

# Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum Governance Study

Produced on behalf of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum  
Study Panel

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## Foreword

This report reflects the consensus of the members of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum Study Panel on the complex issues affecting governance of the ALPLM and its relationship to its parent agency, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), and offers options for future consideration. The study panel was proposed by the IHPA, in consultation with the ALPLM Advisory Board and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, to conduct an independent review of the ALPLM management and governance issues and its current relationship with the parent agency. This review was prompted by the introduction in spring 2014 of a bill (HB 3836) in the Illinois legislature to establish the Library and Museum as a new state agency, separate from the IHPA.

The nine-member study panel was established in September 2014, with two representatives from each of the boards—the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the ALPLM Advisory Board and the Board of Directors of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation. The panel then invited three outside authorities on museums and research libraries to be members, in order to provide special expertise: Donna K. Sack, Executive Director of the Association of Midwest Museums; Gary T. Johnson, President of the Chicago History Museum; and Bernard Reilly, President of the Center for Research Libraries. Donna Sack and Bernard Reilly co-chaired the panel.

The panel was charged with preparing a report for the three Boards by January 15, 2015, recommending solutions to the identified issues of ALPLM management and governance. Given the short time frame allotted for the report, the panel engaged Bryan and Jordan Consulting, LLC, to conduct a series of interviews with stakeholders and experts in the field and a thorough review and analysis of extensive written materials and reports.

Dr. Brent D. Glass, of Bryan and Jordan Consulting, served as the project lead and principal researcher for the consultancy. The consultants were asked to examine the management and governance at other, comparable presidential libraries and museums, including those not operated by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and to identify the advantages of funding and governance models, and relationships with parent organizations (such as NARA, operating foundations, etc.), that might be applicable to the current situation of the ALPLM. The present report, prepared by Dr. Glass, is the result of that study.

Preparation of the report involved examination of voluminous documentation, and interviews with more than 35 individuals knowledgeable about the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and about matters regarding the governance of comparable historical organizations. (See Appendix B.) The panel made every effort to gather the perspectives of others as well, through a standing invitation for comment. Due to the compressed time frame for delivery of the report, however, the number of interviewees consulted was of necessity limited.

## **Members of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum Study Panel**

### Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum Advisory Board

Charles Russell Branham, Ph.D.

Paula Kaufman

### Illinois Historic Preservation Agency Board

Julia Bachrach

Melinda Spitzer Johnston

### Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation Board

William N. Ball

Craig Schermerhorn

### Museum and Research Library Industry Experts

Gary T. Johnson, President, Chicago History Museum

Bernard Reilly, President, Center for Research Libraries (Study Panel Co-Chair)

Donna K. Sack, Executive Director, Association of Midwest Museums (Study Panel Co-Chair)

## Introduction

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

— Abraham Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858

It is a short walk from the Old State Capitol in Springfield, the site of Lincoln’s historic speech, to the library and museum that preserves his legacy. The issue that engaged Lincoln and his contemporaries then was momentous: the expansion of slavery and whether the United States could be governed as a nation “half slave, half free.” The issue of governing the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM) will not generate another Civil War; however, the responsibility for effectively managing ALPLM and caring for its extraordinary museum collections and library holdings does have major consequences.

In less than a decade, ALPLM has set new standards for presenting the history of Lincoln’s life and times. With the help of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation (ALPL Foundation), it acquired one of the world’s greatest private collections of Lincoln materials, the Taper Collection. ALPLM became a major tourist attraction, visited by nearly 4 million people since it opened in 2005. Moreover, the ALPLM now carries out the role, dating from 1889, as the state historical library, providing access to superb holdings in political, social, and religious history.

The past decade also has been a time of significant challenges for ALPLM. It has had five directors—permanent, interim, and acting—in nine years. Its attendance has declined from more than 500,000 in its first year to 321,000 in 2013 and its ranking, as the most-visited presidential library has slipped from first to third. Its parent agency, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) has experienced major reductions in its annual state appropriation and barely survived an attempt by the Governor in 2009 to abolish the agency and relocate its functions to another department. The foundation that supports ALPLM has become focused almost entirely on retiring the debt incurred with the purchase of the Taper Collection and has limited ability to provide additional financial resources for other needs. The library has been unable to maintain its professional staff and to make necessary investments in digital technology. The museum’s famously innovative exhibitions, created a decade ago, are in need of a major reinvestment in order to regain and maintain their reputation of excellence.

