



2024

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
COURTHOUSE
GRANT
APPLICATION
GUIDE

2025

— ◆ ◆ ◆ —
TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



Clockwise from top left: Falls, Marion, Lipscomb, and San Saba County Courhouses



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ABOUT THE TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Texas Historical Commission's nationally recognized and award-winning Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP), was established in June 1999 by the Texas Legislature and Gov. George W. Bush. Texas courthouses are among the most widely recognized, used, and appreciated assets in our communities. With some courthouses dating from as far back as the mid-19th century, they were among the first permanent structures in many counties. With their brick and stone towers, ornate cupolas, and soaring domes, they represent an impressive collection of public architecture.

Not surprisingly, Texas has more historic courthouses than any other state—over 246 are still in active government use. With decades or even centuries of use, most of these structures have significantly deteriorated due to inadequate maintenance, insensitive modifications, or weather-related damage.

Since the program was created, over \$400 million has been

appropriated by the Texas Legislature to courthouses in need. To be considered eligible for this program, a building must be at least 50 years old, have served or currently serve as a county courthouse, and have an approved master plan. Grant cycles are contingent upon funding from the legislature and are typically available in the fiscal year following a legislative session.

The 88th Texas Legislature met in 2023 allocated \$45 million to the THCPP for the 2024–25 biennium.

To date, the program has funded the restoration of 77 Texas courthouses and another 26 courthouses have received emergency or planning grants. These restored county courthouses serve as a catalyst to economic revitalization in the business districts that surround courthouse squares throughout the state.

Counties with restored historic courthouses also see an impact in the form of improved building accessibility and usability, easier building maintenance, increased safety and energy efficiency, and downtown revitalization in addition to expanding local tourism.



Above: Williamson County Courthouse, Georgetown

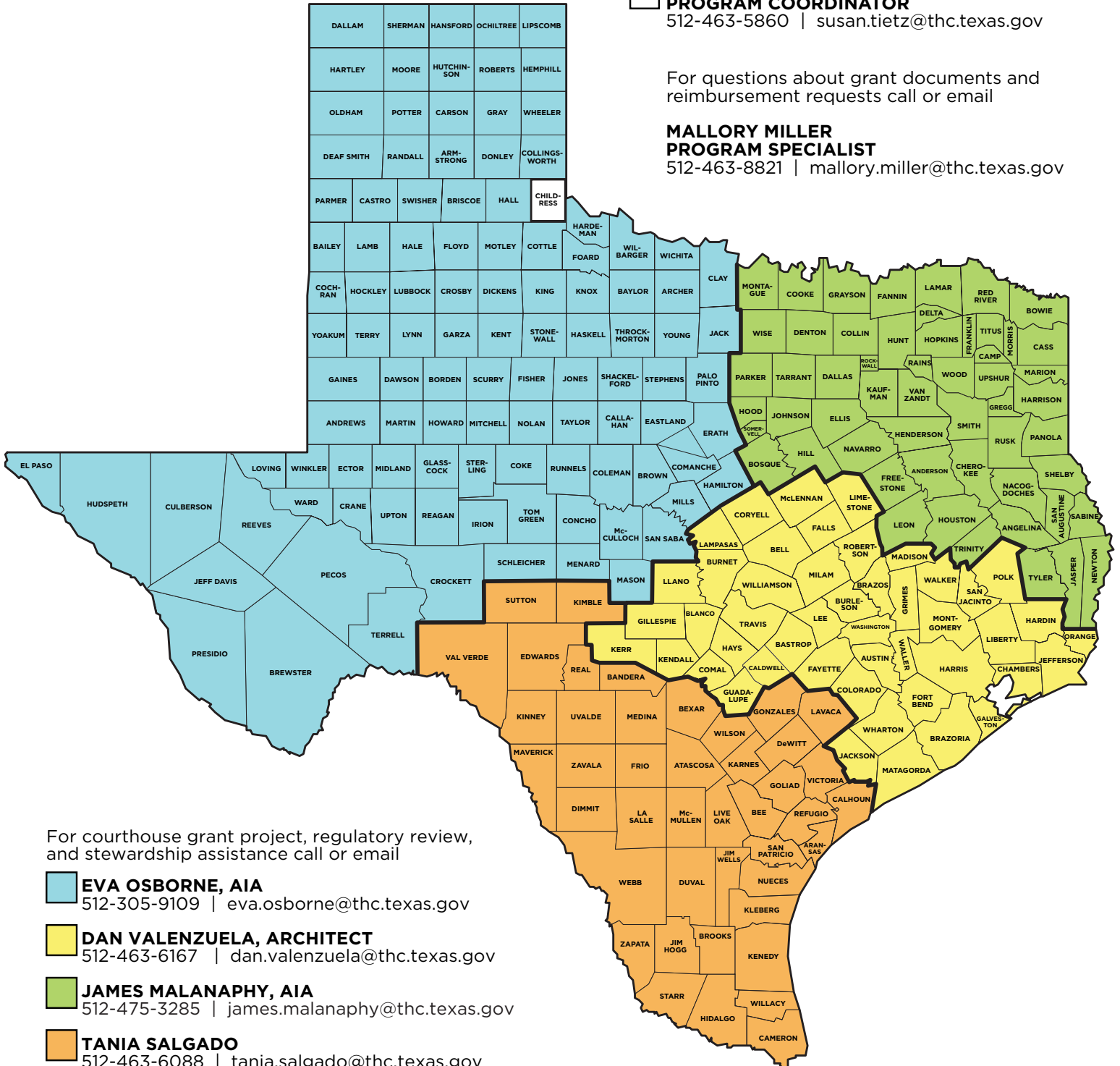
TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM TEAM AND REVIEWERS BY REGION

