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SEATTLE, WA 98104
4CULTURE.ORG

Landmarks Capital

Sample Application

Applicant

InterIm Community Development Association (dba InterIm CDA)

Discipline

Preservation of Historic Place/Artifact

Project Title

Republic Hotel Preservation

Application Description

Critical Repairs needed prior to rehabilitating the historic Republic Hotel into 36 units of affordable housing for seniors and other vulnerable community members.

Project Description

The Republic Hotel is a four-story unreinforced masonry building built in the 1920s in Seattle's Chinatown-International District. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the building was constructed by a Chinese family association to house members immigrating to Seattle. Over the decades it provided affordable housing to low-income community members including many seniors. The offices of the family association were on the second floor, which later served as a nightclub after ownership changed hands. A decade ago the property was purchased by the current owner, RAC Investment, and the interior was gutted in preparation for a planned renovation which never occurred. In 2024, InterIm CDA executed an agreement to purchase the building and rehabilitate it as affordable housing. InterIm was unable to secure full funding for the project in 2024, but was encouraged by the City, County and State funding agencies to reapply for funding for the full renovation of the property in 2025. However, in the meantime, plans have moved ahead for Housing Diversity Corporation to redevelop the adjacent property at 701 S. Jackson Street into an eight story, zero lot line building scheduled to break ground in October 2025. Since that project will be constructed within inches of the north wall of the Republic Hotel, repairs to the north wall of the Republic must be done this year to enable the Republic Hotel to be preserved and rehabilitated.

Specifically, the north wall must be tuckpointed to maintain the integrity of the building envelope. This work would be impossible without access to the north wall. The cost of tuckpointing is \$110,861

of which we are requesting \$100,000 from 4Culture. This small investment is an essential and time critical step that will allow the full rehabilitation of the building in 2027.

InterIm will rehabilitate the Republic Hotel into 36 units of permanently affordable housing, restoring both its structural integrity and historic character. The project will follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and will prioritize the repair and preservation of key historic features, including the brick façade, storefront elements, and existing window profiles. The original SRO layout will be reconfigured into modern, family-friendly apartments, including studios, one-, two- and three-bedrooms units, serving households earning up to 50% of the Area Median Income. The rear of the first and mezzanine floors will be converted to residential units, while maintaining active, publicly accessible street-facing retail. A portion of a second-floor light well will be enclosed for added space, and a modest penthouse, set back from the street, will be added to increase the housing count without compromising the historic streetscape. The project will utilize Historic Tax credit funding, as well as State, City, and County loans, Low Income Housing Tax credits and tax-exempt bonds.

Once restored, the Republic Hotel will once again serve the community, this time as safe, dignified, and affordable housing in a neighborhood facing significant pressures of displacement and gentrification.

Project Impact

Forty of the International District's original historic hotels have been lost to demolition, and only 26 remain, including the Republic Hotel. It is arguable that the Republic Hotel is most at risk, having been vacant for over 10 years and subject to squatters, vandalism and fires. Rehabilitating the Republic Hotel will provide deep public benefit by transforming a deteriorated historic landmark into a vital community asset. The project advances long-term preservation, brings new life to a blighted property, and supports vulnerable populations in a high-risk neighborhood facing intense development pressures.

Located in a highly visible corridor of the Chinatown-International District, the restored building will reinforce the neighborhood's architectural and cultural identity. The project will stabilize the structure, ensure seismic safety, and integrate ADA improvements to enhance overall accessibility. These upgrades contribute to the long-term sustainability of the landmark.

The building will provide 36 housing units, all affordable at 30% or 50% of AMI, for at least 50 years. Public-facing elements will also support cultural engagement. InterIm CDA plans to include interpretive signage and historical displays in common areas to tell the story of the Republic Hotel and its role in housing low-income and immigrant residents throughout the 20th century. This approach encourages residents and visitors alike to connect with the building's legacy and understand its broader place in Seattle's history.

The building's ground-floor retail restored and preserved as part of the rehabilitation will maintain an active street presence, encouraging pedestrian engagement and neighborhood safety. In addition, residents will have access to InterIm's culturally competent services, including youth programs,

employment navigation, and wellness offerings, further integrating the building into the civic and social life of the community.

