

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

**CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT
GRANT PROGRAM
Federal Fiscal Year 2026
Application and Reporting Guidelines**

DEADLINE: February 27, 2026

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM GRANTS

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program recognizes counties and municipalities that have made a special commitment to preservation. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, establishing a qualified historic preservation commission to designate and review historic properties.

Maryland's CLG Program is administered by the National Park Service and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). CLG programs exist in every state and are supported through the federal Historic Preservation Fund. MHT awards 10% of its annual allocation from the Historic Preservation Fund via subgrants to CLG projects and educational opportunities each year. Funding available for the Federal Fiscal Year 2026 (FFY26) CLG grant round is expected to be approximately \$100,000.

CLG funds are awarded in two categories: 1) Education and Training and 2) Projects. The FFY26 deadline to apply is **February 27, 2026**. MHT intends to notify recipients by May 2026; however, the federal appropriations status may cause a delay. If awarded a grant, the grantee may start incurring project expenses at the time of notification, prior to the execution of the official grant agreement. All grant funds must be expended by **June 30, 2027**.

CLG funding is distributed on a **REIMBURSABLE** basis. To receive funds awarded for education and training or project grants, CLGs (or a designated third-party administrator) must sign a grant agreement with MHT. MHT will request information about the authorized signatory for grant agreements as part of the application.

Have questions? Planning to apply? For clarification about the following guidelines or requirements, or to discuss a proposed project or a statewide educational program, please contact Nell Ziehl (nell.ziehl@maryland.gov), MHT's Chief of the Office of Planning, Education and Outreach.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All CLGs within the state of Maryland are eligible to compete for CLG funds. If you are uncertain whether your local government is a CLG, visit http://mht.maryland.gov/grants_clg.shtml for a complete list. **CLGs with outstanding FFY25 annual reports will not be eligible to receive grant funds.**

To request a FFY26 application link, or if your CLG report is currently overdue and you wish to be considered for funding, please contact Nell Ziehl at nell.ziehl@maryland.gov.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING GRANTS

The application for education and training grants is very simple (one page) and available in MHT's online grants portal during the open grant round. Once all Education and Training funds are expended, CLGs may request reimbursement by submitting documentation of expenses with a short narrative report via MHT's online grants portal. These reports are accepted and reimbursed on a rolling basis through **July 31, 2027**.

Training

CLGs may request up to **\$2,500** for Commissioner and staff training each year. In FFY26, CLGs may request an additional **\$2,000** to attend the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions' biennial [Forum](#), to be held July 22-26, 2026, in Minneapolis, MN.

Annual grants for Commissioner and staff training are non-competitive. However, the actual award may be less than the requested amount depending on availability of funds and the past performance of a CLG in utilizing and administering funding. Applicants are not required to specify how they will spend training funds in the application.

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- programs by MAHDC;
- programs by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC);
- registration for state-sponsored training workshops; and
- conferences hosted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Association for Preservation Technology, and similar organizations.

Other training activities may be eligible, subject to approval in advance by MHT.

Educational Programs

In addition to non-competitive training funds, CLGs may request up to **\$5,000** each year to support educational programs that benefit CLGs statewide (e.g. MAHDC's Annual Symposium or a NAPC statewide training). Applications for education grants are reviewed competitively, and only one application per educational program will be accepted (an educational program will only be supported once in one year by the CLG Program).

PROJECT GRANTS

CLGs may request up to **\$25,000** for non-capital projects that support the CLG's efforts to protect and preserve historic, archaeological and cultural resources. Individual awards generally range from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- identifying and documenting cultural and historic resources for survey or planning purposes;
- researching and evaluating historic and archaeological sites (e.g. historic structures reports, archaeological site reports and Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation);
- documenting cultural heritage (e.g. oral histories) related to existing structures and historic communities, especially under-served and/or minority communities;
- preparing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places;
- developing local preservation plans or preservation elements in local comprehensive plans;
- developing or updating design guidelines for local historic districts;
- producing heritage education materials including publications, exhibits, video, and curricula;
- preparing publications that add to the public knowledge of Maryland's architectural, archaeological, and cultural history; and
- conducting studies to determine the fiscal impact or feasibility of preservation activities.

