



October 7, 2019

# American Battlefield Protection Program

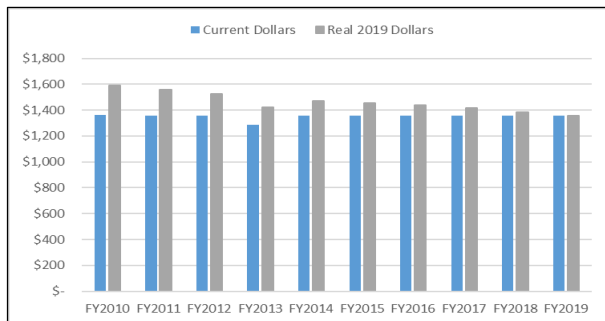
The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) promotes the preservation of significant sites where historic battles were fought on American soil. Initiated by the Secretary of the Interior in 1991, the program was officially authorized by Congress in 1996 in the American Battlefield Protection Act (P.L. 104-333; 54 U.S.C. §§308101-308103). The ABPP is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and comprises two distinct competitive grant programs: the Battlefield Planning Grant Program and the Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program.

## ABPP Planning Grant Program

Under the Battlefield Planning Grant Program, NPS awards grants to groups, institutions, organizations, governments (local, state, and tribal), and federal entities sponsoring preservation projects at historic battlefields. The program supports projects that include site identification and documentation, planning and consensus building, and educational programs, among others. Any battlefield or associated site on American soil is eligible for funding under this grant program. Planning grants are not awarded for land acquisition or capital improvements. Applicants for the Battlefield Planning grants are encouraged but not required to provide matching funds or in-kind services for these projects.

**Figure 1. Appropriations for ABPP Planning Grant Program: FY2010-FY2019**

(\$ in thousands)



**Sources:** CRS, with data from annual NPS Budget Justifications for FY2012-FY2020. Figures were taken from the volume published two years following the fiscal year in question (e.g., for FY2015, figures are from FY2017 document). FY2019 figures reflect enacted totals.

**Notes:** Totals reflect appropriations for both grant-making purposes and grant administration. Reported totals differ from the appropriated totals, as obligations may carry over from year to year. Current dollars have been converted to real 2019 dollars using the GDP (Chained) Price Index column in Table 10.1 from the Office of Management and Budget, Historical Tables, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/historical-tables/>.

## Authorization and Funding History

NPS first awarded Battlefield Planning grants for preservation projects at historic battlefields in 1992 under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. In 1996, Congress authorized the program under the American Battlefield Protection Act. At that time, Congress authorized to be appropriated \$3 million annually for a duration of 10 years. Congress permanently authorized discretionary appropriations at \$3 million annually for the program in 2009 (P.L. 111-11).

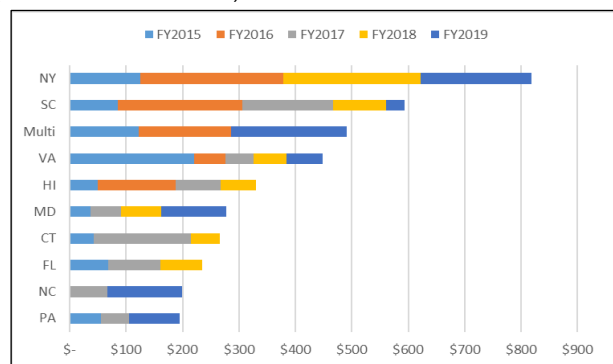
Battlefield Planning grants are funded as part of NPS appropriations within the agency’s National Recreation and Preservation (NR&P) account. Appropriations for the program are split between two subaccounts within the NR&P account: direct grant-making funds are provided under the “Cultural Programs” activity, and grant administration funding is provided under a separate “Grants Administration” activity. Typically, Congress has not funded the program at the full authorized level. Actual appropriations for the program have remained unchanged at just under \$1.4 million annually since FY2015 (**Figure 1**).

## Recent Grant-Making Trends

According to NPS, the program has helped to protect and enhance battlefields through 620 projects in 42 states and territories. Individual project funding historically has ranged from \$5,000 to more than \$100,000. From FY2015 to FY2019, total annual grant funding averaged roughly \$1.16 million. New York received the largest amount of program funding during this period, at just over \$800,000 for 15 projects, followed by South Carolina and Virginia. See **Figure 2** for an overview of the 10 states that received the largest amount of funding from FY2015 to FY2019.

**Figure 2. FY2015-FY2019 Planning Grants: Ten Most-Awarded States**

(current \$ in thousands)



**Source:** NPS, “Battlefield Planning Grants,” at <http://www.nps.gov/subjects/battlefields/battlefield-planning-grants.htm>.

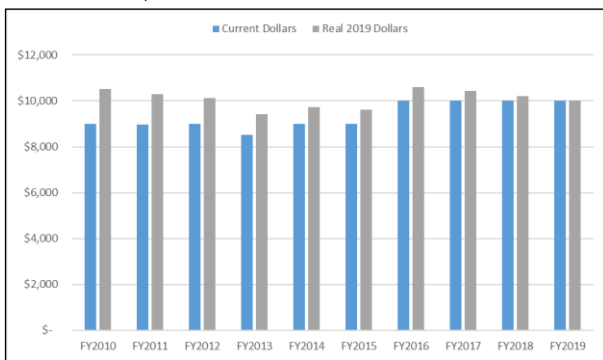
**Notes:** Multi = Grants awarded for projects that cross multiple states. This includes \$340,840 in grants awarded to Maryland-based organizations the American Battlefield Trust and the Civil War Trust and a \$150,659 grant awarded to Temple University in Pennsylvania.

