

HISTORIC THEATER CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

2025-2027 BIENNIUM

Grant applications are due **Sunday, December 21, 2025, at 11:59pm**

Contact Information:

206-462-2999

grants@preservewa.org



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HISTORIC THEATER CAPITAL GRANT

The Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, together with the Governor's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Historic Theater Advisory Committee, are pleased to announce the third round of grant funds through the Historic Theater Capital Grant Program. Established in 2020 as a Capital Budget Request, the program is aimed at recognizing and preserving historic theaters as an essential element to economic vitality and social health of any community.

The Historic Theater Capital Grant Program is a program of the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP). Management of the grant portion of the program is provided by the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation under contract with DAHP. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation is Washington's only statewide non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to historic preservation.

Approximately \$500,000 in matching funds is available in the 2025-2027 Biennium with individual awards up to \$75,000.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants for the Historic Theater Capital Grant program include private/commercial property owners, non-profit organizations, and local governments. Leaseholders may apply for funds in conjunction with the property owner. Property owners may submit only one application per grant round, even if they own multiple properties eligible to participate in the program.

Eligible buildings:

Funds may be requested for the stabilization and rehabilitation of theaters that are:

- Originally built as a theater
- Currently operating as or will be restored for use as a theater
- In need of capital improvement (physical repairs)
- Currently listed (or applying to be listed) in either the Washington Heritage Register or the National Register of Historic Places, which generally means at least 50 years old. For theaters not yet listed, a nomination must be submitted to

DAHP and approved for formal review prior to any grant funds being released.

Note: If you have questions about your building's eligibility or if it is not yet listed on a historic register, please contact Michael Houser, the State Architectural Historian, before completing this application at (360) 890-2634 or via email at michael.houser@dahp.wa.gov.

Eligible projects & expenses:

- Stabilization and rehabilitation of historic theater buildings
 - including but not limited to repairs of building shell and structure such as roof and foundation, theater features such as marquee and decorative finishes, building systems such as plumbing and electrical, and accessibility improvements in compliance with ADA requirements.
- All work must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties* (see Page 14).
 - Historic materials, features, and finishes should be retained and repaired when possible. In the case of severe deterioration, historic materials may be replaced with new if the new materials identically replicate the original in dimension, appearance, material type, etc. To make sure the materials you are proposing align with the grant requirements, materials information must be submitted with your application as an attachment.
 - If you have any questions about program methodology or materials appropriateness, please contact the grant administrator before submitting a grant application. DAHP also provides Theater Preservation Guidance: <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/preservation-topics/theater-preservation-guidance>
- Grants may be used to reimburse expenditures related directly to construction (materials, labor, overhead, sales tax, etc.) **up to \$75,000 per project with a 50% or 1:1 match*** (i.e. eligible projects that cost over \$150,000 will receive a maximum \$75,000 reimbursement as a grant award). Construction-related expenditures for theater repairs made after July 1, 2025, may be eligible for use as the applicant's required match, provided such work complies with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties*.

* Theaters located in jurisdictions with a population below 50,000 or within distressed counties, as defined by the Employment Security Department, may apply **with a 25% or 1:3 match**. To verify "distressed" status, please visit: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/distressed-areas>

- Planning or soft costs (such as condition assessments, structural investigations, permitting, etc.) may not be directly reimbursed as a grant award, but they may be eligible for use toward the applicant's required match.

Eligible projects & expenses: (continued)

- Grant projects utilizing state capital funds must follow prevailing wages guidelines.
- The program goal is to support continued or improved use of historic theaters through their physical preservation. Therefore, intangible projects such as programming, building acquisition, mortgage/loan payments, web presence, and general historic or architectural research would not be eligible for funding. However, if you intend to complete those projects, you may mention so in the application to show how funding in one capital improvement project may free up funds for another essential project.

