

**AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE PRESERVATION PROGRAM  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

**MARYLAND COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

## **Report to the Governor and the General Assembly**

# **2024 Annual Report on the African American Heritage Preservation Program**

## **THE MARYLAND COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) is to interpret, document, preserve, and promote Maryland's African American heritage; to provide technical assistance to institutions and groups with similar objectives; and to educate Maryland's citizens and visitors about the significance of the African American experience in Maryland and the nation. MCAAHC is housed within the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

## **MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. Through research, conservation, and education, MHT assists the people of Maryland in understanding their historical and cultural heritage. MHT is a division of the Maryland Department of Planning.

### **Program Overview**

The Maryland General Assembly created the African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP) during the 2010 session and reauthorized it, with modifications, as a permanent program during the 2015 session. The AAHPP encourages the preservation of buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural significance to the African American experience in Maryland. The program is administered as a partnership of MCAAHC and MHT.

Nonprofit organizations, government entities, business entities, and individuals may apply for AAHPP grants. Matching funds are no longer required for this grant. Eligible activities include acquisition, rehabilitation, restoration, new construction, and pre-development associated with a construction project.

This report is submitted in accordance with the requirements of State Finance and Procurement Article § 5A-330(i), SB 601/Chapter 371, 2015.

## **Activity of the African American Heritage Preservation Program in FY24**

### ***FY24 Grant Cycle***

For the FY24 grant round the program funding was increased to \$5 million, with an increase in the amount of individual grant awards from \$100,000 to \$250,000. In April 2023, MHT provided grant guidelines and application materials on the program webpage and at webinars and in-person workshops. MHT and MCAAHC staff held one in-person grant workshops in April 2023 in Crownsville and Hagerstown. One General Overview webinar session was held in April 2023, which was made available on MHT's YouTube Channel, while virtual Question and Answer sessions were held in May and June 2023. Applicants submitted 107 eligible applications by the July 17, 2023, deadline, requesting more than \$20 million for projects in 21 counties and the City of Baltimore.

MCAAHC recommended 24 projects for funding, which were approved by the MHT Board of Trustees and the Secretary of Planning and announced in December 2023.

### ***FY24 Grant Awards***

**Robert W. Johnson Community Center**, W North Ave, Hagerstown, Washington County

**Sponsor:** Robert W. Johnson Community Center, Inc.

**Grant:** \$150,000

Founded in 1888 as a school for Black children, the Robert W. Johnson Community Center will benefit from renovations to the pool, plumbing, electrical system, and more. The center will use these funds to restore the building so it can continue to host community events, as well as after-school and adult programming.

**Hoppy Adams House**, Old Solomons Island Rd, Annapolis, Anne Arundel County

**Sponsor:** Charles W. "Hoppy" Adams Jr. Foundation, Inc.

**Grant:** \$245,000

Charles "Hoppy" Adams, Jr., renowned African American radio broadcaster with WANN Annapolis, spread soul and R&B music to diverse audiences in Maryland. The Charles W. "Hoppy" Adams Jr. Foundation will renovate his 1964 brick home to create a museum. Work will include ADA upgrades and structural repairs.

**American Hall**, W Bethel St, Hagerstown, Washington County

**Sponsor:** The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free And Accepted Masons Of Maryland And Its Jurisdiction, Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

Constructed in 1883 to serve the Jonathan Street community with a school, community space, and fraternal hall, the restoration of the American Hall by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, Maryland and its Jurisdiction, will include structural repairs, accessibility upgrades, and an addition to open it up to community use again.

**Upton Mansion**, W Lanvale St, Baltimore City

**Sponsor:** Afro Charities, Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

Located in the Old West Baltimore Historic District, Upton Mansion was once home to prominent African American developer Robert J. Young. Afro Charities, Afro Archives, and the AFRO American Newspapers will restore it as their archives. Funding will support the construction of a new annex as well as window and door repairs.

**Henry's Hotel**, S Division St, Ocean City, Worcester County

**Sponsor:** Henry Hotel Foundation

**Grant:** \$250,000

Built in Ocean City in the late 1800s as "Henry's Colored Hotel," Henry's Hotel was Maryland's last beach-accessible hotel for African Americans in the Jim Crow era. Through structural additions, the Henry Hotel Foundation will convert the building into a museum centered on segregation and the city's African American community.

**Historic Oliver Community Firehouse**, Federal St, Baltimore City

**Sponsor:** African American Fire Fighters Historical Society, Inc.

**Grant:** \$247,000

Baltimore's Truck House #5 (c. 1905) in the Oliver neighborhood was acquired by the African American Fire Fighters Historical Society through the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development's Vacants to Value program. Funding will support exterior rehabilitation to convert the building into the International Black Fire Fighters Museum & Safety Education Center.

