



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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May 6, 2008

To: Non-Profit Organizations Owning Property in Cambridge

From: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission

Re: Funding Opportunity for Building Rehabilitation

The Cambridge Historical Commission is once again requesting proposals for Institutional Preservation Grants, which provide funds to qualified non-profit organizations for rehabilitation or restoration of significant Cambridge buildings or structures.

In 2001, Cambridge voters accepted the terms of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) and agreed to establish a Community Preservation Fund to support affordable housing, open space, and historic preservation. Since then, 10% of the funds generated through this program – up to \$1.2 million per year - have been set aside for historic preservation purposes, which include the “acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources.”

Cambridge’s CPA-funded historic preservation activities have supported restoration of historic public buildings and landscapes and continuation of the Historical Commission’s Preservation Grant program for affordable housing rehabilitation, which is now in its 32nd year. The Commission’s Institutional Preservation Grant (IPG) program, now in its third year, extends the Commission’s Preservation Grant program, but with some significant differences.

- Applicants to the IPG program must be non-profit organizations.
- The building or structure for which assistance is being sought must be significant on the local, state, or national level for its architecture or associations with important persons, organizations, or events. (If the building is not already designated in some way, the CHC can make this determination.)
- The work must constitute rehabilitation or restoration or enhance accessibility, rather than ordinary maintenance.
- Applicants must demonstrate that they have the financial and managerial resources to enable projects to proceed expeditiously to completion.

The maximum Institutional Preservation Grant per project may consist of an outright grant of up to \$50,000, and a further grant of up to 50% of additional documented costs for a maximum

disbursement of \$100,000. Amounts over the initial \$50,000 grant must be matched by the applicant.

- Actual grant amounts will be determined by the Commission on the basis of the selection criteria and with regard to the availability of funds, and are likely to be less than the total cost of the work even if the total project cost is less than \$50,000; that is, some matching may be required even for projects costing less than \$50,000.
- Grants will be made on a reimbursement basis and will not be paid until the approved work is completed and documented to the satisfaction of the Commission.
- The Commission may require that the owner enter into a 30-year preservation restriction that will protect the property as though it were designated as a landmark.
- Applications from previous recipients will be considered, but may be assigned a lower priority than new applications. An applicant requesting additional assistance within a three-year period may be eligible for a 50% matching grant only.

If your organization is interested in applying for an Institutional Preservation Grant, please review the attached guidelines and complete the enclosed application. Describe the nature of your organization, the building or structure for which the grant is requested, the organization's capital improvement plan, the scope of projects proposed for IPG funding, and the estimated cost.

Grant applications will be reviewed by the Commission staff, which may request additional information, and then presented to the Cambridge Historical Commission for a determination of significance and concurrence on the amount and terms of the proposed grant. Once a contract has been signed, ninety days will be allowed to solicit bids; when the Commission has issued a notice to proceed, recipients will have eighteen months to complete projects and seek reimbursement.

Please feel free to contact either me or Kathleen (Kit) Rawlins, the Assistant Director of the Commission, if you have questions or need further information

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