In spite of these problems, ALPLM continues to enjoy a reservoir of goodwill and public support, especially in the region around Springfield where it is a significant source of community pride and an important asset in the local tourism economy. Lincoln scholars and students of state history continue to regard the library as an important repository of books, documents, and other materials. Within the IHPA, several Lincoln-related sites form an impressive network of preservation and education, a network that collaborates with ALPLM to mutual advantage and for which ALPLM collections provide a critical knowledge base. In addition, the National Park Service manages the Lincoln Home and represents an important partner for programs and research.

These conditions, —positive and negative, —provide a context for an evaluation of new legislation, HB 3836, proposed in May 2014 by Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, Michael Madigan, to establish ALPLM as an independent state agency. This initiative came in response to conflicts between the IHPA and ALPLM leadership, a conflict that has persisted almost since the founding of ALPLM in 2002. The new governance proposed by HB 3836 and the amended bill, SB 218, has generated a thoughtful discussion about how ALPLM should operate in the future.

In September 2014 the IHPA, in consultation with the ALPLM Advisory Board and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation created a study panel to conduct an independent review of the ALPLM management and governance structure. The panel consisted of two representatives from each of the boards and three outside authorities on museums and research libraries. This report reflects a two-month study of the various perspectives of key stakeholders, discussion and debate by the study panel, and provides an assessment of alternative governance models. Bryan and Jordan Consulting, led by Dr. Brent D. Glass, director emeritus of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History and former executive director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, conducted the study. The methodology for this study is described in Appendix A (page 17).

## I. Executive Summary

It is generally accepted by key stakeholders that, for various reasons, maintaining the status quo for ALPLM governance is untenable. It cannot thrive and achieve excellence without two fundamental changes:

1. **There must be a better balance between the political culture that created ALPLM, the bureaucratic culture that has managed ALPLM for the past decade, and a museum and research library culture that must assume a higher profile in the future.** At the present time, the political and bureaucratic culture has dominated ALPLM, preventing the emergence of the kind of professional culture and values that drive the activities and operations of museums and research libraries. Museums and research libraries are devoted to core functions—research, collections, preservation, education, and public programming and operate according to nationally accepted standards. These functions are undervalued at ALPLM. Furthermore, the requirements and qualifications for those leading ALPLM (and IHPA) must reflect expertise and experience in museum and library management, fundraising, and scholarship.
2. **Separation of the ALPLM from the IHPA would result in a significant lost opportunity for the state.** A new governing structure must promote a seamless integration of and promote economies and synergies between, ALPLM, its Foundation, and the historic sites related specifically to Lincoln and the history of Illinois in general. The resources of ALPLM as a research library, a leader in cultural tourism, and a successful fundraising operation are critically important assets for IHPA and the entire state. Conversely, the Lincoln-related sites of IHPA and other state historic sites of international and national significance, such as Frank Lloyd Wright’s DanaThomas House and Cahokia Mounds, provide opportunities for intellectual and programmatic synergies between ALPLM and its parent agency, IHPA. The leadership of both ALPLM and IHPA should be required to foster and promote these synergies. The result will be a state agency that will be a powerful advocate and voice for public history and historic preservation in Illinois.

**Recommendations:** Using these conceptual changes as the starting point, it is the Study Panel’s recommendation that the State of Illinois create the following governing structure for ALPLM:

--A reorganized IHPA governed by an expanded board of trustees of 11-13 members that includes members with relevant professional and/or academic expertise and interests in Lincoln and his era, Illinois history, research libraries, museums, historic sites and historic preservation. Adding members of the Illinois General Assembly, one from each caucus, would create bipartisan and multi-branch governance that would strengthen public history programs throughout the state. The agency would consist of two divisions, one for ALPLM and one for

Historic Sites/Historic Preservation (HS/HP), led by division leaders appointed by and reporting to an agency director. The State Historian would also be a part of the senior management team.

--The ALPL Foundation should remain as a non-profit organization with a strong role in program planning and should participate actively in the recruitment of the ALPLM executive director. Every effort should be made to give the Foundation the capacity to generate private support and generate program income with the long-range goal of assuming responsibility under a public-private partnership agreement for operating ALPLM in the future.

A more detailed discussion of these preferred options begins in Section VII, below..

