

2026 National Grant Program Question and Answer Period

This documents the questions and responses we received January 13-23, 2026. These are provided here so that all applicants have access to the information provided to individual applicants. If you submitted a question and do not see the answer here, that is because it is already answered in the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund's Frequently Asked Questions page.

Eligibility

Is my project eligible?

Please review the guidelines for the grant opportunity you are interested in. If there is an eligibility quiz, complete that to know whether your organization and project are eligible.

Can you provide any feedback on the application we submitted last year that might inform our application this year?

Given the volume of applications received and the limits of funding, many thoughtful and well-aligned applications cannot be awarded during any grant round. Unfortunately, due to this volume and limited staff we are also not able to provide individualized feedback on applications that were not awarded.

I received a message that my eligibility quiz had failed. The message did not detail why. Could you provide the reasons?

At this time, we are not able to analyze every prospective applicant's quiz to determine the exact cause of the denial. The questions in the eligibility quiz are based on the eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines and have been tested thoroughly. Unfortunately, one or more of your responses did not meet those requirements. We would encourage you to review the guidelines and consider reapplying for the next cycle.

Application Process

Where can I find the application?

To gain access to the application, you must first complete an eligibility quiz. Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria will receive access to the full application.

Before completing the eligibility quiz, please carefully read through the [guidelines](#). We value applicants' time and want to ensure alignment with program requirements.

Double-check your responses to the quiz because answers are final once the quiz is submitted. Therefore, the results are also final.

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria will receive access to the full application.

The link to access the quiz is at the bottom of the guidelines page under the Application header and shows as a button that says, "[Application Form](#)." After logging in, click the 'Apply' button on the top left, then click the 'Continue Eligibility' button below.

Is completion of a letter of intent (LOI) required to apply for the National Grant Program?

Application requirements vary by program and year. If a LOI is required, it will be available in the grant portal when the application opens to the public.

For 2026, successful completion of an eligibility quiz is required to gain access to the National Grant Program application. Visit the <https://savingplaces.org/action-fund-grants> to access application guidelines, requirements, and deadlines.

Please share insight on how to answer, "How were the project expenses determined."

This is where you provide the basis for the expenses included in your budget. Are they based on a study, estimate(s), industry standards, or other research?

National Grant Program Project Type Questions*

Project Type	Description	Funding Max	Grant Period	Indirect Costs Max (as % of Grant Award)
Capital	Construction costs for shovel-ready projects (most planning work is complete)	\$500,000	18 months	10%
Organizational Capacity	Funds are used to support staff who will advance preservation priorities	\$300,000	24 months	Ineligible
Planning	Development of plans used to direct the implementation of future preservation activities	\$150,000	12 months	10%
Programming & Interpretation	Product will bring more attention to African American cultural heritage (may or may not involve a site)	\$100,000	12 months	10%

*Funding maximums and grant periods for other AACHAF grant programs may vary.

What is a conditions assessment and when is one needed?

A conditions assessment is typically completed by a preservation professional. It documents the current state of the structure and makes general recommendations for further study or immediate repairs needed. It could also address maintenance needs. The need for a conditions assessment depends on the level of repairs needed.

If you are uncertain about whether one is needed, you should contact a preservation professional who can do an on-site review to determine if that is necessary. If you need help locating a preservation professional, contact your local or state preservation office for options of qualified people.

Capital

Is the installation of paved paths to interpretive signage eligible in order to provide ADA accessibility?

No. Paved pathways are typically considered a site improvement and fall under “landscaping and parking lot improvements,” which are ineligible expenses.

Is conducting archaeological research and investigation an eligible capital activity?

Archaeological activities may be eligible if part of formal planning deliverable (such as a feasibility study or other implementable plan) and archaeology is being proposed as a supporting component. Archaeological activities on their own are not eligible.

Organizational Capacity

How does a reimbursable grant apply to an organizational capacity project type? No vendors, contractors, or consultants will be used, only a full-time staff position.

The grantee will need to pay the person’s salary and then seek reimbursement. Typically, reimbursements are made at the beginning and end of the grant period.

Disbursement	Disbursement Needs	Disbursement Amount
1	Executed grant agreement, • Final scope of work and budget • Completed W-9 and EFT forms	50% of the grant award
	Interim Report • Work is 50% complete • Invoices and receipts for completed work to date	No payment
2	Final Report • Work is 100% complete • Submission of final product or proof of work completion • Invoices and receipts for all work completed	The lessor of the remainder of the full project cost or 50% of the grant award

Since we are requesting greater than \$50,000, which triggers a formal procurement process, are we required to procure three bids (applicants) for the grant-funded position?

It should be a competitive process to hire an employee based upon the job description you have created. Typically, grantees provide National Trust staff with copies of final candidate resumes to show how they have complied with procurement practices.

Are we required to advertise on a job search like Indeed and share the applications with the National Grant Program?

The grantee can choose where they advertise, but the grantee will have to demonstrate their due diligence in conducting a thorough search. National Trust staff are not involved in the grantee’s hiring decision.

Is our organization free to select the final candidate? Or are we required to let the National Grant Program select for us?

National Trust staff are not involved in the grantee's hiring decision.

What training expenses are allowed for organizational capacity projects?

Allowable training expenses are whatever you deem necessary for the staff person to be able to perform their job as it relates to the preservation of the historic resource. It's open-ended and based on the applicant/grantee's justification for the need for the training.

Are travel expenses eligible for the hired position to travel to the historic site?

In general travel expenses for the position supported by the grant are not eligible. Travel expenses may be eligible for travel required for training activities for the person in that position.

What photos are representative to upload for an organizational capacity building project?

The application should include photos of the historic resource that the person in the position would be responsible for preserving in some way. If there is a specific element(s) of the historic resource that the position will be focused on during the grant period, please share photos of that as well.

Programming & Interpretation

Please clarify what are ineligible "exhibit equipment purchases."

The following is a list of ineligible exhibit equipment:

- Display cases (freestanding or wall-mounted)
- Vitrines / artifact cases
- Pedestals, plinths, risers
- Exhibit panels, stanchions, queue barriers
- Track lighting or exhibit-specific lighting kits
- Mounting systems (brackets, rails, hanging systems)

My project includes designating a property for local, state or national recognition. It is included under both the project planning and programming and interpretation project types. Which should I use?

It actually depends on the other activities proposed in the project. If the other activities of the project focus on planning, then apply for a project planning grant. If the designation or erection of a marker are part of a broader programming and interpretation project, then you should apply for a programming and interpretation grant.

Are high-resolution scanners, video/audio digitization stations, computers with editing software, microphones, and storage solutions (external drives or cloud) eligible?

No, these are all equipment that can be reused for other purposes outside preservation work. Even if that is not the applicant's intention, these are ineligible purchases.

Is the acquisition of materials, digital archives, and preservation and conservation tools eligible?

No, these are ineligible.

Is programming and outreach, panel discussions, and honoraria for guest speakers eligible?

Yes, these are all eligible activities.

Project Planning

My project includes designating a property for local, state or national recognition. It is included under both the project planning and programming and interpretation project types. Which should I use?

It actually depends on the other activities proposed in the project. If the other activities of the project focus on planning then apply for a project planning grant. If the designation or erection of a marker are part of broader programming and interpretation project, then you should apply for a programming and interpretation grant.

Is an historic resource survey an eligible activity, and if so, would it fall under the planning project type?

Yes, this is correct.