have significance because of an event that happened there or an early, influential settler who resided there.

Sources for Identifying Historic Properties:

- ◆ Use historical maps to locate properties.
- ◆ Check early published histories
- ◆ Use early photos to compare the building then and now
- ◆ Interview descendants of early owners for property details
- ◆ Check with local historical societies for background information
- ◆ Review deeds and the chain of ownership
- ◆ Look for property inventories and auctions notices.

For all historic properties in your muni, consider:

- ◆ Researching their background
- ◆ Copying deeds and wills associated with the property
- ◆ Creating a chronology of the property and its owners
- ◆ Writing an article about what you've found
- ◆ Recognizing the property with a historical marker
- ◆ Working with a local group who is restoring a historic property.

Certified Local Government Program

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs). Each local community works through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Once certified, CLGs become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program. Each community gains access to benefits of the program and agrees to follow required Federal and State requirements. You can read more about the program at: <https://www.nps.gov/clg/>

As of 2016, there are seventy-five (75) municipalities in New York State who qualified as Certified Local Governments. If you are considering applying for CLG status, contact the historian in one of the 75 munis to ask questions and hear helpful tips.

Preservation—2

CLG Program Benefits

These benefits are listed on the NYS Certified Local Government website:

- ◆ Ongoing, focused support from your SHPO
- ◆ Technical preservation assistance and legal advice
- ◆ Direct involvement in SHPO programs such as identifying properties that may be eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places
- ◆ Training opportunities that increase the ability of communities to protect their historic resources and integrate them into short- and long-term planning initiatives
- ◆ Grants designated exclusively for CLG projects
- ◆ Membership in statewide and national CLG networks.

New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

The New York State SHPO website, <https://parks.ny.gov/shpo>, provides information about such topics as:

- ◆ National Register Criteria
- ◆ Historic Resources Surveys
- ◆ Tax Credit Programs
- ◆ Archaeological Investigations
- ◆ Environmental Reviews
- ◆ Technical Assistance
- ◆ Contacts....and much more.

The steps for becoming a CLG are also covered:

- ◆ Passing an ordinance
- ◆ Establishing a Preservation Commission
- ◆ Holding Meetings
- ◆ Reporting

Whether your municipality becomes a CLG or not, there are activities you as the historian can do to recognize historical properties. You can:

- ◆ Research and write about the property
- ◆ Apply for a historical marker
- ◆ Determine whether the property qualifies for the state and national registers
- ◆ Add a page to your muni website that identifies historical properties.
- ◆ With the permission of the owner:
 - ◆ Photograph the property's interior and exterior
 - ◆ Offer a tour of the property
 - ◆ Submit an application for state and national register designation.

Remember: Historic Preservation is one of the four responsibilities of every historian.