**Brown's UMC Multi Cultural Heritage Center**, Parkers Creek Rd, Port Republic, Calvert County

**Sponsor:** Brown's UMC Multi Cultural Heritage Center, Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

Built in the 1890s, Brown's UMC is one of Calvert County's oldest African American churches. The UMC Multi-Cultural Heritage Center will showcase local history, and will offer self-guided and guided tours of the cemetery. Funding will support foundation and flooring repairs and a roof replacement.

**Buffalo Soldier Living History Site**, South Upper Ferry Rd, Eden, Wicomico County

**Sponsor:** Buffalo Soldier Living History Site Co.

**Grant:** \$250,000

The Buffalo Soldier Living History Site will be established on land bought in 1898 by Buffalo Soldier Thomas E. Polk. The museum will preserve African American military history and host reenactments. Funding will support selective demolition, structural repairs, and door repairs.

**Brewer Hill Cemetery**, West St, Annapolis, Anne Arundel County

**Sponsor:** Brewer Hill Cemetery Association, Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

Brewer Hill Cemetery, the oldest Black graveyard in Annapolis, was initially used by Judge Nichols Brewer to bury enslaved people and Black community members. Brewer Hill Cemetery Association will use funding to support cemetery conservation, as well as fence and masonry repairs.

**The Bellevue Passage Museum**, Bellevue Rd, Royal Oak, Talbot County

**Sponsor:** Mid-Shore Community Foundation, Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

Originating as the W.H. Valliant Packing Co. in 1895, the Bellevue Passage Museum highlights African American heritage, focusing on Bellevue's economic contributions and conserving the area's maritime story. The Mid-Shore Community Foundation will use funds to help construct a new annex and improve accessibility.

**The Fruitland Community Center**, Morris St, Fruitland, Wicomico County

**Sponsor:** Fruitland Community Center, Inc.

**Grant:** \$203,000

The Fruitland Community Center, housed in the 1912 Morris Street Colored School, aids low-income youth with after-school programs and African American history education. Funding will bolster structural repairs, carpentry, metalwork, and electrical and mechanical upgrades to enhance its community impact.

**Grasonville Community Center**, Main St, Grasonville, Queen Anne's County

**Sponsor:** Grasonville Community Center

**Grant:** \$250,000

Funding will enhance the Grasonville Community Center's Black History Library and Health Room through interior and exterior rehabilitation. This work will help advance the center's mission to foster connections and share African American experiences by providing after-school and summer programs.

**Malone Methodist Episcopal Church**, White Marsh Rd, Madison, Dorchester County

**Sponsor:** Harrisville/Malone Cemetery Maintenance Fund, Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

The Malone Methodist Episcopal Church (c.1895) served the town of Malone's African American community and is linked to Harriet Tubman's extended family, buried in a nearby cemetery. Funding will support floor and roof repairs, lifting the building, and exterior rehabilitation.

**Bryan's Chapel and Cemetery**, Main St, Grasonville, Queen Anne's County

**Sponsor:** Bryan's United Methodist Church (UMC), Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

Founded in the 1800s, Bryan's Chapel is the second oldest African American church in the United Methodist Peninsula-Delaware Conference, and its congregation established the county's NAACP Chapter. The church will use funds for ground-penetrating radar (GPR), headstone conservation, and structural repairs.

**Locust UMC**, Martin Rd, Columbia, Howard County

**Sponsor:** Locust UMC

**Grant:** \$233,500

Founded in 1869 by Freetown's formerly enslaved residents, Locust UMC has been a predominantly African American congregation for over 150 years. The church will use funds to support pavilion construction and rehabilitation of community spaces to tell the descendant community's story.

**Ship Caulkers' Houses (Two Sisters' Houses)**, S Wolfe St, Baltimore City

**Sponsor:** The Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point, Inc.

**Grant:** \$250,000

Built in the 1790s and home to Black ship caulkers, this small duplex structure is a rare survivor of a once-prevalent wooden housing type in Baltimore. The Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point will use funding to enhance fire safety, repair carpentry and masonry, and modernize systems.

**The Yellow/Hearse House**, Calvert St, Chestertown, Kent County

**Sponsor:** Kent County Public Library

**Grant:** \$200,000

Built in 1906, the Yellow/Hearse House played an important role in Kent County's rich heritage, serving as the primary funeral parlor for the local African American community. This project will help the Kent County Public Library address critical structural needs facing the building, allowing for increased heritage education at the site that spotlights the Walley family.