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PROJECT GRANT FUNDING

The THCPP program funds are requested by the THC in the agency's Legislative Appropriations Request at the beginning of each session of the Texas Legislature. By statute, the maximum award to any county is \$10 million. Awards may be reduced from the amount requested depending upon funding availability.

Upon appropriation of funds by the Texas Legislature, the THC establishes the general expectations for the next grant cycle including the following types of project funding to achieve the overall goals of the program for preservation of historic county courthouses. Applications for funding are typically accepted on a biennial basis.

To be eligible to apply for grant funding, the subject courthouse must have an approved preservation master plan on file with the program. The application process is competitive. Applicants are not limited to applying for any single type of grant. Awards may be offered for full restoration or planning as appropriate or an emergency if requested. Applications for full restoration and planning grants are evaluated on 22 scoring criteria

while emergency grants are evaluated using seven criteria for awarding funds to non-restored courthouses and 14 criteria for awarding emergency funds to previously restored courthouses. Please see the three scoring systems on the following pages.



Each grant cycle, the THC carefully considers the available funds and the needs of all applicants before deciding how to prioritize and allocate grant funding. All three grant types are considered every grant cycle, but accomplishing as many fully restored courthouses as the grant cycle's funding appropriation can fund has always been and continues to be a priority.

All projects must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1995 edition, or as revised).

Please consult the Texas Government Code Sections 442.0081 through 442.0083 and the Texas Administrative Code Title 13 Part 2 Chapter 12 Rules 12.1 through 12.9 for more detailed information about the program requirements.

Above: Navarro County Courthouse, Corsicana

FULL RESTORATION GRANTS

GRANTS TO FUND FULL RESTORATION OF THE EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR

Construction grants are awarded for the full restoration of a courthouse to a particular historic period while rehabilitating and upgrading the building to current codes and functional requirements.

15%
min. match

FULL RESTORATION GRANTS

Accomplishing as many fully restored courthouses as possible continues to be a priority of the courthouse grant program. A full restoration grant is a construction grant to undertake a project to restore a courthouse to its appearance at an agreed upon restoration period, which includes removing additions and alterations from later periods and reconstructing features missing from the restoration period. Full restoration grants also include bringing the building into compliance with life safety code and accessibility standards, improving security and energy efficiency, and installing acoustic treatments and audio-visual systems. This treatment applies to the site, exterior of the courthouse, and interior public spaces such as the corridors, stairways, and courtrooms. Secondary spaces may be preserved or rehabilitated rather than restored. Additions or attached annexes must be removed if they post-date the selected restoration period. Retention or removal of site features from outside of the restoration period may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Restoration period is the date selected for the purpose of defining the full restoration of a courthouse, representing the most significant time in the courthouse's history. Selection of the restoration period must be justified based on documentary and physical evidence and surviving integrity of historic materials from that period, and it must be described in the master plan for the restoration project. The restoration period represents a time when the building in its entirety exhibited a cohesive architectural style exemplifying the work of an architect or a period when the building experienced a significant historical event. Occasionally the THC agreed to remove scope from a grant-funded full restoration. In those rare cases, applicants with previously restored courthouses may apply for a Full Restoration grant to complete a full restoration scope.

