



AT THE INTERSECTION
OF HERITAGE, FAITH,
& COMMUNITY

Partners for Sacred Places



National Trust *for*
Historic Preservation®

Intervention Fund

A program of Partners for Sacred Places in collaboration with
the National Trust for Historic Preservation

OVERVIEW

The Intervention Fund is an emergency grant program under the umbrella of the [National Fund for Sacred Places](#). The Intervention Fund supports stewards of historic sacred places with building repair and recovery after an unanticipated emergency. Applications are accepted by invitation only.

GRANT TYPES

The Intervention Fund offers grants of up to a maximum of \$100,000. No cash match is required. Funding is available for the following types of projects:

- **Capital projects:** Physical repairs to the building addressing direct damage caused by the eligible emergency. May also address other building features to prevent further damage or to facilitate full recovery (for example, if an exterior repair is needed to prevent further interior damage). More information on eligible capital projects is available below.
- **Planning projects:** Architect fees, engineering studies, damage assessments, or other work intended to assess the extent of the damage caused by the eligible emergency, prioritize urgent repairs, and plan for long-term resilience to future emergencies.
- **Short-term response:** Temporary measures intended to respond to the eligible emergency, such as scaffolding, temporary shoring, safety netting, and tarps. These grants are intended to support early actions that can be critical in saving a building and preventing further damage, like drying a building out or securing broken windows. Other examples include fans, dehumidifiers, plywood/OSB for boarding windows, heavy-duty plastic, and cleaning supplies.

Please note: In these materials, the term “congregation” is used to refer to the worshipping body or faith community of any religion including those that do not identify with this term (such as mosques/masjid). The National Fund for Sacred Places accepts applications from any faith tradition and seeks to provide inclusive programming and resources across religions.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. The property must be located within the United States or its territories.
2. The property must have been originally built to be a house of worship and must be owned by an active community of faith.
3. The applicant must be a religious congregation or closely affiliated nonprofit organization.

4. If the applicant is a congregation, the congregation must be at least three years old.
5. The property must have experienced an eligible emergency. Unanticipated emergencies are typically due to factors beyond the congregation's control, with the expectation that congregations have made reasonable efforts to be good stewards of the building through regular maintenance and addressing urgent repairs. While congregations impacted by an emergency may have some degree of deferred maintenance, building repairs stemming from deferred maintenance alone will likely not qualify as an emergency. Eligible emergencies include:
 - a. Emergencies caused by a precipitating event, such as:
 - i. Extreme weather: Severe or extraordinary weather conditions. Examples include floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and fires. A state or federal disaster declaration may underscore the eligibility of the event but is not required.
 - ii. Property destruction: Deliberate destruction to property, such as vandalism or arson. Damage to building components or building systems via theft or car crash is also eligible. Unanticipated building fires are also eligible.
 - iii. Staff may consider emergency situations caused by other precipitating events on a case-by-case basis.
 - b. Emergencies caused by sudden identification of urgent safety hazards that pose an immediate health and safety threat to building users or the public. Given that urgent safety hazards can arise from deferred maintenance, staff will gather additional information to determine whether these projects meet the eligibility criteria.
6. The property must possess historical, cultural, or architectural significance. We do not ask for any official documentation of historic or cultural significance. Designation as a local landmark or listing on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) is not required, but referring to the [National Register criteria](#) can help clarify the ways in which a historic house of worship is significant.
7. The property must be occupied by a congregation that is community-minded and that serves nonmembers. Congregations that share space and partner with other nonprofit organizations are prioritized.
8. The property must have urgent repair needs related to structural components, walls, roof, and/or other elements of the building envelope that are integral to a building's preservation and longevity. Projects that improve functionality or improve accessibility of the property in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) are also eligible, as well as renovation projects that make vacant or underused space usable for community outreach, but applicants should demonstrate that urgent repair needs to the building envelope have already been identified by a building conditions assessment and addressed before proposing ADA or interior rehabilitation projects.
9. Anticipated capital projects must respect the property's historic character and materials, and must adhere to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#).
10. The congregation must demonstrate a need for project funds that exceeds the congregation's typical donor base and membership.
11. The applicant must exhibit several signs of positive organizational health, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Senior clergy (and/or lay leadership) is established in tenure
 - b. Consensus around project goals
 - c. Commitment to retaining and caring for the historic property

- d. Stable or growing membership
 - e. Established partnerships with external entities
 - f. Financial strength and stability
 - g. If applicable, positive and supportive relationship with regional denominational offices.
12. The congregation must work with [Partners for Sacred Places](#) and the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) as part of a vetting process prior to being invited to submit an application in order to identify an eligible scope of work for the Intervention Fund grant. Applicants are required to:
- a. Develop a comprehensive scope of work described by permit-ready documentation (100% Construction Documents) or equivalent documentation produced by an experienced, qualified building professional or team of professionals, typically including architects.
 - b. Develop a realistic budget and timeline for completing the work, including bids from qualified contractors, and select a contractor and bid(s).
13. No cash match is required. For projects with a larger scope and/or cost than the Intervention Fund grant, applicants who have identified matching funds or demonstrate strong community or institutional support will be stronger candidates. In these cases, applicants should provide information about where additional funding may come from (committed or anticipated) in order to complete the larger project.

