

HISTORIC COUNTY COURTHOUSE REHABILITATION GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARY

Since the establishment of the Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program in 2005, over \$24.5 million in state matching grants have been awarded to assist with 77 courthouse capital improvement projects in 28 counties across the state. The Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation is seeking applications from counties interested in receiving funding in the 2025-2027 biennium to assist with historic county courthouse rehabilitation projects.

The grant program Steering Committee may select projects to receive matching grants during the 2025-27 Biennium solely for courthouse rehabilitation and preservation, including:

- the preservation/rehabilitation of exterior and interior character defining architectural features
- improvements to courthouse accessibility and accommodations for persons with disabilities made in conjunction with historic rehabilitation
- improvements to life safety made in conjunction with historic rehabilitation

Expenditures for the following activities are not eligible to be reimbursed with grant funds, but may count toward the required county match (or a portion thereof):

- system upgrades, such as Mechanical, HVAC, Electrical (except when such upgrades involve the rehabilitation of historic, character defining features)
- general repairs (provided they do not fall under the category of general maintenance)
- architectural and engineering fees
- project planning

Expenditures for the following activities are not eligible for grant funds, nor are such expenditures eligible to count toward the required county match:

- general courthouse maintenance
- lobbying
- reduction of debts

Applications requesting funding through the Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 1) Courthouses listed in the National Register of Historic Places or Washington Heritage Register, or determined eligible for listing in either register.
- 2) Public visibility of work that addresses the historic character defining features of a courthouse.

- 3) Degree of urgency and extent to which inaction would lead to loss of historic fabric and character defining features.
- 4) Projects that assist in providing structural and life safety, including improvements to courthouse accessibility and seismic retrofits.
- 5) Projects that have match in-hand at time of application or grant award.
- 6) Project feasibility.
- 7) Percentage of requested state funding applicant intends to match with funding from other allowable sources.

The following stipulations apply to all counties receiving grant awards:

- All expenditures eligible for reimbursement must be made between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2027 following execution of a grant contract with the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation.
- All expenditures committed as eligible county matching funds must be made between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2027. County expenditures on projects completed after January 1, 2024 may be used as matching funds for a new project moving forward, provided the completed project meets all grant eligibility criteria and complies with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*.
- All rehabilitation work on the courthouse, including seismic retrofits, accessibility and life safety improvements, shall comply with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*.
- Only courthouses that continue to maintain county functions are eligible for grants.
- Counties receiving grants shall provide matching funds from eligible public or private sources as required per the program. Federal funds may be included as matching funds. State funds secured through the Department of Commerce for the purpose of increasing building energy efficiency may also be used as matching funds.
- County funds expended on project planning, including architectural and engineering fees, may be used as matching funds.
- The State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) must review preliminary project designs and plans for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties* prior to construction.
- Any construction begun on a courthouse prior to executing a contract with DAHP is done so at the risk of the county. Project expenditures made prior to executing a contract with DAHP are not eligible to be reimbursed.
- Counties receiving grants to complete a project for courthouses that are NOT listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the Washington Heritage Register **must** submit a draft nomination for such listing to DAHP prior to receiving any grant reimbursement. A final nomination must be submitted to DAHP within one (1) year of the project completion date.
- County courthouses under the jurisdiction of a local preservation/design commission must comply with the local review process prior to project implementation.
- Counties may submit an application in each funding round regardless of prior grant awards or denials.
- There is no cap on the amount of funding a county can receive in any single funding round.

- There is no cap on the amount of funding a county can receive over the course of multiple funding rounds.
- In-kind contributions, such as volunteer time and donated materials, may be used as a portion (not to exceed 50%) of a county's required match.
- Counties accepting grant funds commit to implementing future courthouse repairs and maintenance in a manner that complies with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties* for a period of five years. This five-year period begins once the project for which grant funds were received is complete.
- Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant funds are available on a reimbursement basis only and cannot be "advanced" to Grant Recipients.
- Reimbursement for costs incurred and paid out may only be made once within any given thirty-day period.
- Requests for payment must be submitted on a State Invoice Voucher/Form A-19. The voucher must be signed by an individual authorized by the Recipient to bind it.
- Recipients are responsible for maintaining clear and accurate project records, and making those records accessible to DAHP and the State Auditor.
- Quarterly progress reports must be submitted to grant administrators until project completion.
- Counties accepting grant funds commit to displaying a sign acknowledging DAHP as the source of grant support. This sign should be displayed in a publicly visible location for the duration of the project.

Reappropriation

The State of Washington operates under a two-year (biennial) budget. Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program dollars must, by law, lapse at the close of each state biennium (June 30 of each odd-numbered year). In the event that a project takes more than two years to complete, DAHP can request a one-time reappropriation of any unspent funds. However, it cannot guarantee that the Legislature will reappropriate unspent funds. DAHP cannot obligate funds from one biennium to another. Grantees must contact grant administrators as soon as they determine that reappropriation may be needed. If it is needed, formal written request for reappropriation must be submitted to program staff at least three months prior to the close of the biennium.

Distribution of grant awards to selected counties is contingent upon program funds being allocated in the 2025-27 Capital Budget.

Courthouse projects must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*. **Rehabilitation** as a treatment is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

The [Standards for Rehabilitation](#) provide more detail on the application of this treatment.

The [Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#) illustrate visually the practical application of all the treatment standards to historic preservation (Rehabilitation guidelines begin on page 85 of the linked pdf).