

SPEAKER ADRIENNE A. JONES AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE PRESERVATION PROGRAM NON-CAPITAL GRANT GUIDELINES

*Completed grant applications must be submitted ONLINE by
November 20, 2026, at 11:59PM EST.*

Access the online grant application at: tiny.cc/MHT-NCAAHPP.



THE MARYLAND COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of 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

MHT is the state agency 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. Part of the Maryland Department of Planning, MHT serves as Maryland's State Historic Preservation Office pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Contents

GENERAL INFORMATION	4
GETTING STARTED / CONTACT INFO	4
ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	4
ELIGIBLE PROJECTS	4
APPLICATION PROCESS	8
WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE ONLINE APPLICATION:	8
RESOURCES	8
“APPLICANT INFORMATION” TAB	8
“MISSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY” TAB	10
“PROGRAMMING AND IMPACT” TAB	10
“GRANT REQUEST” TAB	11
“ATTACHMENTS” TAB	12
“RELEASE & CONSENT” TAB	12
GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS	13
PROJECT SCOPE & BUDGET	13
GRANT DISBURSEMENTS	13
COMPLIANCE & LEGAL RULES	13
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	13
STANDING WITH THE STATE OF MARYLAND	14
EXHIBIT 1: INELIGIBLE COSTS	15
EXHIBIT 2: PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA	16

General Information

The **Speaker Adrienne A. Jones African American Heritage Preservation Program's** (AAHPP) non-capital grants help organizations dedicated to African American heritage and culture build the capacity needed to stay active and focused on their communities.

Getting Started / Contact Info

Please review these guidelines before you apply. We strongly recommend talking to MHT and MCAAHC staff before applying. They can confirm that your project is eligible and offer guidance.

MHT Capital Programs Administrator: Stacy Montgomery |
stacy.montgomery@maryland.gov | 410-697-9559

MCAAHC Research Specialist: Alexandria Anderson |
alexandria.anderson@maryland.gov.

Eligible Applicants

The following entity types are eligible for this program.

- Nonprofit organizations
- State and local governments
- Businesses
- Individuals

All applicants must be legally able to do business in the state and in good standing with the [Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation \(SDAT\)](#).

All Non-Profit Organizations must be registered with [Maryland's Secretary of State](#).

Eligible Projects

Awards are offered in three tiers based on your project type. Applicants can only apply for one tier per project. Matching funds are not required, but they are encouraged. MCAAHC may adjust grant amounts or award fewer grants based on the applications received. Applicants can only apply for one tier per project.

To be eligible, the projects must:

- Be in Maryland

- Have a clear, documented connection to African American history, culture, or heritage

Eligible Project Types

Applicants can only apply to one tier. All proposals must have a clear plan for a 12-month grant period and must directly connect to Maryland's African American heritage and culture. This grant is meant to fund work that can be finished in 12 months – in special cases, staff may grant an extension if you ask in advance and show a clear need.

Tier 1: Organizational Capacity | Up to \$50,000

This tier pays for new staff member positions or consultants to help groups that lack the workforce to meet their preservation goals. The position must directly advance the preservation, stewardship, or interpretation of African American history and culture in Maryland, rather than general office operations.

Qualifying positions include, but are not limited to:

- Preservation coordinator or site manager
- Project manager leading a capital or preservation planning effort
- History program or education coordinator
- Collections, archives, or records manager
- Community outreach coordinator focused on site events
- Grant writer or fundraiser dedicated to site funding that supports programming or projects related to an African American heritage site (excluding this grant)

Eligible uses:

- Salaries and wages for the grant-funded position only. Pay rates must match standard local pay. You may include benefits like health insurance.
- Consultant fees set as a flat contract price. Your budget must clearly explain all work covered by the fee.

