

Administrative Guide for Family History

Introduction

This administrative guide supplements the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders*, section 9, “Temple and Family History Work.” It discusses how stake presidencies, high council advisers, bishoprics, and high priests group leaders can:

- Implement and oversee family history programs.
- Provide direction to family history efforts.

The specific responsibilities of priesthood leaders and family history workers are listed in the chart at the end of this guide.

For additional information and instruction on how to administer family history in stakes and wards, see the Family History pages in the “Serving in the Church” section of LDS.org.

Overview

The family history organization in stakes and wards exists to help members identify their ancestors, link them into families, and ensure that temple ordinances are performed for them.

Family History and the Mission of the Church

Through family history, priesthood leaders can help proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead. Members who participate in family history and provide temple ordinances for their ancestors are more likely to live gospel-centered lives. They are more likely to hold personal and family prayer, personal and family scripture study, and regular family home evening. Leaders can use family history to strengthen members and families and to reach out to members of the community to introduce them to the Church. They can use family history in conversion, retention, and activation.

Key Priesthood Leaders

Under the direction of the stake presidency and bishopric, the assigned high council adviser and high priests group leader are the key priesthood leaders who help oversee and coordinate family history efforts in the stake and ward. In wards or branches where there is no high priests group

leader, an assigned member of the elders quorum presidency fulfills this role.

Family History Consultants

The key to a successful family history program is family history consultants who meet with members and families individually to help them begin and continue their family history work. The high priests group leader recommends and bishoprics call and set apart one or more family history consultants sufficient to meet the needs of members in each ward. Consultants also may be assigned to teach family history classes, serve in a family history center, and provide family history training. The high priests group leader supervises family history consultants in their work in the ward. The family history center director supervises family history consultants in their service in the center.

Ideally, family history consultants work directly with members in their homes and also serve in a family history center so they can become familiar with all the resources available to help members. Where there is no family history center near consultants, they may work directly with members in their ward. In some cases, consultants might be assigned specifically to serve only in a family history center.

The high council adviser may coordinate with bishoprics and high priests group leaders in the stake to assign one or more family history consultants to provide training to consultants and others with family history callings.

The Basic Program

The basic family history program of the Church consists of ward family history consultants who meet individually with members and families to help them do family history. In this program:

- Consultants reach out to ward members a few individuals or families at a time to help them become involved in family history. As consultants do this, over time all members of the ward can have the opportunity to receive help from a family history consultant.
- Consultants particularly focus on members suggested by the high priests group

leader through the priesthood executive committee or the ward council. Under the direction of the bishopric, the high priests group leader reports on temple and family history efforts in priesthood executive committee and ward council meetings. He discusses how this service can bless the lives of individual members and families.

- Consultants introduce new members to the principles of temple and family history work. They help new members to identify ancestors and provide needed temple ordinances for them. Where possible, they help them go to the temple to be baptized and confirmed for their ancestors.

How Leaders Implement the Basic Program

To implement the basic family history program, the bishopric and the high priests group leader do the following:

The bishopric:

- Calls and sets apart one or more consultants who actively reach out to help members participate in family history.
- Provides direction in priesthood executive committee and ward council meetings about individuals and families that family history consultants could contact.
- Ensures that new members of the Church have the opportunity soon after their baptism to receive help from a family history consultant to identify ancestors and provide ordinances for them.
- Receives a regular report from the high priests group leader on temple and family history efforts in the ward.

The high priests group leader:

- Recommends one or more members the bishopric can call and set apart as family history consultants.
- Ensures that family history consultants are trained and able to fulfill their calling. He encourages consultants to register online at consultant.familysearch.org so they can complete training for consultants.
- Gives a regular report on temple and family history efforts in the ward in priesthood interviews, priesthood executive committee,

and ward council meetings. He reports on the help consultants have provided to specific individuals and families.

- Leads family history discussions in priesthood executive committee and ward council meetings, under the direction of the bishop, to suggest individuals and families that consultants could contact.
- Meets regularly with family history consultants to provide counsel and help. He assigns them to contact members suggested by the priesthood executive committee or the ward council. He reviews the consultants' success in helping members do family history.

