



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS



ORGANIZATION CONTACT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NATHPO ANNOUNCES HISTORIC GRANT FROM MELLON FOUNDATION

The Three-Year, \$5 Million Grant Will Allow NATHPO To Greatly Expand Its Support For THPOs!

On Friday, December 6, 2024, Dr. Valerie Grussing, Executive Director of the National Association of Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO) traveled to New York City to formally accept a three-year, \$5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation. This award represents the largest single grant to NATHPO in the history of the organization.

With these funds, NATHPO will be able to make unprecedented re-grants to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), whose responsibilities have long since expanded beyond both the statutory framework passed in 1992 and the funding currently provided by Congress. These re-grants will put badly needed resources directly into the hands of THPOs working day in and day out to protect their Tribes' sacred places and preserve their cultural resources. The funding will also allow NATHPO to expand its own capacity to support and advocate on behalf of THPOs.

“NATHPO is beyond grateful for this historic support from the Mellon Foundation,” said NATHPO Executive Director Valerie J. Grussing. **“THPOs, who long ago outgrew the job description in statute, remain chronically underfunded. The added support we will be able to provide directly to THPOs with this grant will help them perform their work of protecting sacred places and preserving cultural resources. Moreover, by expanding our own capacity, NATHPO will be able to expand its reach in advocating on behalf of and the work we do providing hands-on support to THPOs.”**

“Mellon’s support for NATHPO reflects a deep commitment to honoring the profound interconnection between Indigenous communities and their ancestral landscapes, recognizing that place is not just about geography, but living heritage, culture, and community” said Mellon Foundation Humanities in Place director Justin Garrett Moore. **“By providing multiyear support for NATHPO and the Protecting Native Places program, we are investing directly in tribal leadership, Indigenous knowledge systems, and local solutions that have been historically underfunded but are essential to preserving and revitalizing cultural sites that tell powerful stories of resilience and continuity.”**

Who we are – NATHPO is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization, founded in 1998, of Tribal preservation leaders protecting culturally important places that perpetuate Native identity, resilience, and cultural endurance. Connections to cultural heritage sustain the health and vitality of Native peoples. We provide guidance to preservation officials, elected representatives, and the public about national historic preservation legislation, policies, and regulations. We promote Tribal sovereignty, develop partnerships, and advocate for Tribes in governmental activities on preservation issues. For more information visit our website at www.nathpo.org.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation – The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.



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NEWSLETTER

MAJOR NATHPO ANNOUNCEMENT!

Earlier this month, Executive Director Dr. Valerie Grussing traveled to New York City to accept a historic grant from the Mellon Foundation. This three-year, \$5 million grant is the first of its kind in NATHPO's history and will give us unprecedented capacity to directly support and advocate on behalf of THPOs. Read the announcement to learn more [HERE](#). THPOs – Stay tuned for opportunities to take advantage of this funding in the new year!



(NATHPO Executive Director Dr. Valerie Grussing gathered with fellow grantees at the Mellon Foundation's 2024 Humanities In Place Convening in New York City earlier this month. Photo credit: Mellon Foundation)

UPCOMING DEADLINES

STOP Act Comment, Due 12/24/24: Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony

Regulations - The Department of the Interior proposes new regulations that provide a framework to prevent the export for sale in foreign countries of Native American cultural items that are held in violation of current Federal laws; to repatriate such items from individuals and organizations having such items; and to improve coordination among Federal agencies, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations seeking to prevent the export and sale, and support the repatriation, of such items. The proposed rule would establish an export certification system, set forth procedures for detention and repatriation of items subject to the rule, establish a framework for voluntary return of items subject to the rule, and establish interagency and Native working groups. NATHPO will be providing comment to the Interior Department, a draft of which is attached to this email and will be made available on our website [HERE](#) when finalized. Comments are due on or before December 24, 2024. You can learn more about the proposed rule [HERE](#).

