Freedom's Way National Heritage Area
2027 Legacy Grant Program Guidelines

Freedom's Way National Heritage Association is thrilled to announce a new initiative – the Legacy Grant Program.

This program is intended to provide significant investments in projects that highlight the natural, cultural, and historical heritage of our 45 communities in a permanent manner *(for the purposes of this grant, permanent is defined as 10 or more years).*

The Legacy Grant provides a one-time grant of **$10,000** to help fund the **implementation** of "shovel-ready" permanent monuments, memorials, markers, gravestones, or preservation projects that provide an opportunity to share, commemorate, and preserve those stories, events, people, structures, and landscapes that helped define our area's heritage and sense of place.

Please note: this is not a planning grant to fund architectural or landscape designs or time and services to plan the project.

In fiscal year 2027, Freedom's Way has dedicated $30,000 to provide up to three $10,000 grants. Grants are **reimbursable** and **require a match of at least 1:1**, either through cash expenditures and/or in-kind contributions (more information below). These are competitive grants and all applications will be reviewed by a committee.

Eligibility:

Eligible applicants include:

- non-profit organizations with current 501(c)3 status
- municipalities and state agencies
- public academic institutions

Eligible applicants and projects must:

- have the legal capacity and authority to incur obligations involved under the grant program or identify a fiscal sponsor that does;
- be located within the geographic boundaries of the 45 communities within the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area;
- be matched, at a minimum, one-to-one by **non-federal** sources;
- comply with all applicable federal regulations and guidelines (projects are funded with funds received from the National Park Service);
- agree to acknowledge support of the project from Freedom's Way National Heritage Area in all publicity, on the built item in a visible location, printed collateral, at events, and online;
- submit a final report and related documentation at the conclusion of the project.

The following are not eligible:

- for-profit enterprises, religious organizations, and private individuals;
- organizational operating costs (including staff salaries or consultants functioning as staff) or to fund ongoing, annual programming;
- established/annual/core projects and programs.
- purchase of an interest in real property;
- religious ceremonies or events advancing or inhibiting a particular religious ideology, alcohol, fundraising, advocacy, or travel.

NOTE: All preservation projects *should conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, available at https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm. The grantee is responsible for obtaining any necessary permits, as well as any required letters of "no adverse effect" from their local Historic Commission and/or their state's Historic Preservation Office, as required by the law of their town or state.*

Documenting Matching Funds:

Because the third-party match generated through our Legacy Grant Program is critical to helping us fulfill the matching requirements imposed by the National Park Service, we request that Grantees submit a complete budget reflecting revenue and expenses for the *entire* project with the Final Report. This allows us to demonstrate to NPS the extent to which the Heritage Area is able to leverage the allocated federal funding.

Reach out to us should you have concerns about your ability to secure a 1:1 match.

Match can be in the form of cash funds and/or documented in-kind contributions of labor (staff and volunteers), goods, and services that are reasonable and necessary for project fulfillment.

NOTE: volunteer labor is valued at $42.92 per hour for the purposes of this grant. Based on https://independentsector.org/research/value-of-volunteer-time/.

It is encouraged, but not required, to have matching cash funds in hand, or firmly committed to, at the time of the application.

Matching Funds must:

- be verifiable from your records,
- be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient completion of the project,
- be applied to the project **AFTER** the date the agreement is signed by the grantee.

Matching Funds must not:

- be included as direct contributions from any other federally assisted program,
- be paid by the federal government under another award,
- include annual operating costs of the organization (not including staff time, which can be used as a cash match, as detailed above) or routine repair and facility costs.

Grantees are provided with forms to document matching funds throughout the project upon notification of award.

Timeline:

December 15, 2026 – Freedom's Way 2027 Legacy Grant Program announced.

January 15, 2027 – Online application submission form opens.

March 1, 2027 – Last day to submit applications for consideration in FY2027.

April 1, 2027 – Awards announced and contracts sent to awardees. Awardees can start accruing expenses related to the project AFTER the contract is signed by both parties.

January 15, 2028* – Projects completed

February 15, 2028* – Final Reports Due (funds will be dispersed after the final report is received and approved).