How Leaders Implement Supplemental Family History Programs

Supplemental family history programs, such as family record extraction and family history centers, are administered by the stake and overseen by the high council adviser.

Family Record Extraction

Stakes may request the family record extraction program to provide opportunities for members to participate in family history. Through family record extraction, members create indexes for family history information found in documents such as census records, church registers, and vital records. These indexes then are made available through the Church's family history resources on the Internet. Members can search these indexes to find their ancestors and provide ordinances for them.

Family Record Extraction Directors and Workers

The high council adviser oversees family record extraction programs. The high council adviser recommends members to be called as the stake family record extraction director, assistant directors (if needed), and family record extraction workers. A member of the stake presidency or the high council adviser calls and sets apart these members.

Request and Implement Family Record Extraction

Information on how the stake presidency requests the family record extraction program

for their stake is found in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, section 9, page 266.

The specific steps the high council adviser follows to implement family record extraction are listed in the chart at the end of this guide. For further information on family record extraction, see the *Family Record Extraction Administrative Handbook* (30985), or contact the area family history adviser.

Family History Centers

Family history centers are a valuable resource for family history consultants in helping members identify their ancestors and provide temple ordinances for them. Family history centers give members and community patrons access to family history resources, such as FamilySearch™ and the Church's circulating collection of microfilmed genealogical records. Centers can train members and consultants in how to use family history resources.

Center Directors and Consultants

The high council adviser oversees all family history centers in the stake. He recommends members to be called as family history center directors and assistant directors (if needed). A member of the stake presidency or the high council adviser calls and sets apart these members. Center directors are responsible for operating family history centers. The duties and responsibilities of family history center directors are discussed in the *Family History Center Operations Guide* (34051).

Family history centers are staffed by family history consultants. Under the direction of the stake presidency, the high council adviser coordinates with the bishoprics and high priests group leaders to assign enough family history consultants to staff each family history center in the stake. Members of the community may serve as volunteers in the centers, with the approval of the high council adviser.

Determine If a Center Is Needed

Church family history information is becoming increasingly available on the Internet. Members can do much of their family history, including submitting names to the temple, in their own homes or wherever they access the Internet.

Church approval for new family history centers generally is granted in areas of the world where member access to the Internet is still limited. Members and family history consultants in these areas use the Internet connection in family history centers to access FamilySearch. In areas of the world where members typically have Internet access in their homes, requests from stakes for new family history centers are approved only as an exception.

Establish or Relocate a Center

Information on how the stake presidency requests a new center or the relocation of an existing center is found in the *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, section 9, page 267.

The specific steps the high council adviser follows to establish a family history center are listed in the chart at the end of this guide. For further information on family history centers, contact the area family history adviser. For information on how to operate a center, see *Family History Center Operations Guide* (34051).

Priesthood Guidance for Members with Family History Callings

The high council adviser and high priests group leaders meet with or contact monthly or as regularly as possible the workers for whom they are responsible. In some areas, due to distance, priesthood leaders may need to consult with workers by telephone or other media, such as e-mail. In these meetings or contacts, family history workers can report on their activities and receive counsel from their leaders.

The high council adviser and high priests group leaders request a regular report from family history workers on how they are fulfilling their callings and any specific assignments. These leaders can then provide a report to the stake presidency or to the bishopric in stake and ward priesthood executive committee and council meetings. Regular reporting provides priesthood leaders and family history workers opportunities to counsel together and focus on progress in family history efforts.

