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The small historic house museums in your neighborhood have a chance to receive help from the National Trust, a non-profit organization, thanks to a three-year grant from the William Penn Foundation of Philadelphia.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation is looking for non-profit organizations that are responsible for running historic house museums in the six counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania, and Camden in New Jersey. The major qualification is that they can identify their problems and needs and have an interest in setting long-range goals and priorities.

Problems can cover the gamut, ongoing maintenance, major repairs, fund-raising, proper insurance, conservation, restoration, volunteers, membership, marketing, publicity, attendance, taxes, programs, exhibits, acquisitions, to just about any concern, even rewriting the by-laws or reorganizing the board of directors.

The National Trust will assign separate teams of professional specialists to each site to work with staff, board and volunteers on their specific problems, and will prepare a detailed written report for each organization that will include a long-range plan listing suggested resources and procedures. Then during the period of this three-year grant there will be follow-up visits to give more assistance as it is needed.

District assistance from a team of experts is rare, because organizations usually can find help only for one problem at a time. The team approach of this program is essential for museum organizations to achieve future stability.

Eighteen historic house museums will receive this help. Six will be chosen competitively each year. All applicants will benefit, however, since they are invited to attend, at no charge, a wrap-up symposium after the professional teams have completed their reports.

Information and application forms are available from Janet S. Klein, project coordinator, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 6401 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19144, (215) 483-2886.

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