
EASTERN SHORE NETWORK
FOR CHANGE

ESNC

"Where the status quo is not an option."

March 4, 2022

Maryland State Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St., Annapolis

Dear Chair McIntosh and Vice-Chair Chang and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of the Eastern Shore Network for Change, a nonprofit organization on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I am writing in favor of the African American Heritage Preservation Program - Annual Appropriation and Alterations - House Bill 1088 to increase the grant program from \$1 million to \$5million per year to support African American heritage sites in Maryland. The Eastern Shore Network for Change is a proud recipient of the AAHPP grant, and as such, we know firsthand how important this grant program is to Maryland communities.

For over 50 years, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) has authentically preserved and presented Black history and culture as a tool for racial equity, community empowerment, and social change. Their work includes operating the *Banneker-Douglass Museum*, the State's official Museum on African American History and Culture, and the African American Heritage Preservation Program grant (AAHPP), the State's one-million-dollar capital grant. The African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP) provides grants to preserve buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland.

Since 2010, MCAAHC has awarded up to 12 million dollars to over 150 preservation projects in Maryland. Still, it is critical to increase the African American Heritage Preservation Grant from \$1 million to \$5 million to address inflation and meet the statewide African American heritage sites' capital and non-capital funding needs.

The grant we received allowed us to perform restorations to Bethel A.M.E. Church in Cambridge, MD. This church was founded in 1847 and has served as a safe place for African Americans during and after slavery and was also the home of the Civil Rights movement, led by the late Gloria Richardson Dandridge.

This grant increase will strengthen the capacities of African American heritage sites (museums, historic homes, schools, community centers, and more) to help economic revitalization, historic preservation, and community development throughout the state. We hope the Maryland State Appropriations Committee will join us in investing in this effort.

Eastern Shore Network for Change • "Where the status quo is not an option."
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Sincerely,

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