



TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICERS

Our Request

\$13.5 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) to carry out the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act. The request includes \$500,000 for a competitive grant program to survey and document tribal historic and cultural resources.

Background:

There are expected to be 190 NPS-recognized THPOs throughout the country in FY2019. These Indian tribes have assumed the responsibilities of SHPOs for their tribal lands and have a land base exceeding 56 million acres spanning 30 states.

What are Tribal Historic Preservation Officers?

They are federally recognized tribal governments that have entered into an agreement with the Department of the Interior to assume the federal compliance role of the SHPO on their respective Tribal lands, as codified in 36 CFR Part 800. Thus, THPOs are actively involved with projects to improve Indian schools, roads, health clinics and housing.

What do THPOs do?

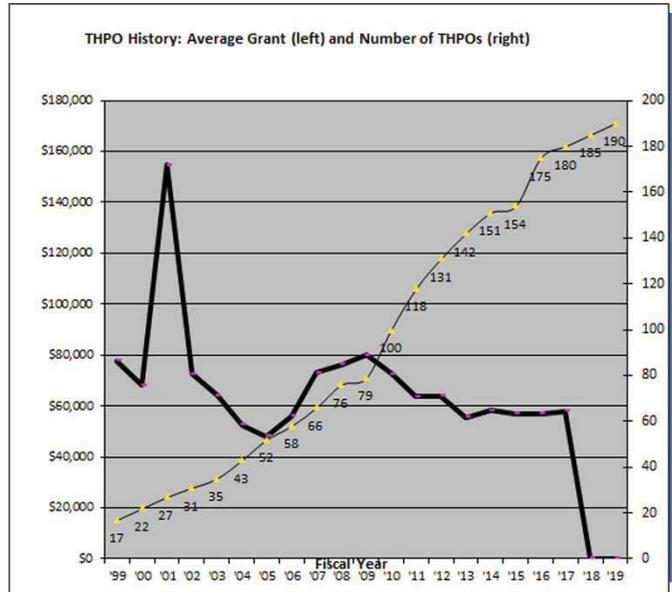
THPOs are the first responders when a sacred site is threatened, when an ancestral home is uncovered, and when Native ancestors are disturbed by development. They are also responsible for creating their tribe's oral history programs and operating tribal museums and cultural centers and have other responsibilities per their respective Tribe. They are an active expression and exercise of tribal sovereignty. For the past 10 years, THPOs have become very popular and successful with tribal governments and for the first time are recognized as the authentic representatives of cultures that have been in existence for countless generations.

What is the funding history of the Tribal line item of the Historic Preservation Fund?

The THPO program is supported via the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). However, as the number of Indian tribes operating THPO programs increases, the amount of HPF funds appropriated to the THPOs is not keeping pace. In FY1996, 12 tribes received an average of \$80,000. In FY2015, 158 tribes received an average of \$56,600 – more than \$20,000 less than when the program first started and not taking into account inflation. The National Park Service expects there to be at least 190 approved THPOs by the end of FY19. The highest amount of federal support THPOs received was in FY2001 at an average of \$154,000. In addition to THPO funding, a portion of the Tribal line item in HPF goes to competitive tribal heritage grants.

What is at stake?

Without an increase in FY2019, each THPO program will be asked to perform important federal compliance work with fewer funds. To continue cultural preservation in Indian country, it is essential that THPO programs be provided with adequate funding to meet the increasing need. This means that the funding for THPO programs overall cannot remain static or decrease while the number of THPOs participating in the program continues to increase.



Note: Black line indicates the average THPO grant. Dotted line shows growth of the THPO program.