EMERGENCY GRANTS

GRANTS TO FUND CRITICAL NEED

Emergency grants are awarded to address critical issues endangering the courthouse or its occupants. These grants are awarded on the basis of need and program funding availability.

30%

min. match—may be capped at

\$500K

EMERGENCY GRANTS

The commission may make grants to address urgent or critical work to protect the building or its users. An emergency is defined to be caused by a catastrophic event, a recently discovered condition that threatens the building with imminent and severe damage or critical repairs needed to correct accelerating damage from long-term deferred maintenance. Emergency applicants are evaluated on a separate scoring system that emphasizes the categories that best assess the urgency of the work and the need of the applicant.

EMERGENCY GRANTS FOR PREVIOUSLY RESTORED COURTHOUSES

Applicants with a courthouse previously restored with THCPP grant funding are only eligible to apply for emergency grant funding. Occasionally the THC agreed to remove scope from a grant-funded full restoration, in which case applicants with previously restored courthouses may apply for a Full Restoration grant to complete a full restoration scope instead of emergency grant funding. Applications for previously restored courthouses will be reviewed using a reduced number of scoring criteria and will be considered alongside other returning applicants.

Sometimes, returning applicants may seek an emergency grant to remedy defects in construction quality from a previously grant-funded full restoration project. Before applying for such a grant, a county or municipality must first pursue repairs through an insurance claim or under warranty when applicable or administrative remedies with their contractor, architect, or other party at fault for the defect. If a county or municipality that receives a grant to remedy a construction defect later recovers funds related to the scope of the grant through litigation or a settlement agreement, the net amount recovered, minus court costs and attorney's fees, shall be ineligible for grant reimbursement. The commission may recapture the grant, or if the net amount recovered is insufficient to accomplish the full scope of work for the grant, the commission may revise the grant budget to consider such funds as the cash match and recapture the excess amount of the grant award. Further, the county or municipality must repay any such funds that were previously reimbursed, proportionate to the state share of the overall project costs.

PLANNING GRANTS

GRANTS TO FUND THE PRODUCTION OF CONSTRUCTION BID DOCUMENTS

Planning grants are awarded for the production of 95% complete architectural plans and specifications which are used as “blueprints” for a future construction project. Planning grants typically precede a construction project.

