NGS Commitment to Ethical Purpose

Commitment to ethical purpose situates NGS’s reason for being and its most important work in the world in an ethical context.

NGS commits to building a diverse and inclusive community interested in shaping the future of family history through trusted collaboration.

Rationale: Through its work, NGS seeks to inspire, strengthen, and unite the family history community to nurture greater understanding among diverse people and cultures. NGS will strive to create an inclusive and trusted context within which all interested contributors can discover the past, pursue their unique genealogical journeys, and leave a meaningful legacy for themselves and their successors.

NGS Board of Directors Governing Intent

Governing intent is a specific expression of the outcomes the NGS Board of Directors will strive to achieve through the work of stewardship.

As the association’s primary stewards, the NGS Board of Directors will use its duty of foresight to shape a different and better future for family history. To make meaningful progress toward this outcome, the NGS Board of Directors will pursue intentional learning with the future and develop a shared understanding of the deeper societal and other forces that will remake both the world and family history throughout the rest of this decade and beyond.

Rationale: The NGS Board of Directors is responsible for guiding the family history community through conditions of radical uncertainty, volatility, and risk. To pursue this challenging endeavor, the NGS Board of Directors must listen to and learn from diverse perspectives throughout the family history community, think and act beyond deep-seated assumptions, and build a consistent practice of foresight to create a strong future orientation for decision-making.

NGS Guiding Principles of Action

Guiding principles of action provide the NGS Board of Directors and staff with a decision-making framework grounded in ethical purpose.

• NGS will prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) throughout the family history community.

Rationale: To advance its commitment to ethical purpose, NGS will consider how its decisions will increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the family history community. NGS’s belief in diversity, equity, and inclusion is not transitory but an enduring and critical principle that enables the work of shaping a different and better future for family history.

• NGS will work to nurture deep trust throughout the family history community.

Rationale: To reduce unproductive friction and accelerate collaboration within a diverse ecosystem, NGS will strive to create a context of trust by listening to and understanding the interests of all interested communities and contributors. While finding agreement among divergent views will not always be possible, NGS will always strive to identify common ground as the basis for future-focused cooperation.

• NGS will identify opportunities to strengthen genealogical societies and organizations.

Rationale: To ensure their vibrancy, NGS will consider how it can act to help spark the renewal of genealogical societies and organizations throughout the rest of this decade. NGS recognizes that local genealogical ecosystems play a vital role in preserving and protecting family history’s past and must contribute to building a better future for family history. Through its work, NGS will endeavor to identify opportunities to expand the capacity of local genealogical ecosystems to create mutually-beneficial impact.

• NGS will prioritize new value creation through innovation.

Rationale: To discover what is possible in the future, NGS will explore opportunities for innovation in current and emerging products, services, experiences, and other value offers. By adopting a disciplined and inclusive approach to innovation, NGS can maximize the impact of its financial assets and intangible resources (including organizational attention, relationships, and reputation) to achieve positive-sum outcomes for interested communities and contributors.

• NGS will adopt a balanced, data-infused approach to making decisions.

Rationale: To facilitate intentional learning and work toward ethical outcomes, NGS will develop a balanced flow of information from different sources. Instead of using mostly retrospective data to drive decisions, NGS will infuse reliable, forward-looking qualitative and quantitative data into its decision-making process to augment human decision-makers’ creativity, imagination, and judgment.

• NGS will examine risks, threats, and opportunities from multiple perspectives.

Rationale: To ensure its decision-making is situated in a holistic view of the emerging family history landscape, NGS will examine potential risks, threats, and opportunities from more than one perspective. In addition to centering decision-making in the NGS Commitment to Ethical Purpose and carefully evaluating financial considerations, NGS will examine the plausible impact of its decisions on intangible resources, the integrity of its strategy system, short-term risks for today’s communities, and long-term risks for successors.
NGS Strategic Intent

**Strategic intent** is a focused expression of how NGS intends to create value for and with interested communities and contributors in a manner consistent with its commitment to ethical purpose.

NGS will serve as an inclusive platform for advancing knowledgeable genealogy practice and building a deeper understanding of family history’s beneficial impact on individuals, families, and society.

**Rationale:** Through this proposed strategic intent, NGS can create a robust context for meaningful co-creation and collaboration among diverse contributors who share an interest in and commitment to developing and enhancing genealogy knowledge and skills for anyone interested in learning more about their family history.

NGS Key Priorities/Critical Outcomes

**Key Priorities** are a high-level explanation of the key priorities that will organize NGS’s pursuit of its strategic intent within an always-shifting 18-36 months window. Each key priority is linked to a **critical outcome** that NGS will monitor to assess the impact of its strategic intent.

**Key Priority #1—Advancing Knowledgeable Genealogy Practice**

**Critical Outcome:** Deeper and more frequent learning collaboration among interested family history community contributors with different levels of experience and expertise in genealogy.

**Key Priority #2—Building an Understanding of Family History's Beneficial Impact**

**Critical Outcome:** Increased involvement of interested communities and contributors in pursuing their genealogical journeys through local genealogical ecosystems and more national/global resources.

**Key Priority #3—Creating a More Diverse Future for Family History**

**Critical Outcome:** Clear growth in the demographic, identity, and other dimensions of diversity among interested contributors involved in the family history community.

NGS Key Initiatives/Shared Learning Questions

**Key Initiatives** are a high-level explanation of the specific areas of work NGS will pursue to advance its key priorities. Each key initiative will be linked to one or more **shared learning questions** that NGS will explore as part of its outreach to communities, contributors, and local genealogical ecosystems.

**NGS Genealogy Learning Initiative**—NGS will develop a suite of genealogy learning products, services, and experiences to help build the knowledge and skills of all family history community participants.

**Shared Learning Questions:** 1) Which aspects of genealogy learning are essential for all interested communities and contributors to know, irrespective of experience or expertise? 2) How can NGS adapt genealogy learning to embrace new approaches and methods of education, information processing, and sense-making?

**NGS Local Genealogical Societies Initiative**—NGS will collaborate directly with interested contributors in developing value that helps strengthen local genealogical ecosystems.

**Shared Learning Questions:** 1) How can NGS best use its relationships and resources to strengthen local genealogical ecosystems? 2) How can NGS assist local genealogical ecosystems with overcoming the deep-seated assumptions that may interfere with their ability to thrive in this decade and beyond?

**NGS Family History Diversity Initiative**—NGS will identify and work to break down barriers to greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the family history community.

**Shared Learning Questions:** 1) Which long-term barriers to participation continue to exert a detrimental impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the family history community? 2) How can NGS bring about increased diversity, meaningful equity, and a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging among current and emerging contributors in the family history community?