Administrative Responsibilities for Family History

Position	Does the following:
Area Presidency or assigned member of the Presidency of the Seventy	<p>Oversees temple and family history activities in the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches the doctrines of temple and family history work. • Teaches leaders their temple and family history responsibilities. • Calls and sets apart one or more area family history advisers to assist in overseeing temple and family history work in the area.
Area family history adviser	<p>Assists in overseeing temple and family history work in the area:</p> <p>Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency. • Provides information to area leadership on the direction and plans of the Family and Church History Department. • Informs the department about the area’s family history needs and activities and works with the department to obtain necessary resources. <p>Trains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training to stake leaders and others within stakes and wards as directed or approved by the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency. <p>Oversees family history support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees family history support and family history missionaries in the area under the direction of the Family and Church History Department, as approved by the Presidency of the Seventy or the Area Presidency.
Stake presidency	<p>Oversees temple and family history work in the stake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigns one or more high councilors as high council advisers to help oversee temple and family history work. • Determines whether the stake should participate in family record extraction. • Determines whether the stake should request a family history center. <p>Encourages members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets an example in doing temple and family history work. • Helps members become involved in the work by sharing testimonies and experiences and ensuring that the doctrines, principles, and blessings related to temple and family history work are taught regularly in stake and ward meetings. • Helps members prepare to receive their own temple ordinances. • Encourages members to identify their kindred dead and provide temple ordinances for them. • Encourages members to attend the temple regularly where circumstances allow.
High council adviser	<p>Helps oversee temple and family history work in the stake, under the direction of the stake presidency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that the stake is organized to provide resources to the wards to help members in their temple and family history work. <p>Trains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets an example in doing temple and family history work. • Becomes knowledgeable in temple and family history work and assists the stake presidency in instructing other leaders and members in this work. He may assign family history consultants to assist him in providing family history training.

High council adviser

- Instructs high priests group and elders quorum leaders in their temple and family history responsibilities and ensures that the stake, wards, and quorums are organized to do temple and family history work.

Reports

- Meets regularly with the stake presidency to report on temple and family history work and to receive counsel.

Oversees supplemental family history programs

- Oversees the operation of family history centers and family record extraction programs.
- Recommends when the stake should participate in the family record extraction program.
- Recommends the establishment and placement of family history centers, when needed.
- Recommends individuals to be called as family history center directors, family record extraction directors, and extraction workers.

Implements family record extraction:

- Recommends an individual to serve as the stake family record extraction director. Under the direction of the stake presidency, the high council adviser, if assigned, extends a call to and sets apart the stake family record extraction director.
- Counsels with the stake family record extraction director to determine if assistant stake family record extraction directors are needed.
- Works with high priests group leaders to identify members to serve as assistant stake family record extraction directors (if needed) and family record extraction workers. Under the direction of the stake presidency, if assigned, he extends calls to and sets apart assistant stake family record extraction directors and family record extraction workers.
- Ensures that family record extraction directors, assistant directors, and workers understand their responsibilities and are trained to fulfill their assignments.

Establishes family history centers:

- Coordinates with the facilities manager to determine where a center should be located and to request any minor remodeling to accommodate the center's electrical and equipment needs.
- Recommends members who can be called to serve as family history center directors. Under the direction of the stake presidency, if assigned, he extends calls to and sets apart family history center directors.
- Counsels with family history center directors to determine if assistant family history center directors are needed.
- Works with center directors and high priests group leaders to identify members to serve as assistant family history center directors (if needed). The high council adviser, if assigned, calls and sets apart assistant family history center directors.
- Makes assignments to wards to provide family history consultants to staff the centers. Members of the community may serve as volunteers, with the approval of the high council adviser.
- Ensures that family history center directors and those who serve in centers understand their responsibilities and are trained to fulfill their assignments.
- Counsels with family history center directors to help them develop an annual budget request and ensures that the stake allots funds annually to operate the centers in the stake.
- Reviews family history center audits and works with directors to ensure compliance with policy and financial controls.

