



# Capital Development Committee

## Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

### FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION REQUEST

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**History Colorado  
Collections Care Facility**

**2024-028**

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#### Project Status

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History Colorado first requested funding for the project for FY 2023-24. At the time, the project contemplated using a combination of state and cash funds to purchase or build a warehouse. In the 2024 legislative session, [Senate Bill 24-222](#) provided funding for the first phase of a new project scope to explore use of the state-owned facility at 1881 Pierce Street, Lakewood, recently vacated by the Department of Revenue. The project received a cash-funded appropriation for FY 2025-26 to continue this scope.

Upon investigation by a third-party architecture firm specializing in museum collections, the department has determined that the Pierce Street facility is not suitable as a historical collection repository, and costs to retrofit the facility for this purpose would be prohibitive. As of November 2025, the department plans to pool appropriated funds with the FY 2026-27 request moneys to consider previously explored options, including upgrading the North Storage Facility, where the collection is currently located, to meet programming needs.

**Table 1  
Prioritization**

<b>Prioritized By</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Notes</b>
History Colorado	1 of 2	
Office of State Planning and Budgeting	NP	Recommended for funding from cash sources.

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**Table 2**  
**Prior Appropriation and Request Information**

<b>Fund Source</b>	<b>Prior Appropriation</b>	<b>Budget Year FY 2026-27</b>	<b>Out Year FY 2027-28</b>	<b>Future Requests</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
CCF	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	40
CF	\$7,799,761	\$8,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$15,799,761
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,799,761</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$15,799,761</b>

**Table 3**  
**Itemized Cost Information**

<b>Fund Source</b>	<b>Prior Appropriation</b>	<b>Budget Year FY 2026-27</b>	<b>Out Year FY 2027-28</b>	<b>Future Requests</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
Land Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$795,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$795,600
Construction	\$3,302,320	\$7,103,000	\$0	\$0	\$10,405,320
Equipment	\$1,571,841	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,571,841
Miscellaneous	\$1,810,000	\$47,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,857,000
Contingency	\$320,000	\$850,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,170,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,799,761</b>	<b>\$8,000,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$15,799,761</b>

## Program Plan Status

Approved Program Plan: Yes

FCI: N/A

## Project Description/Scope of Work

History Colorado is requesting cash funds spending authority for the final phase of a three-phase project to house its greater collection of historic artifacts, currently located at the North Storage Facility in North Denver. The project will enable History Colorado to accommodate storage needs in a safer, more sustainable, and efficient manner, thus preserving artifacts and archives meaningful to the state's history for future generations.

The North Storage Facility in its current condition is unable to house the collection not only based on volume, but also based on failing to properly preserve a vital artifact collection due to physical condition. Until recently, the department had planned to move the collection to a state-owned property vacated by the Department of Revenue. During project design, the property was deemed unsuitable for housing the collection. History Colorado is now weighing previously considered options for the collection, including improving and augmenting the North

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Storage Warehouse, leasing space, and renovating the History Colorado Center at 1200 Broadway, Denver, to provide additional storage. Attachment A, a brief published by History Colorado, provides additional information on the project and its status.

Phase 1 of the project, which was funded by legislation during the 2024 legislative session, initiated design work for the project. The Phase 2 and 3 appropriations will be used to continue project design and complete the project.

**Cost assumption.** History Colorado estimated costs based on projected cash funds availability from the sale of other properties. With the possibility of the department continuing to use the North Storage Facility instead of selling it, these figures may change. The project accounts for inflation at 4.0 percent per year. The project complies with Art in Public Places and High Performance Certification Program requirements.

**Table 4**  
**Project Schedule: Phase 3**

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Design	June 2026	December 2026
Construction	January 2027	August 2027
Equipment	August 2027	October 2027
Occupancy	October 2027	December 2027

\*Overall project completion: December 2027

## Project Justification

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History Colorado says the North Storage Facility in its current state does not meet standards for preserving and conserving collections, and the department thus risks losing its accreditation with the American Association of Museums. Accreditation makes History Colorado eligible for traveling exhibits and national museum partnerships, which drive programming and revenue. Factors negatively impacting accreditation status include HVAC and air-handling systems that do not properly set temperature, humidity, and air quality, nor do they adjust to Colorado's swift changes in temperatures. This leaves the department's collections vulnerable to corrosion, expansion, mold, cracking, and hazardous particulates such as dust, fibers, and soot. These factors can damage irreplaceable historic artifacts beyond repair, or drive restoration costs. Other issues include roof leaks that damage artifacts and conditions that affect the efficiency and safety of operations, space utilization, public perception, and staff retention. The North Storage Facility is also over capacity, storing about 85,000 square feet of artifacts in a 50,000-square-foot warehouse.

