

Snohomish County's Historic Preservation Commission Community Heritage Program

"Preserving the past, building the future"

Mission: The Community Heritage Program provides resources to assist the collection, preservation and interpretation of Snohomish County's heritage.

Program Goal: When a community understands the lessons of its past, it is better equipped to chart its future. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Community Heritage Program is a partnership between the County and the citizens that translates that understanding into activities that use history as a tool to build the future. Leveraging community resources with County funds, it supports projects that preserve the tangible, written and oral elements of local history, projects that weave those elements into public education products, and projects that better equip partners to accomplish these objectives.

Program Elements:

Eligibility: By providing matching funds on a competitive basis, the Historic Preservation Commission Community Heritage Program assists projects that promote the public's access to county history. To qualify for assistance, projects must fall into one of the following categories:

- Professional development;
- Public education;
- Capital; or
- Collections management.

ALL FUNDS GRANTED ARE ON A REIMBURSEMENT BASIS. Non-profit and for-profit entities are eligible for consideration as long as they have a clear heritage focus that relates to the county. Heritage content is a threshold criterion. Project sponsors must demonstrate that their proposals meet this criterion before projects will be evaluated for merit. Projects sponsored by individuals are not eligible. Additional eligibility requirements include:

- All projects will have a clearly defined public benefit that is commensurate with the amount of the investment;
- Normally, no recipient may be funded more than twice for any project in any three consecutive years;
- Operation costs (staff, utilities, rent, etc.) are not eligible for funding;
- Priority may be given to projects that do not already receive funding from the Historic Preservation surcharge;
- Proposals must have a clearly defined product and include a strategy for objectively measuring the success of the project at its conclusion;
- Projects must demonstrate that they will increase the public's access to one or more aspects of local history; and
- Project budgets must establish how the minimum match requirement will be met (exceeding the minimum will be evaluated favorably).

While not a requirement, it will be considered favorably when sponsors recognize the economic development potential of local history and include active coordination with the county's tourism industry in their project work plans.

Source of funds: The program is funded with a portion of document recording fees collected by the Snohomish County Auditor. The allocation of these fees for projects that “promote historical preservation or historical programs, which may include preservation of historic documents” is authorized under RCW 36.22.170. The revenues accrue to a dedicated fund and may not be used for any purposes other than those stipulated in the RCW.

The program is operated in such a way that revenues accruing to the fund in one year are allocated in the following year, ensuring that project awards will be available regardless of prevailing economic conditions.

Sponsor match: Project sponsors selected for funding will be required to match the County’s funds at a dollar-for-dollar rate. All projects will be governed by contracts executed between the County and the project sponsors that define the project products to be delivered (the project’s scope of work), the County’s funding commitment and the project sponsor’s obligations. The match items must be integral to the proposed project and the applicant must demonstrate how the match was instrumental in advancing the project to the state that it qualified for County funding.

Reimbursement: The project sponsors will complete their projects to the satisfaction of the County and then invoice the County for reimbursement of the approved expenditures.

Process: Once the application period closes, program staff will review each proposal for eligibility. For those that meet program requirements, staff will prepare summaries and comments which will be forwarded to the County’s Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

The HPC will evaluate each project and make recommendations on project scope and funding level. The recommendations, which must be endorsed by a majority of the HPC quorum, will be forwarded simultaneously to the Executive and to County Council who will make final funding decisions. The program operates on a January to December calendar year. **For 2010, projects must be completed by December 15, 2010.**

Major Projects: Major Projects have a substantial impact on the collection, preservation or interpretation of Snohomish County history. Projects in this category must be of a scope to qualify for a minimum of \$2,500 and a maximum of \$25,000 in County funds (i.e., a total value of \$5,000 to \$50,000 or more counting the required match). All of the general provisions above will apply to applications for funding. While an applicant may request up to \$25,000 the HPC may recommend, and the County Council approve, a lesser amount.

Small Projects: Individual allocations from this source will be limited to \$1,000 to \$2,500 each. Applicants will be provided guidelines to develop a letter-based application, which will be submitted to the Councilmember of the District in which the project is located. Councilmembers will review and prioritize the applications and forward them to the Historic Preservation Commission. The objective is to provide a resource for support for small requests that are of a value below the regular program threshold and that are judged to be worthy of consideration by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Aside from the \$2,500 minimum, all of the standard program eligibility provisions will apply to requests from this designation.

Examples of Eligible Activities: The following examples of activities are meant to illustrate the types of potentially eligible projects. The listing is not meant to be exclusive. Applicants unsure of a potential project’s eligibility should contact County staff for a determination.

- Professional development: this category provides support for activities that enhance the capabilities of the board, staff and volunteers of non-profit organizations to collect, preserve and interpret history in Snohomish County. Examples:
 - Development or sponsorship of programs for the professional training of non-profit staff and volunteers.
 - Provision of capacity-building training for the boards and staff of non-profit heritage organizations.
- Public education: this category provides support for activities that incorporate county history into the educational infrastructure and the general public discourse. Examples:
 - Research, design, production, installation and promotion of permanent and semi-permanent exhibits, both on-site and off-site.
 - Research, design, production and management of traveling exhibits for schools.
 - Original research that will result in a publication, exhibit, public event or some other product that places the outcome of the research before the public.
 - Production and distribution costs for books, articles, videos, oral history tapes, DVDs, etc. that address some aspect of county history.
- Capital: this category provides support for projects that assist an agency in meeting urgent health, safety and welfare needs that preserve its facility assets and enhance service to the public. Examples:
 - Design and installation of modifications to meet ADA requirements.
 - Exterior maintenance (roofing, painting, relevant landscaping, etc.) of a substantial nature, i.e., more than routine and periodic maintenance expected of a prudent owner or tenant, if such maintenance is necessary to protect historic or archival exhibits.
 - Substantial interior projects that preserve the structural and/or signature design integrity of heritage facilities.
 - Acquisition of technology hardware with a projected useful life of three or more years that is used in direct support of a non-profit agency's heritage mission.
- Collections management: this category provides support for projects that assist non-profit organizations to effectively execute their stewardship obligations for their collections. Examples:
 - Acquisition of significant additions to the collections of non-profit organizations.
 - Professional services related to conservation of key items in the collections of non-profit heritage agencies.
 - Acquisition of software to computerize collections management.
 - Providing a portion of the local share of the cost for an operational assessment by a qualified professional or an accredited institutional program (e.g. the MAP program).