



Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

84 Franklin Street, Annapolis, MD 21401 410-216-6180
www.africanamerican.maryland.gov

MCAAHC

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March 4, 2022

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

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

On behalf of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC), I am writing to express our support of House Bill 1088 - The African American Heritage Preservation Program - Annual Appropriation and Alterations - to increase the grant program from \$1 million to \$5million per year.

For over 50 years, MCAAHC has been dedicated to preserving and celebrating African American history and culture in Maryland. As the nation's first state ethnic commission, which operates the state museum on African American history and culture, and the state's African American Heritage Preservation Grant (AAHPP), the state's one-million-dollar capital grant, the Commission remains to this day unique as a national model.

The AAHPP, administered in partnership with the Maryland Historical Trust, provides grants across the state to preserve buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland. Since its inception in 2010, MCAAHC has awarded nearly 150 capital projects totaling over \$12 million. While this is an incredible accomplishment for the state, MCAAHC's capacity to award only \$1 million to address urgent capital needs means that the \$3.4 million (five-year average) requests go unanswered.

Therefore, to address the critical need to preserve African American sites, capital and non-capital, as important Maryland historical sites, and address inflation costs associated with

preservation, it is crucial to increase the AAHPP grant from \$1 million to \$5 million. With the Maryland State Appropriations Committee's support of this bill, African American heritage sites (museums, historic homes, communities, schools, churches, and more) will be strengthened, which will substantially help revitalize communities economically throughout the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamara Wilson".

**Rev. Dr. Tamara E. Wilson,
Chair**