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Certified Local Government Program

A Certified Local Government (CLG) is a town or city that demonstrated its commitment to saving what is important from the past for future generations through a partnership with the National Park Service and the Alabama Historical Commission.

A town or city becomes a CLG by:

- enacting a special historic preservation ordinance;
- enforcing the ordinance through a local preservation commission;
- Meeting minimum standards for certified local governments as determined by the National Park service and the Alabama Historical Commission.

What are the benefits of becoming a CLG?

Funding: Alabama receives an annual appropriation from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund and is required to give at least 10% of their funding to CLGs as subgrants. These grants can fund a wide variety of projects including: surveys, National Register nominations, rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies, to name a few.

Technical Assistance: As a CLG, communities have direct access to SHPO staff for assistance with their commission, building assessments, surveys and nominations, and general preservation assistance. State staff and NPS offer regular training for CLGs as well, an added benefit of the partnership. Each SHPO has a designated CLG Coordinator.

Sustainability: Historic preservation has proven economic, environmental, and social benefits. Studies show that historic districts maintain higher property values, less population decline, more walkability and greater sense of community. Through a public process, cities can opt to have more local control over development in locally designated historic districts. This is not a requirement of becoming a CLG, but it allows communities to stabilize historic districts and preserve community character. Locally designated historic districts consistently show increased property values and economic investment. These areas also create opportunities for heritage tourism programs.

What are the responsibilities of a CLG?

Local preservation commissions recommend designation of local historic landmarks and districts to city council. They review and approve rehabilitation projects within locally designated districts or on locally designated landmarks through a Certificate of Appropriateness program. They review and make comments on all districts and individual nominations to the National Register of Historic Places in their town. People who serve on local commissions and architectural review boards make a serious time commitment to serve their communities by protecting historic resources. Cities in the CLG program make a commitment to survey and inventory historic properties and determine strategies to protect their special character.

What are the criteria for gaining CLG status?

Only cities and towns with a comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance can adopt a preservation ordinance, one of the cornerstones of the CLG program. The ordinance, surveys and composition of the local commission also have criteria set out by agreement between the city and the AHC.

Where can I get more information? Contact:

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Participating Cities in Alabama: Abbeville, Anniston, Arab, Auburn, Atmore, Bessemer, Birmingham, Blountsville, Centreville, Chickasaw, Decatur, Demopolis, Dothan, Eufaula, Fayette, Fairfield, Foley, Guntersville, Homewood, Huntsville, Magnolia Springs, Mobile, Monroeville, Montevallo, Montgomery, Northport, Opelika, Phenix City, Selma, Sheffield, Sylacauga, Tuscaloosa, Tuscumbia, and Valley