



MARYLAND CANAL TOWNS REINVESTMENT & REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE



This material was produced with assistance from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior under Grant Number P24AP02347-00. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

Contents

Introduction	3
Program Timeline Overview	4
Eligibility Requirements	5
Application Process	7
Selection Process and Criteria	8
Program Requirements	10
Appendix A – Program Map	13
Appendix B – Sample Subgrant Agreement	14
Appendix C – Sample Preservation Agreement	15
Appendix D - Sample Preservation Easement.....	16
Appendix E - Project Sign.....	17
Appendix F – SOI Professional Qualifications Standards	18
Appendix G – SOI Standards for Rehabilitation	20

Preservation Maryland is a nonprofit 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.

Powered by PM, **The Campaign for Historic Trades** is a national workforce development program working to expand and strengthen careers in the historic trades. CHT focuses on the skills needed to preserve, restore, rehabilitate, reconstruct, and deconstruct historic structures.

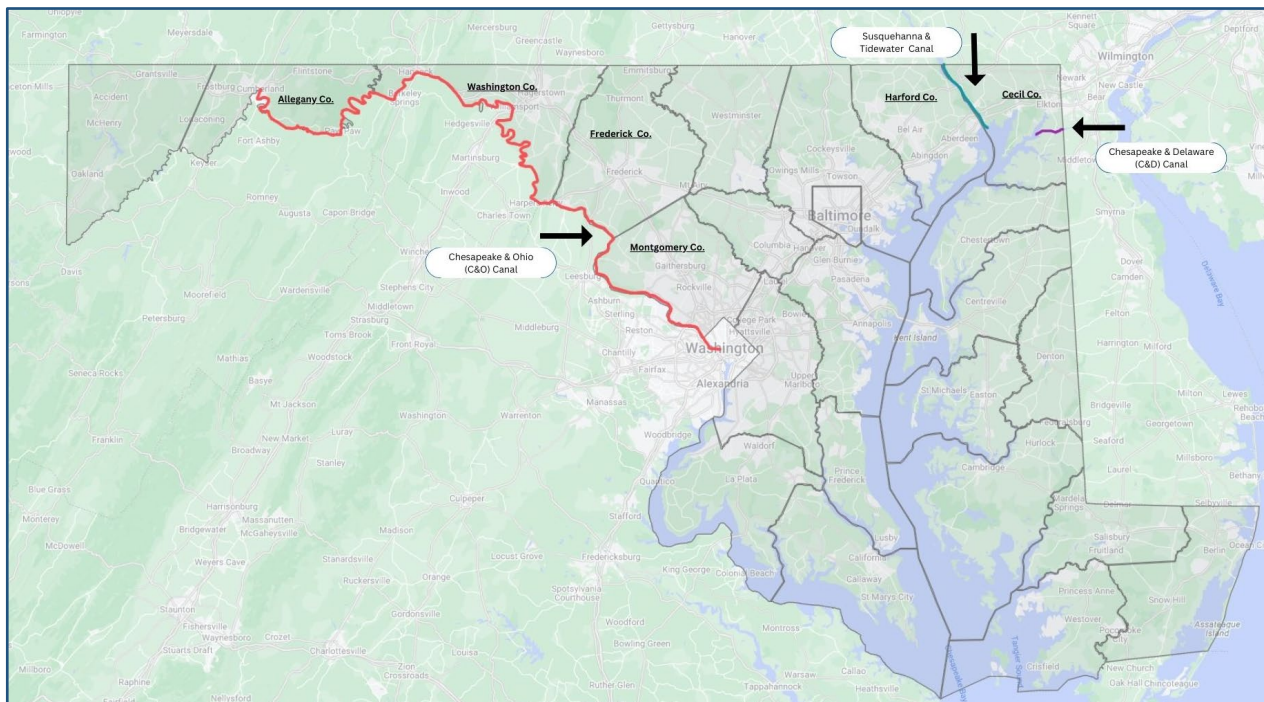


Introduction

The Maryland Canal Towns Reinvestment & Revitalization Initiative (CTRR) will provide direct funding assistance to endangered and underutilized historic properties within canal towns and communities along the three historic canals of Maryland. Once booming communities, many of Maryland's canal towns have seen significant disinvestment as a result of decreased canal traffic and the relocation of associated industrial uses. While many communities have pivoted to incorporate heritage and recreational tourism to fill the economic void left by that loss, they still face numerous challenges in converting and re-energizing their historic downtowns and main streets into economic benefits.

