

Cultural District Advisory Committee or Board Development Guide

What is a Cultural District Advisory Committee or Board?

A group of dedicated individuals who support and guide the district toward achieving its mission and goals. This group provides specialized advice, expertise, and insights. They may have formal governance responsibilities and fiduciary duties, or they might be primarily consultative, offering guidance on specific areas of expertise, strategic direction, or projects. Some cultural districts establish a 501(c)(3) nonprofit board, while others are an extension of a liaison or local government.

FYI

Cultural districts are the responsibility of the Local Governing Authority (LGA). Despite taking on the role of advisory committee or board as well as some responsibilities, the LGA is ultimately responsible for the district. This is an agreement established between the state and LGA upon the inception of the district.

The information below is not exhaustive. It is intended to function as a broad resource that is adaptable for a variety of cultural district types. If additional resources or technical assistance is needed, please contact the Director of Civic Design and Cultural Districts Francesca Vega at fvega@crt.la.gov.

Key Characteristics:

- **Consultative Function:** Provides expert advice and recommendations on specific issues, such as strategic planning, trends, or community relations.
- **Expertise:** Members are chosen for their expertise, experience, and knowledge in relevant fields. They can include industry experts, community leaders, academics, or other professionals.
- **Diversity:** A well-rounded advisory committee includes individuals with diverse perspectives and backgrounds to offer a broad range of insights.
- **Terms of Service:** Members usually serve for a specific term, which can be renewed based on the needs of the organization and the members' willingness to continue.
- **Meetings:** The frequency and format of meetings vary, but they typically involve periodic gatherings to discuss and provide feedback on specific topics or projects.

Responsibilities:

- **Formulating Objectives:** Establishing strategic plans with clear goals, detailed timelines, and specific task assignments.

- **Providing Expertise:** Offering specialized knowledge and skills that complement the district's goals.
- **Strategic Input:** Contributing to the district's strategic direction by providing informed recommendations that represent and benefit the Cultural District's community.
- **Networking and Advocacy:** Leveraging their networks to support the district's goals and advocate on its behalf when appropriate.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Assessing programs, initiatives, and proposals, and providing constructive feedback for improvement.

Benefits:

- **Enhanced Expertise:** Access to a broader range of knowledge and skills.
- **Annual Reporting:** Annual reports can be a heavy lift for LGAs and liaisons. Having a group of people to help with this task is beneficial and likely to produce more accurate data.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** Improved strategic planning and decision-making based on the committee's expert insights and connection to the public.

Establishing a Committee or Board:

- **Define the Purpose:** Clearly outline objectives and how the objectives will support the district's mission and goals.
- **Identify Members:** Select individuals based on their expertise, experience, and ability to contribute meaningfully to the committee's purpose.
- **Set Terms:** Develop a document detailing the committee's role, responsibilities, meeting frequency, and operational guidelines.
- **Orientation:** Provide an orientation for new members to familiarize them with the district and its needs, ensuring they are well-integrated into the advisory process. The Cultural Districts Program Director can be part of the orientation.
- **Regular Review:** Periodically review the committee's composition, effectiveness, and relevance to ensure it continues to meet the organization's needs.