



## **West Texas Regional Office Proposal**

Preservation Texas is requesting a grant to support a *West Texas Regional Office* in El Paso. The office would employ a full time, bilingual *West Texas Program Officer* and a part-time *West Texas Program Associate* who would provide the capacity to deliver a sustained and substantive historic preservation program in West Texas. We are requesting support in the amount of \$100,000 per year over a three-year period for a total grant of \$300,000. This three-year commitment is critically needed to ensure the sustainable development of programs that require time to develop and deliver, while also building private long-term funding support for the Office.

### **West Texas Program Services**

Based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's regional office model, Preservation Texas's West Texas office would meet the critical need for preservation assistance in a part of the state that does not presently have a full-service, professional historic preservation organization. As a statewide organization, Preservation Texas has found that the need for preservation assistance in Texas has outpaced our organizational capacity to deliver technical expertise to the people, organizations, and communities that look to us for professional support and trusted guidance from a single office in Central Texas. Preservation Texas's Board of Directors has recognized that a regional program delivery model will be the most efficient and effective means of providing sustained and meaningful support for preservation efforts at the local level. As a statewide organization, Preservation Texas must accommodate the size and diversity of the state and take advantage of these opportunities to deliver targeted and region-specific educational programming and technical support to our members and stakeholders, including historic property owners, municipal and county historical commissions, nonprofit organizations, universities, advocates, and professionals in the field.

The *West Texas Regional Office* staff will coordinate and deliver Preservation Texas's historic preservation programs and initiatives within a nine-county region west of the Pecos River, developing a strong grassroots network throughout the West Texas region, which includes diverse urban and rural historic places, cultural landscapes, and constituencies, from urban El Paso to rural Fort Davis. These counties are: *Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, and Terrell*, a region with a U.S. census-estimated population in 2021 of 921,000 Texans in an area of 31,478 square miles. For perspective, consider that the West Texas region would be the 39th-largest state in the United States, slightly smaller than Indiana. The need for dedicated program staff is much needed. Naturally, with 94% of the region's population

living in El Paso County, the West Texas Regional Office's day-to-day work will be largely focused on El Paso County and its diverse historic resources.

The West Texas Regional Office's responsibilities will include:

- Serving as the first point of contact for historic preservation inquiries related to the West Texas region
- Organizing and delivering solo and collaborative preservation education workshops, tours, and speaking engagements in West Texas
- Developing and monitoring a conservation easement and covenant program for West Texas
- Responding to Section 106 consultation requests
- Keeping the public and Preservation Texas staff and board informed about regional historic preservation trends, challenges, and opportunities
- Contributing images, ideas, and stories from West Texas for Preservation Texas's statewide social media and publications
- Recruiting and managing regional volunteers and interns in support of regional goals

The West Texas Regional Office will greatly expand the capacity of Preservation Texas to have a positive impact in building a strong grassroots network for historic preservation. The Office will be able to provide on-the-ground assistance across the region. Historic preservation is site-specific, and a regional focus will ensure that Preservation Texas can provide timely in-person assessments, advice, and programming support where and when it is most urgently needed.

### ***Most Endangered Places in West Texas***

Since 2004, Preservation Texas has announced an annual list of between seven and fifteen endangered historic places across Texas. The program has provided a means to raise the visibility of these historic resources and to support local advocates in their efforts to save them. Of the over 150 sites listed, less than 10% have been lost. The West Texas Regional Office will oversee a portfolio of Most Endangered Places sites in the region and develop strategies to provide technical support. In El Paso County, these sites include three Henry Trost-designed buildings in El Paso, the Rio Vista Farm in Socorro, Duranguito and El Segundo Barrio in El Paso, and the site of Hart's Mill/Old Fort Bliss. Historically segregated *Mexican-American Public Schools* is a new thematic listing in 2022 that is of significance to El Paso County and the West Texas region.

### ***Certified Local Governments***

The West Texas Regional Office will encourage communities in the region to become Certified Local Governments. In West Texas, only the cities of El Paso and Socorro are part of this Texas Historical Commission-managed program. If El Paso County were to become a Certified Local

Government, it would qualify for National Park Service-funded grants for historic resource surveys and related preservation activities. Smaller cities such as San Elizario would similarly benefit.

### ***Historic Resources on Public Lands***

Preservation Texas has a demonstrated interest and expertise in the practice of cultural landscape preservation. This is particularly important in addressing the preservation needs related to historic and cultural resources in city, county, state, and federally-owned parks. The West Texas Office will model hands-on volunteer training and education programs focused on supporting preservation needs on public lands. The best model is HistoricCorps, based in Colorado.