## II. Current Governance: “A Ball of Spaghetti”

It is not hard to understand why the chair of the ALPLM Advisory Board referred to the current management environment of ALPLM as “a ball of spaghetti.” Founded in 1985, the IHPA Board consists of seven Trustees of the IHPA appointed by the Governor of Illinois and responsible for “setting and determining policy for the agency.” The 2002 legislation authorizing ALPLM, however, provided for an advisory board of eleven members also appointed by the governor. The first appointments to this board were made by the governor in 2002 but the board did not meet until Governor Quinn appointed new board members in 2012. The Governor also appoints the Executive Director of ALPLM.

The qualifications of the people currently in these governance positions are not an issue. They share not only a passion for Lincoln and Illinois history but also extensive expertise in historical research, preservation, research library management, and public history. However, conflicts over roles, responsibilities and authority are inevitable with 19 gubernatorial appointees presiding over the work of a relatively small public agency. Even as this report is being written, there are fundamental disagreements about whether the Director of IHPA has supervisory authority over the ALPLM Executive Director. In addition, several senior IHPA staff positions are also occupied by appointees and by administrators who have expertise and experience in government but not in managing cultural organizations. Finally, there is no requirement that places specialists in historical content, museum, or library management in any senior leadership positions. The scarcity of qualified professionals in the leadership structure reinforces the difficulty in building a strong, professional museum and research library culture at ALPLM.

The lack of a professional culture is acutely evident at the State Historical Library. According to one interviewee, “in addition to the troubles perpetuated by the lack of staffing, by the out of date knowledge and skills wrought by the near-absence of professional development, and the antagonisms and tensions among many of the staff units, the organization is beset by a clash of at least two cultures. The museum and the library operate almost independently of one another, and while some of the current issues might be remediated by trained and talented interveners, . . .it needs much more.”

Despite today’s competitive climate in which all major museums and historical organizations allocate time and resources for fundraising, neither the ALPLM nor IHPA board is responsible for generating private funding for capital projects or operating support for ALPLM. Instead, that role is assigned to the ALPL Foundation, even though the Foundation has little input into setting annual goals or priorities, and often creates its own programs and events to cultivate new and existing donors. The Foundation maintains a large board with some national members that are disconnected from ALPLM policy and decision-making. For example, selection of the current ALPLM executive director took place without any participation from the Foundation. Furthermore, the success of the work of the Foundation is sensitive to any conflicts between the IHPA and ALPLM.



### III. Leadership

The director of IHPA and the executive director of ALPLM have responsibility for managing historic sites and collections of national and even international significance. However, the job description for each position states only minimum educational and professional requirements. There is no specific preference for years of professional expertise and service in a related field. A director of a historic preservation agency should have prior experience and an advanced degree in a field with a direct connection to historic preservation. An executive director of a major museum and research library should also have an advanced degree in historical or museum studies and experience in research library, museum or public history management. Reference is made (in the job description) to the need for ability in “grantsmanship,” but there is no requirement for or even direct reference to the need for a candidate to demonstrate successful experience in fundraising or in capital campaigns. The ability to provide professional leadership and also provide effective fundraising results is interconnected.

These comments are not aimed at the incumbents in these positions. They clearly have demonstrated commitment and experience in their respective fields. However, the job descriptions for these positions have open-ended language, e.g., that the ALPLM executive director “has direct interaction with the (IHPA) Board of Trustees” and the IHPA director is “advising the Governor through the Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff.” These dotted line relationships partly explain the impasse and conflict between the incumbents.

Any discussion of leadership as part of ALPLM governance must include the role and responsibility of the State Historian. The person in this position should be a part of senior management with specific authority for articulating an intellectual framework for public history in Illinois. This intellectual framework would be a key element in a new strategic plan and provide guidance on collecting, research, and commemorative events. The authorizing legislation for IHPA clearly states that the Board of Trustees appoints the State Historian and that the position reports to the agency director.

#### IV. Governance Models for Historical Agencies and Institutions

There are various forms of governance that can serve as models for ALPLM, with the understanding that any new governance for ALPLM must be tailored to suit its unique mission and circumstances. Many of these involve public-private partnerships. Despite their differences, comparable organizations that are successful depend on strong professional leadership and on commitment from board members to strategic planning and financial sustainability. For purposes of comparison, some of these models are:

##### Presidential Libraries

The 13 presidential libraries (from Herbert Hoover to George W. Bush) under the management of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) are hybrid organizations that follow national standards for preservation and access of public records established by statute and administered by NARA. These were established as a way to enable presidential records to remain under the control of the federal government, while allowing private sector support for bricks and mortar costs and programs built around those records. Each library administers a museum and public education program funded largely through private foundations created originally to fund the construction of the library. Management of the presidential libraries is generally shared between NARA staff and leaders of the private foundation. Beginning with the George W. Bush Library, the foundations of presidential libraries are required to provide an endowment to offset declines in federal funding and to ensure continued operations of the library. The Executive Director of each presidential library is appointed by NARA; the Director of the private foundation is appointed by and reports to the foundation board. The federal government owns the real estate and collections but the foundations are responsible for funding for building the libraries and for providing programmatic support.

##### Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

An independent state agency, the Commission is governed by 14 commissioners, 9 appointed by the governor, 4 appointed by legislative caucuses, and the Secretary of Education. The Commission's responsibility includes the State Museum, State Archives, State Historic Preservation Program, and 25 historic sites and museums, historical publications and markers. Each historic site and museum benefits from support from non-profit organizations for fundraising and revenue generating activities. In the past decade, the private organizations have taken more responsibility as state funding has declined. A good example is the Flagship NIAGARA and Maritime Museum in Erie, PA. A private foundation, the Flagship NIAGARA League (FNL), currently raises all the operating funds for a sailing program and ship maintenance while the PHMC provides funding for a small staff to operate the museum. FNL also operates the gift shop and facility rental program. The PHMC and Ohio History Connection are similar in scope and in annual budgets but the governance and administration differ in the relationship to state government.

### Ohio History Connection

Since 1885, the Ohio History Connection (OHC), formerly the Ohio Historical Society, has been the state's history partner, a comprehensive, full-service private organization under contract to the state to manage major cultural institutions such as the State Archives, a Natural History Museum, the Historical Marker program, and more than 50 historic sites including the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center. Private 501 (c) 3 groups provide financial support for each historic site. Today the Ohio General Fund appropriates about \$10 million each year for operating and \$5 million annually for capital projects. The OHC Foundation raises around \$2 million annually. The state owns most of the real estate of the historic sites and conducts an annual audit of the OHC. All the OHC staff are employees of the non-profit, not the state.

### Thomas Jefferson Foundation

The Foundation, a private non-profit foundation, preserves and operates Monticello near Charlottesville, Virginia as a center for the interpretation of Thomas Jefferson's life and times. A president and CEO reports to a national board of directors which is responsible for raising an annual operating budget of around \$20 million and building an endowment that now stands at \$200 million. A new education center opened in 2009. Unlike George Washington's Mt. Vernon, the Jefferson Foundation does accept public funds through grants for specific projects. The Foundation and other non-NARA presidential libraries offer models of a major museum and research library devoted to the life of a major historical figure like Abraham Lincoln.

### Illinois State Museum

When the Illinois State Museum (ISM) was founded in 1877, it was originally housed in the State Capitol. In 1917, it became part of the Department of Registration and Education. The ISM now operates under the Department of Natural Resources, with the Department Director having a seat as an ex-officio member on the Illinois State Museum Board, whose 11 members are appointed by the governor. Board members serve two-year terms and may serve multiple terms. By statute, the board must include "representatives of the natural sciences, anthropology, art, and business, qualified by at least 10 years of experience in practicing or teaching their several professions." The board is a governing board with authority to recommend and approve the appointment of the Museum Director, approve budget requests for state appropriation, and other duties. The museum is supported by the Illinois State Museum Society, a 501(c) 3, created in 1952 to operate concessions, as well as accept donations and memberships. The Museum Director serves as Executive Secretary and ex-officio member on the 13-member Society board. The Society raises around \$1.5 million each year to support museum programs and projects. The annual state appropriation to ISM is \$6.3 million and Federal grants, around \$300,000 to \$420,000 a year, supplement ISM's budget.

## Chicago Park District: Museums in the Park

Eleven museums and cultural organizations including the Shedd Aquarium, the Art Institute, and the Chicago History Museum are located on real estate owned by the city of Chicago and operated as part of the Chicago Park District. These institutions are managed and supported by private membership societies and foundations and enjoy independence in their daily operations. The Lincoln Park Zoo is another example of a public-private partnership. A citizen's group—the Lincoln Park Zoological Society—supports the zoo's mission. In 1995, the Zoological Society assumed management of the zoo from the Chicago Park District, which remains the owner. In doing so, the Zoological Society entered into a long-term operating agreement, which has been renewed and extended. The Chicago Park District provides some annual operating support to the Zoological Society. In spite of financial challenges to some of these organizations during the economic downturn in 2008-2012, the overall success of this model of non-profit cultural organizations under contract to a public entity is worth further study. Volunteer unpaid boards offer leadership, nationally recognized professionals accept staff positions, and the funding base expands tremendously because the museum is not seen as primarily a responsibility of the taxpayers.