The primary goal of the CTRR is to complete rehabilitation projects that return currently vacant or underutilized historic buildings located within the designated CTRR-eligible communities into productive use. Approximately \$572,844 is expected to be awarded as grant funding. Preservation Maryland anticipates 5-10 projects will be awarded. Grant awards for projects will range from \$20,000 to \$150,000 and will require a 25% cash or in-kind match. As a reimbursement grant, awarded funds will only be paid upon completion of the work described in the approved scope of work.

This competitive grant program is funded by the National Park Service through the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program. In 2024 Preservation Maryland was one of 17 organizations across the country awarded Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization subgrant awards: the first organization to do so in Maryland. The grants are supported through the [Historic Preservation Fund](#) (HPF), which has provided more than \$2 billion in historic preservation grants to states, Tribes, local governments, and nonprofit organizations since its inception in 1977.



Program Timeline Overview

In general, the following timeline is anticipated for Maryland Canal Towns Reinvestment & Revitalization Initiative grant project selection and award. All specific dates applicable to awarded projects will be detailed in the grant agreement executed with Preservation Maryland.

September 2026	Online application portal opens
October 2026	Virtual & In-Person Information Sessions
November 2026	Application DEADLINE – 11:59 PM
November-December 2026	Application Review
January 2027	Award Notification Letters Sent Grant Agreements executed
January-February 2027	NPS review, procurement, bid approval, and notice to proceed
August 2027	Deadline to complete construction phase of project

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant Eligibility

The Maryland Canal Towns Reinvestment & Revitalization Initiative (CTRR) is open to applications from:

- non-profit organizations
- units of local, county, or state government
- private commercial/income-producing property owners

CTRR is not open to applications from:

- private homeowners
- active religious spaces*

**Note about active religious spaces. Non-profit religious organizations are welcome to apply for projects that meet all the CTRR program requirements, as are projects involving former religious spaces being adaptively reused. CTRR program funds cannot be used for projects involving scopes of work in active religious spaces.*

Property Eligibility

To apply for a CTRR subgrant, the property must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Be listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) individually or as a contributing resource to a listed historic district;
- Be a non-residential, non-religious building or structure (residential units as part of a mixed-use building are eligible, but single- or multi-family homes without commercial or other third spaces are not eligible)
- Be located within canal towns or adjacent communities along the three historic canals of Maryland, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, and Susquehanna & Tidewater Canal. The property must be located within the designated [eligible canal zones](#), which includes communities approximately no more than 2 miles from the canal.
- Be located in a municipality or unorganized territory with a population of 50,000 or less as determined by the [2020 U.S. Census](#).
- Be a project that has the potential to catalyze continued investment in the historic canal towns.
- All work must meet the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation](#), and the [Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards](#), where applicable.
- Properties receiving funding must enter into an Easement or Preservation Agreement with Preservation Maryland. The term of the agreement is a minimum of five (5) years and determined by the total amount of the subgrant.

Project Eligibility

CTRR supports rehabilitation projects of endangered and underutilized historic properties. Funds can only be used for construction/rehabilitation hard costs; soft costs and work that has already been completed are not eligible for grant funding.

While projects can include interior work, all projects must include an exterior scope of work. If a project includes the interior of a property or work on functional systems (e.g., fire suppression or energy efficiency upgrades), the application must specifically address why the proposed work is critical to meeting long-term goals and how it will help ensure continued active use of the property.

In addition to meeting the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, all projects must comply with all applicable local, county, and/or state zoning and building permit requirements.

