



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

FY2026 Heritage Fund Program Guidelines

Introduction

Established in 1996, the Heritage Fund is a cooperative effort of Preservation Maryland (PM) and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). The program provides direct assistance for the protection of historic and cultural resources and supports innovative demonstration projects that can be replicated to meet preservation needs across the state. Open once a year, the Heritage Fund is intended to serve tangible cultural resources in Maryland whose needs are not likely to be met through existing PM or MHT programs.

The FY26 grant cycle marks the Heritage Fund's 30th anniversary. This round will feature a total of \$144,000 in available grant funding. Applications will open on January 7, 2026, and will be due by March 27, 2026.

Eligibility

The Heritage Fund is open to non-profit organizations and instrumentalities of state, county, and municipal governments engaged in historic preservation projects. Private property owners are not eligible. Applicants must demonstrate capacity to complete their project within one calendar year of award. Extensions and modifications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are not automatically granted.

Eligible projects fall into three general categories: **education & research, planning & feasibility, and repair & rehabilitation.**

Education & Research

Education & research projects include programmatic work supporting public education and outreach, with a particular interest in reaching new audiences. Funding supports projects that use innovative approaches to introduce communities to preservation. Representative projects include:

- Development and installation of historic markers or interpretive signage
- Production of brochures, visitor guides, and outreach materials
- Heritage tourism programs and related materials
- Conferences, trainings, and educational resources for preservation professionals
- Website and media development
- Public exhibits or oral history projects

Planning & Feasibility

These programmatic projects produce the studies, reports, or plans necessary to support future programmatic or capital work. Projects may focus on individual resources, collections of resources, or provide organizational support to local preservation nonprofits. Representative projects include:

- Feasibility studies, architectural plans, condition or structural assessments, and Historic Structure Reports
- Historic context statements, cultural resource or landscape surveys, and local/state/National Register nominations
- Preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance, or emergency plans
- Design guidelines
- Organizational strategic plans and board or volunteer development

Repair & Rehabilitation

Repair & rehabilitation projects are capital efforts that support the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, or reconstruction of historic resources—including structures, sites, landscapes, objects, and archaeological resources. Eligible work may also include legal services to protect or acquire endangered resources.

Representative projects include:

- Capital work such as structural repairs, restoration of missing elements, or grave marker repair and remounting
- Legal services to prevent demolition, designate resources, or strengthen local preservation ordinances

Grant Awards

- The FY26 Heritage Fund will award **\$144,000** in total grant funding. The maximum grant award is **\$10,000**, and most awards range between **\$2,000 and \$6,000**. As a competitive program, not all proposals are funded, and partial awards are common.
- Each applicant must provide a **cash or in-kind match of at least 10%** of the total project cost, reflected in the application budget.
- The Heritage Fund is a **reimbursable** grant program. PM will reimburse approved project costs once the project is complete and proper documentation is submitted through the Disbursement Request. Reimbursement cannot exceed the award amount and can only be made to the applicant organization—never directly to contractors or vendors.

Criteria for Grant Awards

Applications are evaluated by an independent Selection Committee appointed by both PM and MHT. Projects are evaluated on how successfully they meet the purposes and priorities of the Fund. *The FY26 Criteria and Scoring Rubric is included at the end of these guidelines.*

Application Procedure

[Applications](#) must be submitted through PM's online platform, SmarterSelect. Creating an account is required. The application will be open **January 7–March 27, 2026**. No email or mailed materials will be accepted. All applications must be submitted online by the deadline, no exceptions.

Applicants should expect to upload some or all the following:

- IRS Determination Letter / confirmation of federal nonprofit status
- EIN
- Maryland Secretary of State Charitable Registration confirmation
- Photographs of the building, project, and/or organization
- Project budget
- Consultant estimates or quotes
- Letters of support (optional)
- Letter of support from property owner (if applicable)
- Potential applicants are encouraged to contact PM before beginning an application to confirm eligibility.

It is recommended that potential applicants contact PM before beginning an application to ensure eligibility. PM staff will be available virtually via Zoom on the following dates and times to discuss grant requirements and answer questions.

