



**ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUMS**

*in partnership with*



**NOFO 2023 Grant Guidelines**

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### *Purpose*

The **African American Civil Rights Network (AACRN)** Grant Project will document, interpret, and preserve the history and stories of the African American struggle to gain equal rights. The program funds research, documentation, educational, and interpretative projects to commemorate, honor and interpret “. . . the history of the African American Civil Rights movement as a crucial element in the evolution of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and the relevance of the African American Civil Rights movement in fostering the spirit of social justice and national reconciliation.” Grants are awarded through a competitive process and do not require a non-Federal match. Eligible entities must be members or recipients of an [NPS State, Local, Tribal, Planning and Grants Division \(STLPG\)](#) African American Civil Rights Grant prior to application deadline.

The AACRN grants support community efforts to document, protect, preserve, and interpret important resources with a verifiable connection to the history of African American civil rights. These competitively funded projects will leverage additional investment in African American civil rights resources and will support the work of community groups, non-profits, and state or local governments in preserving and interpreting their historic resources. Through these preserved historic places and these educational and research programs and facilities, the public will learn more about the role of African Americans in the development of the nation. The increased ability to appreciate African American heritage rests on the protection, preservation and promotion of properties, facilities, and interpretive programs associated with this history and on ready access to information about the importance of these resources to people of all ages, races and ethnicities. Information gained from all of the projects will lead to a deeper understanding of the African American experience than currently exists.

### *Background*

The **African American Civil Rights Network (AACRN)** was created with the passage of the African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-04) to recognize “the importance of the African American Civil Rights movement and the sacrifices made by the people who fought against discrimination and segregation.” The Network is established within the National Park Service (NPS), who oversees the process for adding properties, facilities, and programs to the Network. These must have a direct and verifiable connection to the African American Civil Rights movement.

AACRN is not a competitive program; all properties, facilities, and programs that meet the requirements will be added to the Network.

To apply for AACRN, please visit: [African American Civil Rights Network](#).

The **Association of African American Museums (AAAM)** was established to provide professional development and networking opportunities to serve its membership base and African American and African diaspora audiences broadly. AAAM has a longstanding success rate of convening leaders, from national and international institutions, around issues of professional development and capacity building, boasting a membership of over 1,100 individual and institutional members rallying around this worthy cause.

Membership is composed of museums, museum professionals, institutions, and individuals that share an interest in African American art, culture, and history. Through training opportunities and member services, AAAM supports the goals of African American museums and museum professionals. AAAM includes cultural organizations, historical societies and museums which not only collect, preserve, and exhibit objects valuable to art, history and science, but also educational institutions, research agencies and cultural centers.

AAAM works as an advocate for the interests of institutions and individuals committed to the support of African and African derived cultures. It defines a relationship for the body of such institutions within the national museum community, and seeks to strengthen such institutions through improved communication, shared resources, training, annual conferences, technical assistance, and fundraising guidance. AAAM also provides, through newsletters, placement bureaus, etc., services supportive for the professional needs of its membership.

## **ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **Eligible Applicants:**

**AAAM Annual Institutional** membership is required, if awarded a grant. Applicants without a current AAAM membership at this level, if awarded a grant, will finalize this process before the “Grant Period” start date. Please see the Institutional Membership line item (F) on the AAAM | AACRN Budget Form.

Benefits of AAAM Annual Institutional membership include up to five (5) individuals to form a single group with year-round association access and support. Additionally, during said membership period, a maximum of 10 team members may attend the AAAM annual conference at the published member/discounted rate (per person).

**NPS AACRN** members; and past or existing NPS STLPG AACR grant recipients with a **Letter of Owner Consent** agreeing to become a member of the NPS AACRN.

Benefits of NPS AACRN members include non-commercial use of the program logo, access to NPS staff technical assistance on African American civil rights projects and activities as capacity allows, and access to a network of sites, programs, and facilities dedicated to researching, documenting, and interpreting the history of African American Civil Rights.

