

**AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE PRESERVATION PROGRAM
2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

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

December 2025

Report to the Governor and the General Assembly 2025 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 African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP) encourages the preservation of buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural significance to the African American experience in Maryland. Created by the General Assembly in 2010 and awarding its first grants in FY 2012, the AAHPP is jointly administered by MHT and MCAAHC.

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. Assisted properties must involve buildings, sites, or communities of historical or cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland.

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 FY25

FY25 Grant Cycle

In March 2024, MHT provided grant guidelines and application materials on the program webpage and at in-person workshops. MHT and MCAAHC staff held two in-person grant workshops, one in March 2024 in Annapolis and one in May in Frederick. One General Overview webinar session was held in April, while a virtual Question and Answer session was held in June. A recorded General Overview webinar was made available on MHT's YouTube Channel. Applicants submitted 71 eligible applications by the July 17, 2024, deadline, requesting more than \$17 million for projects in 17 counties and Baltimore City.

MCAAHC recommended 31 projects for funding, which were approved by the MHT and announced in December 2024.

FY25 Grant Awards

Asbury United Methodist Church (UMC), 87 West St, Annapolis, Anne Arundel County

Sponsor: Asbury UMC

Grant: \$193,717

Founded in 1803, Asbury UMC's African American congregation built the current church in 1888. Once home to many formerly enslaved members, the church now hosts community events, including a job re-entry program for those seeking employment after incarceration. Asbury UMC will use funds to restore windows, repair masonry, and replace doors to preserve the historic building.

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

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

Grant: \$250,000

This project aims to convert Adams's home – a refuge for Black entertainers during segregation – into a historic house museum that will interpret his legacy and African American life in Jim Crow Annapolis. The Charles W. "Hoppy" Adams Jr. Foundation will use funds to acquire adjacent land, once owned by Adams's parents, for a visitor's center and parking.

Frederick Douglass Summer House, Wayman Ave, Highland Beach, Anne Arundel County

Sponsor: Town of Highland Beach

Grant: \$106,000

The Frederick Douglass Summer House (c. 1894), a Queen Anne-style frame dwelling built for Douglass, is the oldest home in the African American-founded town of Highland Beach. Though he died before its completion, it now houses a museum in his honor. Funds will support the town's efforts to make structural improvements to the building.

Mt. Zion UMC Laurel, Whiskey Bottom Rd, Laurel, Anne Arundel County

Sponsor: NST Collaborative

Grant: \$180,000

Mt. Zion Church, built in 1913, has continually served the Bacontown community since its opening, honoring the legacy of Maria Bacon, an African American woman who established roots here after emancipation. Funding supports NST Collaborative in the rehabilitation of the historic church and the preliminary design schematics for a space that documents, preserves, and promotes Bacontown's African American heritage, as well as the lived experiences that shaped its history and identity.

The Harlem Theater, N Gilmor St, Baltimore City

Sponsor: AJOR Real Estate Group

Grant: \$243,000

Opening in 1932 with a lavish Spanish-style interior, the Harlem Theatre is the last extant first-run movie theater to serve Black Baltimoreans during segregation. Still a vital community hub, today it hosts youth and multicultural performances. AJOR Real Estate Group will use funds for roof and window repair.

Cowdensville African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, Sulphur Spring Rd, Baltimore, Baltimore County

Sponsor: Friends of Cowdensville AME

Grant: \$87,000

Cowdensville AME Church, built between 1904 and 1907, has roots in the 1857 free Black community of Crowden Town. Through the years, the church served as a hub for worship, Civil Rights meetings, and community support services. Friends of Cowdensville AME will use funds to support the repair of the narthex.

Asbury UMC, Philadelphia Rd, White Marsh, Baltimore County

Sponsor: Asbury UMC

Grant: \$186,000

Asbury UMC began in 1828 as a meeting house for enslaved and freed persons living in the White Marsh area, with the current church built in 1913. In 1872, members formed the Union of Brothers and Sisters of Ford's Asbury Lodge #1 for community aid and burial support. Funds will support Asbury UMC's exterior rehabilitation, including repairs to the roof and windows, and the addition of accessibility ramps.

Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm, George Rice House, Grays Rd, Prince Frederick, Calvert County

Sponsor: County Commissioners of Calvert County

Grant: \$50,000

The Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm educates youth about 20th-century African American farming, highlighting the Gray family's Reconstruction-era successes despite racial discrimination. Interpretive signage and trails share this legacy with visitors. The County Commissioners of Calvert County will use project funds to make the site and walking trails ADA-compliant.

Brooks UMC, Mackall Rd, Saint Leonard, Calvert County

Sponsor: Brooks UMC

Grant: \$77,000

Serving one of the oldest African American Methodist congregations in Calvert County, Brooks UMC's 1968 building is located on the site of a former segregated school. The church runs a food pantry, a voter registration site, and a choir space. Funds will support mechanical upgrades, accessibility improvements, and pre-development costs.

St. Paul Church, Beauchamp Rd, Denton, Caroline County

Sponsor: St. Paul Church Historical, Revitalization and Maintenance, Inc.

Grant: \$240,000

St. Paul Church Historical, Revitalization and Maintenance, Inc., plans to transform St. Paul Church, built in the 1880s, into a community-based center promoting African American culture in Denton and beyond through events, literature, and seminars. Project funds will support cemetery conservation, floor and foundation repair, and interior and exterior finishes.

Fairview Methodist Episcopal Church, W. Old Liberty Rd, New Windsor, Carroll County

Sponsor: Fairview United Methodist Church of Taylorsville, Maryland, Inc.

Grant: \$74,783

For nearly 175 years, Fairview Methodist Episcopal (now United Methodist) Church and Cemetery has continuously served the Carroll County community. Built by free African American farmers, stone masons, and carpenters, the church held night services so enslaved and free residents could attend. Funds will support Fairview UMC in cemetery conservation efforts.

Elk Landing Hollingsworth House, Landing Ln, Elkton, Cecil County

Sponsor: Historic Elk Landing Foundation

Grant: \$49,000

Built in the early 18th century by prominent Quaker colonist Zebulon Hollingsworth, the Hollingsworth House was remodeled in 1848, incorporating a kitchen and slave quarters. Now a living history museum, the Historic Elk Landing Foundation will use funds to restore the slave quarters and interpret the African American experience for visitors onsite.

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

Sponsor: Harrisville/Malone Cemetery Maintenance Fund, Inc.

Grant: \$250,000

Built in 1895, the single-story, gable-roofed Malone's Methodist Episcopal Church has ties to Harriet Tubman's family, including in-laws who are buried in the cemetery adjacent to the church. Harrisville/Malone Cemetery Maintenance Fund, Inc. will use project funds to support a new foundation, masonry repairs, and roof rehabilitation.

Ebenezer AME Church, N Maple Ave, Brunswick, Frederick County

Sponsor: Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church-Brunswick, Inc.

Grant: \$195,000

Dr. William Henry Bell, a formerly enslaved man who went on to become a college professor, originally established Ebenezer AME Church with other community members in the early 20th century. The church, built in 1920, features a front-gabled roof and pointed-arch windows. Funding will support accessibility improvements.

Asbury UMC, W All Saints St, Frederick, Frederick County

Sponsor: Asbury UMC

Grant: \$36,000

A pillar of the community for over 200 years, Asbury UMC in the City of Frederick Historic District began as an integrated worship space before becoming restricted for African American use during segregation. The church building, constructed in 1921, features Gothic windows and a central brick tower. Asbury UMC will use grant funds for accessibility upgrades and a new gutter system.

Quinn Chapel AME Church, E 3rd Street, Frederick, Frederick County

Sponsor: Quinn Chapel AME Church

Grant: \$250,000

With roots in the 1790s, Quinn Chapel AME Church served as an Underground Railroad safe house, Civil War hospital, and later, as a school for Black children in Frederick. Funding will support Quinn Chapel AME Church in repairing the bell tower as well as stabilizing and maintaining the building.