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Failure to fund the project will continue to endanger the collections, and History Colorado will not be able to preserve them as required by statute. Further, History Colorado will no longer be able to expand its collections, which grow daily.

## Program Information

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History Colorado was established in 1879 as the State Historical Society of Colorado, and operates under the Department of Higher Education. The agency operates seven museums and four historic sites throughout the state, including the History Colorado Center. Colorado's historic collection contains over 15 million artifacts, photographs, and archival materials spanning 13,000 years of history. History Colorado leased the North Storage Facility starting in 2010 for collections storage while the History Colorado Center was being constructed, and purchased the warehouse in 2015. History Colorado is responsible for the collection and preservation of items of historical significance and has the following statutory charges:

- under Section 24-80-202, C.R.S., "...the Society shall be the trustee of the state... and shall hold its present and future collections and property for the state..."; and
- under Section 24-80-210, C.R.S., "Collections of a scientific or historical nature shall be properly classed and cataloged and shall be at all reasonable hours open for public inspection and examination...".

## Source of Cash Funds

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The source of cash funds for this project is proceeds from the sale of the Lowry Storage Warehouse, Pueblo Storage Facility, the Pierce McAllister Cottage, and the McFarlane House. Further Phase III funding was to come from proceeds of the sale of the North Storage Facility, pending legislative approval.

## Operating Budget

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History Colorado initially projected an increase in operating costs for an inter-agency lease with the Department of Personnel and Administration based upon occupying the 1881 Pierce Street Facility.

## Staff Questions and Issues

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## Stewards of the State's Collection

Colorado's historic collection of 15 million artifacts, photographs, and archival materials spanning 13,000 years of history belongs to the people of Colorado. History Colorado is the statutory steward of this robust collection, which enables access to the rich history of Colorado in ways that ignite the imagination, stimulate curiosity, and help us to understand what it means to be a Coloradan.

## Space Needs Analysis

History Colorado owns a 50,000-square-foot storage facility in Denver, purchased in 2011 to house the collection during construction of the History Colorado Center. Known as North Storage, the facility is now significantly over capacity, holding approximately 85,000 square feet of artifacts. It was never intended to serve as a long-term solution.

The North Storage building also suffers from several key deficiencies, including poor lighting, outdated and non-functioning technology, compromised security, roof leaks, and lack of proper environmental controls. These conditions jeopardize both the safety of staff and the preservation of the State collection. The conditions also put History Colorado's accreditation as a museum at risk, as proper protective and environmental controls are a core standard.

Planning to address the space and condition challenges began in 2022 with a master planning process, including a space needs analysis. This analysis revealed that a right-sized facility would require at least 65,000 square feet of efficient compact storage or 90,000 of storage in the current style, while a long-term solution would require closer to 100,000 square feet of efficient, compact storage and over 160,000 using current storage solutions. Efforts began to evaluate alternative locations as a preferred solution that could address both space and condition needs.



## 1881 Pierce St.

History Colorado evaluated lease, build, and buy options for long-term collections storage. Through this process, access to the State-owned building at 1881 Pierce Street in Lakewood was secured. This location was previously occupied by the Department of Revenue, including the DMV and Colorado Lottery. History Colorado engaged Iron Horse Architects and Schwartz Silver, a nationally recognized museum collections architecture firm, to fully assess the facility, prepare design plans for conversion to storage, and to prepare construction cost estimates.

This review found the building to be structurally sound and well maintained for its age and office use, but also revealed significant challenges related to a change in use that would meet museum accreditation standards, including:

- The existing window system requires replacement
- Exterior areas immediately adjacent to the building allow rodents or pests to enter the building
- The loading dock needs repair
- There is no freight elevator for moving large objects
- Lighting needs to be brought to code if a renovation occurs
- Railings at exterior stairs and accessible ramps need to be replaced
- Floor to ceiling heights are not sufficient and would require modification

## Design Outcome & Next Steps

The estimated cost of demolition, construction, and moving the collection to 1881 Pierce from North Storage is \$30 million, more than double the \$11 to \$15 million planned for this project (includes proceeds from the future sale of North Storage- \$4M to \$8M). These cost estimates have been reviewed with DPA and OSA, with an eye for all possible cost-reducing measures. The challenge is not a single major expense, but the cumulative costs of modifications—particularly raising the ceiling height and lowering the floor to achieve proper clearance.

The high cost has led History Colorado to revisit earlier discussions during the master planning phase, including continued use and expansion of North Storage, leasing storage space from other state agencies, leasing a storage facility on the private market, or renovating the History Colorado Center to increase storage capacity.

Additionally, in 2024 History Colorado was able to access resources and support for facilities upgrades through an Energy Performance Contract. Through this contract, North Storage repairs including lighting, roof replacement, and HVAC could be funded. This would resolve the most pressing North Storage issues and would allow for cash funds authorized for storage improvements to be used to improve and expand North. Cost estimates for this possible solution are still under development, along with explorations of expansion on the site.



