



## Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

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[africanamerican.maryland.gov](http://africanamerican.maryland.gov)

### MCAAHC

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Appropriations Committee

Room 121

House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Delegate Ben Barnes and members of the Appropriations Committee:

As Executive Director of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, I am pleased to offer its strong and enthusiastic support for HB1066 to enhance the African American Heritage Preservation Program grant fund to include non-capital grant funding for African American heritage projects and organizations throughout the great state of Maryland.

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. Our 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 five-million-dollar capital grant.

Since 2012, the AAHPP grant has achieved its goal of not only identifying, but preserving buildings and sites of historical and cultural significance on the African American experience in Maryland.

Maryland, a founding colony, was a site for the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. It was a site of the slave trade and the genocide of generations of African people. Maryland was a site of Jim Crow laws, lynching and racial terror, and racist medical abuse and experimentation on Black bodies. We were also home to great achievements such as the abolitionist movement and stops along the Underground Railroad. We were home to the women's suffrage movement, and a major site for the civil rights and Black power movements. We were the birthplace of great black innovators, artists, scientists, political leaders, and entrepreneurs.

In Maryland, there are over 200 African American heritage sites that tell these stories. These places, such as historic churches, schoolhouses, community centers, historic homes, and museums,

where significant African American history happened, are vital to the fabric of our state. They stand as lasting imprints of a resilient and profound American story. As reported by Maryland Historical Trust and our commission, African American heritage sites in Maryland are in critical need of non-capital funding that supports research, planning, capacity building, and programming for the communities in which they serve.

The African American Heritage Preservation Program grant has the administrative capacity to award both capital and non-capital funding. An introduction of non-capital funding will assist in the cultivation and preservation of Maryland's dynamic African American history while accelerating public engagement through the state's heritage tourism economy.

The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture is committed to supporting significant statewide projects that act as cultural anchors and create healthy and culturally diverse communities. This vision epitomizes our values, and we highly support this vital legislation to support African American heritage in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

*Chanel C. Johnson*