30%
min. match

PLANNING GRANTS

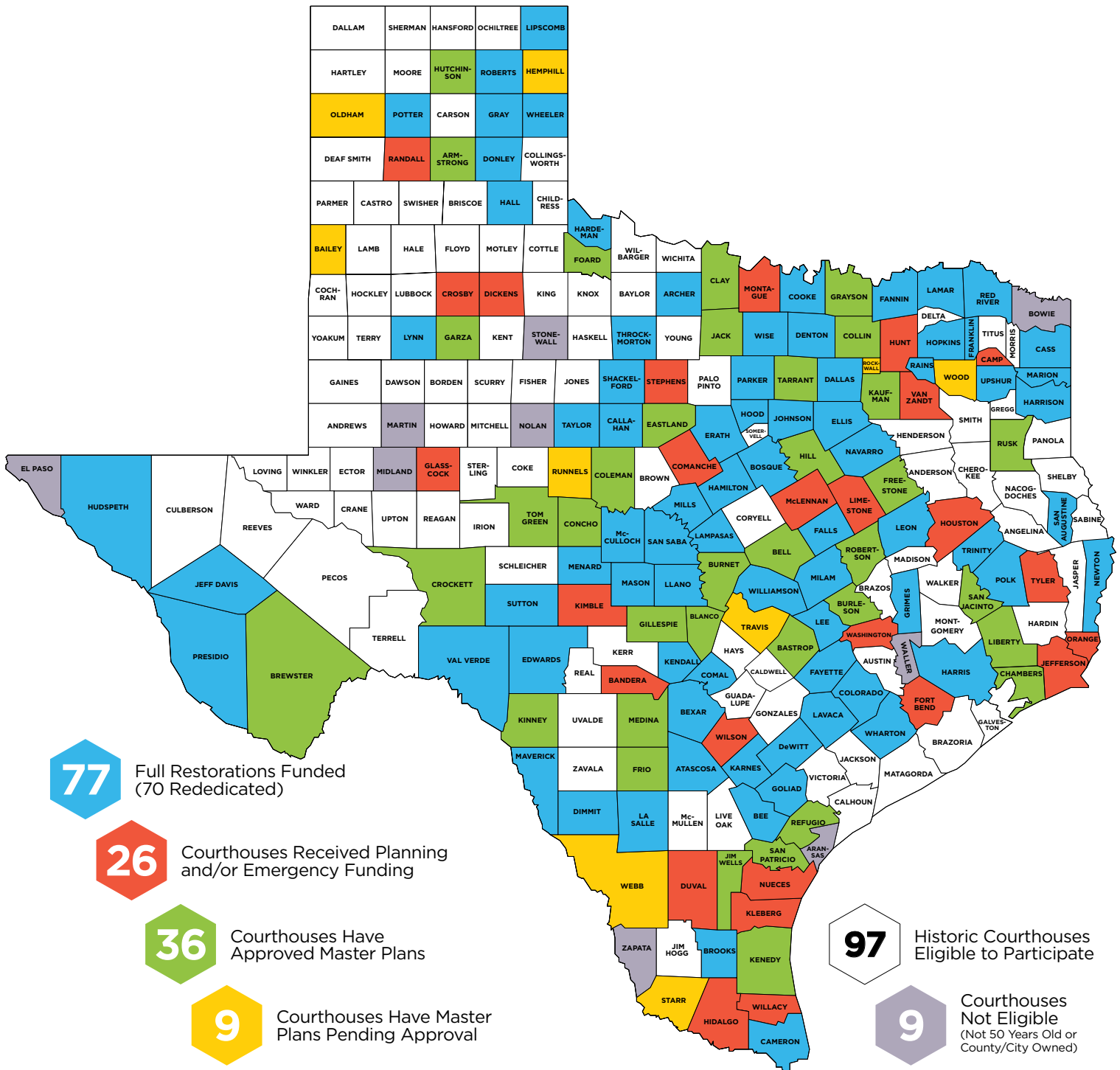
The commission may make grants for the purpose of hiring a professional consultant to prepare 95% complete construction plans and specifications for a future full restoration construction project. A full restoration project restores a courthouse to its appearance at an agreed upon restoration period, which includes removing additions and alterations from later periods and reconstructing features missing from the restoration period. A full restoration includes the site, exterior and interior of the building, and complying with life safety code and accessibility standards, improving security and energy efficiency, and installing acoustic treatments and audio-visual systems. Planning grants are not awarded for partial projects. The grant recipient may then use the construction documents to bid on the full restoration construction project. Applicants with 95% complete construction plans and specifications are considered shovel ready and will be eligible to receive up to 10 additional points when their future grant application is scored, making shovel ready applicants more likely to receive construction grant funding.

A county or municipality that receives a Planning grant is strongly encouraged to apply for a construction grant from the program at the next grant program funding opportunity following commission acceptance of their 95% complete plans and specifications.

		PLANNING AND FULL RESTORATION	EMERGENCY	EMERGENCY FOR PREVIOUSLY RESTORED COURTHOUSES
BUILDING-BASED	Historic Designations (1, 2, 4, or 6 points)	✓		✓
	Age of the Courthouse (2, 4, or 6 points)	✓		✓
	Architecture (2, 6, 8, 10, or 14 points)	✓		✓
	Significance (0, 2, 6, 10, or 14 points)	✓		✓
	Endangerment (0, 5, 10, 13, 15, or 20 points)	✓	✓	✓
	Integrity (0, 2, 6, 10, or 14 points)	✓		✓
PROJECT-BASED	Current Use (0, 6, or 10 points)	✓	✓	✓
	Future Use (0, 10, or 20 points)	✓	✓	✓
	County Records (0, 2, or 4 points)	✓		
	Fix Inappropriate Changes (0, 6, 10, or 14 points)	✓		✓
	Master Plan (0, 6, 12, or 18 points)	✓	✓	✓
	Full Restoration (0 or 20 points)	✓		
COUNTY COMMITMENT BASED	Current Deed (0, 6, 12, 18, or 20 points)	✓		✓
	Future Deed (0, 8, 14, or 20 points)	✓	✓	✓
	County Preservation Support (0, 1, or 2 points)	✓		
	Local Resources (0, 2, or 4 points)	✓		
	Local Support (0 or 2 points)	✓		
	Compliance (0, 2, or 4 points)	✓	✓	✓
	Cash Overmatch (0–8 points)	✓		
	Plans and Specifications (0, 5, or 10 points)	✓		
	County Revenue (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, or 20 points)	✓	✓	✓
	Longevity (5 points possible)	✓		
MAX AVAILABLE POINTS	255	112	200	