## V. The Pending Legislation: SB 218 and HB 3836

The proposed legislation introduced by Speaker of the House, Michael Madigan, would establish ALPLM as an independent state agency. Much of the criticism of this proposal focuses on the additional administrative expense required for a new state government agency. IHPA's Chief Financial Officer estimates the annual extra operating cost to be as much as \$1.9 million. ALPLM has responded with its own estimate of \$200,000 based on the savings that will be achieved when IHPA staff costs are no longer charged to the ALPLM budget.

The discussion about administrative costs can distract attention and does not address a much larger question of how ALPLM will continue to operate, given the ALPL Foundation's enormous debt, now estimated at \$11.9 million, which it incurred for acquiring the Taper Collection. The discussion also fails to address how ALPLM will subsidize the substantial new investment in the information technology necessary to maintain library services or how it will rebuild and update its costly interactive museum exhibits as they become dated. Nor is there any indication of whether ALPLM's annual appropriation is sufficient to fill critical positions vacated through attrition and create necessary new professional positions. Without a larger, more professional staff, ALPLM will not be able to build the museum culture needed for continued success, and to operate with museum best practices, which could ultimately lead to national accreditation.

The contrast between the current IHPA governing board and the proposed governance for ALPLM is notable. The seven-member IHPA Board of Trustees is structured as a policy making board that appoints the Director who executes the Agency's statutory powers and policies. Other than setting policy and appointing the Director and State Historian, the Trustees delegate all statutory authorities, such as hiring employees, entering into contracts, leasing concessions and serving as trustee for any trust funds to IHPA management.

In SB 218, however, the proposed 11-member ALPLM board is given direct operational and management authority and responsibility for the newly independent state agency. The bill also assigns authority directly to the proposed ALPLM board, including hiring employees and entering into contracts. Although its members would be unpaid volunteers, the board would hold primary responsibility for signing concession leases and bearing the fiduciary responsibilities of serving as trustee for any trust funds. Delegation to the ALPLM Executive Director is possible; however the legal responsibilities of the board and its chair could be significantly broader than those of the IHPA Board of Trustees. For example, one possible interpretation of the bill is that the chair of the proposed ALPLM board would be the chief executive officer of the new agency. This has significant implications under a number of other state statutes, since the CEO of an Illinois state agency would, for example, execute contracts over \$250,000 and certify to the State Comptroller all goods and services vouchers and all payroll vouchers.

Regardless of whether ALPLM is an independent agency or part of a larger agency, its governing board must have the capacity to advocate for increases in state funding and to

collaborate with the ALPL Foundation to raise funds from individuals, corporations, and foundations. In addition, ALPLM leadership must make a substantial commitment to marketing and promotion to sustain and increase attendance. SB 218 mentions the ALPL Foundation only once (page 34) and does nothing to emphasize the need to collaborate with the Foundation to raise or generate non-public financial resources.

The proposed legislation also leaves the State Historian in the IHPA and does not specify any relationship between this position and the proposed new state agency. The individual in this position should provide intellectual leadership to ALPLM and other IHPA sites. Removing the State Historian from the ALPLM, and the separation of ALPLM staff from the professionals at IHPA would weaken ALPLM's capacity to carry out its mission. There are a number of Lincoln related sites and memorials in IHPA that can serve as important resources for ALPLM, and conversely ALPLM provides an essential knowledge base for research by staff of those sites. These collaborations and synergies are only likely to occur if they are co-located in a single agency. SB 218 elsewhere amends the State Historical Library Act to clarify that the newspaper microphotography program for which the State Historian is responsible is to be housed within the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Thus, under the proposed legislation, the State Historian (currently unfilled) would remain within IHPA, but would retain obligations to a program within the proposed independent ALPLM.

