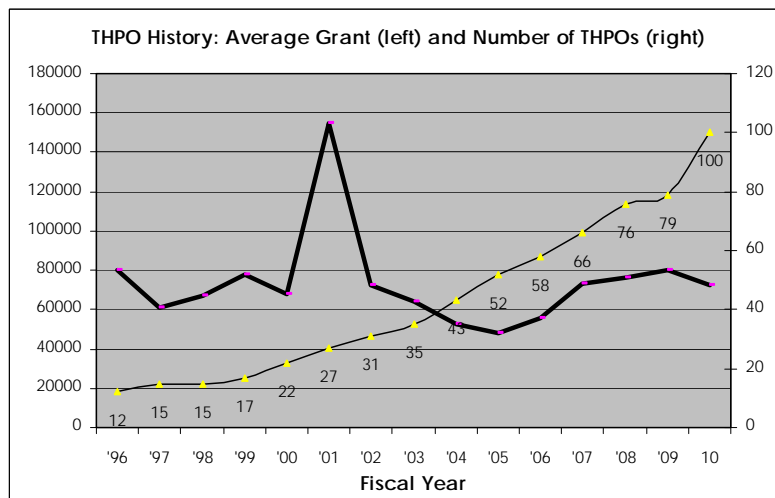


Funding for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers: Respect for America's Traditional Cultures

THPO History: Average Grant (left) and Number of THPOs (right)



Our Request:

\$20 million for the Tribal Line that supports both the THPOs and a tribal competitive grant program of important national needs in Indian country.

As of February 15, 2010, there are 96 NPS-recognized THPOs in the lower 48 states (100 THPOs expected in FY2010 as indicated by the National Park Service). These Indian tribes have assumed the responsibilities of the SHPOs for their tribal lands and have a land base exceeding 34 million acres spanning 28 states.

What are Tribal Historic Preservation Officers? Technically speaking, they are federally recognized tribal governments that have entered into an agreement with the Department of the Interior to assume the federal compliance role of the SHPO on their respective Tribal lands, as codified in 36 CFR Part 800. Thus, THPOs are actively involved with projects to improve Indian schools, roads, health clinics and housing. What are THPOs in a general sense? THPOs are the first responders when a sacred site is threatened, when an ancestral home is uncovered, and when Native ancestors are disturbed by development. They are also responsible for creating their tribe's oral history programs and operating tribal museums and cultural centers. They perform many functions and responsibilities in Indian country and they are an active expression and exercise of tribal sovereignty. For the past 10 years, these programs have become very popular and successful with tribal governments. For the first time, they are recognized as the authentic representatives of cultures and societies that have been in existence for countless generations.

Historic Preservation Fund: As the number of Indian tribes operating THPO programs increases, the amount of HPF funds appropriated to the THPOs is not keeping pace. In FY1996, there were 12 tribes that received an average of \$80,000. In 2010, the number of THPOs will have grown to 100 and received an average amount of \$72,500 – about \$7,500 less than when the program was first supported. If you factor in inflation, the amount has actually decreased more than that figure represents. The highest amount of federal support that the THPOs have received was in FY2001 and they received an average of \$154,000. In addition to THPO funding, a portion of the Tribal line item in HPF goes to competitive tribal heritage grants.

What is at Stake:

- **Without an increase in FY2011, each THPO program will be asked to perform important federal compliance work with fewer funds.** To continue this cultural preservation in Indian country, it is essential that THPO programs be provided with adequate funding to meet the increasing need. This means that the funding for THPO programs overall cannot remain static or decrease while the number of THPOs participating in the program continues to increase.