Thursday, January 22, 2026, 6:00 PM – Heritage Fund Virtual Information Session

This will be a webinar presentation providing an overview of the program followed by a Q&A

Friday, February 13, 2026, 12:30 PM – Heritage Fund Office Hours - February Session

Friday, March 13, 2026, 12:30 PM – Heritage Fund Office Hours – March Session

These will be unstructured drop-in discussions and Q&A sessions where attendees can ask specific questions about program eligibility and completing the application.

Application Timeline	
Application Opens	Wednesday, January 7, 2026
Virtual Information Session	Thursday, January 22, 2026
Virtual Office Hour 1	Friday, February 13, 2026
Virtual Office Hour 2	Friday, March 13, 2026
Application Deadline	Friday, March 27, 2026, at 11:59 PM
Award Public Announcement (anticipated)	May 2026

Requirements and Conditions for Grantees

All applicants awarded grants through the Heritage Fund program will be required to comply with the following grant requirements:

1. Complete the Heritage Fund Grant Acceptance Form which confirms the project name, description, and award amount.
2. Submit a copy of your current W9.
3. Complete your project within one year of the award date.
4. As appropriate, all work must comply with the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties](#), and contractors/consultants should meet the appropriate [Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards](#) (36 CFR Part 61).
5. Post a [Heritage Fund identification sign](#) at the project site, and/or organization headquarters or website, as appropriate.
6. Any materials or publicity produced about the award project, during the grant term or after the project is completed, must include the following citation: *“Funding for this project was provided in part by a grant from the Heritage Fund, a program of Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust.”*
7. Once completed submit a Reimbursement Request and Grant Final Report which includes a summary of the project, and documentation confirming that the project was completed and payment was made by on project expenses.

Questions?

To sign up for the Virtual Information Session or one of the Office Hours, please visit [Preservation Maryland's calendar](#) for registration links. For further questions, contact Christiana Limniatis, Program & Outreach Manager at climniatis@PresMD.org or 410-685-2886 x302.

Program Partners

Preservation Maryland is a non-profit harnessing the power of historic places by revitalizing and reinvesting in communities, advocating, and building the historic trades workforce for the benefit of all Marylanders. Preservation Maryland powers the Campaign for Historic Trades and Smart Growth Maryland.

The **Maryland Historical Trust** is the state agency dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. Governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees, MHT is headquartered in Crownsville and also includes Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (JPPM) in Calvert County. JPPM, the State Museum of Archeology, houses the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory (MAC Lab).



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FY2026 Heritage Fund Criteria and Scoring Rubric

		Not Demonstrated	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
1.	Relative historical and cultural significance of the resource(s)	0	1–3	4–7	8–10	
2.	Urgency of the need for financial assistance	0	1–3	4–7	8–10	
3.	Extent to which the project provides long-term resource protection	0	1–3	4–7	8–10	
4.	Extent to which the project stimulates or promotes other preservation activities	0	1–3	4–7	8–10	
5.	Administrative capability of the applicant to complete the project	0	1–3	4–7	8–10	
6.	Readiness of the applicant to initiate and complete the project, and status of additional funds	0	1–3	4–7	8–10	
7.	Educational value of the project	0	1–2	3–4	5	
8.	Innovative/creative value of the project	0	1–2	3–4	5	
9.	Extent to which the project leverages other sources of financial assistance	0	1–2	3–4	5	
10.	Extent to which the project contributes to the equitable geographic distribution of HF money across the state (Compared against all FY26 applicants)	0	1–2	3–4	5	

	Total	/80 max.
	Extra Credit Criteria: Up to 2 points per item	Points earned
	Extent of public access to the project	
	Publicity/public awareness opportunity	
	Extent to which not funding the project will lead to the resource(s) loss	
	Uniqueness and timeliness of opportunity	
	Extent to which this project promotes the diversity of cultural resources	
	Extent to which the grant will serve to strengthen the organizational capacity of a new or struggling preservation group	
	Extra Credit Total	/12 max.