



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) works to save the real places that tell the real stories of Texas. THC staff consults with citizens and organizations to preserve Texas' architectural, archeological and cultural landmarks. The agency is recognized nationally for its preservation programs.

## Who We Are

The THC is composed of 17 citizen members appointed by the governor to staggered six-year terms. The agency employs about 200 people who work in various fields, including archeology, architecture, history, economic development, heritage tourism, public administration and urban planning.

The Texas State Legislature established the agency in 1953 as the Texas State Historical Survey Committee with the task to identify important historic sites across the state. The Texas Legislature changed the agency's name to the Texas Historical Commission in 1973. Along with the name change came more protective powers, an expanded leadership role and broader educational responsibilities.

## What We Do

The THC:

- Works with communities and individuals to help identify important historic resources.
- Encourages communities to evaluate their historic resources and develop a plan to preserve them.
- Provides leadership and training to county historical commissions, heritage organizations and museums in Texas' 254 counties.
- Helps protect Texas' diverse architectural heritage, including historic county courthouses.
- Partners with communities to stimulate tourism and economic development.



*The THC headquarters is located in the historic Carrington-Covert House in downtown Austin.*

- Assists Texas cities in the revitalization of their historic downtowns through the Texas Main Street Program.
- Works with communities to create a preservation vision and to plan for the future.
- Administers the state's historical marker program — currently there are more than 12,000 historical markers across the state.
- Consults with citizens and groups to nominate properties as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, State Archeological Landmarks and to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Operates 20 state historic sites including house museums, military forts and archeological sites.
- Works with property owners to save archeological sites on private land.
- Ensures archeological sites are protected as land is developed for highways and other public construction projects.
- Publishes educational materials on a wide range of preservation topics.

## Community Assistance

The THC staff provides assistance to communities and organizations through activities such as regional workshops, individual and group consultations, and promoting *Preserving Our Heritage: A Statewide Plan for Texas*, a “roadmap” for preservation in Texas. THC staff members are divided into regional teams to serve Texans more effectively.

Capitalizing on the increasing popularity of learning vacations and heritage travel, the THC has developed a nationally recognized heritage tourism program. The agency works with local communities, preservation organizations and other state agencies to increase visitorship to heritage attractions and thereby encourage economic development. The Texas Heritage Trails Program creates travel guides, and provides technical, financial and marketing assistance to themed areas across the state.

The Visionaries in Preservation Program empowers communities to shape the future of their historic preservation efforts through visioning and planning, and provides training and assistance tailored to achieve local preservation goals.

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## Grants

### Texas Preservation Trust Fund

This endowment of public and private funds serves as a source of matching grants for architectural and archeological projects. The THC annually accepts applications for the grants program.

### Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

Cities and counties participating in the CLG Program, a local, state and federal partnership, are eligible to receive matching grants for local preservation projects.

### Museum Grants

The THC provides matching grants of up to \$1,000 to local history museums to help conserve collections.

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## Special Projects and Programs

### Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program

In 1999, the Texas Legislature created the program to provide matching grants to assist county courthouse restoration projects throughout the state.

### Texas Heritage Trails Program

The THC’s Texas Heritage Trails Program is a combination of historic preservation and tourism. This economic development initiative encourages communities

to partner to promote Texas’ historic and cultural resources. These successful local preservation efforts, combined with statewide marketing of heritage regions as tourism destinations, increase visitation to cultural and historic sites and bring more dollars to Texas communities, especially rural ones.

### La Salle Archeological Project

The 1996–97 excavation of the Belle, French explorer La Salle’s 300-year-old shipwreck in Matagorda Bay, worldwide interest and media attention. The project continued with the excavation of La Salle’s colony at Fort St. Louis in 1999–2002.

### Red River War Battle Sites Project

This project documents the significant battle sites of the 1874–75 Red River War when the U.S. military removed Native Americans from the Texas Panhandle and Plains regions. The THC initiated the project in 1998 as a collaborative effort with the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum and the National Park Service.

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## How to Reach Us

The THC is located in a cluster of buildings in the Capitol Complex in downtown Austin:

- **THC Headquarters and Marketing Communications Divisions**  
Carrington-Covert House, 1511 Colorado
- **Architecture Division and Archeology Division**  
Elrose Building, 108 W. 16th
- **THC Library and Friends of the THC, Inc.**  
Gethsemane Lutheran Church, southwest corner of 16th & Congress
- **History Programs Division**  
Luther Hall, 105 W. 16th
- **Historic Sites Division**  
Roy Thomas House, 1510 San Antonio
- **Community Heritage Development Division**  
Christianson-Leberman Building, 1304 Colorado



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*real places telling real stories*

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