Projects NOT eligible for funding:

- Work that is incompatible with the historic nature of historic theater buildings, such as removing historic building fabric, using materials that are incompatible for the age of the building, or using materials that would not have been available historically.
- Work that is considered new construction, i.e. additions to existing theater buildings (interior or exterior), even if such work is considered historically compatible.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used in determining grant awards:

- SIGNIFICANCE - Relative historic, cultural, and social significance of the theater to the local community;
- THEATRIC USE - Historic, continued, and/or intended operations as a theater;
- URGENCY & RELEVANCE - Urgency of the threat and need for repair in relation to identified conditions;
- PRESERVATION - Extent to which the project preserves historic character and extends the useful life of the theater;
- PUBLIC BENEFIT - Physical presence in community as well as average audience/visitation;
- CONTRIBUTION - Extent to which the project leverages other sources of financial

- or community assistance;
- EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY - To what extent does the project continue, improve upon, or expand the theater's service to marginalized or under-represented communities; and
- READINESS - Readiness of the applicant to initiate and complete the project and quality of application.

Special consideration includes:

- GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION - Additional attention may be given to rural, or otherwise often neglected regions within the state.
- ECONOMIC RECOVERY - Additional attention may be given to theaters located in areas of the state identified as distressed.

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PUBLIC BENEFIT REQUIREMENT

The program goal is to support continued or improved use of historic theaters through their physical preservation which provides economic benefit to our citizens and enrich communities throughout Washington. The following are requirements for applicants receiving grant funding:

- Depending on the amount of the grant award, the grant contract will include a historic five- to fifteen-year term preservation **easement** or covenant, which specifies public benefit and minimum maintenance requirements.
- Grant recipients will be expected to proactively maintain their theater for a minimum of ten years through submission of an **annual monitoring** form.
- Visibility from the public right-of-way is the lowest threshold to meet the public benefit requirement. In the rare occurrence that a theater is no longer visible or accessible to the public, the applicant must provide a plan for limited public engagement such as hosting an annual screening or tour.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

Assistance from the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation is available by phone, email, teleconference (Zoom), and if travel and weather permitting, via site visits.

Please direct all questions to the Washington Trust grant administrator at (206) 462-2999 or via email at grants@preservewa.org.

Quality and thoroughness of the application is important, but please limit your

information to the space provided in the application form and the attachments that have been requested. *Please do not include continuation sheets or attach any lengthy supplemental, historical, or organizational materials that are not requested in the application.*

APPLICATION PREPARATION

We 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 in the **online form**, which will go live October 20, 2025:

<https://preservewa.org/historic-theater-grants-application/>

SECTION 1. Property Information

This section is for introducing the theater and its location.

- Current Theater Name
- Historic Theater Name(s) (if known)
- Theater Physical Street Address
- City, Zip Code, County
- Parcel Number
- Legal Description

SECTION 2. Owner Information

This section is for introducing the legal owner of the theater.

- Owner Name, Address, Phone, and Email

SECTION 3. Applicant Information

This section is for introducing the grant applicant (if different from the property owner).

- Owner Authorization. If not the owner, please prepare to upload a letter or email authorizing the applicant.
- Applicant Name, Address, Phone, and Email
- Preferred Contact (Email, Text Message, Phone Call, Video Call)

SECTION 4. Building Description

- Date(s) of Theater Construction (if known)
- Theater Seating Capacity
- Historic Use of the Theater
 - Please summarize the type of entertainment the theater venue historically

offered (eg. projected movies, plays, musicals, concerts, community/commercial use, use by notable persons, etc.)