Catoctin Furnace African American Cemetery, Catoctin Furnace Rd, Thurmont, Frederick County

Sponsor: Catoctin Furnace Historical Society

Grant: \$150,000

The Catoctin Furnace African American Cemetery highlights the vital role of enslaved African Americans in the iron industry. DNA research identified 40,000 descendants of Catoctin Furnace ironworkers. Catoctin Furnace Historical Society will use grant funds to purchase the cemetery, enabling public access and historical interpretation of the site.

Hosanna School Museum, Castleton Rd, Darlington, Harford County

Sponsor: Hosanna Community House, Inc.

Grant: \$225,000

Built in 1867 on donated land and with Freedmen's Bureau support, the Hosanna School educated freed African Americans and now operates as a museum teaching local history, addressing issues of slavery through the Jim Crow era. The Hosanna Community House, Inc. will use funds to support accessibility upgrades, including accessible bathrooms and an updated chair lift.

Blandair Slave Quarters, Highway 175, Columbia, Howard County

Sponsor: Mt. Calvary Community Engagement Incorporated

Grant: \$250,000

Howard County Government will restore the slave quarters associated with the Blandair Estate in what is now Blandair Regional Park. The rare double-pen building, made of sawn planks with a central double fireplace, will be preserved to honor all who lived there, both free and enslaved. Funds will support the rehabilitation of the roof and siding, as well as window repairs.

Mt. Gregory UMC, Route 97, Cooksville, Howard County

Sponsor: Mt. Gregory UMC

Grant: \$236,500

Founded in the 1860s to educate African American children, Mt. Gregory UMC served as both school and church into the 20th century. The 1898 Gothic Revival building remains active today as a congregation and a food pantry. Funds will support renovations to the church's lower level for continued community use.

Barksdale Grocery Store and Tavern, Washington Boulevard, Jessup, Howard County

Sponsor: BNCM, LLC

Grant: \$185,000

Established in 1943, the Barksdale Grocery Store and Tavern was a hub for the local African American community in Jessup. Operated by Edgar D. Barksdale, the first person of color to hold a liquor license in Howard County, the site housed multiple other businesses. Funds will support the rehabilitation of the historic building into a new community and commercial space.

The Custom House, High St, Chestertown, Kent County

Sponsor: Washington College's Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience

Grant: \$232,000

Built over 275 years ago to govern trade and shipping via the Chester River, the Custom House in Chestertown may contain an underground holding cell for enslaved people. The house, now home to Washington College's Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience, hosts public programming on African American history. Funds will support an archaeological investigation, as well as framing and waterproofing the chamber.

Mander House Museum, Needham Rd, Worton, Kent County

Sponsor: Yvette Young

Grant: \$247,000

Congo "Mango" Mander, a formerly enslaved man, bought the Mander House property in the late 1700s. Still in his family today, it will become a museum telling the story of local African American freedmen. Funds will support structural repairs, a new roof, and a conditions assessment ahead of a full rehabilitation.

The Montgomery Chapel Cemetery, Frederick Rd, Clarksburg, Montgomery County

Sponsor: Montgomery County Parks Foundation

Grant: \$10,000

Montgomery County Parks Foundation will conduct ground-penetrating radar at the Montgomery Chapel Cemetery (c. 1870s), a vital remnant of Hyattstown's post-Emancipation African American community. This cemetery is the only remaining trace of Montgomery Chapel, which was demolished in 1982.

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

Sponsor: Menare Foundation

Grant: \$106,000

The Menare Foundation will conduct critical renovations at Button Farm, a living history center in Seneca Creek State Park. Funds will provide a new pavilion roof, farmhouse framing, window repairs, electrical work, and barn repairs to preserve the stories of formerly enslaved people and their descendants who built this post-Emancipation community.

Mt. Nebo AME Church, Queen Anne Rd, Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County

Sponsor: Friends of Historic Mt. Nebo Preservation Corporation

Grant: \$50,000

Built in 1925, Mt. Nebo AME Church is a rare surviving example of a rural AME church in Prince George's County that served as a refuge during the Jim Crow era. Funds will support Friends of Historic Mt. Nebo Preservation Corporation in stabilizing the building ahead of a full rehabilitation for use as a community center.