Eligible capital expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Structural repairs and stabilization
- Roof and cornice repair/replacement
- Gutter systems
- Masonry repair
- Wood siding and trim repair/replacement
- Window and door repair/replacement
- Storefront rehabilitation
- Replacement of documented but missing/damaged historic features
- Exterior and interior finishes and features
- Building system upgrades (e.g. HVAC, fire suppression)
- ADA accessibility improvements
- Energy efficiency upgrades
- Project Sign installation
- Pre-development professional services, including architectural and engineering plans and specifications which contribute to the cost of completion of Project Scopes of Work.*

Ineligible expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Project administration and oversight
- Acquisition
- Costs incurred prior to the contract start date
- Costs incurred after the contract expiration date
- Routine maintenance
- Mothballing of vacant buildings with no anticipated use
- Major landscaping
- Site improvements associated with parking lots, sidewalks, etc.
- Mitigation activities as a condition or precondition for obtaining a federal permit, license, or funding

* *The combined costs for pre-development professional services cannot exceed 20% of the total project cost.*

Grant Awards

Projects successfully meeting all program eligibility requirements will be eligible for CTRR funding. Grant awards will range from \$20,000 to \$150,000. Each project budget must include at least 25% cash or in-kind match. As a reimbursement grant, awarded funds will only be paid upon completion of the work described in the approved scope of work.

Application Process

Preservation Maryland will receive CTRR applications through the online grant application platform, *SmarterSelect* and accessed from the CTRR website. This program is free but does require setting up an account. Applications will only be accepted through the online application platform; email or hard copies of the application and/or supplemental documentation will not be accepted.

Applicants will be required to complete the online application form and upload support documentation. Depending on project plans, an applicant should expect to provide the following, or similar items:

- Confirmation of [NRHP](#) listing
- IRS Determination Letter OR [IRS Tax Exempt Organization](#) Confirmation
- [Maryland Secretary of State Charitable Organization](#) Confirmation
- Photographs of the property
- Project budget worksheet
- Proof of funds/funding commitment
- Project timeline
- Project plan, drawings, and renderings
- Contractor/consultant estimates or quotes for proposed work
- Organization/Team overview and structure
- Letters of Support from community partners
- Current lease agreement (if applicable)
- Property owner letter of consent (if applicable)
- Co-owner, corporation, or nonprofit board letter of consent (if applicable)

Application Timeline

Application opens	Monday, September 21 st , 2026
In-person Information Session #1 – Williamsport	Thursday, October 8 th , 2026
In-person Information Session #2 – Havre De Grace	Friday, October 16 th , 2026
Virtual Information Session	Friday, October 16 th , 2026
Virtual Office Hours #1	Thursday, October 22 nd , 2026
Application deadline	Friday, November 6 th , 2026, 11:59 PM
Application review	November - December 2026
Award notifications Grant Agreements executed	January- August 2027
NPS & Environmental Reviews	
Procurement/bid approval	
Notice to Proceed	
Quarterly Reports	
Final Project reports due	August 2027
Final Project completion deadline	September 30 th , 2027

It is recommended that interested applicants attend one of the public information or office hours prior to beginning an application to learn more about the program and ensure eligibility. PM staff will be available virtually and in-person on the following dates and times to discuss grant requirements and answer questions. To sign up for the information session or one of the office hours, please visit [Preservation Maryland's calendar](#) for registration links.

Selection Process and Criteria

Applications are reviewed and scored by Preservation Maryland staff and Board of Directors and undergo a National Park Service review as well. Preservation Maryland will consult with the Maryland Historical Trust, and other individuals who have enterprise and knowledge of property rehabilitation, the history of Maryland's canal towns, and a commitment to adhering to the priorities identified in the program guidelines and selection criteria.

Submitted applications are initially reviewed for completeness and eligibility, and requests for additional information may be made to the Applicant, if necessary. An application is only advanced for formal review if Preservation Maryland staff determines the application package to be complete, eligible, and all requested documentation has been received and approved.

All funding decisions will be based on CTRR Selection Criteria. Depending on the number of applications received and amount of funding requested, additional non-scored criteria may be used in the selection. These may include, for example, geographic distribution of funds, benefit to underserved or disadvantaged communities, amount of applicant match, and demonstrated local support.

Maryland Canal Towns Reinvestment & Revitalization Initiative Selection Criteria

Impact

Max 10 Points

Extent to which the project meets the program objective to rehabilitate vacant or underutilized historic buildings within canal towns and communities of Maryland.

Is the property eligible as defined in the program guidelines?

Will the proposed project enhance the value of the building to the community?

Is the property a community asset or critical infrastructure to the community?

Define the need, urgency, or threat to the property and proposed scope of work?

To what extent will the project create physical/visible changes downtown?

Will occupancy of the building increase when the project is completed?

Will the project contribute to the economic revitalization of the community?

Feasibility

Max 10 Points

Extent to which the applicant shows the readiness and capacity to complete the project.