Historic Preservation Award for Federal Partnerships in Historic Preservation, Nominations Due 1/10/25 - If you know of someone worthy of receiving the National Trust/Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Award for Federal Partnerships in Historic Preservation, submit a nomination at the link below. Nominations are due January 10, 2025. Learn more [HERE](#).

USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program, Applications Due 1/31/25 - The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program provides full tuition, fees, books, and paid workforce training to any interested and eligible student pursuing degrees in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines at a Tribal college or university. Eligible applicants include graduating high school seniors, full-time students currently enrolled at a 1994 land-grant Tribal college or university, or recent TCU associate degree graduates. The program timeframe begins Fall 2025 and the application deadline is January 31, 2025. Learn more [HERE](#).

NAGPRA Review Committee, Nominations Due 2/3/25 - The National Park Service is calling for nominations to the NAGPRA Review Committee from Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and traditional religious leaders. Please note the nominee must meet the description of a traditional Indian religious leader (see [43 CFR 10.12\(b\)\(1\)](#)). Nominations must be received by February 3, 2025. Detailed information is in the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-28234> FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melanie O'Brien, via telephone at (202) 354-2201.

NPS Grant Opportunity, Applications Due 2/27/25 - The National Park Service is accepting competitive grant applications through their Tribal Heritage Grants Program. Federally-recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Villages/Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organization are all eligible for grants from this \$600,000 program. Applications are due February 27, 2025. You can find details about this opportunity [HERE](#).

NATHPO regularly submits comment letters to federal agencies advocating on behalf of Tribal communities and their THPOs. You can find several of our most recent letters [HERE](#), and if you know of an upcoming deadline and want NATHPO to consider submitting comment, please contact Melissa Madrigal at melissa@nathpo.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE

Earlier this month, Pala Band of Mission Indians THPO and NATHPO Board Vice Chair Dr. Shasta Gaughen submitted her resignation from NATHPO's Board in order to more closely focus on issues closer to the Tribe she serves, We could not be more grateful to Shasta for the years of service she has given to NATHPO, first as Board Chair and more recently as Vice Chair.

Having said that, we are grateful and excited to announce that the Board has elected Michael Black Wolf, THPO for the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes, as the new Vice Chair. You can learn more about Michael [HERE](#), as well as the rest of NATHPO's Board and staff, [HERE](#).

We are also grateful to Sean Scruggs, THPO for the Fort Independence Indian Reservation, for agreeing to serve as the Pacific Region's representative on NATHPO's Board. A 20-year veteran of the United States Air Force, Sean has represented his Tribe with the Nellis Air Force Base Consolidated Groups and Tribes Organization for 10 years and has been his Tribe's THPO for nearly 7 years. Stay tuned to [our website](#) as we update in to include more information about Sean as he settles into his role on the Board of Directors.

END OF YEAR REFLECTIONS

2024 was a whirlwind year for NATHPO. We welcomed [six new THPOs](#), bringing the total number to 227 nationwide. Operations Director Melissa Madrigal and Indigenization Director Stacy Laravie (Ponca) went on an [EPIC road trip](#) visiting THPOs through the Western United States. We had a phenomenal annual conference at the Ho-Chunk Gaming Resort, where we honored champions in [state](#) government and [Congress](#), as well as Ira Matt, the inaugural recipient of NATHPO's Federal Changemaker Award, a former THPO, whose many contributions to the Indigenous preservation community we only begin to outline in [this post](#). We presented the [2024 Partner in Preservation Award](#) to NATHPO Repatriation Advisor Dr. Timothy McKeown, whose long federal service, combined with his advice and guidance to NATHPO and the Tribes and THPOs we serve and advocacy on behalf of others working to bring home their ancestors whose remains were stolen, has been invaluable over the years. We also presented our [Excellence in Tribal Historic Preservation Award](#) to Dr. Shasta Gaughen, Environmental Director and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Pala Band of Mission Indians, and our inaugural [Lifetime Achievement Award](#) to Ho-Chunk Nation THPO Bill Quackenbush. We partnered with The Wilderness Society and the Tennessee Valley Authority to continue our [Protecting Native Places](#) grant program (stay tuned for an announcement of the recipients in the new year). NATHPO also [expanded its staff](#) by bringing on Indigenization Director Stacy Laravie (Ponca) and Finance Director Amy Garcia as full-time staff members. And we closed out the year by accepting [a historic grant from the Mellon Foundation](#), which will vastly expand NATHPO's ability to directly support and advocate on behalf of THPOs.

