

# Instructions for Preparing the Stake, District, Ward, or Branch Annual History

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## Purpose

Preparing and submitting an annual history helps fulfill the Lord's charge: "Continue in writing and making a history of all the important things . . . concerning my church. . . . And also, my servants who are abroad in the earth should send forth the accounts of their stewardships" (D&C 69:3, 5).

## Overview

Compiling the annual history should begin in January and continue throughout the year. Every ward should create its own history and submit it to the stake. The stake combines the ward histories with its own report and submits a single annual history to the Church. Branches and districts follow this same pattern.

Priesthood leaders begin by assigning the responsibility for compiling the history to the ward or stake clerk, an assistant clerk, or a history specialist working under the clerk's direction. The assigned person should gather material throughout the year and should invite others to contribute stories and information.

## What to Include

There are two options for compiling the annual history: basic or comprehensive. The priesthood leader, considering the circumstances of his Church unit, will determine which option to follow.

A basic annual history should contain:

1. A cover sheet.
2. A brief narrative describing the year's important events and developments. Include faith-building stories.
3. The unit's calendar.
4. The Officers Sustained forms read at ward and stake conferences.

In addition to the four items above, a comprehensive history contains:

5. Reports from priesthood and auxiliary leaders summarizing their efforts to help individuals

and families qualify for exaltation. For example, a bishop may identify a few goals for the ward early in the year and then invite the ward council to contribute stories and photographs giving details on how each organization worked to achieve these goals.

6. Significant records created by or about the unit, such as:
  - Photographs that are clearly identified and dated.
  - Newsletters.
  - Special programs and publications.
  - Photocopies of newspaper clippings (include information that will identify the newspaper and the date it was published).

Note that confidential or private information is typically *not* included in the annual history.

## Submission

Ward and branch histories are due to the stake or district no later than March 1. Stake and district histories are due to the Church History Department or the assigned administrative office no later than March 31. Copies of the history may be retained locally.

Stakes and districts in the United States and Canada should mail the original version of the annual history to:

CHURCH HISTORY DEPARTMENT  
ANNUAL HISTORY  
15 EAST NORTH TEMPLE STREET  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84150-1600

Units outside the United States and Canada should mail their histories to the assigned administrative office.

For additional information, cover sheets, and templates, see *Church History Guides: Stake, District, and Mission Annual Histories* or visit [lds.org/annualhistories](http://lds.org/annualhistories).