

Kennard Alumni Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 213
Centreville, MD 21617
443-239-2110
www.kennardheritage.com
kennardalumniassociation@gmail.com



March 3, 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 Kennard Alumni Association Inc., 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 \$5 million per year to support African American heritage sites in Maryland. Kennard Alumni 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 assist in preserving 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 10 preservation projects in the State of 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.

When Kennard was searching for funding to complete the restoration of Queen Anne's County's first and only African American high school to create a cultural heritage center and museum, the AAHPP grant proved to be a "lifesaver". We were able to qualify for the maximum amount the first 3 years the grant was available, allowing us to complete the final phase of the restoration without searching for "matching" funds beyond what we had. This aspect of the grant is very significant for small minority nonprofits. While the current appropriation of \$1million has proved helpful and necessary to the organizations the grant has served, many more, like the Kennard African American Cultural Heritage Center and Museum, would benefit by increasing the funding to 5 million and expanding the grant's scope to include capital and non-capital projects and programs. We do not want to miss an opportunity for our African American small

"Caretakers of the Past, Guardians of the Future"

nonprofits to expand the depth and breadth of their heritage projects and programs due to a lack of available funding.

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.

Sincerely,

Clayton Washington

Clayton “Clay” Washington, President