Can the project be completed in the one-year grant term?

Is the applicant experienced enough to complete the project?

Do they have successful project team?

If a cash match is provided, is it in-hand or pending?

Are you/the property owner able to comply with the termed easement?

Preservation

Max 10 Points

Extent to which the project meets the historic preservation standards and guidelines and industry best practices put forth in the program guidelines.

Is the scope of work well-prioritized, clearly explained with an appropriate level of detail?

What parts of the scope of work will the grant fund?

Does the project comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards?

If not already listed, can the applicant secure NR listing within the project timeline?

Budget

Max 10 points

Extent to which the project budget meets the needs of the project.

Does the budget provide a line-item breakdown for each scope of work?

Is the budget reasonable to complete all the project objectives?

Is the budget appropriate for the project to relevant preservation standards and guidelines?

If not awarded through this program, how will the project be completed?

Program Requirements

If awarded funding, a Grant Agreement will be made between the Applicant (and Property Owner of Record if not the Applicant) and Preservation Maryland accepting the terms of the CTRR award. This document will confirm key project terms and conditions including but not limited to the Project Period start and end dates, reporting schedule, grant award amount, and project summary. The Grant Agreement will also include the following program requirements:

Match & Budget

To encourage further local investment, CTRR projects require a minimum 25% cash or in-kind match of the grant amount requested. For example, if you request a grant of \$50,000, your total project budget must be at least \$62,500 (\$50,000 grant request plus \$12,500 match); if you request a grant of \$100,000, your total project budget must be at least \$125,000 (\$100,000 grant request plus \$25,000 match). Applicants may include a match beyond the 25% requirement. Match amount may be taken into consideration by the review team during project selection. The total match must be available and reserved for the project at the time of application, and proof of match must be included with the application.

The cash match must be liquid assets, cash-in-hand that is used to complete the project. It can be raised from several sources (e.g. private funds, donations, local grant funds, general organizational funds, etc.) but it cannot be sourced from or include other federal funds. An in-kind match represents the value of non-cash contributions provided by the Applicant or a non-federal third-party. In-kind matches can consist of charges for the value of goods and services directly benefiting approved objectives of the approved project. DIY work by the property owner is not an allowable reimbursable cost or unless that person is otherwise qualified to perform the work. Materials purchased for DIY work is an allowable reimbursable cost.

National Register of Historic Places Listing

The project property must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including contributing structures to NR districts. This is a federal program requirement and no expectations are allowed.

Bidding and Procurement

Awarded Applicants will be required to use [Federal Procurement Standards](#). In all procurement actions, the general objectives are to:

- Provide full and open competition for government-funded work
- Guard against real and perceived favoritism and profiteering at taxpayer's expense by using an open and fair competitive bid process (when required)
- Provide equal opportunities to participate in public business

In addition to complying with 2 CFR 200 to determine the allowable procurement methods and policies, the [Historic Preservation Fund Grant Manual](#) also provides information on unallowable costs. Before undertaking a procurement action, whether for goods or services, grantees should review 2 CFR 200 to understand methods and generally allowable or unallowable costs as well as the grant manual for additional guidance on allowable and unallowable costs.

Easements and Preservation Agreements

In accordance with federal program requirements, an Easement or Preservation Agreement is required to protect the grant-funded investment in the historic character of the property. As part of these agreements, the Applicant agrees to keep and maintain the property in reasonably good order and in accordance with all relevant preservation and building codes, and to not make any major exterior or structural changes without approval from Preservation Maryland; the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation will be used to review proposed changes. Preservation Agreements are simple contracts executed by Preservation Maryland and the property owner; Easements are recorded with the county clerk's land records with the deed of the property.

The preservation agreement terms are as follows:

Award Amount	Easement/Preservation Agreement Term Requirement
\$20,000 - \$50,000	5-year minimum Preservation Agreement
\$50,001 - \$150,000	10-year minimum Easement

Laws and Regulations

Historic Preservation Fund [program funds are subject](#) to the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the [Historic Preservation Fund Grants Manual](#) (2007), and subsequent memos and guidance, [OMB regulations in 2 CFR 200](#), and other Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

All projects must maintain all financial and programmatic records, supporting documents, statistical records, and other grants-related records for 3 years and be made available for access in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200.333-200.337 and the Historic Preservation Fund Grants Manual.