*These are final due dates. If the project is completed earlier, please submit your final report so that funds can be dispersed to you in a timely manner.

Application Process:

Prospective applicants are welcome to contact Freedom's Way to with any questions or concerns about their proposed projects prior to preparing and submitting an application. Please email grants@freedomsway.org to set up a time to talk.

Applications must be submitted online at: https://freedomsway.org/legacy/.

Selection Process & Criteria:

As there are only 3 grants available in Fiscal Year 2027, this is a competitive grant process. A committee will review your grant application and determine which applications to award.

Successful applicants will clearly define how their project meets the following criteria:

- **Connectivity to the Mission & Vision of the National Heritage Area:** Does the project advance the mission of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area, as explained on our website, by highlighting the area's cultural, historical, or landscape heritage?
- **Readiness & Feasibility:** Can the goals and objectives of the project be realized within a reasonable timeframe? Is the applicant ready to proceed and have the ability to complete the project as defined? Please note: this is meant to be an implementation grant for "shovel-ready" or near-"shovel-ready" projects. This is not a planning grant to fund architectural or landscape designs or time and services to plan the project.
- **Visibility & Awareness:** Does the applicant have a plan to ensure public awareness of the project? Will the results of the project be publicly visible and accessible?
- **Permanency:** Is the project designed to last at least 10 years?
- **Collaboration:** Does the program or project involve volunteers and/or other partners to achieve its deliverables and demonstrate community engagement?
- **Clarity:** Are the project's objectives clearly identified?

Grant Terms

Agreement:

Grantees are required to execute an agreement with the Freedom's Way Heritage Association indicating an understanding and acceptance of these guidelines and all applicable federal regulations prior to beginning work on the project.

The Legacy Grant's $10,000 should be spent and matched by January 15, 2028. In some circumstances, it is possible that the entire project will not be completed by this time, especially in the case of preservation or rehabilitation of historic sites. If you believe this will be the case, please reach out to Freedom's Way staff at grants@freedomsway.org to discuss. A single project extension may be requested in extenuating circumstances. Requests must be made in writing and will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Acknowledgement:

Grantees agree to acknowledge support of the project from Freedom's Way National Heritage Area in all publicity, printed collateral, at events, online, and on the marker, monument, signage, building, etc. Freedom's Way logo files are provided to grantees upon notification of award.

An example of proper acknowledgement is Freedom's Way logo or "This monument is made possible in part through a Freedom's Way National Heritage Area Legacy Grant."

Proof of inclusion of either the Freedom's Way logo and/or the above acknowledgment must be submitted to Freedom's Way and approval provided before the final signage is produced. Proof must be included in the final report BEFORE grant funds will be disbursed.

Final Report & Reimbursement:

Grantees are required to submit a final report, as outlined in the guidelines issued to grantees when notified of the award, upon completion of the project as described in the application. **Freedom's Way will issue a single reimbursement check to the grantee upon receipt and approval of the final report and all required documentation.**

For complete details and application materials, visit

https://freedomsway.org/legacy/

Email grants@freedomsway.org
with questions or to schedule a call.

About Freedom's Way:

The Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (Freedom's Way) was designated by Congress and the President on March 30, 2009, to preserve the special historic identity of 45 communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire and to manage, preserve, protect, and interpret their cultural, historic, and natural resources for the educational and inspirational benefit of future generations.

As a partnership endeavor, Freedom's Way serves as facilitator, host, and guide for heritage area-wide presentations, activities, and initiatives that recognize and preserve the unique identity of the region. One of sixty-two National Heritage Areas in the United States, we tell a distinctly American story unique to Freedom's Way and inclusive of the multiple perspectives of those who live and work here.

Communication and collaboration are central to our mission. In 2022, we launched a new brand identity and fully interactive website that serves as an online museum of the Heritage Area. Designed to curate the region, the site includes an accessible and engaging interactive guide, an online archive, and a robust mapping feature. A dedicated mobile app allows users to create custom itineraries and a crowd-sourced community events calendar is integrated within a search function.

To learn more about Freedom's Way, including our programs and story-telling initiatives, visit: http://www.freedomsway.org/