The Standard scoring system assesses all non-emergency grant requests. Emergency grant requests are considered for courthouses that have not yet been restored and those previously restored using a past full restoration grant. A limited number of scoring criteria are used to evaluate emergency projects for non-restored courthouses while 14 criteria are used to evaluate emergency projects for a previously restored courthouse.

TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM



77 Full Restorations Funded (70 Rededicated)

26 Courthouses Received Planning and/or Emergency Funding

36 Courthouses Have Approved Master Plans

9 Courthouses Have Master Plans Pending Approval

97 Historic Courthouses Eligible to Participate

9 Courthouses Not Eligible (Not 50 Years Old or County/City Owned)

103 Courthouses Awarded Preservation Grants

71 Counties Have Committed Local Funds and Need State Grants to Restore Their Historic Courthouses

MAJOR FUNDING FOR PROJECTS FROM 1999-2023

FULLY RESTORED COURTHOUSES

County	City	Rededicated	Yr Built
Archer	Archer City	5/12/05	1891
Atascosa	Jourdanton	6/14/03	1912
Bee	Beeville	5/20/06	1913
Bexar	San Antonio	7/14/15	1896
Bosque	Meridian	9/22/07	1886
Brooks	Falfurrias	2/26/10	1914
Cameron	Brownsville	10/17/06	1912
Cass	Linden	2/18/12	1861
Colorado	Columbus	5/17/14	1891
Comal	New Braunfels	1/22/13	1898
Cooke	Gainesville	11/12/11	1911
Dallas	Dallas	5/15/07	1892
Denton	Denton	11/6/04	1896
DeWitt	Cuero	10/27/07	1896
Dimmit	Carrizo Springs	11/18/04	1884
Donley	Clarendon	7/4/03	1894
Edwards	Rocksprings	7/5/14	1891
Ellis	Waxahachie	10/4/03	1897
Erath	Stephenville	8/20/02	1892
Falls	Marlin	10/16/21	1940
Fannin	Bonham	3/10/22	1889
Fayette	La Grange	6/25/05	1891
Franklin	Mount Vernon	9/20/14	1912
Goliad	Goliad	12/4/03	1894
Gray	Pampa	4/12/03	1928
Grimes	Anderson	3/2/02	1894
Hamilton	Hamilton	4/28/12	1887
Hardeman	Quanah	5/9/14	1908
Harris	Houston	8/23/11	1910
Harrison	Marshall	6/20/09	1901
Hood	Granbury	10/27/12	1891
Hopkins	Sulphur Springs	12/7/02	1894
Hudspeth	Sierra Blanca	7/3/04	1920
Jeff Davis	Fort Davis	11/8/03	1910
Johnson	Cleburne	12/1/07	1913

