

Statement
on
Threats to the Historic Preservation Fund

Society of Architectural Historians
Heritage Conservation Committee

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) remains the cornerstone of federal support for safeguarding the United States' architectural and cultural legacy. For decades, HPF allocations have enabled essential preservation activities—historic resource surveys, National Register nominations, public education, and project review for the federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program—all of which directly benefit communities across the country. Central to these efforts are State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs and THPOs), which exercise federally delegated responsibilities in evaluating, protecting, and interpreting heritage resources.

Immediate Threats in FY 2025

Despite full Congressional appropriation in March 2025, HPF funds were only released after a three-month delay. On 1 July 2025 the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), allowing State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs and THPOs) to apply for their annual funding. While that process has only just begun this delay has severely jeopardized preservation offices' capacity to meet their statutory obligations. As a result, staff layoffs began well before the funds were restored; the Ohio SHPO for example, laid off 1/3 of its staff.

Critical Risks in FY 2026

More alarming still is the proposed elimination of HPF funding in the President's FY 2026 budget. Such a withdrawal would dismantle core preservation infrastructure, undermine legal responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and silence stakeholder input in federal decision-making processes. The President's FY 2026 budget proposal would eliminate nearly all HPF funding, retaining only a small allocation for preservation grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). If enacted, this would defund State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and competitive grant programs like Save America's Treasures. As of July 2025, Congress has not yet appropriated funds for FY 2026. A decision is expected later this summer. This proposed rollback comes just ahead of the United States' 250th anniversary in 2026, making the potential loss of preservation funding especially symbolic and troubling.

The cascading impacts would extend beyond preservation, derailing infrastructure initiatives and rehabilitation projects reliant on historic tax incentives, discouraging private investment and constraining local economic development. Moreover, the proposal disregards the federal government's fiduciary and trust obligations to Tribal Nations.

Call to Action

In anticipation of the United States' 250th anniversary in 2026, we call on lawmakers to demonstrate bipartisan support for the values enshrined in the NHPA. This includes robust FY 2026 appropriations for SHPOs and THPOs, recognizing their stewardship roles and enabling continued investment in preservation initiatives that honor the past while shaping a more inclusive and resilient future.

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