### ***West Texas Revolving Fund***

Preservation Texas is developing a statewide *Revolving Fund* to invest in the preservation of historic buildings that can then be sold or leased to replenish the fund so that additional projects can be undertaken. In 2020, we completed a feasibility study with the support of the 1772 Foundation that recommended that a Revolving Fund start small, in a focused and targeted area, with the goal of expanding the program over time. Through *regional nodes*, the Revolving Fund program can build upon networks of professionals, funders, and volunteers in that area to support rehabilitation efforts. A regional node in El Paso County, focused on a specific set of resources in need of investment, such as the Mission Trail historic districts, would be immensely beneficial to the county and region.

### ***Preservation Grants for Historic Rural Adobe Structures***

Preservation Texas will seek \$750,000 in funding from the National Park Service's Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants program that can then be regranted to National Register-listed historic sites in rural communities (population less than 50,000). In El Paso County, historic adobe buildings in Socorro and San Elizario's historic districts would be eligible for this funding. Preservation Texas successfully applied for an identical grant in 2021, focused on Rural African-American Heritage in Northeast Texas. That program will model a West Texas program focused on adobe structures.

### ***Hands-On Adobe Preservation Training***

Building on a range of hands-on training programs that have been offered in recent years in places such as the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, the West Texas Regional Office will organize and deliver hands-on adobe preservation training. This training could be based at the Rio Vista Farm, where adobe preservation projects abound; trained volunteers could also apply their skills at other sites in the area. This will not only improve and beautify the neighborhoods in which these buildings are found, but build a set of practical skills that could develop into small

preservation businesses. Adobe preservation skills could also be supported by and supplied to our regional national parks, including Big Bend and Big Bend Ranch, for example.

### ***West Texas Architectural Guidebook***

The West Texas Regional Office would coordinate the development of a *West Texas Architectural Guidebook*. With a focus on El Paso County, the Guidebook would facilitate heritage tourism by providing detailed information about historic architecture and cultural landscapes in the region. Drawing from recent architectural surveys and inventories, National Register nominations, and other supplementary research, this guidebook will fill an important need for accurate information that embraces both architect-designed and vernacular architectural typologies, and will draw visitors to the City of El Paso out into outlying areas of the county, and deeper into the West Texas region. Similarly, visitors to the Marfa/Alpine/Big Bend will be able to discover the wealth of architectural resources in El Paso County.

### ***The Trost Society***

Preservation Texas will be incorporating the programs of The Trost Society into the West Texas Regional Office. The Trost Society recently voted to dissolve, and Preservation Texas stands ready to continue and expand the former group's mission. The West Texas Program Office staff will work with students and volunteers to organize and deliver ongoing tours and programs related to the architecture of Henry C. Trost and his contemporaries. This includes the maintenance of a detailed website and the re-publication of the Henry C. Trost book by Lloyd and June Engelbrecht (1981). Re-publication of the book will be tied to a symposium on the architecture of Henry C. Trost and his time, and the West Texas office will manage a *Trost Fellowship* internship program in support of further Trost documentation and scholarship.

### ***El Paso County Mission Trail***

The West Texas office will advocate for and support efforts to document the historic architecture and cultural landscapes of the Mission Trail. This will include efforts to elevate current National Register listings to National Historic Landmarks and build toward the potential nomination of the Mission Trail as a bi-national UNESCO World Heritage site in conjunction with the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. Other programs outlined above will further support the goals of the *El Paso County Mission Train Comprehensive Master Plan*, specifically in the areas of protecting and enhancing historic assets and agricultural landscapes and promoting heritage tourism. The development of Certified Local Government programs, a regional architectural guidebook, hands-on adobe preservation training, and grants for historic adobe buildings in Socorro and San Elizario will directly address these objectives.



**WEST TEXAS REGIONAL OFFICE  
Proposed Annual Operating Budget**

<b>Income</b>	El Paso County Grant	\$100,000
	Private Matching Grant	\$ 50,000
	West Texas Memberships	\$ 15,000
	Program Event Revenue	\$ 15,000
	Total	\$180,000

<b>Expense</b>	Program Staff (1.5 FTE)	\$110,000
	Office Space/Supplies	\$ 24,000
	Admin/Overhead	\$ 18,000
	Regional Travel/Conferences	\$ 15,000
	Program Events	\$ 7,000
	Trost Fellowships (2)	\$ 6,000
	Total	\$180,000