

The Steeples Project Grant Program

The Steeples Project is a competitive dollar-for-dollar matching grant program that funds preservation planning, major repairs, and exterior lighting projects and that is open to congregations of all faiths within the city of Boston. Since 1993, HBI has awarded nearly \$1.5 million to 53 religious properties. These grants have leveraged an additional investment of \$13.1 million for a total of over \$14 million spent on preservation and maintenance projects.

The Steeples Project is in no way limited to the preservation of steeples, but instead promotes a holistic, long-term planning approach to building use, maintenance, and preservation. To qualify for a grant, a property must be listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and must be an active house of worship. The congregation must also provide important community services in its building, such as food pantries, citizenship classes, recovery programs, youth music and art programs, and parenting classes.

Grant recipients must demonstrate financial need, but also a willingness and capacity to leverage additional funds to complete their project. In order to stress the importance of good project management, we require recipient congregations to appoint a Local Project Coordinator. We partner with that person and the project team to supervise the execution of the project. In order to maintain the structural integrity and salient historical features of these buildings, all work performed must be completed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The procurement process of professional services must demonstrate that the scope of work is clear, the contractor is qualified, and the price is competitive. In addition to regular site meetings, we require six-month interim and project completion reports. These reports help us manage, assess, and improve the program.

When applying for a Steeples Project grant, congregations must demonstrate that they meet some or all of following requirements: their historic buildings are architecturally significant, and are endangered due to mismanagement, fiscal challenges, or demographic changes; the congregation facilitates the use of their building for human services that improve the quality of life in Boston neighborhoods; and the property is located in a transitional neighborhood.

In addition to the award, grant recipients receive hands-on project management assistance and training. Upon receiving a grant, project management training begins. Through targeted workshops, recipients learn how to develop a project team, hire professional consultants and contractors, involve the congregations and community, and organize a capital campaign.

Technical Assistance Grants: Up to \$10,000



Parish of All Saints, Dorchester
2002 Steeples TA grant recipient

Technical Assistance grants are available to fund a comprehensive building conditions survey, long-term maintenance plans, and the preparation of plans and specifications suitable for bidding. The purpose of these grants is to help property owners effectively position themselves to raise funds and to understand the repair needs of the building. HBI staff will help define the scope of services for each site, assist congregations in the selection of a consultant, and review all documentation produced to ensure the creation of a useful planning document.

Major Repair Grants: Up to \$50,000



Immaculate Conception Church, Boston
2002 Steeples MR grant recipient

Major Repair grants are available to fund maintenance or major repair work planned for the exterior building envelope. In general, preference is given to those buildings with emergency needs, but HBI encourages applications with projects on all levels. Work will be performed under the supervision of a preservation architect, per professional plans and specifications approved by HBI staff.

In order to maintain the structural integrity and salient historical features of these buildings, all work performed must be completed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The procurement process of professional services must demonstrate that the scope of work is clear, the contractor is qualified, and the price is competitive.

Lighting Grants: Up to \$10,000



Albanian Orthodox Cathedral of St. George, South Boston
2004 Steeples LTG grant recipient

Design: Grantee's share: \$1000 paid to HBI.

A professional lighting designer under contract to HBI will present alternative exterior schemes for the building through actual mock-ups at the site. Once the lighting designer, congregation's project team, and HBI staff have decided on the most desirable lighting scheme, the lighting designer will produce a set of specifications suitable for going out to bid for the installation of lighting equipment.

Estimated costs: \$2,000 for professional design services.



1996 Steeples LTG grant recipient
First Church, Roxbury

Installation: Matching grant amount: up to \$9,000.

Once a lighting designer has developed plans and specifications, HBI will supply matching funds for lighting installation. The lighting designer and HBI staff will assist the congregation's project team throughout the bid process, contractor selection, and installation. The final installation will be inspected by the lighting designer to ensure the installation meets the plans and specifications.