



Photos, top to Bottom: Historic Courthouses in Franklin, Snohomish, and Spokane Counties

Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program

Background

Based on an assessment of county courthouses conducted in 2003 that identified over \$95 million in capital needs, the program is designed to assist with the rehabilitation of historic county courthouses statewide. Since 2005, \$10 million from the State Capital Budget has been allocated to the Courthouse Rehabilitation Grant Program. Grants are awarded as matching funds to counties, with grant awards working to leverage over \$30 million in overall capital improvements to date. Since its inception, the program has been run through the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP).

Benefits

Based on survey information, 32 of Washington's 39 counties possess courthouses that retain levels of significance and architectural integrity deeming them eligible for designation in a variety of historic registers. The grant program works to assist counties as they endeavor to preserve these diverse and valuable landmarks while at the same time serving as a tool for local economic development.

Accomplishments

Since 2005, the program has achieved the following:

- 24 grant awards have been made to 19 counties statewide, with 53% of funds going to 9 eastern WA counties and 47% of funds going to 10 counties in western WA.
- Nearly \$10 million in grant funds have worked to leverage over \$30 million in overall capital improvements, leading to a return of \$3 for every \$1 in contributed funding.
- Preservation of key features that define and characterize these community landmarks.

Local Economic Stimulus

- Historic rehabilitation work is more labor intensive than new construction;
- Rehabilitation supports local contractors, subcontractors, and specialty craftspeople;
- Sales tax revenues remain in-state at the local level.

By utilizing the local labor force, rehabilitation projects provide tangible benefits as wages and expenses paid remain within the local economy.

2009-2011 Biennium

The Governor's proposed budget includes \$5 million from the State Capital Budget to continue the grant program in the coming biennium, but would move the program out of DAHP and allocate funding to the Washington State Historical Society. The Washington Trust strongly supports continued funding, but opposes moving the program out of DAHP, as doing so would add unnecessary administrative costs and program inefficiencies.

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