

**Frequently Asked Questions about Historic Preservation Grants from the Tennessee
Historical Commission/National Park Service
June, 2012**

1. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THESE GRANT FUNDS?

Federal grant funds are made available to the states under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). This legislation gives authority to the Secretary of the Interior "to expand and maintain a national register of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture" and to grant funds to assist the states in conducting historic preservation matters. The Tennessee Historical Commission is responsible for administering these programs in Tennessee. At the Federal level the program is administered by the National Park Service.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THESE FUNDS?

Any individual, local governmental body, private organization, or educational institution that is interested in the benefits of historic preservation may apply for funds. Owners or administrators of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places may apply for funds to restore or to plan for the restoration of those properties. If an applicant for a restoration grant is not the owner of the property the owner must provide written consent to the application and must agree to execute the required preservation covenants on the property. Churches in use by an active congregation for religious purposes are not eligible to receive grants.

3. HOW DO I APPLY FOR THESE FUNDS?

Applications may be downloaded from the THC Website <http://www.tn.gov/environment/hist/federal/presgrnt.shtml>. Apply by submitting a grant proposal following this application format or by writing or calling:

Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0442
(615) 532-1550

4. WHEN IS THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS?

The deadline for applications for the 2012 Fiscal Year (Oct. 2012-Sept. 2013) must be postmarked by **SEPTEMBER 1, 2012**

5. WHAT CAN THESE GRANT FUNDS BE USED FOR?

The available designated funds are in two categories: 1) Survey and Planning (S&P) and 2) Acquisition and Development (A&D).

Survey and Planning (S&P) funds may generally be used for the following kinds of activities:
a. "Survey" projects are designed to identify and record archeological sites and/or potentially historic buildings and structures (i.e. over 50 years old) within easily defined geographical units such as counties, cities, neighborhoods, or central business districts or which are related to a common theme, railroading, iron manufacturing, etc. "Survey" projects can also be for

research necessary to prepare for a survey or to publish the results of such a survey.

"Survey" is one of the most important activities mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act. Because the survey is fundamental to most other preservation efforts and because completing and maintaining an up-to-date survey of the entire state is such a large and never-ending task survey projects generally are given priority over projects of other types.

b. "Planning" may include projects having as their objective a wide range of preservation objectives. Among these may be included projects to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places; local preservation planning studies; or, design review guidelines for local historic districts. Other projects, such as projects to educate or inform the public regarding historic resources and preservation would also be regarded as "planning" projects. "Pre-development" planning, I.E., architectural planning for the restoration of a National Register property should be submitted as an A&D project. (See below, Acquisition and Development) General research into important themes and events in Tennessee history which is specifically directed toward the identification and evaluation of historic properties would normally be submitted as a "Survey" project. General historical research or publication which is not so directed is generally not considered for funding under the HPF program.

Among "planning" projects, projects to prepare nominations to the National Register of Historic Places have a high priority. The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources that are worthy of preservation. Nominations may include significant individual properties or historic districts. Nominations, called Multiple Property Nominations, may be prepared to nominate several properties at once. These are usually related to a common theme or are for all eligible properties in a specific geographic area such as a town or county and may be a logical follow-up to a "Survey" project. Listing of a property on the National Register can result in preserving the property by: giving official recognition by the federal government that a property is considered significant; insuring consideration in planning for federal projects; making the property eligible for federal tax benefits; and qualifying the property for restoration grants. Along with the survey, nominating to the National Register all eligible properties is a high priority goal of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Acquisition and Development (A&D) projects are projects to acquire or restore historic properties. Properties must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The work done must be reviewed and approved by staff of the Tennessee Historical Commission and must conform to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects. Owners of properties which receive A&D grants for actual construction, as opposed to architectural planning, are required to execute an agreement to maintain and preserve the property and to allow a measure of public access for a specified period of years. The term of this agreement is proportional to the amount of the grant. Because of the anticipated level of funding and because "Survey" and "Planning" projects will have priority, funds for restoration projects may be limited, however, THC always encourages quality applications for A&D projects.

6. HOW MUCH OF THE TOTAL PROJECT COST WILL BE PAID FOR BY THE FEDERAL FUNDS?

The federal grant will pay up to 60% of the total project cost after the proposed project has been properly reviewed and approved by the Tennessee Historical Commission. These are

maximum figures and the actual grant may be for less than this amount or may be for only a portion of the work included in the application. Work that has already been completed or is underway is not eligible for grant assistance nor may the cost associated with it be used as match.

