

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM  
**STEPS TO SET UP A LOCAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**STEP ONE**

Adopt a local historic preservation ordinance based on Code of Alabama 11-68-1 to 11-68-15. Model ordinance is available from the Alabama Historical Commission.

**STEP TWO**

Appoint a seven member historic preservation commission with at least three members with formal training in the fields listed in Section 11-68-3(a) in order to qualify for Certified Local Government program.

**STEP THREE**

Local historic preservation commission holds an organizational meeting to learn about their responsibilities, nominate the officers, establish monthly meeting date and develop by-laws. Staff from Alabama Historical Commission is available to assist with this meeting.

**STEP FOUR**

Adopt by-laws, approve officers and establish annual work plan. Work plan should be individual to the community. The town may need to have a historic resource survey conducted, apply for a grant, educate community on benefits of local designation, lobby to save a local landmark, etc. Staff from AHC is available to assist with this meeting.

**STEP FIVE**

The city clerk or other appropriate staff requests review of their local program for compliance with the Certified Local Government requirements. This correspondence should include a copy of the ordinance, name of city staff assigned to work with the commission, and be signed by the mayor. AHC staff will review the local ordinance for compliance with the state enabling legislation. If the ordinance is in compliance, AHC will request resumes from commission members to verify at least three meet the educational requirements of the ordinance. After this approval, a CLG Agreement will be signed by the AHC director and mayor. This agreement will be sent to the National Park Service for final approval.

**STEP SIX**

For communities ready to designate a local district, the preservation ordinance must be followed for this process. It requires the commission survey the district according to AHC standards, justify district boundaries based on architectural and historical merits, and develop local design guidelines to protect significant features of the district. The commission must hold a public hearing and notify all district residents of the hearing. Within 15 days (according to the model ordinance) of the hearing the commission must present proposed district to city council for their approval.

**STEP SEVEN**

On city council's approval, an ordinance establishing the local district is passed. Property owners must have approval from the local historic preservation commission before making any major changes to property in the district. The commission must develop an application form and process. Building permits are not issued until property owner has commission approval (called a Certificate of Appropriateness). City personnel must be educated on their role. Regular maintenance work can be "expedited" by city staff. These expedited work items must be listed and have the commission's approval. Typically, this expedited work includes re-roofing with same material, re-painting similar color, and ordinary maintenance to correct decay, deterioration, or damage that does not involve material change or change in appearance.

Once the city receives CLG designation, grant funds are available to help the commission with development of their program. Applications are generally due in August with funds available for approved projects the following fiscal year.