- Current Use of the Theater
 - Funding priority is given to historic theaters that are still used as such. If your theater is not currently in use as a public or commercial entertainment venue, but you plan to restore the theater to such use after implementing the grant project, please detail that here as well.
- Historic and Cultural Significance of Theater
 - Please describe the relative historical and cultural significance of the theater for which grant funds are being requested. The overall historical and cultural significance of the theater is a primary consideration of the Theater Advisory Committee as they review grant applications. In other words, please explain how or why this theater is important to local or state history and/or the community it serves. You may also upload the local, state, or national register nomination forms if available.
- Historic Designation Status of the Property
 - If you have questions about your building's eligibility or if it is not yet listed on a historic register, please contact Michael Houser, the State Architectural Historian, before completing this application at (360) 890-2634 or via email at michael.houser@dahp.wa.gov.
- Other Restrictions
 - Is the property protected through a conservation easement, transfer of development rights, or any other program providing conservation / preservation incentives? If yes, explain. For easements, provide the name of the easement holder and the easement term.

SECTION 5. BUILDING CONDITION ASSESSMENT

This section is for illustrating the specific needs and urgency for preservation work done to the theater. Use this section to show what features need the most attention and grant support. Answers in this section should guide the proposed scope of work in the next section, **"Section 6: Project Proposal."**

Using the prompts below, indicate the relative condition for each building element as 'good,' 'fair,' 'poor,' or 'failing (needs replacement).' The project that you describe in

“Section 6: Project Proposal” should address those building elements identified as ‘fair,’ ‘poor,’ or ‘failing.’ In other words, you should not request grant funds for elements that are identified as being in ‘good’ condition.

- Roofing
- Foundation
- Exterior Walls
- Marquee/Signage
- Interior Walls
- Interior Flooring
- Overall Accessibility (ADA, etc.)
- Stage (including Curtains, Lights, and Mechanical Features)
- Systems: HVAC, Plumbing, Electrical, etc.
- Box Office
- Audience Seating
- Interior Decorative Features
- Utility Spaces (Offices, Storage, etc.)
- Windows and Doors
- Theater Conditions Description
 - Describe in detail the noteworthy conditions of the building elements above to illustrate the exact need or urgency for grant support.
- Theater Maintenance and Repair History
 - Describe any major repair work or restoration projects that you have completed on this property in the last five (5) years and the approximate cost of those major projects.

SECTION 6. PROJECT PROPOSAL & BUDGET

This section is for developing and proposing a project and budget based on the conditions assessment from the previous section, **“Section 5: Building Condition Assessment.”** Use this section to demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the preservation work required to restore the theater in terms of selecting scopes of work, contractors, and materials as well as managing timelines and project funds.

All work must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties* (on Page 14), which often means repair in-place or replace in-kind with identical or historically appropriate materials and features. Contractor bids/estimates, images or product pages of new materials, and photos of area conditions must also be submitted later in the application for each selected work type. DAHP also provides Theater Preservation Guidance:
<https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/preservation-topics/theater-preservation-guidance>

This section will also be used to develop the grant contract, if selected, so it is important to be clear in the proposed work and dollars allocated.

All work must be categorized into at least one of the following **Work Types**:

- **Building Shell & Structure** (roof, foundation, walls, floor, etc.)
- **Theater Features** (marquee, stage, seating, decorative finishes, etc.)
- **Building Systems & Utility** (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, offices, storage, etc.)
- **Accessibility Improvements** (ADA features & ease of physical access, etc.)

For each of the Work Type you select, you must then provide the following:

- A. **Description** - Describe the work in detail including treatments, techniques, and materials used.
 - B. **Timeline** - Example: "7/26-9/26" or "2 weeks in August 2026"
 - C. **Cost** - In dollars, based on quotes/estimates to be uploaded with the application
- **Project Total Cost** - In the online application form, include the total project cost in the space provided by adding the amounts from 1C – 4C as needed.

- **Grant Request**

This amount should be between 50% to 75% of the total project cost, up to \$75,000. Please review the Eligible Projects section (Page 2) to determine the required match level in relation to the location of your theater. A more detailed cash/in-kind match worksheet will be provided in the next section, "**Section 7. Cash & In-Kind Match Worksheet.**"

SECTION 7. CASH & IN-KIND MATCH WORKSHEET

Use this section to demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the match (your contribution) required of the program as well as having the funds and/or donated resources available to begin the project. Please keep in mind that **the grant award is a reimbursement**, so you are expected to pay 50-100% of the total project cost in advance.

