

REHABILITATION PROJECT FAQs

What is the First Bank of the United States?

Created by an act of Congress in 1791 at the urging of Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, the First Bank of the United States was the federal government's initial foray into a centralized banking system for the new nation. In part a response to the escalating debts incurred during the Revolutionary War, the First Bank consolidated the country's financial policies, created national credit markets, and laid the foundation for the transformation of our economy from its agrarian roots to one that could emerge as a global, industrial power.

What is the rehabilitation project?

The National Park Service and Independence Historical Trust are seeking to complete their vision for Independence National Historical Park by reopening the First Bank of the United States building. A \$22.2 million grant awarded as part of the federal Great American Outdoors Act will allow for preservation and rehabilitation of the First Bank building.

Unchanged since construction, the facade's marble will be carefully repointed and weathered elements will be repaired or replaced. A modest addition will be constructed on the back of the First Bank building to accommodate a new stairway, bathrooms, an elevator, and heating and cooling systems. The grand interior, a floor-to-roof rotunda dating to a 1902 remodeling, will be carefully rehabilitated to its original grandeur and contain exhibits that tell the First Bank's history.

Who is rehabilitating the building?

John Milner Architects (JMA), based in Chadds Ford, Pa., was chosen to reimagine the First Bank. A firm that specializes in the evaluation, restoration, and adaptation of historic buildings, JMA has been responsible for the direction and implementation of numerous projects involving buildings and sites dating from the 17th century and has worked on more than 100 National Historic Landmark properties. The Bedwell Company, a construction management firm located in West Chester, Pennsylvania, has been selected to complete the building's rehabilitation.

How will the First Bank be used?

Contingent upon additional funding, the First Bank of the United States building, which opened in 1797, will be transformed into an immersive museum that illustrates the establishment of the United States' economy and the First Bank's profound impact on it.

Who is designing the museum exhibits?

The exhibit planner is New York-based Local Projects LLC, which has created iconic experiences for The National September 11 Memorial & Museum and other prominent museums.

When will the Museum open?

The Trust is leading a campaign to raise \$6.6 million by the end of 2024 to fabricate and install exhibits in the rehabilitated First Bank building. Meeting this schedule will ensure that the First Bank is opened by 2026, the 250th anniversary of the nation, when Philadelphia is expected to welcome a surge of visitors from around the world.

What is the Independence Historical Trust?

The Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that raises funds to fulfill the mission of Independence National Historical Park and to promote its historical, scientific, educational, and interpretive activities. Created in 1972, it invests philanthropic dollars in park programs, conservation efforts, and capital campaigns while working with other partners in the historic area to enhance the visitor experience.

How do I get involved as a donor or a sponsor?

The continued support of corporate and philanthropic partners is necessary to make this project come to life. More than 5 million guests visit Independence Hall from across the world to learn more about the U.S., its founding, and its successes and failures. If you or your company wish to learn how to support the cause, visit firstbankphilly.com.