



National Docent Symposium Council

A Report from the NDSC Annual Meeting - October 2020

The National Docent Symposium Council convened virtually on October 27 and 28 to conduct our annual business meeting. At our meeting we looked closely at where we are now and where we're heading:

- The NDS host committee chairs from Washington, D.C. (2019), Kansas City (2022), and Atlanta (2024) led a robust discussion about planning for future symposia. We will continue to evolve with the docents/guides we support.
- We explored the concept of "hybrid" programming that would allow for in-person and virtual attendance at NDS and other potential learning opportunities.
- The NDSC website, our resource hub, was visited by 7,700 users in 2020 with particular interest in NDS 2019 breakout session materials and virtual audience engagement programs.
- Our database contact list represents over 1,100 institutions, reaching thousands of docents/guides from all 50 states, seven Canadian provinces, and 10 other countries
- The National Docents Forum Facebook group, launched in 2018, has grown to over 1,000 members, with 850 posts and 4,000 comments. Engagement is high!
- Our *Docent Handbook*, now offered through Amazon and digitally through our website, has provided sustainable income over the years. Sales have declined this year due to the suspension of touring as well as market saturation.
- The development committee reviewed strategies for enhancing the organization's financial sustainability, providing on-going support of the symposium, and preparing for the cost of expanding our resources and programs.
- We brainstormed ways in which regional directors can more effectively connect with docents and museum staff, creating a vital exchange of ideas and best practices. Virtual regional meetings have been pilot tested and will expand in 2021.
- The enthusiastic energy among Council directors set a tone of anticipation and excitement for new opportunities going forward.

As we move into 2021, we recognize that we really are working at the intersection of the traditional and the visionary. We are doing it together. We are confident that even more "learn, share and connect" initiatives will emerge from our incredibly resourceful community.