Ineligible activities include:

- property acquisition, rehabilitation or restoration;
- archival research not associated with historic property documentation;
- curation of objects or collections following the conclusion of a federally funded project; and
- operating or overhead support, except for third-party administrative costs (see “Third-Party Administration” below).

Project Selection

A successful application will clearly demonstrate that the project will make a significant contribution to local preservation efforts and will be managed in a professional manner. The CLG project grant application requires more detail than the education and training application. It is designed to help MHT’s review committee evaluate the following criteria: **significance of the project or affected resources, urgency, project design and management, project impact, administrative capability, and geographic distribution**. MHT also encourages applications that 1) promote local preservation planning efforts, 2) document or preserve sites/heritage associated with communities underrepresented in the historical record, and/or 3) include planning for climate adaptation or resilience.

Based on feedback from the review committee, MHT may award funding contingent on changes to the project scope and budget, or MHT may request subsequent consultation prior to its approval of the grant. MHT may propose project conditions to grantees as part of the award selection process, via MHT’s online grants system. Grantees will have the opportunity to discuss and approve or refuse changes prior to acceptance of the award and issuance of the grant agreement.

General Project Requirements

All CLG-funded projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior’s [Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation](#) as well as the [Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Historical Investigations in Maryland](#) or the [Standards and Guidelines for Archeological Investigations in Maryland](#).

In addition, principal investigators undertaking CLG-funded projects must meet the applicable minimum requirements of the Secretary of the Interior’s [Professional Qualification Standards](#) as set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36CFR61, published in the Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 190, pages 44738-39. Federal guidelines typically require that consultants be selected through a competitive procurement process (see “Federal Requirements” below), and MHT must approve the consultant selection.

If funding is awarded, the grantee will be responsible for submitting a mid-term progress report as well as a final narrative and financial report that accompanies the project deliverables. Requests for the reimbursement of project expenses, with appropriate documentation, may be submitted along with these reports (see “Budget Requirements” for more detail). All required reports are distributed and received through the MHT online grants system.

Budget and Financial Requirements

CLG project grants do not require a match, but applicants who include matching funds will be more favorably considered, as described in the “Project Selection” section above. Applications that demonstrate strong local investment are typically ranked higher in the selection process, and a cash match of at least 15% is encouraged. Federal funds may not be used as a match for the CLG program.

If awarded, CLG funds are distributed as **REIMBURSEMENTS** for eligible project expenses incurred on or after the announcement of award. Although many grantees elect to file for reimbursement at the final report stage, reimbursements may be requested with the progress report as well. All requests for reimbursement require documentation of expenses (e.g. invoices, receipts) acceptable to MHT.

Federal Requirements

Because the CLG Program is funded by the federal government, grantees must comply with certain federal requirements. MHT’s grant application review and selection process will help evaluate the project scope and budget for consistency with the National Park Service [*Historic Preservation Fund Grants Manual*](#) and the Office of Management and Budget requirements set out in 2CFR200.

For projects involving the hiring of consultants and the procurement of services, CLG grant recipients must follow (at a minimum) the federal procurement standards outlined below. Grantees may use their own procurement standards, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2CFR Subsections 200.318 through 200.326.

- Micro-purchases (\$10,000 or less) may be awarded without soliciting competitive quotations if the grantee considers the price to be reasonable.
- Small purchases (more than \$10,000) require written price or rate quotations from at least three qualified sources (if available), as well as documentation of how the fair and reasonable price was determined.

The CLG grant agreement requires all CLG grant recipients to follow state and federal guidelines in the expenditure of CLG grants, including prohibitions against lobbying.

