

# PROJECT BRIEF



Project Name: Constitution Hall-Topeka Restoration and Entry Center

Grant Program: BASE

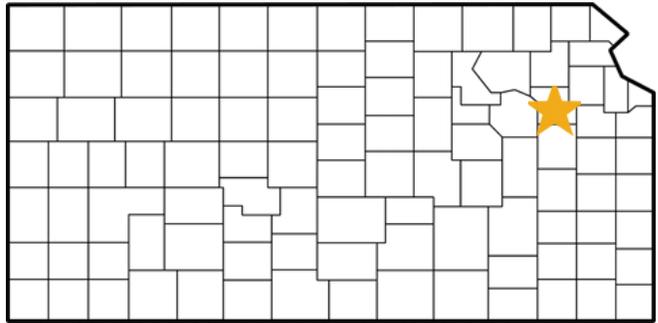
Project Date: Jun 2022 - Jun 2025

## Project Summary

BASE funds supported an accessible entry center and restoration of one of Kansas's most important historic landmarks. Constitution Hall-Topeka in 1855 was the birthplace of the Topeka Constitution. This pivotal anti-slavery charter led to establishment of Kansas as a new Free State under the present Wyandotte Constitution in 1861. The building became a headquarters for the frontier's Underground Railroad and later, temporarily the first Kansas Capitol. The building had suffered significant deterioration, threatening a loss of this cornerstone of Kansas and national history. Restoration is transforming the landmark as a tourism destination, while contributing to Topeka's downtown revitalization and the state's long-term economic development vitality.

## Location

Topeka, Kansas



## Budget Overview

- Award amount: \$3,750,000
- Match amount: \$1,250,000
- Total: \$5,000,000.00

### Budget Categories:

- Construction: \$4,297,000.00
- Non-Construction: \$661,000.00
- Administrative: \$42,000.00

## Goals and Objectives

- **Goal:** Restore and make accessible Constitution Hall-Topeka, the historic Free State Capitol
- **Goal 2:** Help stimulate local and state economic growth with an important site for heritage tourism in downtown Topeka and Kansas.
- **Objective:** Complete the final phase of a nearly 30-year preservation and restoration project.

## Activities and Timeline

- Q3 2023: Architectural and engineering design approved by the City of Topeka and the Kansas Historic Preservation Office
- 2023: Construction commenced
- Q3 2025: Construction completed

## Target Population

The project serves the public through education, tourism, and community involvement. The restored Constitution Hall - Topeka welcomes visitors interested in Kansas's Free State history, provides an educational resource for students and educators, and engages local, regional, and state residents through programs and events that connect with Kansas history.

## Outcomes

Constitution Hall serves as a regional heritage attraction and educational center. The project creates opportunities for cultural tourism, generates local economic benefits, and strengthens community identity. Long-term, it will ensure public access to one of Kansas's most important historic sites and promote civic engagement around themes of freedom, equality, and state history.

## Sustainability

Friends of the Free State Capitol will maintain the property through a combination of private fundraising, grant opportunities, and revenue from educational tours and events. Partnerships with historical, civic, and tourism organizations will provide ongoing program support. Volunteer engagement and community partnerships will ensure long-term stewardship, keeping the building accessible and relevant to future generations.

## Grantee Information

Friends of the Free State Capitol, a nonprofit organization based in Topeka, is dedicated to preserving and interpreting Constitution Hall—the birthplace of Kansas's free state heritage. Since saving the building from demolition in 1998, the organization has led extensive stabilization and restoration efforts. Its mission is to protect this historic site and share its enduring story of freedom, civic courage, and community.

## Contact Information

For any queries or additional information, please contact

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