CORE CRITERIA

The Intervention Fund assesses grant requests according to the core criteria described below, while also striving to build a diverse participant pool that reflects a broad range of geographic, cultural, and religious identities. We welcome submissions related to historic sacred places important to all communities including those that have been historically underrepresented within preservation, such as places associated with women, immigrants, Asian Americans, Black Americans, Latine Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and LGBTQ+ communities.

Historic, Cultural, or Architectural Significance

The Intervention Fund supports congregations with building repair and recovery after an unanticipated emergency at purpose built historic houses of worship. The Intervention Fund prioritizes buildings that have historic, cultural, or architectural significance; particularly those that are significant at the national or regional level. Designation as a local landmark or listing on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) is not required, but referring to the [National Register criteria](#) can help clarify the ways in which a historic house of worship is significant.

Community-Serving Congregations

The Intervention Fund prioritizes congregations that are engaged in their communities and that are providing public value. Engaged congregations operate and host programming that serves non-members and/or vulnerable and at-risk populations; share space with non-affiliated groups and organizations (often at subsidized rates); partner and collaborate with other congregations, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and/or municipalities; and have a widespread reputation for being a welcoming center of community life and as an anchoring institution. If a congregation and/or community partners are temporarily unable to use the building, or portions of the building, due to the emergency, the applicant will not be penalized for this in their application, provided that they demonstrate a commitment to returning community programs to the building after needed repairs have been completed.

Project Scope and Need

The Intervention Fund aims to support projects critical to building repair and recovery after an unanticipated emergency. Applications are by invitation only. Staff will work with potential applicants to identify an eligible scope of work prior to inviting an application. While the Intervention Fund generally aims to fund urgent, high-priority projects related to structural components, walls, roof, and/or other elements of the building envelope that are integral to a building's preservation and longevity, the Intervention Fund may support other scope items if high-priority projects related to the building envelope are being addressed through other funding sources. If needed, staff may work with potential applicants to advise on a logical order of repairs that reduces further risk to the building. Projects that improve accessibility of the property in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may also be eligible, if building accessibility features like elevators were damaged by the eligible emergency and if leaving those issues unaddressed would prevent the congregation from worshipping in, meeting in, or offering programming in the building. If Intervention Fund grants are only funding a portion of a larger project, staff will consider if there is a strong possibility that the full project will be completed in a timely fashion (e.g., when Intervention Fund grants are helping to stabilize a damaged building, but a full rehabilitation will ultimately be necessary in order to ensure the building's preservation.) All projects must respect the property's historic character and materials and adhere to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#).

Fundraising Readiness

The Intervention Fund does not require a cash match. For projects with a larger scope and/or cost than the Intervention Fund grant, those that have matching funds identified or demonstrate strong community or institutional support will be stronger candidates. In these cases, applicants should provide information about where additional funding may come from (committed or anticipated) in order to complete the larger project. Program staff also evaluate for financial need. While staff may consider insurance payouts as part of financial need, receiving an insurance payout does not disqualify a congregation from receiving an Intervention Fund grant. To avoid significant delays after distributing funding, there may be a delay in inviting applications for projects where starting the work is dependent upon an insurance payout.

Healthy Congregations

The Intervention Fund prioritizes healthy, stable congregations so that our investment is truly impactful and lasting. We look for some or all of the following, although this is not an exhaustive list of characteristics that indicate healthy congregations: tenured, well-respected clergy; capable lay leadership; stable or growing membership; financial strength and stability; consensus around project goals; positive and supportive relationship with regional denominational offices, if applicable; and a history of weathering challenges with resilience. We also take into consideration the congregation's commitment to the care and long-term stewardship of its building, with an understanding that the building is an asset for ministry and is central to congregational life. However, staff will take into consideration that emergencies can destabilize otherwise healthy congregations (e.g., by forcing building closure, limiting community programs, or draining finances).

Strong Applications

Intervention Fund grants are by invitation only, and the Intervention Fund is not intended to be a competitive program. However, it is important that congregations complete the application in full with all attachments; make a compelling case for support; and clearly communicate the key details of their project. Staff will work with potential applicants to gather relevant information and documents before determining whether to invite an application.