Ineligible positions:

- Clergy and religious ministry staff
- Janitorial and general maintenance staff
- Executive or office staff who do not handle preservation or site programs

Applicants must demonstrate:

1. How the position helps reach your historic preservation or program goals
2. A realistic plan to keep paying for the position after the grant ends (if applicable)

3. A clear reason for choosing a paid staff member over a consultant, or a consultant over a staff member.

Tier 2: Project Planning | Up to \$25,000

This tier pays for plans, studies, and strategies that guide how to preserve, manage, protect or interpret African American history and culture. All funded activities must produce a final written deliverable with clear, step-by-step recommendations. Certain deliverables must meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Eligible planning activities include:

Organizational & Financial Planning

- Business and leadership plans for nonprofit managers
- Fundraising plans to directly support the preservation and stewardship of a site or sites
- Strategic plans that advance site preservation
- Plans to address legal issues affecting the site
- Marketing and communications plans

Pre-Development & Capital Project Planning

- Property condition assessments with estimated costs
- Historic structures reports and conservation plans
- Preservation plans
- Engineering and environmental studies
- Landscape conservation plans
- ADA accessibility studies
- Energy efficiency and climate readiness strategies
- Project feasibility studies
- Plans and studies for historic cemeteries

Designation and Historic Site Protection

- Nominations for the National Register of Historic Places or designation as a National Historic Landmark
- Costs to transfer a preservation easement to MHT for a capital grant award (AAHPP capital, Historic Preservation capital, or Maryland Heritage Areas Program capital)

A strong Tier 2 proposal names the exact final deliverable and explains how it will advance the preservation, management, protection, or interpretation of African American history and culture.

Tier 3: Programming & Interpretation | Up to \$25,000

This tier funds public programs that connect communities to African American history through education, documentation, storytelling, and the arts. All projects must focus on African American heritage and must host public events during the 12-month grant period.

Eligible activities:

- Educational programs, tours, or community workshops rooted in African American history and culture
- Community oral history projects that collect and preserve living memories
- Interpretation plans that guide how African American History and Culture is shared with the public
- Partnerships with artists and scholars to create new programs, like performances, artwork, or digital storytelling
- Arts and culture events that bring history and culture to life and build strong community ties
- Design and installation of historic markers, if paired with public programs
- Community mapping projects that find and record African American resources
- Repatriation projects to return ancestral remains to Maryland's African American communities

Ineligible uses:

- Making or installing historic markers without supporting public programs

A strong Tier 3 proposal describes the project's activities and a realistic timeline, explains how local community members are involved, and shows what visitors will learn or experience.

All Tiers

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs in your budget must directly relate to your project work. Nonprofit applicants can add a line item named "Indirect Costs." This item can cover up to 15% of the total grant request.

Ineligible Uses (see [Exhibit 1](#))

Application Process

Grant applications are due by 11:59 pm on November 20, 2026.

Access the program webpage here: tiny.cc/MHT-NCAAHPP

What to know about the online application:

- **First-Time Users:** If you have not used the grant portal before, you must create a user ID and password.
- **Quick Start Guide:** A guide on how to use the portal and upload files is on MHT's ["How to Apply for a Grant" page](#).
- **Two Links:** Organizations and individuals must use separate application links on the webpage.
- **Downloading Copies:** You can download blank, draft, or completed versions by selecting "Download" at the top left of the form.
- **Application Structure:** The application uses topic tabs that match the sections of these guidelines.
- **Required Questions:** Questions marked with a red asterisk (*) are mandatory. You cannot submit your application without them.
- **Confirmation:** You will see a confirmation message on screen and receive a confirmation email once the application is submitted.

Resources

The following materials are available for applicants:

- Guidelines and documents
- Technical assistance, including links to webinar recordings and slide decks

"Applicant Information" Tab

This tab collects information about your organization to verify grant eligibility. Fill out all sections to avoid review delays.

Nonprofits (including state and federal government entities), **local jurisdictions**, **private individuals**, and **businesses** can all apply for funding. To be eligible, nonprofits and

businesses must be in good standing, registered to do business in Maryland, and legally able to manage grant funds.

Important Notes for Individuals and Businesses

- Selection typically favors projects owned or backed by nonprofits and local governments.
- To be competitive, projects run by individuals or for-profit businesses must serve a clear public benefit rather than private gain.
- Use the correct application link for your group type (individual vs. organization).

Primary Contact

Designate **one** main person for all project notices and emails. You may list other team contacts, but only the primary contact receives official notices.