This section will also be used to develop the grant contract and prepare reimbursement, if selected, so it is important to be clear in match source and dollars allocated.

If you are proposing in-kind (donated) labor, materials, or equipment for your project, please fill out the following worksheet. Please keep in mind that the grant award may

be only reimbursed for cash expenditures, so in-kind match may only be used to meet the match requirement (i.e., limited to 50% of the total project cost).

- **Cash Match:** Funds from the owner/applicant which can go toward both hard costs (purchasing materials, hiring contractors) and soft costs (architectural designs, structural assessment, permitting, etc.).
 - **In-kind Labor:** Any work donated to the project by the owner or other volunteers (**valued at \$41.70/hr**) or donated professional services that can be valued at the appropriate professional rate.
 - **In-kind Materials:** Any materials already on-hand that are donated to the project. To count materials as in-kind match, documentation (such as a product page from a website) must be provided to demonstrate the value of those donated materials.
 - **In-kind Equipment:** Any major equipment already on-hand that is donated for use during the project that would otherwise have to have been rented, such as crane, scissor lifts, electric planer, etc. To count equipment as in-kind match, documentation (such as a product rental page from a website) must be provided to demonstrate what the equipment would have cost if it had been rented.
- For each Work Type you select, you will need to describe and input the **dollar value of expected In-Kind Match** (eg. 100 hours of donated labor x \$41.70 = \$4,170; a friend donated a pallet of roof shingles = \$3,000).
 - Then you will input the remaining amount per project or phase as the **Cash Match**, which can be understood as out-of-pocket, non-reimbursed expenses as your contribution to the project. Since only actual cash expenditures can be reimbursed, this means that *at least 50% of the project must be paid in cash*.
 - Experience & Qualifications
If you are planning to complete the project yourself, please describe your experience renovating or restoring this or any other historic properties in the last ten years. If you plan to employ a contractor or other professional for your project, please provide their contact information here and include a one-page summary of their experience working on historic buildings as an attachment.

- Financial Need

How critical is a Historic Theater Grant in terms of completing this project? How will you proceed if you receive a reduced grant or no grant this year?

Funding Examples:

A. All cash, no in-kind match:

- \$20,000 foundation repair

1. You hire a contractor and pay \$20,000 for an all-inclusive foundation repair.
2. Grant award reimburses you \$10,000 after documenting completion.

B. Maximum in-kind match:

- \$20,000 reroofing

1. You buy roof shingles for \$10,000.
2. Your roofer friend donates their labor valued at \$10,000.
3. Grant award reimburses you \$10,000 after documenting completion.

C. Multi-phase:

- \$40,000 foundation and roof repair

1. You perform the foundation repairs yourself valued at \$20,000.
2. You buy shingles and hire a roofer for \$20,000.
3. Grant award reimburses you \$20,000 after documenting completion of both phases.

D. Partial Reimbursement:

- \$40,000 foundation and roof repair

1. You buy shingles and hire a roofer for \$20,000, but run out of funds for phase 2.
2. Grant award reimburses you \$10,000 after documenting completion of phase 1.
3. You hire a contractor and pay \$20,000 for an all-inclusive foundation repair.
4. Grant award reimburses you \$10,000 reimbursement after documenting completion of phase 2.

SECTION 8. PUBLIC BENEFIT

One of the purposes of this program is to promote and preserve Washington State's theater history through historic preservation for the benefit of the public. This can include long-term preservation, visibility within a Main Street or Downtown corridor, and active public or commercial use. More information about public benefit requirements can be found on Page 4.

- Preservation Easement

If a grant is awarded, the owner will be required to enter into an easement on the property to ensure the building is not adversely impacted by future action, such as demolition or inappropriate alteration. The term of the easement will be 5-15 years, depending on the amount of the grant award. If awarded a grant, will you agree to enter into this easement?

