



# HISTORIC COUNTY COURTHOUSE REHABILITATION GRANT PROGRAM

## GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

2027 - 2029 BIENNIUM

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

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### PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In spring of 2005, the Washington State Legislature established the Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant program. Based on findings from a statewide survey undertaken in 2003, it has been determined that a majority of the state's 39 counties possess courthouses of historic and architectural merit. Additionally, the study identified a significant level of needed capital improvements to these structures. To address this need, the Washington State Legislature has allocated funding in the capital budget for qualified historic courthouse rehabilitation projects. Since the program's establishment, 88 grants have been awarded to 29 counties statewide. Grant funds have worked to leverage local funding resulting in nearly \$75 million in total rehabilitation work to selected courthouses.

The Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation is seeking applications from counties interested in receiving funding in the 2027-2029 Biennium to assist with historic county courthouse rehabilitation projects. The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation administers the program; the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation provides administrative support.

The Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program requires counties to provide a match for state funds received. For grant awards in the 2027-2029 Biennium, the amount of the required match will be considered on a sliding scale. At a minimum, counties must match 25% of the total grant award. Only county expenditures made after a grant contract is fully executed are eligible for reimbursement. However, counties may count expenditures on other eligible capital projects made after January 1, 2026 as part of the required county match (such expenditures will be reviewed by program administrators to ensure compliance with all program requirements). Expenditures made for the purpose of project planning and for architectural and engineering fees are not eligible for reimbursement but may be used as a portion of the county match.

### OVERVIEW

Please keep the following points in mind when applying for 2027-2029 funding from the Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program:

- **Intent:** It is the intent of the Steering Committee to recommend grant funding to multiple counties to assist with rehabilitation projects. It is incumbent on applicants to demonstrate the project can be completed in a timely manner and to describe the impact of the project for the local community.
- **Eligibility:** All county courthouses identified as historic by the assessment study completed in June of 2003 are eligible to apply for 2027-2029 grant funds. Several additional courthouses have been identified as eligible for participation in the program as well –consult grant administrators for a list of eligible courthouses. The entire proposed scope of work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the *Rehabilitation* of Historic Properties (*see page 6*). Counties that have recently implemented capital projects that do not meet these Standards may not be eligible for funding if the work completed constitutes a significant alteration to the historic courthouse.

- **Project execution:** Priority will be given to applicants that clearly demonstrate the ability to complete the proposed project prior to June 30, 2029.
- **Funding cap:** At present, there is no cap on the amount of funding a county can receive. Counties that applied for and/or received program funds in previous grant rounds are eligible to submit applications in the 2027-2029 Biennium.

## CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated 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. The percentage of requested state funding applicant intends to match with funding from other allowable sources.

Applications for the 2027-2029 Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program must be submitted through the online application form **by 11:59pm PDT on Friday – July 10, 2026**. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation will aid in providing county officials and staff with technical assistance in completing application materials and interpreting criteria.

## MATCH REQUIREMENTS

For the 2027-2029 Biennium grant process, the required county match is a sliding scale ranging from 25%-100% of the total grant funds being requested. For instance, if the grant request is \$100,000, counties are required to match at least 25% of this request, or \$25,000, for a total project of \$125,000. Counties may, however, opt to provide a greater percentage of the required match compared to grant funds requested. Upon reviewing all grant applications, the Courthouse Steering Committee will consider the percentage of match in the evaluation process. Counties providing a higher percentage of match will receive a higher score for that particular program criterion (identified as #7 on the described Courthouse Grant Criteria.)

Please note that in-kind contributions may not exceed more than half of the required county contribution. Therefore, at least half (50%) of the required county match must be provided through a cash contribution. Eligible federal funds may be used toward the required county match. State funds secured through the Department of Commerce for the purpose of increasing building energy efficiency may also be used as match.

## SELECT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

**Section 1.** There are two fields labeled 'County.' One requires the manual typed entry of the county name, while the other is a drop-down menu to select the county. Please complete both fields.

**Section 3.** If you are unsure of the current historic designation for your county courthouse, please ask program staff. And please note – the courthouse only needs to be *eligible* for historic designation in order to apply for grant funds. If, however, the county does receive a grant, a nomination for historic designation must be submitted as a condition of the grant project.

**Section 4.** Please include the amount the county is requesting in overall grant funds (this total should be the grant request only – not the total project cost). Please also include a brief description (2-4 sentences) summarizing the project description (there is a section later in the application to provide additional project details).

**Section 5.** The grant project should be organized in to no more than 5 work elements. For example, a work element might be “Structural Stabilization”, “Roof Repair/Replacement”, “Exterior Rehabilitation”, etc. Enter each element on the line where indicated in the online submittal form. In the following field, a detailed narrative description of each proposed work element should be provided. This is the section to include as much detail as possible about the project. Detailed information assists the Courthouse Steering Committee in determining how well the project addresses the grant eligibility criteria.

