

Certified Local Government Program

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the Certified Local Government Program?**

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is a federal program administered in Nebraska by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO), a division of the History Nebraska. The goal of the program is to increase local preservation activities and link local governments with a national network of federal, state, and local organizations. CLGs are cities or counties that meet certain federal and state standards. CLG status entitles a local government to apply for yearly grants from the NeSHPO.

- **How can historic preservation and the CLG program help my community?**

Communities in Nebraska can use historic preservation principles to help maintain their identities and enrich their citizen's quality of life. Communities have discovered that historic preservation can also be an important economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and tourism tool. Managing change to preserve historic sites and encouraging suitable development are challenging tasks. The Certified Local Government Program (CLG) can be a powerful tool for local preservation efforts.

- **What are the benefits of being a CLG?**

Besides being eligible for grants, CLGs receive technical assistance and training from the NeSHPO. CLGs, in turn, provide local expertise about community preservation issues to the NeSHPO and proactively pursue preservation activities. The CLG program provides a framework within which a community may invest in existing historic assets in the context of the community's comprehensive plan.

- **What types of projects do CLGs perform?**

Eligible projects for CLG funding include: Historic property surveys, design guidelines, preservation planning activities, public outreach, publications, walking/driving tour brochures, workshops, lectures, local conferences, National Register of Historic Places nominations, and training for commission members and staff.

- **How does a local government become a CLG?**

Communities become a CLG when the NeSHPO and the National Park Service certifies that the local government has met all requirements for certification.

- **Whom should I contact for more information?**

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CLG Requirements

There are certain requirements that must be met in order for a local government to become and remain certified. The following conditions are necessary in order for a community to maintain its certified status and continue to be eligible for grants.

- **Preservation Ordinance**

The local government must enact and enforce local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties. Most cities and towns in Nebraska can find sufficient authority to enact a historic preservation ordinance under provisions of Neb. Rev. Stat., Section 19-903 (Reissue 1977). The drafting and adoption of an historic preservation ordinance must be made by the governing body of the local government in consultation with its own legal counsel.
- **Historic Preservation Commission**

A CLG must maintain a historic preservation commission established by the preservation ordinance. The commission must have at least five members appointed by the chief elected official of the jurisdiction. Commission members must have a demonstrated interest, competence, or knowledge in historic preservation. Terms of office for commission members must be at least two years. Commissions must meet at regular intervals at least four times each year. All meetings must be publicly announced, open to the public, and have a previously advertised agenda. Minutes of each meeting must be made public and submitted to the NeSHPO.
- **Survey**

CLGs are required to maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties within its jurisdiction. Most Nebraska communities have been surveyed as part of the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS), but these surveys need to be updated periodically. The CLG should be aware of the status of its historic sites survey and make it a priority to keep the survey updated and accessible to the public.
- **Public Participation/Public Education**

The CLG must provide for public participation in the local historic preservation program. One of the top priorities of the CLG program is to provide historic preservation education to the local citizens of each CLG community. Each year, all CLGs should strive to sponsor at least one historic preservation workshop for the general public and complete an annual public education program.
- **Staff**

CLGs must employ or have access to a minimum of one professional staff position to carry out the duties and requirements delegated to the local government and to provide technical and advisory services to the commission and others. This does not have to be a newly created or full-time position.

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Grant Information

Grant Amounts

Each year NeSHPO awards at least ten percent of its federal grant to CLGs for local preservation activities. In recent years, the total amount of available funding has been between \$80,000 and \$95,000, depending on Federal funding. The CLG program provides these small matching grants to local governments seeking to preserve historic properties. All grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

Eligible Activities

CLGs may use annual grant funds for a variety of projects including:

- Archeological, architectural, and historical surveys
- Preservation planning
- Preparation of National Register of Historic Places, local landmark, and tax incentive program nominations
- Programs for public education in historic preservation
- Workshops, lectures, and conferences
- Walking/driving tours and video productions
- Staff and commission training

Ineligible Activities

There are a few activities that CLG grants may not be used for, including:

- Repair, rehabilitation, reconstruction, moving, or acquisition of historic properties or sites
- Plans and specifications for individual properties
- Landscaping, lighting, or banners
- Conservation of collections and curatorial work
- Maintenance of historic properties or construction of new buildings
- Cash reserves, endowments, or revolving funds
- Fund-raising costs or other miscellaneous costs such as contingencies

Results

All CLG grant projects must result in a completed, tangible product or result. All grant activities must be completed in accordance with guidelines provided by the NeSHPO.

Match

CLG grants are reimbursable matching grants. Match can include volunteer or donated services or cash, staff and commission time, and donated personal property. The grant provides for a maximum of 60% of the project cost, while the local CLG provides at least 40% of the project cost.

Grant Timetable

When the Federal budget is determined, the NeSHPO will announce its CLG funding amount and distribute grant applications to all CLGs. Each CLG requesting funds must complete and submit an annual funding request and application by the deadline, usually April 1 of each year. Awards are typically announced by early May. The State CLG funding period is from June 1 through May 31.