Galilee United Methodist Cemetery, Loveville Rd, Mechanicsville, St. Mary's County

Sponsor: St. Mary's College of Maryland

Grant: \$24,000

Established by an African American congregation in Mechanicsville, Galilee Methodist Episcopal Church Cemetery (c. 1880) holds graves of many, including Civil War veteran J. T. Cully of the 9th United States Colored Infantry. Once conserved, it will support genealogical research and historical interpretation. Funds will support St. Mary's College of Maryland with cemetery conservation and site mapping, fence repair, and the installation of interpretive kiosks.

Coulbourne and Jewett House, N Talbot St, St. Michaels, Talbot County

Sponsor: Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

Grant: \$242,000

The Coulbourne and Jewett House (c. 1875) at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum was home to Black entrepreneur William Coulbourne, whose seafood packing business with Frederick Jewett became St. Michaels' largest employer. Funds will help convert this Victorian-style building from a museum store into an education center focused on the lives of Black watermen.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Lappans Rd, Boonsboro, Washington County

Sponsor: St. Marks Episcopal Church

Grant: \$75,000

Built in 1849, St. Mark's Episcopal Church served local white landowners as well as free and enslaved Black congregants. A stained-glass window honors two enslaved Black congregants, the first to be married in the church and who are buried in the cemetery. Funds will support the church with repointing and electrical upgrades to preserve the site.

Tyree AME Church, Germantown Rd, Berlin, Worcester County

Sponsor: Tyree AME Church

Grant: \$250,000

Tyree AME Church, built in 1915 in the Germantown community, features Gothic Revival architecture and tripartite colored-glass windows. Before the Germantown Rosenwald School opened, it also served as an educational space. Funds will support the church with structural repairs to the foundation and original bell tower.

Freetown Education, Research, and Cultural Museum, N Bay St, Snow Hill, Worcester County

Sponsor: Freetown Education, Research, and Cultural Center of Snow Hill

Grant: \$250,000

Located in the historic African American community of Freetown, this late 19th-century home once sheltered people formerly enslaved along the Pocomoke River. Funds will support the Freetown Education, Research, and Cultural Center of Snow Hill to rehabilitate the building, turning it into a museum that preserves and shares the area's rich African American heritage.

FY25 Grant Cycle

In March 2025, MHT provided grant guidelines and application materials on the program webpage and at the in-person workshop. MHT and MCAAHC staff held two in-person grant workshops—one in March 2025 in Annapolis and one in May 2025 in Frederick—as well as two virtual General Overview webinars in April and June 2025. A recorded General Overview webinar was made available on MHT’s YouTube Channel. Applicants submitted 73 eligible applications by the July 1, 2025, 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

Bethel Center, G Street, Mountain Lake Park, Garrett County

Sponsor: Mountain Lake Park Historical Association Inc

Funded by an AAHPP grant in FY22, the Bethel Center project shed light on the story of Garrett County’s African American community at the turn of the 20th century. The Center’s wood-frame building, built by the Bethel AME Church in the 1890s, served as a church, school, and community hub in the town of Oakland. Like many African American sites, it faced a difficult history and closed in the 1920s–30s, as residents left the area amid growing racial tensions and limited job opportunities. An Amish farmer purchased the building in the 1930s and relocated it to his farm, where his family used it as a blacksmith shop for nearly a century.

In 2023, the building was carefully disassembled and moved to Mountain Lake Park, where the mayor and a dedicated team, including Kate Smith, Oakland’s first African American elected official, led a meticulous reconstruction effort. Challenges such as the lack of a foundation, altered windows and doors, and weathering of bare wood were addressed through thoughtful design and skilled craftsmanship.

The Bethel Center is a powerful example of the AAHPP’s impact, preserving a vital piece of African American history in Garrett County. Thanks to creative partnerships and enthusiastic leaders in the Mountain Lake Park Historical Association, the site now features new siding, paint, and roofing, standing as a tangible example of persistence in the face of adversity.