To apply for the NPS African American Civil Rights Network (AACRN), please visit:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/african-american-civil-rights-network.htm>

**NOTE: Past or existing NPS STPLG AACR grant recipients that are NOT current AACRN members, must become members by submitting a Letter of Owner Consent to join the AACRN as part of their grant application *and* shall submit a complete application to the [NPS AACRN e-database](#) within 90 days of notice of award as a requirement of the award.**

**The NPS AACRN membership and/or status as a STPLG grant recipient will be verified as part of the technical review of grant proposals. *Any applicant not a member, a STPLG grant recipient, and/or not having submitted a complete application prior to the closing date of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) application date deadline, will not receive further consideration.***

## **AWARD INFORMATION**

**Total Funding:** \$2,700,000

**Expected Award Amount\***

**Maximum Award:** \$25,000

**Minimum Award:** \$5,000

\*Grant applications must range from \$5,000 to \$25,000.

**NOFO Opens:** Sunday, October 1, 2023

**NOFO Closes:** Friday, December 1, 2023

**Anticipated Award Month:** Black History Month (BHM) - February, 2024 (Tentative)

**Funding Disbursement Date:** March, 2024 (Tentative)

Projects receiving funding through this NOFO will start once funding has been secured and awards have been made.

Agreements are not effective until released through Submittable by AAAM.

Pre-agreement costs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with a final decision made by AAAM & NPS, not to exceed three months.

Upon receiving funding through this NOFO, there will be an opportunity for grant recipients to attend the 2024 AAAM Conference.

**Expected Number of Awards:** Approximately 150

**Type of Award Funding Instrument Type:** G - Grant

**G-Grant Definition:** A legal instrument of financial assistance between The Association of African American Museums and a non-Federal entity.

### **Substantial Involvement**

No substantial involvement on the part of the AAAM is anticipated.

**Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No**

Cost share is not required for this agreement but may be considered as a competitive factor. Applicants should consider the adding a match as a part of a concise and well-defined project that might be part of or a phase of a much larger project.

**Eligible Costs**

- Eligible costs include survey, planning, collections conservation, and documentation of historic sites/events, as well as the creation of interpretive and educational programming and materials (including oral histories).
- Successful applications will emphasize innovative strategies, creative projects with measurable results, expanded accessibility, and include cross generational engagement that promote and preserve the communities of African American civil rights history.
- Projects must fit one of the categories listed below. If a project overlaps more than one category, select the dominant category.
  - Survey and Planning
  - Research and Documentation
  - Interpretation and Education
  - Collection Conservation
  - Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality
  - Digitization
  - GIS Mapping
  - Website Enhancements
  - Custom Mobile App Development
  - Accessibility
- Eligible costs under this program include:
  - Administrative costs necessary to complete and administer the grant requirements;
  - Cost for producing or amending a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places or Tribal Register (if applicable);
  - Cost for establishing/administering an easement/covenant for the property;
  - Cost for any required audits or financial requests;
  - Cost for the production of a project sign;
  - Costs associated with required training or reporting; and
  - Any other costs as determined eligible in accordance with the OMB circulars, NPS policies, and the standards outlined in the [Historic Preservation Fund Grants Manual](#) adopted by AAAM.

## What Is Not Funded

- Construction, repair, rehab of existing or new sites;
- Acquisition of collections or historic sites;
- Long-term maintenance or curatorial work beyond the grant period;
- Reconstructing historic properties (recreating all or a significant portion that no longer exists);
- Moving historic properties or work on moved historic properties that are no longer eligible for listing in the NRHP;
- Cash reserves, endowments, revolving funds, or fund-raising costs;
- Work performed prior to award date;
- Work on sites or collections owned by the NPS;
- Lobbying or advocacy activities;
- Costs for work already completed or funded through other programs;
- Administrative costs plus indirect costs beyond 25% of the total project budget; Miscellaneous costs, contingencies, reserves, and overhead.

## **APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### Address to Request Application Package

All application information and documentation can be found on [blackmuseums.org](https://blackmuseums.org).

A full application consists of the following:

NOTE: Items 1 through 10 will be available via “Submittable”.