Most importantly, the project will provide urgently needed affordable housing in a historic building, ensuring that future generations can live, work, and build community in the Chinatown-International District without being priced out or displaced.

Advancing Equity

The Republic Hotel, a landmark in King County's history, holds significant importance in preserving the stories of underrepresented groups. Built in the 1920s, it served as a single-room occupancy (SRO) residence for low-income seniors and immigrant workers, particularly Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese immigrants. These individuals faced discrimination due to redlining, restrictive covenants, and systemic racism, preventing them from homeownership and mainstream rental markets. Preserving the Republic Hotel means safeguarding the narrative of a building that housed those often marginalized from Seattle's official histories.

In the heart of the Chinatown-International District (CID), the building embodies the character and challenges faced by one of Seattle's most racially and economically diverse neighborhoods. Recent data reveals that 63.5% of CID residents are people of color, compared to 37.8% of the city's overall population. Moreover, nearly 95% of CID residents rent their homes, and the median household income stands at just \$39,171, significantly lower than Seattle's citywide median of \$105,391. Additionally, nearly 30% of CID residents reside below the poverty line. These disparities stem from long-standing inequities, making the preservation and reuse of this building particularly urgent and meaningful.

InterIm plans to restore the Republic Hotel as 36 units of permanently affordable housing. The project aims to prioritize tenant selection from the CID and surrounding neighborhoods through affirmative marketing strategies. These strategies are designed to reach immigrant, refugee, and limited-English-proficient households, who are most vulnerable to displacement in today's housing market.

The building's reuse will bring about cultural and economic benefits for marginalized communities. On-site, culturally competent services such as financial literacy classes, employment support, wellness programming, and youth leadership development will be offered to residents and the surrounding community. Additionally, ground-floor retail spaces will be retained and leased to small or immigrant-owned businesses, fostering economic resilience and visibility.

To ensure the public continues to engage with the building's past, InterIm will incorporate interpretive signage and historical displays that narrate the stories of former residents and their contributions to shaping the CID. These features will be accessible in shared spaces and translated into multiple languages to accommodate the linguistic diversity of the community.

Throughout its history and future, the Republic Hotel stands as a civic asset that promotes equity. Its preservation honors the legacy of those historically marginalized, while its reuse provides tangible

material benefits to the very communities it once served, communities that continue to face vulnerability today. This project not only safeguards a landmark but also activates it with a mission of belonging, opportunity, and dignity.

Relevant Expertise / Experience / Accomplishments

InterIm CDA has assembled a highly qualified team with deep experience in historic preservation, affordable housing, and community development, ensuring the success of the Republic Hotel rehabilitation.

Leslie Morishita, InterIm's Co-Executive Director, brings over 30 years of experience managing community-based real estate projects. She leads the team, coordinating development timelines, funding strategies, and mission alignment.

Julie Nielson, Asset Manager, contributes 26 years of experience in property and asset management. Her oversight ensures decisions are both sustainable and culturally responsive.

Philippa Nye, of Ally Community Development, is the lead project management consultant with over 30 years of affordable housing finance experience. She has led the rehabilitation and financing of historic properties, including Cooper Lofts and the NP and Eastern Hotels, and is guiding this project through feasibility and closing.

Akhil Arun, Senior Housing Developer, brings five years of experience, including at DESC, and supports the project through design, financing, and construction phases. His background in architecture strengthens the team's technical capacity.

Rolluda Architects leads design. Bob Hale, Principal in Charge, has 30+ years of historic preservation experience and has served on the International Special Review District Board and Pike Place Market Historic Commission. Brett Barbakoff, Project Architect, offers hands-on expertise in masonry restoration, envelope upgrades, and energy-efficient historic design.

Marpac Construction, represented by Nat Nguyen and Joey Mar, is providing pre-construction services. They bring strong rehabilitation experience in the International District, including recent work on the NP and Eastern Hotels.