<p>Bishopric</p>	<p>Oversees temple and family history work in the ward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls and sets apart a sufficient number of family history consultants to meet the needs of the ward. • Counsels with the high priests group leader (or assigned member of the elders quorum presidency if there is no high priests group leader), the priesthood executive committee, and the ward council to suggest families and individuals that family history consultants could contact. • Ensures that new members are contacted by family history consultants to help them identify deceased ancestors and provide needed temple ordinances for them. <p>Encourages members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets an example in doing family history work. • Helps members become involved in the work by sharing testimonies and experiences and ensuring that the doctrines, principles, and blessings related to temple and family history work are taught regularly in ward meetings. • Helps members prepare to receive their own ordinances. • Encourages members to identify their kindred dead and provide temple ordinances for them.
<p>High priests group leader (or an assigned member of the elders quorum presidency where there is no high priests group leader)</p>	<p>Coordinates temple and family history work in the ward:</p> <p>Supervises family history consultants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets an example in doing temple and family history work. • Recommends one or more members that the bishopric can call and set apart as family history consultants. • Ensures that enough family history consultants are called to meet the needs of the ward, including those needed to fulfill the ward’s assignment to support a family history center in the stake (where applicable). • Leads family history discussions in priesthood executive committee and ward council meetings, under the direction of the bishop, to suggest individuals and families that family history consultants could work with individually. • Helps consultants fulfill their responsibilities. <p>Recommends members to serve as extraction workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends individuals to serve as family record extraction workers in stakes that participate in family record extraction. <p>Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on temple and family history activity (including reports on individual work by family history consultants with members) in priesthood interviews and priesthood executive committee and ward council meetings and receives direction from the bishop.

<p>High priests group leadership and elders quorum presidency</p>	<p>Encourage temple and family history work in the group or quorum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set an example in doing temple and family history work. • Ensure that the doctrines, principles, and blessings relating to redeeming the dead are taught regularly in priesthood meetings. • Encourage members to identify their kindred dead and provide temple ordinances for them. • May organize a temple and family history committee in the group or quorum to help promote family history and temple work.
<p>Family history consultant</p>	<p>Provides members individual family history help:</p> <p>Works with members who are either beginning or continuing their family history work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches out to individuals and families in the ward a few at a time, so that over time all members of the ward have the opportunity to receive family history help. • Focuses on those individuals and families suggested by the priesthood executive committee or the ward council, through the high priests group leader. • Meets with members in their homes, where possible. • Helps members identify ancestors and ensure temple ordinances are performed for them. • Helps members who do not have access to computers or are uncomfortable using computers prepare family information for temple ordinances. • Meets with new members soon after their baptism to explain in a basic way the doctrines of the redemption of the dead and how these members can get started in family history and temple work. • Helps new members identify deceased ancestors and prepare the names of these ancestors for temple ordinances. • Accompanies new members as a friend, where possible, when they go to the temple to be baptized and confirmed for their ancestors. <p>Teaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets an example in doing family history work. • Teaches family history classes during Sunday School, when assigned by the bishopric. • Provides family history training, if assigned by the high council adviser through the bishopric or high priests group leader. <p>Serves in a family history center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves in a family history center, when assigned, if the ward is assigned to support a family history center.
<p>Family history center director</p>	<p>Directs a family history center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is responsible for family history center operations. • Ensures that Church policies and procedures are followed. • Supervises those who serve in centers and assigns duties and responsibilities. • Ensures that those who serve in centers are trained to help all patrons use center resources to identify their ancestors and to help members provide temple ordinances for their ancestors. • Sets an example in doing family history work.

Assistant family history center director	<p>Assists the family history center director as needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs administrative duties assigned by the director. • Fulfills the duties of the director when the director cannot be present. • Sets an example in doing family history work.
Family history consultant who serves in a family history center	<p>Performs family history center duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps members and community patrons use family history center resources to identify deceased ancestors. • Helps members use FamilySearch resources to identify and provide needed temple ordinances for their deceased ancestors. • Performs center operations tasks as assigned by the family history center director. • Sets an example in doing family history work.
Stake family record extraction director	<p>Directs family record extraction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trains and assists family record extraction workers. • Provides extraction workers with access to Church resources, such as online programs, equipment, and facilities. • Requests and distributes records to extract. • Sets an example in doing family history work.
Assistant stake family record extraction director	<p>Assists the stake family record extraction director as needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs administrative duties assigned by the director. • Coordinates extraction work in wards and branches that have large numbers of extraction workers. • Sets an example in doing family history work.
Family record extraction worker	<p>Performs family record extraction duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs family record extraction tasks. • Works under the direction of the stake family record extraction director. • Sets an example in doing family history work.

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