

PRESS! RELEASE

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THC AWARDS COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PLANNING GRANTS TO 25 COUNTIES

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is allocating nearly \$1.2 million to 25 counties with awards of up to \$50,000 each to help plan for preserving their historic courthouses. The agency announced the grant recipients during its recent quarterly meeting in Austin.

Of the 50 counties offered the opportunity for grant assistance to undertake this master planning effort, 26 submitted funding requests. These 50 counties have a previously approved courthouse preservation master plan, but have not yet been successful in receiving full courthouse restoration funding from the THC's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP). A majority of the requests came from rural counties throughout the state, where the courthouse is often a centerpiece of the community.

"The overwhelmingly positive response to this master plan update opportunity demonstrates the abiding interest of counties in partnering with the state to preserve and protect these wonderful historic assets," said Sharon Fleming, director of the THCPP. "We anticipate many of them will be requesting state grant funds to restore their courthouses in the next grant cycle."

Counties receiving the grant awards are: Bandera, Bell, Blanco, Burnet, Chambers, Clay, Coleman, Collin, Duval, Frio, Grayson, Hall, Hutchinson, Jefferson, Kimble, Kleberg, Limestone, Mason, McLennan, Randall, Robertson, Taylor, Upshur, Willacy, and Wise counties. A \$5,000 local match is required.

"By undertaking these grant projects, we believe county officials will positively impact their communities by assessing critical infrastructure needs, engaging with stakeholders to plan the restoration of a treasured landmark, and envisioning a safer, more functional building to serve its citizens," said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe.

Consultation between the counties, their preservation consultants, and the THC will begin immediately, with the goal of having a revised master plan by the end of 2019 that assesses the building's current conditions and makes appropriate recommendations to update and preserve each courthouse. The total outstanding financial need to preserve these 25 courthouses is estimated to be over \$100 million.

The THCPP has invested more than \$290 million in 99 Texas counties for the preservation of their courthouses. Construction activity related to the program has created nearly 11,000 jobs and generated more than \$44 million in local taxes. For more information about the program, visit thc.texas.gov/thcpp.

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