ELIGIBLE CAPITAL PROJECTS

Eligible capital projects include, but are not limited to:

- Building repairs that are critical for recovery, including but not limited to repairs in the following areas:
 - Exterior
 - Interior
 - Roof/Gutters/Chimney
 - Walls/Siding/Cladding
 - Windows/Doors
 - Foundation
 - Steeple/Spire/Bell Tower
 - Drainage/Sewer/Site
 - ADA Accessibility
 - Structural
 - Water Infiltration Mitigation
 - Masonry/Brick/Stone
 - Stained Glass
 - Restrooms
 - Elevator/Lift/Ramp
 - Hazardous Material Abatement
 - Smoke and Soot Remediation
- Repair or replacement of essential building systems, such as:
 - Electricity
 - Water/Plumbing
 - Mechanical (HVAC)
 - Boilers, Furnaces, and Radiators
 - Fire Suppression

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Demolition of character-defining architectural features
- Purchase or lease of property
- New construction
- Landscaping or fencing
- Cemeteries
- Parking lots
- Religious art restoration such as mural restoration
- Pipe organ restoration or replacement
- Purchase of audio-visual equipment
- Security upgrades
- Pew replacement
- Staff salaries or volunteer reimbursements
- Organizational overhead costs
- Catering or entertainment costs
- Consultant services for any activity other than design services or construction management
- Historic structure reports or historic resource surveys
- Academic research

- Conferences and educational workshops
- Media and marketing
- Capital projects completed prior to formal notification that an Intervention Fund grant has been awarded (Program staff review project documentation before work begins to ensure that all work adheres to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#))
- Mortgages or debt repayment

APPLICATIONS

The Intervention Fund is intended to be more flexible and fast-acting than an annual grant program. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications are by invitation only, after consultation with program staff.

The application is completed via an online grants system called [Foundant](#). Applicants have up to 30 days to submit. Once the application is submitted, program staff take up to 30 days to review the application. Program staff may follow up with applicants if there is missing information or additional information is needed to complete the review. Applicants will be notified whether their application was approved or denied via email.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATIONAL FUND FOR SACRED PLACES

The Intervention Fund is an emergency grant program under the umbrella of the [National Fund for Sacred Places](#).

Recipients of Intervention Fund grants are still eligible to apply for capital grants through the National Fund for Sacred Places, but if a National Fund capital grant is awarded, the total amount of capital funding available to the congregation will be reduced by the amount of the previously received Intervention Fund grant.

For example, if a congregation receives a \$50,000 Intervention Fund grant, the total amount of capital grant funding it would be eligible to seek from the National Fund for Sacred Places would be \$450,000, rather than the \$500,000 cap available to congregations new to the program. National Fund staff reserve the right to consider requests that would total more than \$500,000 per congregation on a case-by-case basis.

Prior recipients of National Fund capital grants are typically not eligible for Intervention Fund grants. Exceptions may be made in rare circumstances which National Fund staff will consider on a case-by-case basis.

Intervention Fund grant recipients do not receive the same training, technical assistance, and other benefits provided to National Fund for Sacred Places grantees (unless Intervention Fund grant recipients are already part of a National Fund cohort).

GRANT CONDITIONS

Grant recipients will be required to sign a contract agreeing to the conditions of the Intervention Fund program. Grant conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Grant funds are restricted solely for use on the project; and the project will not result in the demolition of a historic building or have an adverse impact on historic resources.
- The project must be completed within one (1) year from the date of the disbursement of Grant Funds.

- Consultants must be approved by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Partners for Sacred Places prior to the distribution of funds.
- Grant recipients must acknowledge that the National Fund for Sacred Places is a historic preservation program, not a program for new construction.
- Any documents or plans for preservation work that result from the project must adhere to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.](#)
- All procurement of goods and services for the project shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition and consideration of minority and women-owned business enterprises. Grantees must also maintain adequate procedures to ensure that the procurement of goods and services, including consultant services, do not present a conflict of interest.
- No part of the grant will be used for lobbying activities or to participate in any political campaign in support of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.
- Subject to the "ministerial exception" (or other applicable First Amendment exceptions to which Grantee is entitled), as such exceptions are defined by judicial decisions, federal statutes, or such other federal laws as may be applicable, and as modified from time to time, Grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, creed, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, mental and physical disabilities, sex (including pregnancy), personal appearance, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, genetic information, matriculation, political affiliation or veteran status.
- National Fund grants may not be used to cover administrative costs or to subsidize staff salaries.
- Grant recipients must acknowledge the support of the National Fund for Sacred Places in all print, audio, electronic, and film/video media that it produces concerning the project.
- A final report and financial accounting of the expenditure of the grant funds must be submitted within one month of the project completion date. A final report form will be provided. If the project is not completed in accordance with the grant agreement, the grant funds must be returned.

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