Organization

Legal Name

- Nonprofits and businesses must be registered to do business with SDAT. [Search the SDAT database to confirm.](#)
- The name must **EXACTLY MATCH** the legal name as registered with SDAT, or your application may be rejected.
- If you are not registered, contact SDAT early so it processes **before** the application deadline.

SDAT Standing

- Your organization must be in **good standing**. You can find this by clicking your “Department ID” on the SDAT site where it should show “Active,” “Revived,” or “Incorporated.”
- If it shows “Forfeited” or “Dissolved,” you must resolve your status with SDAT.
- Keep your SDAT information current, including your listed Resident Agent.

Tax Exempt Status

Tax ID / Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)

- Nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies must provide a 9-digit EIN.
- Individuals without an EIN should enter “N/A.” **DO NOT** enter a social security number.

Proof of Nonprofit Status (if applicable)

- Upload your IRS determination letter.

- If you share a tax-exempt status with a national body (common for churches and service groups), upload an IRS umbrella letter proving your coverage. The umbrella letter comes from the parent organization and usually includes a copy of the group exemption letter issued by the IRS.
- Your organization name must match your IRS letter.
- All Non-Profit Organizations must be registered with [Maryland's Secretary of State](#).

Organizational Documents

Nonprofits and businesses MUST upload organizational documents, including their **Organizational Bylaws** and **Articles of Incorporation**.

“Mission and Organizational Capacity” Tab

Provide background information on your organization, including a **mission statement**, **institution type** (archives, cultural or historic site, historical society, etc.), **volunteer support**, **years in operation**, **accreditation**, **collections** and **exhibits**, and **staff details**.

“Programming and Impact” Tab

Describe your organization’s current goals, programming, and community impact. Think about how your project benefits the public and supports MCAAHC’s and MHT’s missions for African American heritage in Maryland. Applicants must answer the following questions:

- **In what ways will this project directly benefit the local African American community affiliated with the site?**
- **How will this grant enable your organization to effectively highlight and elevate African American history in Maryland?**
- **What is the estimated annual attendance for your public programming?**
Applicants can enter a single number or a range.
- **What is your projected audience size for public programming in 2028?**
Applicants should specify the operational schedule (hours per day, days per week, and months per year) that the site or program will be accessible to the public.
- **How will this project expand your reach and engage broader audiences?**
Applicants should outline specific implementation strategies, including strategic partnerships, new initiatives, and promotional efforts.

“Grant Request” Tab

Applicants must specify their project tier, outline a detailed budget, describe the intended use of funds, and present a strategy for long-term sustainability.

Project Tier

Applicants will select their project focus from one of the three tiers: Organizational Capacity, Project Planning, or Programming & Interpretation.

Funding Requested

Applicants can request up to **\$50,000 for Tier 1** or up to **\$25,000 for Tier 2 and Tier 3** in round increments of \$1,000. Base your figures on vendor estimates and verify that all items are eligible.

Applicants must explain how this funding will enhance their organization's long-term sustainability and operational self-sufficiency and address questions specific to their project tier.

- **For Tier 1 - Organizational Capacity**, applicants must address how they would use an organizational capacity grant. Applicants must detail all planned activities and justify how they will strengthen organizational effectiveness.
- **For Tier 2 - Project Planning**, applicants must address how they would use a project planning grant. Applicants must write a proposal that identifies the specific deliverable, the type of professional who will produce it, and how it will advance the project, program, or site's goals.
- **For Tier 3 - Programming & Interpretation**, applicants must address how they would use a programming and interpretation grant? Applicants must describe specific activities. Tier 3 applicants must explain how the proposed programming help people better understand African American history in Maryland.

Budget Steps

1. Download and fill out the MHT's budget spreadsheet from within the application or from the program webpage in the “For Grant Applicants” menu.
2. Complete the budget, adding the expenses the grant would cover.
3. Upload the budget spreadsheet as an **Excel file (.XLSX)**, and not a PDF.

Budget Narrative

Applicants should provide context about their organization's financial status, including current challenges, funding needs, and why operational support is essential now.