THIRD-PARTY ADMINISTRATION

CLGs may elect to have their grants administered by a designated third-party organization, subject to MHT’s approval. The third-party administrator may be another unit of local government, a business, a non-profit, or an educational institution. To request this arrangement, the CLG can indicate their proposed third-party administrator in the grant application and must include a letter of concurrence from the third-party organization. Alternatively, the third-party administrator may submit the grant application on behalf of the CLG and must, in this case, include a letter signed by the CLG’s chief executive official or designee that 1) approves the application and endorses the project and 2) authorizes the applicant organization to act as the third-party administrator on behalf of the CLG.

If a grant is awarded under either of the above scenarios, MHT will execute a grant agreement between MHT and the designated third-party administrator, which will be responsible for submitting all project reporting and project deliverables.

A third-party administrator of a CLG grant may budget 15% of the direct project costs to cover project administration. If the administrator has an approved federal indirect cost rate higher than 15%, it must submit certification of the approved rate prior to the execution of the grant agreement with MHT.

Designation of a third-party administrator is not considered to be a procurement.

POOLING CLG FUNDS

CLGs are permitted to pool Education and Training or Project grants for eligible uses. For example, several CLGs may combine their CLG funds to hire and share professional preservation services for eligible projects or for training activities. This option allows a lead CLG to apply on behalf of participating CLGs for funding in excess of the individual \$25,000 grant limit and allows CLGs with a stronger administrative capacity to assist other CLGs.

Such an arrangement is available if the participants satisfy the following conditions:

- all participants involved in the pooling are CLGs;
- one CLG is designated as the grant applicant and administrator;
- the CLG grant application contains:
 - a. the names of all CLGs participating in the combined project;
 - b. letters of endorsement with signatures of each participating CLG's chief executive official or designee;
 - c. the total amount of CLG funds requested for the pooled funds project; and
 - d. the source and amount of each CLG's matching share commitment, if applicable.

CLG GRANTS PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The FFY26 grant process will follow the schedule below:

Feb. 2, 2026	Notice to CLGs of Grant Application Availability MHT staff assistance is available for application consultation and project planning.
Feb. 27, 2026	Full Application Due Fully completed applications must be submitted through MHT's online grants portal on or before 11:59pm on February 27, 2026 . The application must include the application form and all required attachments.
May 2026 (estimated)	Evaluation of Applications Completed MHT staff presents the recommendations of the review committee to the State Historic Preservation Officer, who will approve, approve with modifications, or deny the applications.

May 2026 (estimated) Award Announcements

Grant applicants will receive email notifications regarding grant decisions. Grant recipients will be asked for additional information and/or concurrence with scope or budget changes made by the review committee.

June 2026 (estimated) Grant Agreements

Grant agreements will begin to be circulated for signature. Please note that project grant reimbursements may only be requested when the progress report and final reports are submitted (December 31 and July 31, respectively). Education and training reimbursements may be requested, once all funds are expended, as part of the final report and submitted on a rolling basis.

December 31, 2026**Progress Report (Project Grants)**

Grantees will submit a short narrative progress report through the online grants portal, along with documentation of expenses if a reimbursement is requested.

May 1, 2027**Draft Deliverables Due (Project Grants)**

MHT has a 45-day period to review draft project deliverables and provide comments. Grantees with project deliverables will be required to submit draft deliverables no later than May 1, 2027.

June 30, 2027**Education, Training and/or Project Completed**

All education and training, and all work on CLG projects, must be completed and all costs incurred *no later than June 30, 2027*.

July 31, 2027**Grant Close-Out**

The final narrative and financial documentation, as well as all project deliverables, must be submitted *no later than July 31, 2027*.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

It is highly beneficial for applicants to contact MHT staff to discuss project proposals prior to submission of an application. For assistance in developing a scope of work and budget for your proposal, or with questions about CLG guidelines or requirements, please contact Nell Ziehl at nell.ziehl@maryland.gov.

This program receives Federal financial assistance through the National Park Service for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Federal law, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability in its federally assisted programs. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or who desires further information should write to Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.