Italian American Task Force (IATF)
Organizing Committee Charter

Establishing a State Italian and Italian American Cultural and Heritage Studies Commission

Purpose

To bring together community leaders, educators, historians, cultural organizations, and civic representatives committed to establishing a permanent, legislatively authorized state commission dedicated to Italian and Italian American heritage studies, cultural understanding, and educational advancement.

The initiative draws upon the experience of the New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission, established in 2002, while adapting its approach to each state's legislative, educational, and cultural environment.

Mission

To advance fact-based education, historical understanding, cultural heritage, and critical thinking through a permanent public institution that **complements and strengthens existing educational agencies**, serving present and future generations.

The commission should promote the study of Italian and Italian American contributions within the broader American experience, recognizing the relationships among cultures and their shared influence on society.

Organizing Committee

The initial committee should seek participation from:

- Italian American community and organizational leaders.
- Educators, historians, and curriculum specialists.
- Representatives or prospective partners from state Departments of Education and educational institutions.
- Cultural heritage organizations and community institutions.
- Individuals experienced in government and legislative affairs.
- Younger-generation representatives committed to continuity.
- Other community partners who support the educational and cultural mission.

Initial Responsibilities

1. Establish a shared mission and preliminary objectives.
2. Identify participating organizations, educational institutions, and cultural partners.
3. Study the New Jersey commission's legislative foundation, educational programs, cultural initiatives, and achievements.
4. Explore partnerships with the state's Department of Education and other appropriate educational authorities.
5. Research the state's legislative and educational framework.
6. Develop relationships with prospective legislative sponsors.
7. Establish a practical plan for advancing the initiative.

Implementation Guidance: These responsibilities provide a general framework rather than a prescribed sequence. Practical examples, organizational templates, and state-specific guidance will be developed as participating states identify their legislative requirements, educational structures, and community circumstances.

Guiding Principles

Education First. Historical accuracy, educational value, and critical thinking will guide the commission's mission.

Students should be presented with the relevant historical facts and evidence, encouraged to examine differing perspectives, and empowered to reach their own informed conclusions.

Cultural Understanding. Italian and Italian American heritage will be studied within the broader context of American history and the contributions of other cultures.

Collaboration Rather Than Competition. Existing cultural and heritage organizations will be encouraged to participate as partners while retaining their individual identities and missions.

Nonpartisanship. The commission's educational and cultural objectives should transcend political affiliations.

Institutional Continuity. The objective is to establish an enduring public institution rather than a temporary initiative.

State Leadership. Each organizing committee retains responsibility for its state's initiative, with IATF serving as a resource, facilitator, and advisor.

Initial Deliverable

A preliminary organizing committee, a statement of purpose, identified educational and cultural partners, and an action plan for beginning legislative discussions.

This charter is a proposed IATF planning resource, not an official NJIHC governing document.