



Selma and Marion Historic Revitalization Grant Program

Notice of Funding Opportunity

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LOIs will be accepted on a rolling basis until November 15, 2023 at 5:00 pm CT, at which point not further LOIs will be accepted. We encourage you to submit your LOI as quickly as possible to ensure availability of funds. Please review instructions thoroughly before completing your application. Letters of Interest must be submitted via email to grants@opportunityalabama.com.

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Overview

In late 2022, Opportunity Alabama (OPAL) was awarded funding from the [Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program](#), funded by the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of Interior. The Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program fosters economic development in rural communities through the rehabilitation and protection of historic properties.

[Opportunity Alabama](#) is a statewide economic development entity that transforms Alabama's communities through private investment in physical spaces and places. We help communities leverage diverse sources of funding to support projects and initiatives that improve quality of place and re-energize local economies.

With Paul Bruhn grant funding, OPAL will administer a competitive subgrant program for catalytic projects to repair and restore historic structures in Selma and Marion, two rural Black Belt communities that were critical sites in the modern voting rights movement. The purpose of this subgrant program is to spark new economic vitality in these communities through downtown historic property redevelopment. Grant funding is intended for brick and mortar projects that will create new economic activity and permanent jobs. This Paul Bruhn grant funding will not be awarded to projects that have previously received grant funding from the National Park Service.

Eligible projects could include projects that create opportunity for food and beverage businesses, entertainment businesses, and moderately-priced multi-family residential. Applicants should be property owners or development teams capable of demonstrating a direct pathway to site control of a downtown historic building. Between now and November 15th, we invite individuals to submit a preliminary Letter of Interest (or LOI), expressing their intention to apply for a grant to cover costs associated with commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family redevelopment projects that will bring new commercial, office space, retail space, or residential units to qualifying historic downtown districts (see eligible applicants, below).

OPAL and an independent grants review committee will accept and evaluate LOIs **on a rolling basis until November 15, 2023 at 5:00 pm CT. OPAL will also issue subgrants on a rolling basis until all funds are dispersed, so we encourage you to submit your LOI as soon as possible.** Promising applicants with projects that fit the parameters of the grant program will be invited to submit a full grant application, on the strength of the LOI. Applicants with projects that do not fit the parameters will receive feedback on their application and may have the opportunity to resubmit an LOI, if the review committee believes the project can be revised to fit the parameters of the grant program.



Subgrants will be issued as reimbursements grants for costs associated with property redevelopment, however funding may be issued on the basis of documented invoices. All grant funding will be dispersed by June 31, 2025. All projects must be completed and documentation submitted by August 31, 2025.

Minimum grant award: \$30,000

Maximum grant award: \$250,000

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for this subgrant program, applicants must be property owners, developers, nonprofit organizations, or municipalities that have an ownership interest in a building that is designated as contributing by the National Park Service to one of the following three historic districts:

- Old Town Historic District (Selma, AL), NRHP Reference No. 78000486
- Water Avenue Historic District (Selma, AL), NRHP Reference No. 72000160
- Marion Courthouse Square Historic District (Marion, AL), NRHP Reference No. 96000111

To determine if a property is a contributing building on the National Register of Historic Places, contact the [Alabama Historic Commission](#) (AHC). AHC is Alabama's designated State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Information about these three historic districts and qualifying properties can be accessed via AHC's [Historic Preservation Map](#).

To be eligible for this grant opportunity, the building must be a commercial, mixed-use, or multi-family housing property, which either generates income or produces jobs. If the property is currently vacant or underutilized, the applicant should demonstrate that it will generate income and/or produce jobs as a result of revitalization.

What is Funded?

This grant program will provide substantial financial support to historically significant rehabilitation projects in the form of reimbursement grants. OPAL will issue grants between \$30,000 and \$250,000 to competitively-selected projects. Projects will be selected for grant funding based on the quality and feasibility of the plans and their ability to serve as catalysts for economic growth in these communities.

To be competitive, proposed projects should demonstrate that community engagement has shaped the plan for the building with the goal of improving quality of place in each of the following ways:

- The project preserves a historic building and returns it to excellent condition.
- The project generates a positive and inclusive sense of place for the neighborhood and community.
- The project fosters economic vitality by leasing to businesses that will create or retain jobs for the local community.



Applicants may apply for funding to cover costs for the following activities:

- Planning/Pre-Development costs including architectural designs, engineering plans, and specifications.
- Consulting costs for securing tax credits, incentives, and financing for redevelopment.
- Construction Materials.
- Labor pertaining to rehabilitation of building interior and exterior.