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#### History Colorado Regional Property Preservation Projects

2002-180

#### Project Status

This is an ongoing request. Cash funds spending authority has been granted on behalf of the project each year for the last 25 years except for FY 2022-23. In FY 2022-23, State Historical Fund cash funds were entirely devoted to Georgetown Loop Railroad improvements.

**Table 1  
Prioritization**

Prioritized By	Priority	Notes
History Colorado	2 of 2	
Office of State Planning and Budgeting	NP	Recommended for funding from cash sources.

**Table 2  
Prior Appropriation and Request Information**

Fund Source	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Future Requests	Total Costs
CCF	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FF	\$1,145,878	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,145,878
CF	\$17,953,802	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$20,053,802
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,099,680</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$21,199,680</b>

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**Table 3**  
**Itemized Cost Information**

<b>Fund Source</b>	<b>Prior Appropriation</b>	<b>Budget Year FY 2026-27</b>	<b>Out Year FY 2027-28</b>	<b>Future Requests</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
Land Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$1,859,744	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$2,159,744
Construction	\$10,915,018	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$12,715,018
Equipment	\$5,391,101	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,391,101
Miscellaneous	\$155,144	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$155,144
Contingency	\$778,673	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$778,673
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,099,680</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$21,199,680</b>

## Program Plan Status

Approved Program Plan: N/A

FCI: N/A

## Project Description/Scope of Work

History Colorado is requesting cash funds spending authority to address a number of historical preservation projects at regional properties. History Colorado says that it has statutory responsibility to reconstruct, restore, repair, install, and furnish state monuments to the extent funds are available. For FY 2026-27, funds will be used for the following:

- grading and installing a ramp for ADA accessibility at the Ute Indian Museum Dominguez Escalante Monument and Ethnobotany Garden (\$90,000);
- landscape maintenance, including upgrading irrigation systems, site drainage, and ADA accessibility, at the Trinidad History Museum (\$50,000). A landscape master plan was completed for the project in 2024;
- the fifth phase of the ongoing window restoration at the Center for Colorado Women’s History in Denver (\$50,000);
- replacing obsolete exterior lighting at the Grant-Humphreys Mansion in Denver (\$75,000);
- landscape maintenance at the El Pueblo History Museum in Pueblo, including improving irrigation systems, tree removal, repairing decorative water features, improving site drainage, and upgrading ADA accessibility (\$200,000); and
- other projects as necessary.

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**Cost assumption.** The cost assumption is based on History Colorado staff estimates, bids from local contractors, and previous maintenance project costs. With a flat internal budget, the department says inflation assumptions are considered each year based on the breadth and scope of individual projects. The project is exempt from Art in Public Places and High Performance Certification Program requirements.

**Table 4**  
**Project Schedule**

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Design	July 2026	August 2027
Construction	August 2027	March 2029

## Project Justification

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The projects identified for FY 2026-27 address various issues, including ADA compliance, building security, and deteriorated infrastructure. History Colorado says it is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and upkeep of over 50 contemporary and historic buildings. The department says failure to fund the projects will begin a cycle of deferred maintenance, reducing structural integrity and public accessibility, and increasing repair costs in the long term. Further, revenue opportunities could be impacted by failure to fund the projects, which could in turn impact local communities, tourism initiatives, and economies statewide.

## Program Information

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All historic properties held by History Colorado are state monuments, as set forth in the State Monuments Act. This year's request impacts the following properties:

- The Grant-Humphreys Mansion is located in Denver and was built in 1902. The mansion is primarily used as a rental property for weddings, receptions, holiday parties, and other special events.
- The Trinidad History Museum occupies a city block in Trinidad's historic district and includes the Bloom Mansion, the Baca House, the Santa Fe Trail Museum, the Barglow Building, and a workshop.
- The Center for Colorado Women's History in Denver located in the historic Byers-Evans House focuses on scholarship, research, lectures, tours, and exhibits that expand the understanding of the collective memory of the history of women in Colorado.

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- El Pueblo History Museum is located in Pueblo and contains exhibits showcasing the region's many cultural and ethnic groups. It also includes a re-creation of an 1840s adobe trading post and plaza, and the archaeological excavation site of the original trading post. The museum hosts a farmers market in the summer and programming for students during the school year.
- The Ute Indian Museum in Montrose presents the history of the Ute tribe.

## Source of Cash Funds

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The source of cash funds for the project is revenue from the Museum and Preservation Operations Account of the State Historical Fund, which accrues revenue from limited stakes gaming. The fund is administered pursuant to Section 44-30-1201, C.R.S.

## Operating Budget

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The department does not anticipate any operating impact from this request.

## Staff Questions and Issues

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None.