

ISSUE BRIEF

Historic Preservation Fund Appropriations

ACRA Position

ACRA urges Congress to provide \$225 million for the Historic Preservation Fund for fiscal year 2026 to help states, communities and Tribes protect the places that tell our nation's story.

Background

Since its establishment in the 1970s, the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) has supported the rescue and rehabilitation of historic sites, revitalized communities, and created opportunities for economic growth.

The Fund helps the National Park Service administer heritage programs such as the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic Tax Credit Program. State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (S/THPOs), who are tasked with the survey and inventory of America's historic resources, rely on the HPF for part of their budgets.

Over the last four decades, the HPF has made possible the survey of millions of acres and identification of numerous cultural resources, resulting in over 95,000 listings on the National Register, provided millions of dollars for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and leveraged more than \$162 billion in private investment through the Historic Tax Credit.

Not a single dollar of HPF funding comes from federal taxpayers; funding for the HPF comes from offshore oil leases. States are required to match at least 40 percent of the funding that they receive from the HPF. Recognizing the immense economic and cultural value of historic preservation, Congress increased funding for the HPF every year from 2015 to 2023.

Despite these increases, the investments have not kept up with rising demand. The need for full funding of the HPF has become more critical in recent years as SHPO responsibilities have increased, new THPO offices are established, and competitive grant programs are created and expanded. In addition, the passage of the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law means that state and Tribal preservation offices will face significant more demand for their services as federal projects get funded.

Without adequate funding, state and Tribal preservation offices will lack the capacity and ability to carry out programs that support management of our cultural resources, heritage preservation, and community development. And critical infrastructure projects will be delayed.

Congress can help states, localities and Tribes continue their efforts to protect and celebrate our heritage by providing \$225 million from the HPF in fiscal 2026, including \$70 million for SHPOs and \$34 million for THPOs.

About the American Cultural Resources Association

ACRA is the national trade association supporting and promoting the common interests of cultural resource management (CRM) firms of all sizes, types and specialties. Member firms undertake much of the legally mandated CRM studies and investigations in the United States.

For more information, contact ACRA at info@acra-crm.org.