



## Help for Nomination Sponsors

### New York State and National Registers of Historic Places



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

## Individual Resources

Thank you for your interest in proposing a property for nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Listing in the registers benefits properties by providing them with recognition and honor, ensuring that they are included in local planning decisions, and, in some cases, by providing eligibility for various preservation incentives.

### About the Registers

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) was established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and its counterpart, the State Register of Historic Places, was established under the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980. New York leads the nation in the National Register program, with more than 128,000 historic properties listed either individually or as components of historic districts. The New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) prides itself on the number, quality, and diversity of our nominations, representing themes important in the history of the nation, the state, and in numerous small villages and hamlets across New York. From architecture to space travel, from ancient archaeological sites to the Urban Renewal projects of the recent past, from sites associated with the Underground Railroad to those associated with LGBT civil rights, the National Register is intended to recognize everyone's history.

### Preparing a Nomination

Preparing a National Register nomination for an individual property is the responsibility of the sponsor and can be a lengthy process. National Register staff at the State Historic Preservation Office will help and guide you every step of the way, from reviewing your preliminary application, to presenting your project at one of the four quarterly meetings of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation (aka the State Review Board or SRB), to preparing it for final submission to the National Park Service (NPS). Occasionally, National Register staff is able to take a more active role in individual nominations, depending on the resource's preservation needs, staff priorities and workloads, and the abilities of the sponsor. The most successful projects are the result of collaborative work; it is always the sponsor's role to provide the research and documentation needed to support a property's eligibility.

### Contact Your National Register Representative at the State Historic Preservation Office

Please let us know if you have any questions. For information and assistance, visit [parks.ny.gov/shpo](https://parks.ny.gov/shpo) or call **518-237-8643** to identify your National Register representative, who will be your primary point of contact for the project.

*Image:* James H. Case III and Laura Rockefeller Case House, built 1962-1964 | Herkimer County

Revised July 2025

## **Who can sponsor a nomination?**

Many nominations for individual properties are sponsored by their owners, often an individual, family, or other group. Other times, a nomination may be sponsored by a historical society, church group, non-profit, developer, business, municipality, or one of many other interested parties.

Although anyone may sponsor a nomination, the State Historic Preservation Office requires that all owners be informed at the beginning of the process, and sponsors will need to demonstrate owner support before they begin the nomination.

## **How do I get started?**

The first step in sponsoring a nomination for an individual resource is to discuss the project with the National Register representative for your county.

These discussions are important. Your representative may already be familiar with the property, the area, or the local context, and/or may already have documentation about it or similar properties on file. A thorough discussion may give the representative a good idea of potential eligibility or at least a direction to guide you for further research. The representative may want to schedule a site visit before the application is completed.

A frank discussion of your preservation goals and objectives may also help your representative advise you on other preservation options. Upon learning your goals, the representative might suggest that something else should be done before, or even instead of, National Register listing.



Clark Witbeck Co. Warehouse, built ca. 1904  
Schenectady County

## **How long will it take to get my property listed?**

It depends! Nomination and listing on the State and National Registers is a lengthy process that varies depending on the complexity of the project, the skill of the applicant and/or consultant, and the workload of the National Register representative.

The process from start to finish can take a year or two, if not longer for complex projects. The increasing popularity and widespread use of preservation incentives has led to an extremely high demand for preservation assistance that staff cannot always meet.

You can help expedite your project by engaging the services of a good preservation consultant, providing high quality research, and sending in complete materials promptly. Staff are eager to work with engaged sponsors. As the expert on your project, with the best access to local archives and materials, your active participation in developing the nomination is essential to moving the process along more quickly.

## What properties are eligible to be listed?

To be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, properties must meet one of four criteria and retain **integrity**. In short, significance + integrity = eligibility.

The criteria require that a property be associated with an important event or theme; or an important person; or represent an important design/type/method of construction in architecture, landscape or engineering; or provide information about the past through archaeology. Properties can meet more than one of these criteria, but at least one is required for nomination. Properties can be nominated individually, in districts, or as part of multiple property nominations, depending on their individual circumstances. Although they must generally be more than 50 years old, there is a process for evaluating properties that have not reached that threshold.

Although there are many ways of preparing a nomination package, sponsors must demonstrate how a property is associated with an important theme in local, state or national history and that it is intact enough to illustrate that theme.

**For example:** A school might be associated with educational history (the development of local school districts in a town or school consolidation in a county), and it might also represent architectural history (how architects incorporated new education department regulations for health and safety or the popularity of colonial revival design in the 1920s). To be eligible, the school must also retain the features that illustrate these themes. Even if a resource is associated with a very important event, if it is so changed that you can no longer understand how the event took place, it will not meet the eligibility criteria. A school that has been gutted, for example, can no longer illustrate how classrooms were laid out for maximum light and air.

## What does it mean for a historic property to have 'integrity'?

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The location and setting of a rural schoolhouse, for example, provides information about the community that used it. Changes to design, materials, and plan can make it hard to understand how a building was designed or used.

