



The Preserve America Program

Preserve America is a federal program that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the program include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities. Since the program's inception in 2003, the First Lady of the United States has been involved in supporting and promoting Preserve America. Permanent authorizing legislation for the program was passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in March, 2009. Detailed information on all aspects of this initiative can be found at www.preserveamerica.gov. Major components of Preserve America include the following:

Preserve America Communities

This program recognizes and designates communities, including neighborhoods within large cities, which protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization, and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through heritage tourism and education programs. To date, 890 Preserve America communities have been designated in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories, including 20 neighborhoods and five tribal communities.



Jonesborough, Tennessee, became a Preserve America Community in August 2005 and showcases its history as the oldest town in the state.

Benefits of designation include White House recognition; a certificate of recognition; a Preserve America Community road sign; authorization to use the Preserve America logo on signs, flags, banners, and promotional materials; listing in an on-line Preserve America Community directory; inclusion in national and regional press releases; eligibility to apply for Preserve America Grants, when funded by Congress; and enhanced community visibility and pride. Preserve America Communities are also featured in National Register Travel Itineraries and in "Teaching with Historic Places" curricular material created by the National Park Service. There are quarterly deadlines to apply for designation annually on March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. Application forms and more information are available at www.preserveamerica.gov/communities.html.



Preserve America Stewards

The Preserve America Stewards program honors exemplary volunteer efforts at historic resources around the country. There are currently 41 Preserve America Stewards. Honorees are recognized for stewardship programs that have demonstrated a successful use of volunteer time and commitment to help care for our cultural heritage. Government entities (federal, tribal, state, or local), non-profit organizations, and businesses are eligible to apply to have their programs recognized. The application form and further information is available at www.preserveamerica.gov/stewards.html.

Volunteers of the Chimney Rock Interpretive Association, a Preserve America Steward, work to help bring the past to life.

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Executive Order 13287: “Preserve America”

The Preserve America Executive Order (2003) emphasizes federal policy for the protection, enhancement, and contemporary use of historic properties owned by the federal government. The order encourages agencies to seek partnerships with state, tribal, and local governments and the private sector to make more informed use of these resources for local economic development and other recognized public benefits. It also directs agencies to support state, tribal, and local heritage tourism with existing authorities and resources. As required by the order, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation reviews agency stewardship and partnership efforts and provides a status report to the President every three years. The reports were compiled and issued in 2006, 2009, and 2012, based on reporting from individual federal agencies with land and property management responsibilities.

Preserve America Grants

From 2006 through 2010 more than \$21 million in matching grants were awarded to 280 projects throughout the country. The grants are designed to support community efforts to develop sustainable resource management strategies and sound business practices for the continued preservation and use of historic and cultural sites. The focus is on economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism. Grant amounts ranged from \$20,000 to \$250,000 and required a 1:1 match. Some grants leveraged a great deal more support than the basic match requirement.

State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, designated Preserve America Communities, and Certified Local Governments that have applied for Preserve America Community designation are eligible to apply for Preserve America Grants pending congressional appropriations. Though the Preserve America Grants have been authorized by Congress, no funding has been allocated for the grants in the current budget. Further information, including descriptions of funded projects, is available at www.nps.gov/history/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica.

Preserve America Presidential Awards

Up to four awards were given annually through 2008 to organizations, businesses, or government entities for exemplary accomplishments in the sustainable use and preservation of cultural or natural heritage assets; demonstrated commitment to the protection and interpretation of America’s heritage assets; and integration of these assets into contemporary community life, combining innovative, creative, and responsible approaches to showcasing historic local resources. Awards were presented to two national initiatives as well as regional, statewide, and local programs in 19 states. For a full list of winners and photographs, visit www.preserveamerica.gov/presidentialaward.

National History Teacher of the Year Award

Since 2004, outstanding history teachers at the K-12 level have been recognized in each state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, followed by selection of the National History Teacher of the Year from among the state winners. State winners each receive \$1,000 and a core archive of history materials for their school libraries. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History administers this award program, in association with HISTORY™, and Preserve America, and hosts a national recognition event each fall.

Preserve America Summit and the Future of Preservation

In recognition of the 40th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, a Preserve America Summit was convened in 2006 with 450 participants to consider the future of the national preservation program. A Youth Summit met in conjunction with the larger conference and has provided a model for subsequent youth projects, including promotion of historic preservation service-learning as an educational tool. Key recommendations emerging from the Summit to improve the effectiveness of historic preservation efforts nationally through better resource identification, stewardship, community support, education, and leadership were adopted by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and are now being implemented by federal agencies in cooperation with non-federal partners.

Program Management

A Web site (www.preserveamerica.gov) and an e-newsletter provide details and updates on Preserve America, with information on how to get involved and links to related programs and resources. Preserve America is administered jointly by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Department of the Interior, in cooperation with representatives from the White House and the Executive Office of the President,; the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Transportation; the General Services Administration; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the President’s Council on Environmental Quality; and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. For more information about Preserve America, visit www.preserveamerica.gov.