7. HOW ARE THESE FUNDS ADMINISTERED?

Grant recipients will enter into a contract between themselves and the State of Tennessee which will spell out the terms and conditions of the grant. No work can be done prior to the effective start date of this contract. All state and federal regulations must be complied with. Grants are administered on a reimbursement basis. In other words, the recipient must document an approved expenditure of \$100 in order to receive from the federal government a reimbursement of \$60. In some cases where a need can be clearly demonstrated, the federal share may be obtained in advance. There are stringent requirements for documentation of expenditures and other reporting requirements. Projects may be audited by federal or state auditors.

8. CAN THESE GRANTS BE MATCHED BY OTHER FEDERAL MONEY?

Federal funds available under the Community Development Act of 1974 constitute an allowable source of matching funds. No other federal funds or donated services from any federal source may be used as match.

9. AM I ASSURED THE AMOUNT OF MONEY I REQUESTED?

No. Tennessee can provide funds for only some of the projects requesting them. Some projects are fully funded, some partially, some not at all. Funding depends upon the amount of money made available to the state, the number and quality of requests, and how well the project ranks when judged on the criteria discussed in No. 10 below.

10. WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES AND CRITERIA FOR AWARDING GRANTS?

The priorities and criteria for funding have been established by the Tennessee Historical Commission to reflect general and specific goals and objectives for historic preservation in the state. These goals and objectives are developed each year with advice solicited from the public prior to the beginning of the grant cycle. They are also based on a comprehensive plan for historic preservation which has been developed by the Historical Commission to guide its efforts and programs. This plan, A Future for the Past, can be viewed on the Historical Commission Website, <http://www.tn.gov/environment/hist/pdf/HistoricPreserv.pdf>. Specific rating criteria designed to measure how well a project meets these factors have been developed. Projects are rated generally on the following factors:

“Survey” projects:

- a. How important is the project for completing the statewide survey or for addressing other programmatically important information needs?
- b. Will the project fill a critical gap in information about historic properties either geographically or thematically?
- c. Is the project well-planned and realistic, and can the sponsor be depended on to complete the project in a timely and efficient manner and maintain quality

standards?

“Planning” Projects:

- a. Projects for the preparation of National Register nominations, especially if done as a follow-up to a survey, or projects for a local preservation plan, are priorities under this component. Projects which are not for one of these activities will be evaluated on how well they can demonstrate that they will advance the goal of preserving historic properties or address the goals of the statewide preservation plan, by, for example, promoting awareness of historic properties as community assets.
- b. Does the applicant appear able to meet all administrative and technical requirements and carry the project to successful completion?

“Acquisition and Development”:

- a. The significance of the property. Though all properties must be listed on the National Register to be eligible to apply, they are not all of equal significance. Properties which are nominated as of statewide or national significance will be given preference.
- b. The level of need for grant funding, for example, is the property endangered and is the grant critical for addressing and alleviating the danger?
- c. The viability of the project, that is, does the applicant appear to be capable, competent, responsible, and business-like and do they have the matching funds in hand? Do they appear able and willing to comply with all terms, conditions, and standards?
- d. Can the project be expected to have a positive impact on public perceptions and opinions regarding the value and importance of historic preservation?
- e. How much planning has been done for the project? Have plans and specifications been prepared? If so, do they meet the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Preservation Projects?

11. HOW ARE APPLICATIONS REVIEWED AND RATED?

Applications will be rated by the staff of the Tennessee Historical Commission based on the above considerations. Each type of project is rated and ranked in competition with other projects of the same type. Dollars are allocated first to “Survey” projects, second to “Planning”, and third to “Acquisition & Development”. Other factors such as the desire to achieve a geographic balance in the distribution of funds and other similar factors will also be considered. Final decisions are made by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Serving by appointment by the Governor of Tennessee, this officer is currently the Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission.

12. WHEN WILL I KNOW IF I WILL RECEIVE FUNDS?

Funds cannot be awarded until Congress completes work on the FY-2013 budget. This sometimes does not occur until several months into the fiscal year (Oct-Sept). Our target schedule is to allocate money to projects by February 1, 2013. Once decisions are made applicants will be promptly informed as to whether or not their project is funded. No work may be done prior to the effective start date of the contract which must be executed between the state and the grantee. Because state contracting procedures are time-consuming there will be a delay of several months between the grant award and the date at which work can begin.

13. **IF I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS, WHOM DO I ASK?**

Address your questions at any point in the application process to

**Tennessee Historical Commission
2941 Lebanon Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0442
(615) 532-1550**

Questions will be answered promptly.