1. AAAM | AACRN Grant Program Application
2. Matched Funds/Cost Sharing spreadsheet **NOTE:** *Cost sharing is not required but may be considered as a competitive factor.*
3. Project Information Section
4. [AAAM | AACRN BUDGET FORM \(Submittable\) Workbook](#)
  - a. Do you have policies and procedures in place that meet certified/approved financial management standards? Copies of policies may be requested if selected for funding.
  - b. Do you have a single audit? If “no”, do you have another type of audit or other annual financial statement?
  - c. Can you certify that there will be no overlap of Federal Funding?
  - d. Please attach a complete set of financial statements including:
    - Balance Sheet/Statement of Financial Position
    - Statement of Revenue and Expense/Statement of Activities
    - Statement of Cash Flow
5. Project Team Description (Enter Narrative or Upload Resume(s) or Career Vitae(s))

6. Letter of Owner Consent (for AACRN membership, if applicable)
7. Project Scope
8. Project Timetable
9. Future Plans
10. Letters of Support

Materials not specifically requested as part of the application package, although included, may not be reviewed.

## **Content and Form of Application Submission**

### **Project Narrative**

- Project descriptions must specifically address each of the evaluation criteria and applications will be reviewed with the rubric as a guide as part of the merit evaluation process.
- AAAM will evaluate and consider only those applications that specifically address each of the criteria listed in Section E.
- A helpful Project (Proposal) Description Worksheet format may be found on GRANTS.GOV (“Related Documents” tab). NOTE: This is a sample and includes all character limits. The Project Description Summary is limited to 3,000 characters including spaces. Criterion limitations (including characters and spaces) are detailed below.

### **Submission Dates and Times**

**Due Date for Applications: Wednesday, January 31, 2024**

### **Application Due Date Explanation**

Electronically transmitted applications must be submitted to the Association of African American Museums **no later than 11:59 PM, ET on Wednesday, January 31, 2024.**

Applicants are held responsible for their proposal submissions. Applications must be received by the date above. Applicants are encouraged to submit the application well before the deadline.

Application preparation time may take several weeks. It is recommended that organizations begin the application process as soon as possible. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for award. If it is determined that a proposal was not considered due to lateness, the applicant will be notified after the selection process.

### **Letter of Owner Consent, if applicable**

- **Past or existing NPS STPLG AACR grant recipients that are NOT AACRN members, may become members by submitting a [Letter of Owner Consent](#) to join the AACRN as part of their grant application *and* shall submit a complete application to the AACRN e-database within 90 days of notice of award as a requirement of the award.**
- If your project is doing work to or preparing a National Register nomination for a property and the owner is different than the applicant, then the applicant **must** include written permission from the owner to complete the project **and** any applicable easements or covenants with the application. If this is anticipated as part of the project, indicate the plan for obtaining this owner consent as part of the project.
- The Letter of Owner Consent must be submitted with the application, signed no earlier than 60 days before the application due date, and pertain to and be included with this particular application.
- Previous letters of owner consent will **not** be accepted.

### **Letters of Support, if applicable**

- Letters of support should be submitted if defining specific partner involvement, support, or matching funds. These letters **must be submitted with your application via Submittable** as part of the attachments form. Letters received in any other manner may not be considered. All letters must be addressed to:

**Vedet Coleman-Robinson, Ph.D., Executive Director  
Association of African American Museums**

- **DO NOT mail/send separately.** They must be submitted with your application. Letters not submitted via Submittable may not be considered. This applies to Congressional Letters of Support as well, a copy must be included with your application.

As outlined in items 4.a. - 4.d., above, if being considered or selected for an award, AAAM reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to:

1. Other budget information
2. Financial capability
3. Evaluation of risk
4. Name and phone number of the Designated Responsible Employee



**APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION****Criteria:****Criterion 1****Maximum Points: 5**

Description	The proposed project must have a direct connection to the significance of African-American civil rights and the struggle for equality.
Significance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the resource(s) in the proposed project and the role the resource(s) played in African American civil rights and the struggle for equality and/or in research and/or interpretation and education of African American civil rights and the struggle for equality.</li> <li>2. Identify any current designations, recognitions, or awards (if applicable) at the National, State, Tribal, or local level and if those designations and awards describe the role the resource(s) played in the African-American civil rights and the struggle for equality and/or in research, and/or interpretation and education of African American civil rights and the struggle for equality.</li> <li>3. Discuss the current integrity of the resource.</li> </ol>