- Public Engagement

Please describe the public engagement, if any, at your theater. You may include the frequency of events, number and demographic of visitors, and visual/physical presence in the immediate built environment. While private or commercial use is expected, theaters that feature public events, host nonprofit causes, and welcome a diverse audience through accessible programming may be scored higher.

- Long Term Maintenance

Describe the plan in place to maintain the property for a period of at least ten (10) years and how this project will contribute to this plan.

- Additional Information

Please add any additional information pertaining to the proposed scope of work and the overall preservation of your theater that you were unable to include in other sections.

SECTION 9. ATTACHMENTS

Please be sure to upload all required application materials listed below. Incomplete applications may risk being scored lower and/or delayed in review. If you encounter technical difficulties, please continue to submit the application, but then reach out to grants@preservewa.org immediately to let us know that you intend to submit attachments separately.

Get tips on how to best photograph your theater in our **DAHP Photography Guide:**

https://preservewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Photography-Guidance-Checklist_2023-25.pdf.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Any contractor bids, cost estimates, condition assessments, etc. used to develop your proposal
- Images of samples or product pages for proposed materials for the project work
- Building images – At least four (4) high-resolution digital images showing each side of the building
- Detail images – Up to 15 high-resolution digital images clearly illustrating the condition of the area(s) of the proposed work and the need for/urgency of repair
- Context image(s) – At least one (1) high-resolution digital image showing the view of the building from a public right-of-way
- Text document with image captions/descriptions that correspond to image file names
- Local Government Applicants: A brief profile of department mission, lead staff, and annual budget (Required if applicable)
- Non-profit Organization Applicants: A list of board members and their affiliations and an annual operating budget for most recently completed fiscal year (Required if applicable)

Preferred file naming: "Theater Name - Descriptive Title" such as "Trust Theater - Marquee Photo".

Section 10. CERTIFICATION & SUBMISSION

"I certify to the best of my knowledge that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate."

Name, Date, and Email (a copy of the entire submitted application will be sent to this email address)

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS / OBLIGATIONS OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

- Once funding is approved, administrative staff will work with award recipients to develop the scope of work for a grant agreement (contract). **Grantees will be**

required to sign a grant contract prior to commencing work. Grant funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. When a grant award is less than the amount requested, applicants and staff may work together to develop a reduced scope of work.

- **Grant funds may only be applied to (reimbursed for) construction-related cash expenditures** and cannot be used to pay for expenditures made prior to the grant contract period.
- Construction must begin within one (1) year of the award date. **Project work must be completed by June 30, 2027.**
- The Washington State Historic Theater Capital Grant Program and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation must be acknowledged on any materials publicizing the project. Grant recipients will receive a sign design file (.pdf) with printing and posting instructions. **This sign must be posted at the project site for the duration of the construction period.**
- Proposed rehabilitation work supported by this program will be reviewed by program staff for both the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation and the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation.
- If a recipient of a grant or subsequent owner of a property that was assisted by a grant takes any action within the term of the preservation easement on the property (between five to fifteen years, based on the amount of the grant award) which destroys the building's historic integrity or context, the preservation grant shall be repaid in full within one year. Such actions may include demolition or substantial alteration.

APPLICATION REVIEW

Completed program applications including attachments are due **Sunday, December 21, 2025, at 11:59pm** via online form. Once all applications are received, the Historic Theater Advisory Committee will convene to review applications based on the evaluation criteria contained herein. The Advisory Committee may recommend **full funding, partial funding, or no funding for applications**. Advisory Committee recommendations will be forwarded to the director of the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation for final review and approval.

After review of grant applications occurs, applicants will receive formal notification regarding grant awards. Historic Theater Capital Grant program staff will work with each award recipient to develop a contract that specifies the scope of work to be funded.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

Funds awarded through the Historic Theater Capital Grant Program are intended to support projects that comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties. These general standards are intended to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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 about the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation can be found at:
<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>