

Heritage Preservation Grant Program  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**1. How do I research historic designation eligibility?**

Several historic designation resource links can be found at [austintexas.gov/heritage-grants](http://austintexas.gov/heritage-grants) under “Historic Preservation and Cultural Significance Research Resources” on the landing page. The [Historic Preservation Office](#) also offers a collection of resources to help identify individual listings and sites located in a historic. For more information on how to get your site designated, you can email [preservation@austintexas.gov](mailto:preservation@austintexas.gov) or call [512-974-3393](tel:512-974-3393). In addition, the Austin History Center offers a [Digital Collections Site](#) with many historic resources related to researching history. For assistance or in-depth research services, submit a [Research Request Form](#) with the Austin History Center.

**2. I lease a historic building and have no historic designation. Am I eligible to apply for an Educational Project?**

Non-profit and commercial entities who own or lease a historic property with no designation are eligible to apply for Educational or Marketing Projects as long as the applicant obtains owner consent for the project and meets at least two of the Historic Cultural Significance criteria below:

**Historic Cultural Significant Projects must meet at least TWO of the following criteria with or without a historic designation that occurs at a historic site and supports history and heritage:**

- **Historic Event:** Project must have direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city;
- **Significant People:** Project has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on local history;
- **Significant Era:** Represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an understanding of how the site was used by past generations;
- **Historic Cultural Understanding:** Be a physical attribute of a neighborhood, community or the city that is a source of pride or heritage understanding;
- **Significant Movements:** Associated with social movements, institutions, or patterns of growth or change that contributed significantly to the heritage or history of the neighborhood, community or city.

**3. I am interested in developing an educational project related to a historic city-owned park. Am I eligible to apply?**

A Community Activated Park Project ([CAPP Review and Approval Form](#)) must be submitted to and approved by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department prior to a Heritage Preservation Grant project submission. Approval must be uploaded as a part of your proposal documents.

**4. I own a historic home in a historic district, am I eligible to apply for a capital project?**

Residential, owner-occupied properties or stewards of historic sites that are not accessible and open to tourists are ineligible.

**5. I have not completed a previous Heritage Preservation Grant funded project. Am I eligible to apply in FY 2022?**

Applicants that have not completed a previous Heritage Preservation Grant project and related reporting requirements (or other HOT-funded grant program requirements) are ineligible to apply until prior contract requirements are fulfilled and the grant is successfully closed.

**6. I am a nonprofit organization and interested in an Educational or Marketing project. My organization serves statewide and/or nationwide populations. Am I eligible to apply?**

Non-Profit organizations primarily serving Statewide or Nationwide populations are ineligible. Applicants must provide primary services to the populations within a [City of Austin Council District](#).

**7. I am interested in a Cultural Landscape project, but do not have an existing Cultural Landscape preservation plan, can I still apply?**

If the project meets HOT statute requirements, and has no cultural landscape preservation plan in place, a Planning Project is recommended to develop a careful preservation plan to protect the integrity of a cultural landscape. The plan should include: historical research, inventory, documentation of existing conditions, development of a cultural landscape preservation approach and treatment plan, development of a cultural landscape management plan and management philosophy, development of a strategy for current and ongoing maintenance that aligns with both the [National Park Service Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes](#) and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

**8. I am interested in both capital and planning projects. Can I apply for both?**

Only one application per organization or entity, per project type is permitted.

**9. Where can I access the Heritage Preservation Grant guidelines?**

Guidelines can be found at [www.austintexas.gov/heritage-grants](http://www.austintexas.gov/heritage-grants)

**10. I don't have demographic information about my Board? What should I do?**

Understanding Board demographics can be important for your organization and its equity goals. If you do not know your board's demographic makeup, a simple anonymous survey is the easiest and fastest way to gather this information (I.e., Microsoft Forms or Google Forms).

**11. Are HVAC and other internal mechanical systems an eligible expense for capital projects?**

Yes, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) are eligible expenses under the revised guidelines. Two project bids must be submitted with the application proposal.

**12. Are archeological projects eligible under these guidelines?**

Archeological-related projects are not eligible under the Capital Projects category; however, they may be eligible for Marketing and Education if the project location also serves tourists.

**13. Can you clarify the definition of "historic designation" threshold? And/or elaborate on what approaches are being taken to ensure equity despite this? It seems that maintaining the lease or own of historic designation property as central to eligibility will be a hindrance to equity of exploring and representing the communities that need it most.**

Generally, buildings are eligible for historic designation if they are 50 years or older and represent a period of significance of at least 50 years ago unless the property is of exceptional importance as defined by the [National Register Bulletin Number 22](#) (National Park Service,1996).

Sites or buildings can be either owned or leased by an applicant. Although, organizations proposing to do preservation projects on a site not owned by the applicant, must obtain written authorization from the property owner prior to applying.

All capital and planning projects must be associated with a building, structure, site, district, or landscape that is historically designated at the local, state, or federal level, or be determined eligible for historic designation. The East Austin Historic Survey includes numerous sites deemed eligible for historic designation. Historic designation through the City of Austin is done through the Historic Preservation Office. For buildings with no designation, sites must be historically designated by the end of the grant contract term.

To expand the pool of potential grant applicants and to be more equitable, changes have also been made to the Heritage Preservation Grant's Marketing and Education project-types. For these two categories, sites do not need to be historically designated if they meet the criteria for Historic Cultural Significance.

Additionally, the City's Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and an external Preservation Plan Working Group have begun efforts this summer to develop recommendations to inform the creation of a historic preservation plan focused on community and equity. To learn more about these efforts, you can visit the [Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan page here](#).

For more information on how to get your property designated or listed as an Austin Historic Landmark or District, you can email [preservation@austintexas.gov](mailto:preservation@austintexas.gov) or call [512-974-3393](tel:512-974-3393).

**14. I have more questions; how do I connect with staff to discuss a potential project proposal?**

**Join us for Virtual Open Office Hours.** No appointment necessary!

Days: Each Tuesday throughout August

Times: 10 am to 12 pm

[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 912 6357 8489

Passcode: 485376