The Old Jail in Washington County was a valuable historical treasure to the community that had become outdated. The county wanted to update the Old Jail in order to maintain the historical value, as well as bring more tourists in to boost Washington County’s tourism industry.

At its current state, the museum needed renovating, and only had the resources to maintain six operating hours per week. This was a major issue as the Old Jail Museum, which is believed to be one of the oldest existing combination jail/warden’s residences in Georgia, also houses the county’s Genealogy Research Center. This historical property is the home to thousands of historical records and documents which bring “heritage tourists” from all over the country to the area, contributing to Washington County’s local tourism and in turn benefitting the local economy.

In order to revamp the valued site, Washington County partnered with the Archway Partnership and applied for the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s Tourism Product Development Grant. The Archway Partnership paired Washington County with graduate student Jeanne Sanders, candidate for a Master of Arts Degree in Nonprofit Management, who wrote the grant that was submitted on behalf of the Historical Society. Washington County received the grant, and has already started exterior renovations.

Renovations for the Old Jail include converting old cells into storage places for old documents and records and possibly renovating one cell to become a tourism office, which Washington County currently lacks. This office will house racks for brochures, maps, and other tourist-related literature. The indoor staircase is being improved for the safety of visitors. The grant also allows the museum to operate longer hours than the previous six hours per week.

Another possible enhancement is a completely new landscape design for the existing green space outside the facility. The new green space design was completed by Archway Partnership graduate students Mario Cambardella and Leah Graham Stewart, both candidates for Master’s degrees in Environmental Planning and Design, and includes a new fence, walkways, event space, and benches making a more visitor-friendly outdoor addition to the Museum.

**Advancing Community Priorities:** Recognizing that tourism was a large part of their local economy, Washington County needed to restore one of their oldest treasures. Washington County declared tourism as a priority and partnered with the Archway Partnership in order to achieve their goal of bringing more tourists to the area. The grant from the Georgia Department of Economic Development will help to update the Old Jail and enhance tourism in the area, boosting the local economy.