This team combines technical skills, preservation knowledge, and deep community commitment, positioning the Republic Hotel for a historically sensitive and community-serving restoration.

Project Implementation

The construction of 701 S. Jackson Street will start in October 2025, and the developer is projecting that the framing of their structure on the side adjacent to the Republic Hotel will begin in January 2026. This makes it essential that we secure funding for the tuckpointing and do it this fall while we can still use swing stage equipment to access the area.

The major renovation of the Republic Hotel is dependent on funding applications that are being submitted to the State, City and County this fall. If these are successful, construction is scheduled to begin in March 2027, with completion anticipated by late 2028. The project is currently in the design

and pre-development phase, with schematic drawings 60% complete and early coordination initiated with the planning department.

The team has initiated outreach with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and the International Special Review District Board. We have conducted site visits with both DAHP and ISRD staff and their early review of renovation concepts have helped inform the project approach. Formal submission of materials for National Park Service historic preservation approvals is anticipated in 2025 and will align with project milestones. The \$100,000 4Culture grant would be matched with \$10,861 from InterIm's own reserves to fund the tuckpointing project. For the major renovation, InterIm plans to seek funding from multiple public sources, including the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, King County Housing Finance Program, and the City of Seattle Office of Housing in September, with decisions made in December 2025. Additional financing applications, including for tax exempt bonds, Low Income Housing federal tax credits, would be completed early next year.

If awarded partial funding, InterIm does not have time to seek other sources, so without this source the project may not move forward.

Given the building's deterioration, the advanced stage of planning, and the strength of the development team, the Republic Hotel project is both timely and feasible. The work aligns fully with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and will stabilize and restore one of the CID's most historically significant structures.

Economic Impact

By enabling the preservation of the Republic Hotel, the \$100,000 investment by 4Culture will leverage over \$12 million in public funding and over \$16 million in private funding. The rehabilitation will generate \$1.5 million in sales tax revenue. Construction will use skilled local labor, with a focus on minority- and women-owned contractors, aligning with InterIm CDA's hiring policies. The project is expected to generate 70 construction jobs across various trades and offer contracting opportunities for local architectural, engineering, and preservation professionals.

Retail spaces on the first and mezzanine levels will be restored and kept, creating opportunities for small, neighborhood-focused businesses. Once occupied, these spaces will foster ongoing local commerce and foot traffic in a corridor currently burdened by vacant and run-down properties. Tenants may qualify for City-supported tenant improvement funds, easing startup costs and encouraging long-term stability.

The addition of 36 new households will bring new spending power to the local economy, with residents supporting nearby grocery stores, restaurants, and services. This revitalization, combined with visible exterior restoration, will signal a reinvestment in the neighborhood that may motivate adjacent property owners to maintain or upgrade their own buildings.

InterIm will also provide in-kind value through its resident services team, which will offer culturally competent programming to tenants, including financial literacy, health and nutrition education, and

civic engagement. These services support resident stability and reduce turnover, helping the sustainability of the project and the wider community.

In the long run, this project is an example of how historic preservation and affordable housing can work together to revitalize neighborhoods without displacement, anchoring economic growth in equity, culture, and community resilience.

Budget

Income	Amount
Applicant	\$10,861
Foundations	\$0
Corporations	\$0
Government	\$0
IndivDonors	\$0
Earned	\$0
In-kindInc	\$0
OtherInc	\$0
4Culture Request	\$100,000
Income Total	\$110,861

Expenses	Amount
Planning	\$0
Design	\$0
Construction	\$110,861
People	\$0
Soft Costs	\$0
FacPurchase	\$0
Fundraising	\$0
Services	\$0
Promotion	\$0
TranspShipping	\$0
Document/Assess	\$0
EquipFixtures	\$0
In-kindExp	\$0
Other Expense	\$0
Expense Total	\$110,861

Budget Notes

The budget just includes the cost of the tuckpointing per the invoice from Masonry Restoration Inc. which is attached.

Optional Support Materials

InterIm CDA attached documents containing:

- Letter of Permission from the owner of the building
- Preliminary Drawings and Site Plan
- An aerial view of the site
- Several directional views of the site