Other Project Funds

List all committed matching funds or other funding sources in the spreadsheet.

“Attachments” Tab

Tier 1 applicants can upload their operating budget if they have one. **All applicants** can upload relevant supporting materials to strengthen your application, such as site photos, estimates, or letters of support. These documents are optional – only attach files that relate directly to your project and are referenced on the “Attachments” tab.

“Release & Consent” Tab

Review and sign disclosures with an **electronic signature**. Contact the program administrator if you have any questions.

Grant Terms and Conditions

All applicants awarded grants through the AAHPP must sign a Grant Agreement with the Maryland Department of Planning and MHT. This agreement sets the rules for your grant.

Project Scope & Budget

Winning a grant does not automatically approve your project plan or budget. MHT may adjust your plan to ensure the grant pays only for eligible costs. Do not start work on this phase until you talk with your project monitor.

Grant Disbursements

- Payments are made as your project progresses.
- To receive a payment, you must submit a Request for Payment that meets MHT standards and follows the Grants Manual.
- Any services funded entirely or in part by this grant must be chosen through a competitive bidding process that meets MHT approval. To satisfy this requirement, you must publicly advertise these service opportunities or solicit proposals from a wide range of providers. Please note that applicants are not expected to have completed this competitive procurement process prior to submitting their application.

Compliance & Legal Rules

- You must follow all federal, state, and local laws. This includes rules on equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, accessibility, and keeping a drug- and alcohol-free workplace.
- MHT may add extra rules to ensure proper reporting and spending checks.

Reporting Requirements

All grantees must submit financial reports that track spending against their approved budget. Photos and community stories are welcome, but optional.

Mid-Grant Check-In

- **Tier 1 (Organizational Capacity):** Write a brief report on hiring progress and early challenges.
- **Tier 2 (Project Planning):** Provide an update on your planning work, consultant hiring, and any plan changes.

- **Tier 3 (Programming & Interpretation):** Share an update on completed events, audience size, and any plan adjustments.

Final Report

- **Tier 1 (Organizational Capacity):** Summarize staff work, site results, and an itemized cost list. Submit an updated funding plan within 60 days of the grant end date.
- **Tier 2 (Project Planning):** Turn in your final written planning report along with a summary of next steps within 60 days of project completion.
- **Tier 3 (Programming & Interpretation):** Summarize all completed programs, public reach, and community impact within 60 days of the grant end date.

Standing with the State of Maryland

All awardees must remain in good standing with SDAT before you sign the agreement and throughout the entire project. [Verify your status on the SDAT website.](#)

All non-profit organizations are required to keep their registration current with the [Maryland Secretary of State.](#)

Exhibit 1: Ineligible Costs

Grant funds **CANNOT** pay for:

- Costs from outside the grant period set in the grant agreement
- Costs outside the approved scope of work
- Capital work like building construction or structural repair (eligible for AAHPP's capital grant)
- Insurance premiums
- Property appraisals
- Equipment that is not essential to the project
- Meetings, events, and fundraising costs (e.g., venue rentals, food, etc.)
- Routine maintenance or repairs
- Landscaping that is not related to the project plan
- General office expenses and everyday operating costs
- Accounting or audit fees
- Property or personal property taxes
- Project management costs, if staff can reasonably cover those duties as part of their regular job
- Certain legal fees
- Any contractor service that was not hired through a fair, competitive bid process
- Some permit or government approval fees
- Reimbursing volunteers for donated time
- Indirect or overhead costs not tied directly to the funded project

Exhibit 2: Project Selection Criteria

Reviewers will evaluate each proposal on its own merits using five core criteria:

- **Historical Significance:** Is the project's connection to African American history clearly documented and specifically explained?
- **Community Benefit:** Will the project directly benefit the local African American community connected to the site? Is the community voice reflected?
- **Clarity & Feasibility:** Is the plan clear, realistic, and easy to complete within 12 months? Is every budget item justified?
- **Organizational Capacity:** Does the team have the skills and workforce to complete the project? Is there a plan to keep the work going?
- **Long-Term Impact:** Will this work create a lasting benefit for the African American heritage site?