### ABPP Land Acquisition Grant Program

Under the ABPP Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program, grants are awarded to state and local governments seeking fee simple acquisition of eligible battlefield land or the acquisition of permanent, protective interests (easements) in battlefield land. Eligible sites for Battlefield Acquisition grants are limited to Revolutionary War, War of 1812, or Civil War battlefield lands. Previously, eligible battlefields were limited to Civil War battlefields listed in the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission’s (CWSAC) 1993 *Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields*. In 2014, P.L. 113-291 amended the statute to include Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefields (specifically, those listed in the 2007 *The Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Historic Preservation Study*). Grants awarded through this program require at least a 50% nonfederal cost share (54 U.S.C. §308103d).

**Figure 3. Appropriations for ABPP Land Acquisition Grant Program: FY2010-FY2019**

(\$ in thousands)



**Sources:** CRS, with data from annual NPS Budget Justifications for FY2000-FY2020. Figures were taken from the volume published two years following the fiscal year in question (e.g., for FY2015, figures are from FY2017 document). FY2019 figures reflect enacted totals.

**Notes:** Reported totals differ from the appropriated totals, as obligations may carry over from year to year. Current dollars have been converted to real 2019 dollars (see note in **Figure 1**).

### Authorization and Funding History

Funding for the Land Acquisition Grant Program comes from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF; 54 U.S.C. §§200301 et seq.). Appropriations from the fund are provided to NPS in its Land Acquisition and State Assistance account, under the “Federal Land Acquisition” activity (although the grants are not for federal acquisition but for state and local acquisition). Congress first appropriated funding for this program in 1998 as part of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (P.L. 105-277, §131). In 2002, Congress authorized appropriations for the program (P.L. 107-359), providing up to \$10 million for each of FY2004 through FY2008. Appropriations have been reauthorized multiple times, most recently in 2014 (P.L. 113-235 and P.L. 113-291). The program currently has authorized appropriations through FY2021. Total authorized

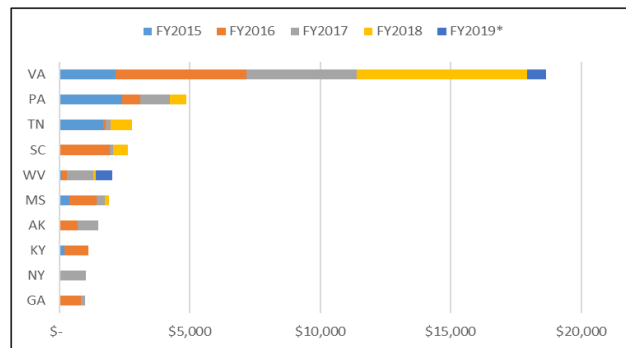
appropriations have remained unchanged at \$10 million since FY2004. Congress provided funding at the full authorized level from FY2016 to FY2019 (**Figure 3**) but at less than that amount between FY2010 and FY2015.

### Recent Grant-Making Trends

Since FY2015, ABPP has awarded competitive grants to 15 different states (**Figure 4**). The state that received the most grant funding between FY2015 and FY2019 was Virginia, which has received over \$18 million in grant funding since FY2015. This is nearly four times the total funding awarded to the second-most-awarded state, Pennsylvania, which has received just under \$5 million in ABPP Land Acquisition funding during this time period.

**Figure 4. Ten Most-Awarded States: FY2015-FY2019**

(current \$ in thousands)



**Sources:** FY2015-FY2017 totals are from NPS, “Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants,” at [nps.gov/abpp/grants/CWBLAGgrants.htm](https://nps.gov/abpp/grants/CWBLAGgrants.htm), accessed on September 16, 2019. FY2018 and FY2019 totals were provided to CRS by NPS.

**Notes:** \*FY2019 figures reflect totals to date. Total obligations for FY2019 have not been reported for the fiscal year for all states.

### Issues for Congress

Certain issues related to the ABPP, including the authorization and level of appropriations, have been of ongoing interest to Congress. In 2013, NPS recommended that Congress increase the authorization level of appropriations for the Land Acquisition program to \$20 million annually, up from \$10 million. This was in response to the addition of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefields as eligible sites to the program. Congress has not adjusted the funding authorization level to date, with some lawmakers citing deficit concerns for not increasing authorized appropriations in line with the 2013 recommendations (*Congressional Record*, vol. 159, no. 46 (2013), p. H1844). In the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Preserving America’s Battlefields Act (S. 225 and H.R. 307) proposes to reauthorize the Land Acquisition program through FY2028 and to increase the annual appropriations authorization to \$20 million. This figure includes up to \$2 million per year for educational and interpretive upgrades at sites. Because funding for the program has been derived from the LWCF, some lawmakers have linked their support for program extensions to support for permanent reauthorization of the LWCF (*Congressional Record*, vol. 164, no. 194 (2018), p. H9776).

**Mark K. DeSantis**, Analyst in Natural Resources Policy

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