NPS Technical and Other Reviews

All projects, contractors, consultants, and project plans will require a review by the National Park Service for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and to conduct consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust and other consulting parties as needed under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Work may not begin until these reviews are completed and NPS provides final approval to proceed.

Progress & Final Report

Preservation Maryland will remain engaged with selected applicants throughout their projects to ensure successful completion. Preservation Maryland staff may also request in-progress site visits or photography for promotion of the program. Projects will be required to provide regular reports detailing the status of the project, any issues or successes encountered, proposed changes to the work schedule, and a budget update showing all paid and unpaid invoices.

All projects will be required to submit a final report at the conclusion of the project and before the final reimbursement. A required on-site inspection by Preservation Maryland will be performed as part of the final report and grant closeout procedure. Progress and final reports are a federal program requirement and no exceptions are allowed. All reports and reimbursement requests will be made online through the same grant application platform that was used to submit the grant application. The project's schedule of reporting will be included in the executed Grant Agreement.

Reimbursement

CTRR is a reimbursable grant program. Selected Applicants must be prepared to fund the cost of the project and then request reimbursement. An initial reimbursement request may be made at 50% completion of the project as long as the reimbursement request is at least \$10,000. Payment of the remainder will be held until satisfactory completion of all project work is confirmed. No advances will be made under any circumstances. Applicants must plan their financial arrangements accordingly. Applicants are encouraged to secure full financing for their projects up front to avoid delays between work completion and grant reimbursement.

Expenditures will only be reimbursed if they are part of the approved Grant Agreement and comply with all terms and policies of this program. Reimbursement may not exceed the grant award amount and can only be made to the selected Applicant and not to any contractors, consultants, or other project vendors. In submitting a partial or final reimbursement request, all expenses must be documented. Acceptable proof of expenditures includes copies of invoices, receipts, bank/credit card statements, and both sides of cancelled checks.

Project Sign & Public Notice

A sign acknowledging the awarded funding must be erected and maintained at the project site. The sign must be of a reasonable and adequate size and construction to withstand weather exposure, be easily read from the public right-of-way, and be maintained in a place throughout the project term. This is a federal program requirement and no exceptions are allowed.

Preservation Maryland will provide the sign graphic to be used. Applicants will be responsible for producing and installing the sign on site at the project for the duration of the Project Period. The cost of fabricating and erecting the sign is an eligible cost for this grant and should be included in the project budget. Once installed, a photo of the sign must be provided to Preservation Maryland.

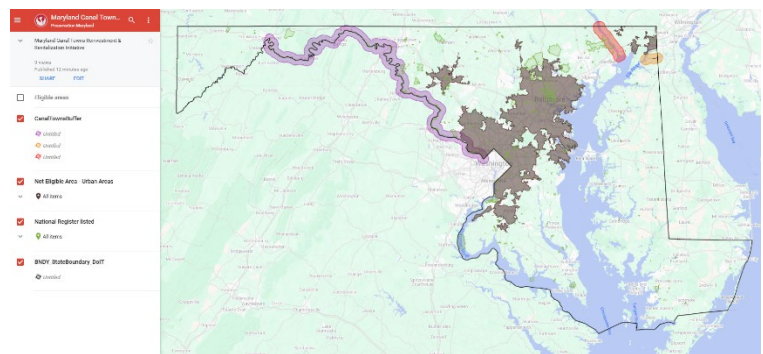
In all publicity and press releases about this project must acknowledge d similar materials funded by the CTRR program, a credit line should be included that reads: *“This project is being supported in part by a grant from the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, in partnership with Preservation Maryland.”* Additional information briefly identifying the historical significance of the property and recognizing the “Maryland Canal Towns Reinvestment & Revitalization Initiative” is also strongly encouraged.

Appendix A – Program Map

As part of the CTRR eligibility requirements, eligible properties must be:

- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing resource to a listed historic district;
- Be a non-residential, non-religious building or structure (residential units as part of a mixed-use building are eligible, but single- or multi-family homes without commercial or other third spaces are not eligible)
- Be located within canal towns or adjacent communities along the three historic canals of Maryland, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, and Susquehanna & Tidewater Canal. The property must be located within the designated [eligible canal zones](#), which includes communities approximately no more than 2 miles from the canal.
- Be located in a municipality or unorganized territory with a population of 50,000 or less as determined by the [2020 U.S. Census](#).
- Be a project that has the potential to catalyze continued investment in the historic canal towns.