We're truly grateful and honored for the opportunity to serve the THPOs performing the sacred work of protecting sacred places and preserving cultural resources, and we look forward to all the possibilities 2025 brings.

NATHPO's Annual Conference Returns in September!

Mark your calendars as we prepare for our 25th annual conference next year, **September 8-12, 2025!** We would like to thank [Reno-Sparks Indian Colony](#) for hosting us in 2025! We

look forward to seeing everyone in Reno September 2025!!! Stay tuned for more details in future newsletters, [as well as our website](#).

NATHPO Community Calendar & Job Board & Grant Opportunities

Stay current on important happenings using our new [Calendar of Events](#), and post your own to share! And let us know if you have a job posting you would like to share and we'll post it on our [Community Job Board](#). AND don't forget to browse our listing of relevant [Grant Opportunities](#).

Thank you for all you do to protect culturally important places that perpetuate Native identity, resilience, and cultural endurance, and to empower Tribal preservation leaders.



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PROTECTING NATIVE PLACES

THPOs: this is your organization! Your participation and support through membership and dues make our work possible. **[JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!](#)** Founded in 1998, the Association is a national non-profit membership organization of Tribal government officials who implement federal and Tribal preservation laws.



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PRESS RELEASE



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NATHPO PRAISES NEW HISTORIC PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

Bills Introduced in Both the House and Senate Would Increase Funding for THPOs and Ensure Stable Funding in Future Years

On Friday, December 20, 2024, Senator Martin Heinrich and Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez of New Mexico introduced the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act. This sweeping legislation, if enacted, would represent an important step towards the federal government fulfilling their Trust responsibilities to ensure Tribal Nations have the financial resources necessary to protect their sacred places and preserve cultural resources.

The Historic Preservation Enhancement Act would permanently require \$300 million each year to be appropriated for the Historic Preservation Fund. Of that \$300 million, at least 20 percent of the funds would be required to be allocated for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs). Moreover, the Senate version of the bill would require the Department of

the Interior to review the allocation funding for annually to ensure that, as more and more Tribal Nations assert their sovereignty and establish THPOs, funding for those THPOs keeps pace. This critical provision would ensure that as more Tribes establish THPOs, the funding for each individual THPO is not diluted.

Read the [full House bill \(H.R. 10553\) here](#) and the [full Senate bill \(S. 5645\) here](#).

“The legislation introduced by Senator Heinrich and Representative Leger Fernandez today would represent a critical step toward the United States Government honoring its Trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations by ensuring they have the adequate means to protect their sacred places and preserve their cultural resources,” said NATHPO Executive Director Valerie J. Grussing. **“Establishing a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer is an act of sovereignty, and the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act would provide critical support as more and more Tribes assert that sovereignty each year. Thanks especially to Senator Heinrich, Representative Leger Fernandez, and all the THPOs from New Mexico and across the country who advocated for this bill. We look forward to working together in hopes of enacting it into law in the new Congress.”**

“It is our duty to preserve our history so that communities can see America’s greatest treasures and hear our saddest stories,” said Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández. **“My parents instilled in me the importance of understanding the pain we have endured and what we can celebrate. I introduced the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act so that we can preserve places of struggle and perseverance across America and celebrate shared historical milestones. This bill funds State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and other organizations dedicated to preserving these stories. Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) are the heart of protecting the heritage and culturally important places of Native American communities. My bill would provide increased resources to THPOs which are currently under-funded despite the millennia of history they must protect.”**

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