County	City	Rededicated	Yr Built
Karnes	Karnes City	4/7/18	1894
Kendall	Boerne	4/10/10	1870
La Salle	Cotulla	1/26/13	1931
Lamar	Paris	9/3/05	1917
Lampasas	Lampasas	3/2/04	1883
Lavaca	Hallettsville	9/11/10	1897
Lee	Giddings	10/8/04	1899
Leon	Centerville	7/1/07	1887
Lipscomb	Lipscomb	9/11/21	1916
Llano	Llano	6/15/02	1892
Lynn	Tahoka	6/20/19	1916
Marion	Jefferson	5/22/21	1912
Maverick	Eagle Pass	10/13/05	1885
McCulloch	Brady	9/5/09	1899
Menard	Menard	11/11/06	1932
Milam	Cameron	7/4/02	1892
Mills	Goldthwaite	8/27/11	1913
Navarro	Corsicana	7/9/16	1905
Newton	Newton	12/8/12	1903
Parker	Weatherford	6/4/05	1886
Potter	Amarillo	8/18/12	1932
Presidio	Marfa	1/5/02	1886
Rains	Emory	10/17/10	1909
Red River	Clarksville	10/26/02	1884
Roberts	Miami	6/2/12	1913
San Augustine	San Augustine	11/20/10	1928
San Saba	San Saba	1/23/20	1911
Shackelford	Albany	6/30/01	1883
Sutton	Sonora	6/11/02	1891
Throckmorton	Throckmorton	3/12/15	1891
Trinity	Groveton	7/22/11	1914
Val Verde	Del Rio	7/23/04	1887
Wharton	Wharton	8/4/07	1889
Wheeler	Wheeler	10/16/04	1925
Williamson	Georgetown	12/8/07	1911

CURRENT FULL RESTORATION GRANTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Callahan	Baird	In Progress	1929
Hall	Memphis	In Progress	1924
Mason	Mason	In Progress	1910
Polk	Livingston	In Progress	1923
Taylor	Abilene	In Progress	1915
Upshur	Gilmer	In Progress	1933
Wise	Decatur	In Progress	1896

CURRENT PLANNING PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Willacy	Raymondville	In Progress	1922
Comanche	Comanche	In Progress	1939

PREVIOUS PLANNING PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Crosby	Crosbyton	Complete	1914
Fort Bend	Richmond	Complete	1909
Houston	Crockett	Complete	1940
Hunt	Greenville	Complete	1929
Kimble	Junction	Complete	1930
Stephens	Breckenridge	Complete	1926
Van Zandt	Canton	Complete	1937
Washington	Brenham	Complete	1940

CURRENT EMERGENCY PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Duval	San Diego	In Progress	1916
Lee	Giddings	In Progress	1899
Willacy	Raymondville	In Progress	1922

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY PROJECTS

County	City	Status	Yr Built
Bandera	Bandera	Complete	1891
Callahan	Baird	Complete	1929
Cameron	Brownsville	Complete	1912
Camp	Pittsburg	Complete	1929
Dickens	Dickens	Complete	1893
Glasscock	Garden City	Complete	1894
Goliad	Goliad	Complete	1894
Hidalgo	Hidalgo	Complete	1886
Houston	Crockett	Complete	1940
Hunt	Greenville	Complete	1929
Jefferson	Beaumont	Complete	1932
Kimble	Junction	Complete	1930
Kleberg	Kingsville	Complete	1914
Limestone	Groesbeck	Complete	1924
Lipscomb	Lipscomb	Complete	1916
Mason	Mason	Complete	1910
McLennan	Waco	Complete	1901
Milam	Cameron	Complete	1892
Montague	Montague	Complete	1913
Nueces	Corpus Christi	Complete	1914
Polk	Livingston	Complete	1923
Randall	Canyon	Complete	1908
Tyler	Woodville	Complete	1891
Upshur	Gilmer	Complete	1933
Wilson	Floresville	Complete	1884

THE BENEFITS OF RESTORED HISTORIC COURTHOUSES

ECONOMIC



- Since 1999, 13,300+ jobs created through courthouse preservation projects
- Generated nearly \$791 million in revenue
- Generated almost \$970 million in gross state product
- Restored courthouses reinvigorate historic downtowns and promote heritage tourism, a \$9.2 billion industry in Texas
- Increased downtown property values
- Increased downtown occupancy
- Increased utility savings from new, energy-efficient systems

ACCESSIBILITY



- ADA-accessible parking and building access (sidewalk and ramps)
- Wheelchair accessibility (elevator, ramps, seating, accessible-height counters, and handrails)
- Signage and other accommodations for the visually impaired
- And many more compliance requirements of the Texas Accessibility Standards

SAFETY



- Brought up to code compliance
- Installation of fire detection, notification, and suppression systems
- Replacement of outdated electrical systems (reduces fire risks)
- Installation of lightning protection
- Installation of security systems
- Improved air quality