The detailed narrative should identify the major components/activities of each work element, giving a thorough description of the areas of the courthouse that will be affected. Please describe in as much detail as possible the proposed method for implementing the project. Please identify any features of the courthouse that will be altered as a result of the project.

The primary goal of the program is to preserve/rehabilitate existing character-defining features of Washington’s historic courthouses. For each Work Element, describe existing historic features/fabric that will be impacted. Provide detail on the existing conditions of character-defining features and explain the effect each proposed Work Element will have on these features. Discuss proposed strategies for retention of character-defining features and note if any specific Work Elements will address and remedy former inappropriate alterations to the courthouse. Finally, please discuss the potential for historic, character-defining **features to be** permanently lost without immediate attention.

Please note: Only work elements that directly address historic, character-defining features are eligible for state grant funds. Expenditures on work elements that address non-historic features/characteristics are not eligible for reimbursement but may be used toward the county match.

**The entire scope of work for any project requesting courthouse grant funds must comply with the [Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties](#).**

**Section 6.** This is the budget worksheet for the project. The budget worksheet should be downloaded, completed, and then uploaded to the online application form as a pdf document. The budget worksheet includes guidance on completing the form. All work elements identified in Section 5 should be included in the budget worksheet, with estimated costs associated with each added to the form.

The Grant Matching Discrepancy field in the lower left corner of the form is set to populate automatically. The number in this field should be ‘0’ to indicate the amount of county match noted in the budget worksheet form is adequate. If the number is not ‘0’, the amount of match must be increased, or the amount of grant funds requested must be decreased.

Please reach out to program staff with any questions you may have on completing the budget worksheet.

**Section 7.** For each project Work Element identified, please include as detailed a timeline as possible. For example, include estimated timelines for any studies to be conducted, architectural/engineering designs that must be developed, permitting and bid processes, and construction timeframes.

Please note that projects should demonstrate a completion date by June 30, 2029.

**Section 11.** Please include a letter/statement of from county officials in support of this application. This letter does not need to be an official county resolution, but it should demonstrate that county officials are aware of the county's efforts to secure grant funds and that county officials support these efforts.

## **DISCLAIMERS**

**Distribution of grant awards to recommended counties is contingent upon program funds being allocated in the 2027- 2029 Capital Budget.**

1. In order for counties to be eligible for reimbursement through the grant program, ALL components within a funded scope of work must be in accordance with the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (see page 6)*.
2. In order to protect the capital investment being made through the grant program, grant recipients must agree to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards when implementing future capital projects on the courthouse for a period of five (5) years. This term begins once the project receiving grant funds is completed and all reimbursements for that project have been made. To fulfill this obligation, during the five-year term counties must submit all architectural plans and construction drawings to the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for approval prior to beginning the construction phase for any capital improvements that may affect historic fabric or character-defining features of the courthouse.
3. County courthouses under the jurisdiction of a local preservation/design commission must comply with the local review process prior to project implementation. Contact program administrators to determine if a local review process applies.
4. All work elements included in a grant request must be capital projects. Only work elements that directly address historic, character-defining features are eligible for state grant funds. Expenditures on work elements that address non-historic features/characteristics are not eligible for reimbursement, but may be used toward the county match.
5. County expenditures on work completed to the courthouse prior to the submittal of the application (but after January 1, 2026) may be used as match for a grant request, provided that all work completed is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties. Program staff must review all previously completed work intended to be used as match prior to submittal of the application.
6. Grant funds will not be used to support general courthouse maintenance needs. Nor can expenditures on general maintenance be used toward the required county match.
7. Courthouse projects in counties defined as Distressed by RCW 43.168.020 will receive extra consideration. Please note this does not guarantee funding for projects in Distressed Counties.
8. Counties receiving grants to complete a project for courthouses that are NOT presently listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the Washington Heritage Register MUST submit a nomination for such listing to DAHP within one year of the project completion date (DAHP reserves the right to withhold a portion of the grant funds until the nomination is submitted).

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

All application materials must be submitted through the online application form by **11:59pm PDT on Friday - July 10, 2026.**

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Complete grant applications shall include the following:

- A completed Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program **online application form**
  - Digital or scanned architectural drawings/construction plans (PDFs) along with credentials for project team
  - High resolution digital images (JPEGs) of the courthouse and areas of proposed project work
  - Statement of Support from the county commissioners/county council
- \* Attachment files can be directly uploaded into the online application form. For files or folder uploads larger than 50 MB, cloud storage links such as Dropbox or Google Drive will also be accepted.*

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION

To submit the online application form, please visit:

<https://preservewa.org/courthouse-application/>

We strongly encourage you to review the entire application, prepare your submission in your own text document and file folder, before finally submitting your answers and attachments to the online form. The online application form does not have the ability to 'Save' your answers and return at a later time.

If you need any assistance throughout the application process, please do not hesitate to email [grants@preservewa.org](mailto:grants@preservewa.org)

# Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties

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.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-rehabilitation.htm>