Finally, SB 218 does not recognize the important role of the State Historical Library. The Library has traditionally served as a resource on state history, using public funds and serving all state historical agencies, but was merged only recently within the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The Library serves a community of scholars, educators, and students whose interests extend beyond Lincoln and his era. Its core functions of collecting, preserving, and presenting state history should be shaped and influenced by the curators and educators of all the state-owned sites not only the ALPLM. This would put a great deal of historical expertise at the disposal of the ALPLM, enriching and informing its programming and reducing the need for building new curatorial staffing. A separate state agency managed by a separate board would therefore reduce the potential for the Library to fulfill its statewide mission to preserve, present, and promote public history, and would remove it from the aegis of the Historic Preservation Agency.

In general, separation of the ALPLM from the IHPA would result in a significant lost opportunity for the state. It would sacrifice significant economies and synergies that the two organizations could achieve by working as an integrated unit. The ALPLM has proven a powerful magnet for tourism in Illinois. As a flagship institution for the state historical agency it could help channel new private resources into Illinois's extensive network of historical sites and memorials, generating significant returns for the Illinois economy, as it has already for the city of Springfield. It can attract new non-public funding to maintain and develop the other historical properties. Moreover, it could serve as the "intelligence hub" of the network of sites, streaming digital resources and content to those institutions to populate exhibits and interactive displays.

## VII. Recommendations

### 1. An integrated, reorganized IHPA (Recommended Option-Short Term)

Illinois should have a nationally recognized public history agency with the resources—human, physical, and cultural—commensurate with its rich and varied heritage. A reorganized IHPA would be governed by a board of trustees with at least 11 trustees appointed by the governor and approved by the Senate with expertise and experience in a variety of disciplines including Lincoln and his era, state history, library and museum studies, historic preservation, and cultural tourism. Members of the Illinois General Assembly representing each caucus could serve as Trustees to ensure a bi-partisan and multi-branch effort on behalf of state history. A member of the Supreme Court or the Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission could also serve as a Trustee or as an ex-officio member of the Board.

In this new organization, the ALPLM Advisory Board, as such, would cease to exist. Members of the current board would be eligible for and encouraged to serve as Trustees of the expanded IHPA board. As is the case with museums throughout Illinois and the United States, IHPA could create one or more advisory committees to assist in fulfilling the mission of ALPLM.

The IHPA Trustees would be responsible for approving policy and the agency's annual spending plan as recommended by the agency's senior staff leadership. They would be responsible for conducting a national search for and appointing an agency director who would lead national searches for an Executive Director of a Division for Historic Sites/Historic Preservation (HS/HP), the Executive Director of the Division of ALPLM and the State Historian (currently unfilled). The minimum requirements for these positions should emphasize advanced degrees in the humanities and extensive experience in managing public and/or private cultural organizations.

The IHPA agency director would lead a management team of four positions, two deputy directors (the ALPLM executive director and the HP/HS executive director), an assistant director for management services (HR, finance, IT, legal, legislative liaison); and the State Historian, appointed by the IHPA director. The position of State Historian should be defined after a review of similar positions in other states. The success of this governing structure depends upon agreement that the agency director and the two deputy directors must meet professional requirements for public history, museum, library, or related fields. They should not be considered political appointees subject to replacement when there is a change in administration. They should also have demonstrated experience in fundraising for non-profit organizations.

**Discussion:** The advantages of this new organization are that it:

- Unifies the governance of Illinois's public history program under one board appointed by the governor and with the critical mass needed to function within a large and complex state bureaucracy;

- Encourages the synergy between IHPA and ALPLM professional staff;
- Recognizes the unique nature of ALPLM by elevating its executive director as a member of the senior management team;
- Recognizes the professional requirements for the executive directors of both ALPLM and the HS/HP;
- Encourages collaborative initiatives for research, educational outreach, and heritage tourism between ALPLM and the Lincoln-related sites and monuments managed by the HS/HP division;
- Preserves and potentially strengthens the unique role of the State Historical Library as a resource for state public history professionals;
- Fosters collaborative initiatives for Illinois public history programming, preservation, and promotion;
- Creates an agency with a strong identity as a collaborating partner for national organizations such as the National Archives, the National Park Service and state and regional history and cultural organizations.

The ALPL Foundation would continue to serve as the fundraising arm for the Library and Museum. It would be engaged in planning and participate in the process of recruiting the Executive Director of the ALPLM division. The long-range goal for the Foundation would be to build its capacity to support the daily operations of ALPLM. It is possible to envision a time when the Foundation's agreement with the state of Illinois would be expanded to allow for greater independence in all operational phases. This idea is further discussed in the next section.