### ***Seven Aspects of Integrity***

The National Register of Historic Places breaks integrity down into seven aspects reflecting a holistic approach to understanding a resource:

- » Location      » Setting      » Workmanship      » Association
- » Design      » Materials      » Feeling



*The building on the right lacks integrity, as it had been modified so much that it can no longer provide information about Greek Revival style architecture.*



## The State and National Register Process in New York State



St. James Firehouse, built 1923 | Suffolk County

*This is a brief outline of the process for listing a property in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. For more details, please contact your National Register representative at the SHPO.*

1. **Discuss** the proposed listing with your county's National Register representative.
2. **Submit an application** for National Register listing, which consists of the preliminary information form and the statement of owner support, preferably through the SHPO's online database called CRIS (Cultural Resource Information System).
3. Wait for the National Register representative to **evaluate the eligibility** of the property. They will contact you to discuss it.
4. Develop a **draft nomination** under the guidance of the National Register representative. Your representative will provide a **required items checklist** for the nomination.
5. When the draft meets all documentary requirements, the National Register representative will **schedule an official review** by the New York State Board for Historic Preservation (aka the State Review Board or SRB).
6. The SHPO will **notify owners and officials**.
7. If the SRB believes the property is eligible, it will **recommend that it be nominated** to the National Register.
8. Final documents will be presented to the State Historic Preservation Officer for review and approval. If the officer concurs with the SRB, they will **list the property on the State Register and nominate it to the National Register**.
9. The nomination will be **sent to the National Park Service (NPS)**.
10. NPS will review the nomination and, if it concurs, **list the property on the National Register**.
11. **Final notifications** will be sent out.
12. **Celebrate the listing!**

*Find the National Register representative for your county by visiting [parks.ny.gov/shpo](http://parks.ny.gov/shpo).*

## Preliminary Information Form

The preliminary information form is a brief questionnaire that asks about the property's type, function, materials, physical appearance, and location on a map. It also asks for a brief overview of its history and significance and an idea about which National Register criteria you believe it meets.

A good application will be based on research, provide accurate information, and have clear representative photos of the building (exterior and interior), any outbuildings, and its setting. Once SHPO staff has informed you that the proposed property meets the criteria for listing, your representative will also discuss the appropriate themes, period of significance, contributing and non-contributing features, boundary, and other aspects of the proposed nomination. SHPO staff will also present additional research needs or questions if necessary. The representative will also schedule a site visit. After the application has been thoroughly vetted, then you are ready to prepare the draft nomination. You will be given a checklist of required material.



William W. Gorham House, built 1826-1828 | Ontario County

## Nomination

Many nomination sponsors hire a professional consultant to prepare the National Register nomination (or even the application) for them. This is not required; however, it can expedite the process. The SHPO cannot recommend specific consultants, but you can ask your state or regional historic preservation nonprofit for this information. We strongly urge you to check references before hiring anyone. Make sure that the applicant has *completed* a project of similar size or complexity. The SHPO is responsible for ensuring that the nomination meets documentation standards established by the National Park Service. Nominations should be clear and well written, address the register's criteria, and follow standard grammar and bibliographic guidelines. Grammar and citations must follow the format in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

The National Register nomination is composed of three types of information: data, essays, and technical information (maps and photos). The National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Form* (available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/publications.htm>) offers specific guidance on completing nominations. Other NPS bulletins cover nominations of specific types of resources, such as cemeteries, battlefields, and suburbs. By far the most important items are **Section #7: Description** (which provides a complete current description of the resource, its site, landscape and all dependencies) and **Section #8: Significance** (which must contain a complete history of the property and explain exactly which of the criteria the resource meets and why). SHPO staff can provide you with a more detailed outline for completing these essays.

*Please note:* The New York SHPO does not require that you submit the information on the actual National Register template. We prefer to receive information as Microsoft Word documents to allow for editing.

## Review

When the draft is nearing completion, your National Register representative will work with you to identify a date for review by the NYS Board for Historic Preservation (aka the State Review Board or SRB). Typically, the review date will be one to two months after the completion of the draft to allow time to complete the owner notification requirements.

The SRB meets four times a year, so timing for every project will vary. Your National Register representative will present the nomination to the SRB, which reviews all of New York's State and National Register nominations. Owners and consultants are welcome – but not required – to attend. The SRB is always happy to hear from people who are passionate about historic resources.

## Owner Notification

The owner of the property and the chief local official of the appropriate municipality must be notified in writing that the state intends to bring the nomination to the SRB and they must be given an opportunity to comment on the proposal. If there are multiple owners (married/unmarried couples, multiple family members, etc.), EACH of them must be notified individually. The SHPO is required to send these notification letters at least 30 days in advance of the SRB meeting.

If the property is located within a community that has a Certified Local Government (CLG) historic preservation commission, the chief elected official and the commission will receive notification and a copy of the nomination 60 days in advance.

If the nomination is approved by the SRB and signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer, property owners and elected officials will receive a letter notifying them that it has been listed in the State Register. If the nomination is approved by the National Park Service, another letter will be sent informing owners and local officials that the district has been listed in the National Register.



821 Broadway, built 1906  
New York County

## Nomination and Listing

If the proposal is approved by the SRB, your National Register representative will prepare the nomination for final submission to the State Historic Preservation Officer, who is also the commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The commissioner confers State Register status and forwards properties to the National Park Service for consideration and listing on the National Register.

Review at the National Park Service typically takes 45–60 days, which includes a public comment period.