An interactive [program map](#) is available to help confirm your project's eligibility. Preservation Maryland staff is also available to help confirm eligibility.



National Register listed historic districts located within the eligible for the CTRR program include but are not limited to:

Berkley Crossroads HD, Darlington, Harford County
Brunswick HD, Brunswick, Frederick County
Havre de Grace HD, Havre de Grace, Harford County
Port Deposit HD, Port Deposit, Cecil County
Sharpsburg HD, Sharpsburg, Washington County
South Chesapeake City HD, Chesapeake City, Cecil County
South Cumberland HD, Cumberland, Washington County
Washington Street HD, Cumberland, Washington County
Williamsport HD, Williamsport, Washington County

To confirm your property's National Register status you can also use the Maryland Historical Trust's Cultural Resource Information System, [MEDUSA](#), or their [National Register Properties](#) search page.

Appendix B – Sample Subgrant Agreement

(page intentionally left blank)

Appendix C – Sample Preservation Agreement

(page intentionally left blank)

Appendix D - Sample Preservation Easement

(page intentionally left blank)

Preservation **in** Progress

This project is supported in part by a Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Learn more about funding and benefits at www.PresMD.org



**PRESERVATION
MARYLAND**

Funding Provided by:



**MARYLAND CANAL TOWNS
REINVESTMENT &
REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE**

[Click here](#) to access a PDF version of the sign.

Appendix F – SOI Professional Qualifications Standards

Used by the [National Park Service](#), the following requirements define the minimum education and experience required to perform identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities. In some cases, additional areas or levels of expertise may be needed, depending on the complexity of the task and the nature of the historic properties involved. In the following definitions, a year of full-time professional experience need not consist of a continuous year of full-time work but may be made up of discontinuous periods of full-time or part-time work adding up to the equivalent of a year of full-time experience. Where appropriate, all contractors and consultants retained on a CTRR funded project must meet the relevant standard.

History

The minimum professional qualifications in history are a graduate degree in history or closely related field; or a bachelor's degree in history or closely related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, teaching, interpretation, or other demonstrable professional activity with an academic institution, historic organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution; or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of history.

Archeology

The minimum professional qualifications in archeology are a graduate degree in archeology, anthropology, or closely related field plus:

1. At least one year of full-time professional experience or equivalent specialized training in archeological research, administration, or management;
2. At least four months of supervised field and analytic experience in general North American archeology, and
3. Demonstrated ability to carry research to completion.

In addition to these minimum qualifications, a professional in prehistoric archeology shall have at least one year of full-time professional experience at a supervisory level in the study of archeological resources of the prehistoric period. A professional in historic archeology shall have at least one year of full-time professional experience at a supervisory level in the study of archeological resources of the historic period.

Architectural History

The minimum professional qualifications in architectural history are a graduate degree in architectural history, art history, historic preservation, or closely related field with coursework in American architectural history or a bachelor's degree in architectural history, art history, historic preservation or closely related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, or teaching in American architectural history or restoration architecture with an academic institution, historical organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution; or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of American architectural history.

Architecture

The minimum professional qualifications in architecture are a professional degree in architecture plus at least two years of full-time experience in architecture; or a State license to practice architecture.

Historic Architecture

The minimum professional qualifications in historic architecture are a professional degree in architecture or a State license to practice architecture, plus one of the following:

1. At least one year of graduate study in architectural preservation, American architectural history, preservation planning, or closely related field; or
2. At least one year of full-time professional experience on historic preservation projects.

Such study or experience shall include detailed investigations of historic structures, preparation of historic structures research reports, and preparation of plans and specifications for preservation projects.

Appendix G – SOI Standards for Rehabilitation

The [Standards for Rehabilitation](#) provide direction in making appropriate choices in planning the repairs, alterations, and additions that may be part of a rehabilitation project. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

The accompanying Guidelines apply the Standards and describe specific treatments that do and do not meet the Standards. The Standards for Rehabilitation are [codified in 36 CFR Part 67](#), are regulatory for the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, and are the Standards most often used by local historic district commissions nationwide. The Standards for Rehabilitation is one of the [Four Treatments](#) of Historic Properties.

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 archeological 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.