## **2. Public-private partnership (Recommended Option-Long Term)**

The infrastructure exists in Illinois for a public-private partnership to operate the ALPLM. If the Foundation continues to develop its fundraising capacity and its business (retail, restaurant, rental) activities, it could enter into a contract with the state in which the Foundation takes responsibility for supporting Museum and Library operations, augmenting state funding, as it currently does, with additional revenue derived through admission fees, concessions and garage receipts. The state would retain ownership of all real property, museum collections, and library holdings. The state would continue to be responsible for major funding of ALPLM operations, providing an annual payment to the Foundation at a level to be determined through further negotiations. Reaching this goal would probably take 7-10 years and during this time, the Foundation would establish its central office in Springfield and also maintain a presence in Chicago. This timetable becomes even more feasible if the State of Illinois could make a one-time payment to retire or significantly reduce the Taper Collection acquisition debt or allow part of its annual appropriation to be used for this purpose.

A variation on this option would be to follow the model of the Ohio History Connection and create a new non-profit organization to administer both ALPLM and IHPA. An annual state appropriation would be needed but could be significantly augmented with private funds once the new agency achieved financial sustainability. This option would require a more robust conversation with various stakeholders at the historic sites and



museums currently under the IHPA management. The benefits of this model would be to maintain a unified public history agency and take strategic advantage of the private support that could be leveraged with international public recognition of Abraham Lincoln and ongoing state funding even at a lower level.

## VIII. Other Options

### 1. ALPLM becomes part of another state agency

There are several examples, large and small, of cultural organizations operating successfully under the auspices of Illinois state government. They include the Illinois State Museum, an AAM accredited museum within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the Illinois Military Museum with the Department of Military Affairs; and the State Archives and State Library within the Secretary of State. As recently as 2009, the governor of Illinois proposed transferring IHPA (including ALPLM) to DNR. This proposal could be revisited but the Study Panel's findings are that the historical resources owned by Illinois have enough significance to merit their own public history agency.

### 2. ALPLM becomes an affiliate or branch of the National Archives Records Administration (NARA) or the University of Illinois

Initial conversations with leadership of the university system and with staff at NARA yielded no support or encouragement for either initiative. According to several people involved with the request for federal funding to build ALPLM, there was a "handshake agreement" that ALPLM would not become part of the NARA system. Interviews with current NARA staff indicate that an act of Congress and a substantial endowment would be required to add a presidential library to the NARA system.

## IX. Conclusions

In the first half of 2015, there are several strategic opportunities to demonstrate the value of public history in Illinois. The ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment, the end of Civil War, the Lincoln assassination, and the Lincoln funeral are major national events that have a strong connection to state history. IHPA and ALPLM should play leading roles in engaging and educating the public and to collaborate with national, state, and local organizations. These anniversaries also can be occasions to build public awareness of the extraordinary historical resources owned by the state and why these resources need public support.

If there were approval for the recommendation to reorganize IHPA into a strong public history agency, the second half of 2015 would be the appropriate time to create a strategic plan for the entire agency. This plan would provide a framework for a renewed commitment to integrating the various parts of IHPA including ALPLM, historic sites, and historic preservation programs. It would draw upon the considerable skills and experience of IHPA staff and engage board members, legislators, and other partners in the National Park Service, educational institutions, and tourism agencies.

Illinois has made an enormous commitment to preserve the legacy of Abraham Lincoln by creating ALPLM and offering the public an extraordinary experience not matched anywhere else in the country. That accomplishment required vision, commitment, hard work and compromise, all qualities that Lincoln himself would have appreciated. In addition, the state has responsibility for sites of national and international significance and a world-class historical library. The task before us is to create a plan that integrates these assets into an agency that can take its place in the top ranks of state public history organizations.

## Appendix A

### Report Methodology

In preparing this report the consultant, Brent D. Glass, Ph.D., drew upon multiple sources:

- Documents review including Historic Preservation Agency Act [20 ILCS 3405]; ALPLM Enabling Legislation, Public Act 92-0600; HB 3836 and SB 218; the Museum Assessment Program review of the American Alliance of Museums (2010); Thoughts on Strategic Planning (Dick Meister, 2012); Abstract for Action Report (Dick Meister, 2013); Governance Matters! White Paper on ALPLM, IHPA Governance Structure (Ranjan Karri, 2014); ALPLM: An Overview, (Catherine Shannon, August 2014); Roadmap for ALPL Review Process (Paula Kaufman, 2013); Strategic Planning ALPL (Learning Alliances Company, April 2014); ALPLM Activities, Observations and Recommendations Report (Karen Witter, 2014); A Response to Karen Witter's Report (Eileen Mackevich, 2014); Fiscal Note HB 3836 (Eddy Fisher, 2014); ALPLM Study Panel Proposed Action Plan (August 2014); Sunny Fischer's Response to October 1, 2014 Hearing (Sunny Fischer, October 2014); Report to the Executive Director Eileen Mackevich on Strategic Planning (Joan Walters November, 2014); Job Descriptions for IHPA Director and ALPLM Executive Director.
- Legislative Hearings held by the Illinois House State Government Committee on October 1 and November 19, 2014.
- A site visit to Springfield on November 5-7 for interviews and tours of the ALPLM complex, Lincoln's Tomb and the Lincoln Home.
- More than 35 interviews with legislators, members of the Independent Review Panel, board and staff leadership of IHPA, ALPLM, and the ALPL Foundation, national public history and museum experts.
- Research on media coverage of ALPLM.
- Four conference call meetings of the Independent Review Panel (October 17, November 14, and December 2 and 22).
- ALPLM Study Panel Minutes, September-December 2014

The consultant communicated frequently in individual and conference calls with the Study Panel's co-chairs, Donna K. Sack and Bernard Reilly. Their perspectives on public history, research libraries and museums in Illinois and elsewhere, were extremely valuable in shaping these recommendations.

## Appendix B

### Individuals Interviewed for this Report-Listed Alphabetically by Last Name

**Julia Bachrach**, Study Panel Member, (IHPA)  
**William N. Ball**, Study Panel Member (ALPL Foundation)  
**Ford Bell**, DVM, President, American Alliance of Museums  
**Steven Beckett**, Chair, ALPLM Advisory Board  
**Justin Blandford**, Site Superintendent, IHPA  
**Charles Russell Branham**, Ph.D, Study Panel Member (ALPLM Advisory Board), History Department, University of Chicago Laboratory School  
**Rene Brethorst**, COO, ALPL Foundation  
**Charles Bryan**, President and CEO, Virginia Historical Society (retired)  
**Julie Cellini**, ALPL Foundation Board  
**Senator John Cullerton**, President, Illinois Senate  
**Senator Richard Durbin**, United States Senate  
**Sunny Fischer**, Chair, IHPA  
**Representative Jack Franks**, Chair, IL House State Government Administration Committee  
**James Gardner**, Executive for Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries and Museum Services, National Archives and Records Administration  
**Jan Grimes**, Director, IHPA (retired)  
**Katherine Hamilton-Smith**, Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, Director of Cultural Resources, Lake County Forest Preserve District  
**Representative David Harris**, IL House State Government Administration Committee  
**Harold Holzer**, Lincoln Scholar  
**Gary T. Johnson**, Study Panel Member (President, Chicago History Museum)  
**Mindy Spitzer Johnston**, Study Panel Member (IHPA)  
**Dan Jordan**, Ph.D., President, Thomas Jefferson Foundation (retired)  
**Paula Kaufman**, Study Panel Member (ALPLM Advisory Board), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
**Carla Knorowski**, Ph.D., CEO, ALPL Foundation  
**Burt Logan**, CEO, Ohio History Connection  
**Eileen Mackevich**, Executive Director, ALPLM  
**Amy Martin**, Director, IHPA  
**Sara Meek**, ALPLM Study Panel Liaison, Legislative Director, IHPA  
**Richard Meister**, Ph.D., ALPLM Advisory Board  
**Representative Robert Pritchard**, IL House State Government Administration Committee  
**Bernard Reilly**, Study Panel co-chair (President, Center for Research Libraries)  
**Donna K. Sack**, Study Panel co-chair (Executive Director, Association of Midwest Museums)  
**Craig Schermerhorn**, Study Panel Member (ALPL Foundation)  
**Catherine Shannon**, Deputy Director, IHPA  
**Bonnie Styles**, Ph.D., Director, Illinois State Museum & Immediate Past Chair, AAM Accreditation Commission  
**Mark Updegrove**, Director, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library  
**James M. Vaughan**, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
**Wayne Whalen**, Chair, ALPL Foundation  
**Karen Witter**, Associate Director, Illinois State Museum (retired), Independent Museum Consultant

**ALPL Foundation**-Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation

**ALPLM**-Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

**IHPA**-Illinois Historic Preservation Agency