**Jones & Moore Luncheon/Bambricks Cards & Gifts**, Race St, Cambridge, Dorchester County

**Sponsor:** Alpha Genesis Community Development Corporation

**Grant:** \$138,000

Alpha Genesis Community Development Corporation plans to renovate Cambridge's Jones & Moore Luncheon/Bambricks Cards & Gifts store—best known for the "Take My Hand" Harriet Tubman mural—to bring arts, culture, and new businesses to the site. Funding will aid in structural updates, window and door repairs, and replacement of the roof.

**Mt. Calvary UMC – Meeting Hall and Cemetery**, Jones Station Rd, Arnold, Anne Arundel County

**Sponsor:** Mt. Calvary Community Engagement Incorporated

**Grant:** \$186,000

Since 1832, the site of the Mt. Calvary Meeting Hall has served as a gathering place for the local African American Community. The grantee plans to repair the foundation and masonry to facilitate the hall's use as a heritage center to share community histories. Funds will also support GPR at the cemetery.

**Ridgely Methodist Church and Cemetery**, Central Ave, Landover, Prince George's County

**Sponsor:** Mildred Ridgely Gray Charitable Trust, Inc.

**Grant:** \$111,000

Founded by freedmen around 1871, Ridgely Methodist Church once served as a school for local Black children. The Mildred Ridgely Gray Charitable Trust will use funding to aid cemetery conservation, GPR,

and fence installation to enhance the site as a space for programs, lectures, and tours to raise awareness of African American history.

**Scotland African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church**, Seven Locks Rd, Potomac, Montgomery County

**Sponsor:** Scotland AME Zion Church

**Grant:** \$104,000

Scotland AME Church offers a chance to explore the history of the 115-year-old African American Scotland community by sharing stories through interpretive panels and public programs. The church will use funding to aid in foundation repairs, building lifting, and stabilization efforts.

**Bushy Park Community Cemetery**, Cemetery Rd, Woodbine, Howard County

**Sponsor:** Bushy Park Community Cemetery, Inc.

**Grant:** \$63,500

Bushy Park Community Cemetery, once farmland worked by enslaved people, holds the remains of many freed individuals, US Colored Troops soldiers, and Civil Rights leaders. Funding will aid in conservation efforts and GPR, preserving its historical significance and facilitating educational programs focused on those interred.

**James Stephenson House – Enslaved Quarters**, Craig's Corner Rd, Havre de Grace, Harford County

**Sponsor:** Maryland Department of Natural Resources

**Grant:** \$119,000

Located within Susquehanna State Park, the 18th-century James Stephenson House includes one of the few documented freestanding enslaved quarters on public land. Funding will support carpentry, masonry, and roof, window, chimney, shutter, and door repairs.

**American Legion Mannie Scott Post 193 Building**, Saathoff Rd, Denton, Caroline County

**Sponsor:** The American Legion, Department Of Maryland, Mannie Scott Post #193, Incorporated

**Grant:** \$250,000

Chartered in 1947 by the American Legion, Mannie Scott Post No. 193 is Caroline County's sole active African American post, honoring veterans across the Armed Forces by fostering justice, freedom, and democracy. The post will use funds to support rehabilitation efforts like bathroom upgrades and siding repairs.

### ***FY24 Grant Cycle***

In March 2024, MHT provided grant guidelines and application materials on the program webpage and at the webinars and in-person workshops. MHT and MCAAHC staff held two in-person grant workshops—one in March 2024 in Annapolis and one in May 2024 in Frederick— as well as two virtual General Overview webinars in April and June 2024. A recorded General Overview webinar was made available on MHT's YouTube Channel. Applicants submitted 73 eligible applications by the July 1, 2024, deadline, requesting more than \$14 million for projects in 21 counties and Baltimore City. MHT staff conducted a threshold review of the applications and forwarded eligible applications to MCAAHC for

review and ranking. The MHT Board of Trustees and the Secretary of Planning will consider the recommendations for approval.

### ***Project Accomplishments & Updates***

**The Button Farm Living History Center**, Black Rock Rd, Germantown, Montgomery County

**Sponsor:** The Menare Foundation

Button Farm (Montgomery County), located inside Seneca Creek State Park, interprets 19th-century plantation life and the Underground Railroad, sharing the impact of enslaved labor on the landscape. In 2018, the Menare Foundation received a \$46,000 grant to repair their late-19th century barn that was on the verge of collapse. The project involved underpinning the barn's footings and repointing mortar at the foundation, along with new framing, replacement of the rotted sill plate, and more. The project required careful work by a specialized contractor who was familiar with 19th-century building techniques. With restoration complete, the barn enhances the interpretation of the 19th-century farm landscape.

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