ENERGY EFFICIENCY/ SUSTAINABILITY



- New, more efficient mechanical and electrical systems
- Installation of insulation and weatherized windows/doors
- Decrease in water usage with new plumbing systems/fixtures

MAINTENANCE



- More manageable maintenance due to all-new finishes, sealants, and building infrastructure
- Counties receive post-restoration maintenance training

FUNCTIONALITY



- Improved audio-visual systems and courtroom functionality
- Improved courtroom acoustics
- Improved technology/network systems
- Improved document and file storage, with better temperature/humidity control

QUALITY OF LIFE



- Restored courthouses instill community pride as centerpieces
- Courthouse lawns and squares serve as event/festival spaces
- Restoration projects increase employment in construction industry and strengthen skills of craftspeople in specialty trades

TESTIMONIALS



DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

“I believe the courthouse restoration was the key to the revitalization of Denton. It was huge for us because we created a showplace that triggered businesses wanting to come to Denton and open up downtown.”

DANNY BRUMLEY

Denton County Facilities Director



NAVARRO COUNTY COURTHOUSE

“Our county courthouses are our history and heritage. Failing to preserve and keep them functional is, to me, dishonoring our past. Thanks to the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, we can keep their beauty and usefulness alive!”

H.M. DAVENPORT

Navarro County Judge



WHARTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

“The courthouse restoration brought a lot of new businesses to the town center. It literally brought the town back from the dead.”

BARBARA YOUNG

Former chair
of the Wharton County Courthouse Committee



BEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

“The courthouse restoration was a catalyst that really helped redevelop downtown. It was the basis for a long-range plan for the revitalization of the downtown area and resulted in a reinvestment of \$9 million in a two-year period.”

DR. BARBARA WELDER

Former chair of the Bee County Historical Commission

ABOUT THE TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM



Mills County Courthouse, Goldthwaite

Since 1999, the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP), and its local partners have made significant financial investments in the restoration of historic courthouses across the state.

In order to protect and preserve these buildings for future generations, the Texas Historic Courthouse Stewardship Program was created in 2005 to assist counties by fostering facility planning, budgeting, and training. The goal is to prevent newly restored facilities from returning to a state of deferred maintenance and disrepair.

Counties are encouraged to develop a cyclical maintenance plan for immediate and long-term care of their historic properties. A complete plan should include inspection schedules and recommendations for appropriate materials and procedures, as well as projected budgets for the prescribed work.

One of the services offered by Texas Historical Commission (THC) staff is consultations. We can help address maintenance and repair concerns or direct county staff to sources of information, including publications, architects, and contractors. THC staff also periodically visits each completed restoration project to identify and assist in resolving any problems, monitor the level of ongoing maintenance, and discuss future preventative

maintenance needs with county officials and facility maintenance managers.

Since 2006, the Texas Land Title Association has partnered with the THC as a sponsor of our annual historic courthouse stewardship training as part of the THC's Real Places conference designed for counties that have received funding through the THCPP and have completed their projects, or are in the process of doing so. The conference is a unique opportunity to hear from guest speakers and THC staff on preventive maintenance challenges and solutions for historic county courthouses.

Additionally, the program offers regional training and networking opportunities across the state at least twice a year. These regional workshops allow for elected officials who share common challenges and concerns to meet and discuss successful approaches. Their courthouses have similar environmental conditions and, often, skilled subcontractors serve specific areas of the state.

In early 2019, the THC released the [Historic Courthouse Maintenance Handbook](#), which includes inspection checklists and maintenance recommendations and is available on our website.

TIMELINE FOR COURTHOUSE GRANTS

**FEB 4,
2024**

DRAFT New Master Plans for Program Eligibility Due by 5 p.m.

**APRIL 5,
2024**

Final Master Plans and 95% Construction Documents Due by 5 p.m.

**APRIL 12,
2024**

Orientation and Online Training Available
Must provide Certificate of Completion with Application

**APRIL 22,
2024**

Notification of Eligibility for New Applicants and Shovel Ready Status

**MAY 13,
2024**

Round XIII Grant Application Due by 5 p.m.

TBD

Public Comment and THC Architecture Committee Meeting

**JULY 26,
2024**

Round XIII Grant Awards Approved by Commission