What is Not Funded

Grants may not be used to cover the following:

- Acquisition of property
- Costs incurred prior to the grant contract start date
- Costs incurred after the grant expiration date
- Furnishings and decorations
- Lobbying activities
- Fundraising efforts
- General operating expenses for the developer or property owner(s)
- Fines or penalties
- Demand or market studies
- Any activities to be executed after construction is complete

Match Requirements

The federal share (grant amount) of any grant award may not exceed 75% of the total project cost. The 25% matching share may be cash or in-kind or a combination. Cash match must be on-hand at the time of the application. Projects that can demonstrate that they have secured additional sources of funding - in the form of investment or loans - will receive priority for grant funding.

Evaluation & Selection Process

Step I: Letter of Interest

Opportunity Alabama (OPAL) and an independent grants review committee will accept and evaluate Letters of Interest **on a rolling basis until November 15, 2023 at 5:00 pm CT.**

Applicants must complete the Letter on Interest form, which can be downloaded from Opportunity Alabama's website, and email it to grants@opportunityalabama.com. As part of the LOI review process, OPAL may request a tour of the property being considered for grant funding.

Promising applicants with projects that fit the parameters of the grant program will be invited to submit a full grant application, on the strength of the LOI. Applicants with projects that do not fit the grant program will receive feedback on their application and may have the opportunity to resubmit an LOI, if the review committee believes the project can be revised to fit the parameters of the grant program.



Step II: Full Grant Application

Applicants who are invited to submit a complete application may download the form from Opportunity Alabama's website and email it to grants@opportunityalabama.com. Full grant applications will be reviewed by staff at Opportunity Alabama (OPAL) and an independent Grants Advisory Committee (GAC). The GAC is made up of professionals with experience in grant making, historic preservation, and economic revitalization, particularly in rural communities.

All applications will be evaluated and scored based on the five major criteria listed below.

1. Historic and Architectural Significance of Property
2. Potential to Foster Economic Development
3. Community Impact of Project
4. Urgency of Project and Need
5. Feasibility of Project and Applicant's Ability to Execute

Additional Standards Applicable to Grantees

Applicants whose submissions receive a high score from the GAC and are finalists for grant funding will be asked to submit further information and documentation to aid in the final determination of awards. Applicants will be asked to submit information about capabilities in the following areas:

- Sufficient financial resources to initiate project work before grant funding is dispersed
- Sufficient financial resources - equity, debt, and subsidy - to cover the cost of the project above and beyond funding secured through this grant program
- Experience, organizational structure, technical qualifications, and abilities to complete the project and to contract with consultants and subcontractors of capacity to complete the project
- A satisfactory record of integrity, judgment, and performance in related activities, including in the execution of prior grant funding
- Experience abiding by federal standards for bidding and contracting construction work and eligibility to conduct business with the Federal government
- Documentation of Commercial General Liability Insurance and Property Insurance
- Evidence of an adequate accounting system and auditing procedures to provide effective accountability

Prevailing Wage

The Davis-Bacon Act, as amended, requires that each contract over \$2,000 to which the United States or the District of Columbia is a party for the construction, alteration, or repair of public buildings or public works shall contain a clause setting forth the minimum wages to be paid to various classes of laborers and mechanics employed under the contract.

Procurement Standards and Additional Regulations



All grantees receiving Paul Bruhn funding must be registered entities on the federal System for Awards Management at SAM.gov.

Plans and specifications for projects awarded grant funding will be reviewed and approved by the Alabama Historic Commission and the National Park Service for conformance to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. All projects must comply with the Secretary of Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* and the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Grant Manual. Projects must be executed in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. All projects will be reviewed for compliance with Sections 106 (54 USC 306108) and 110f (54 USC 306107) of the National Historic Preservation Act in coordination with the Alabama Historic Commission.

Federal procurement standards must be met for all projects supported through this grant program. Projects must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Architectural Barriers Act. Grant recipients must follow all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, laws, rules and regulations, including any local historic preservation requirements.

Build America, Buy America

As required by Section 70914 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), P.L. 117-58, none of the funds under a federal award that are part of Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure may be obligated for a project unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless subject to an approved waiver.

Covenant/Easement

All projects awarded grant funding through this program will require protection through a signed Preservation Covenant, overseen by the Alabama Historic Commission. The term of the covenant/easement will run from 5-15 years depending on the amount of the subgrant awarded to the project. All preservation easements must be executed by registration with the deed of the property.

<i>Grant Amount</i>	<i>Covenant/Easement Requirement</i>
\$1.00 - \$50,000	5-year minimum preservation agreement; a covenant/easement is not required
\$50,001 - \$250,000	10-year minimum preservation covenant/easement

Project Sign



Construction projects that receive grant funding must post a project sign in a prominent location at the job site, acknowledging support from Opportunity Alabama and the National Park Service (NPS). The cost of the sign is an eligible grant expense. The sign must comply with language and image standards set by NPS. Photo documentation of the installed sign/notification will be provided to the NPS.