**Criterion 2****Maximum Points: 5**

Description	The proposed project addresses an imminent threat or demonstrates a need.
Need/ Urgency/ Threat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the need, urgency, and/or threat the project addresses including the source, nature, extent, and severity.</li> <li>2. Discuss how the project will directly mitigate the threat, if applicable.</li> <li>3. Discuss how the project is the next logical step towards long-term preservation of the resource(s).</li> </ol>

**Criterion 3****Maximum Points: 5**

Description	The proposed project must be achievable within 1 year, within a reasonable budget, and be performed with qualified personnel and/or consultants.
Feasibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List and describe all tasks and their expected results.</li> <li>2. Justify the timetable as provided in the Timetable field of Project Information section, keeping in mind that award announcements are not expected until approximately 6 months following the application due date.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate that the costs identified in the AAAM   AACRN BUDGET FORM Workbook are necessary, reasonable, and allowable.</li> <li>4. Demonstrate how you will successfully complete the project within the given timeframe (1 year) and with the given resources while meeting all federal requirements and guidelines.</li> <li>5. Briefly describe who or what type of expertise will be involved in carrying out the project and their qualifications, attach resumes/CVs as applicable.</li> </ol>

**Criterion 4****Maximum Points: 5**

Description	Proposed projects must develop sustainable long-term preservation of the resource(s).
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the impacts of the project after completion, including long-term effects.</li> <li>2. Describe the maintenance plan for the project after grant work is completed.</li> <li>3. Describe how the preservation of this resource will support the community and continue to tell the story of the struggle for African American civil rights.</li> </ol>

## Review and Selection Process

### *Performance Goals and Objectives*

1. Performance Goals –
  - a. To expand knowledge about the history of the African American civil rights movement and the sacrifices made by the people who fought against discrimination and segregation.
  - b. To improve interpretation of this information to the public
  - c. To preserve historic sites associated with this history
  - d. To support communities in uncovering and telling their history
  
2. Project Objectives – To competitively fund research, interpretation, and preservation projects by sites, interpretive or educational programs, or research facilities that have a verifiable connection to African American civil rights movements as demonstrated by previous review and acceptance as members of the African American Civil Rights Network (AACRN) or recipient of an NPS African American Civil Rights Grant.
  
3. Data Captured by Submittable
  - a. 250 characters - Project Title
  - b. 3,000 characters - Project Description Summary
  - c. 1,000 characters - Project Team (including Consultants, Contractors, and Partners) Description
  - d. 500 characters - Organizational Mission
  - e. 500 characters - Project Site Description NOTE: In instances where an applicant does not have a physical site, the form will support "We do not have a specific site, however, **Applicant A** has a national reach and we plan to use our affiliates to identify sites to serve as stewards of the community, collections, and important individuals and activities of national significance and to commemorate these legacies".
  - f. 500 characters - Resource/Site Significance NOTE: This will need to be incorporated in the Project Site Description.
  - g. 4,000 characters - Project Proposal Description
  - h. 1,000 characters - Project Scope
  - i. 500 characters - Project Timetable NOTE: A maximum number of five (5) files may be uploaded in accordance with the file types listed in Submittable.
  - j. 1,500 characters - Future Plans
  - k. 500 characters - Financial Sustainability Description

Prior to award, the program will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the program may request modifications to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or AAAM may choose not to fund the selected project.

The program may not make an award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time AAAM is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Qualified AAAM personnel, and in some cases independent federal and non-profit expert reviewers, will review all proposals. All proposals for funding will be considered using the criteria outlined above. A summary of the review panel comments may be provided to the applicant if requested.

**a. Initial Review**

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; and (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program determination). If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further review.

**b. Comprehensive Merit Review**

All applications that satisfactorily pass the initial review will be eligible for the Comprehensive Merit Review. Each criteria element will be scored with the following **suggested** range:

Description				
Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	
5	5	5	5	Superior
4	4	4	4	Good
3	3	3	3	Satisfactory
2	2	2	2	Marginal
1	1	1	1	Poor
0	0	0	0	Not Acceptable

The scoring of each criterion must be based on the strengths and weaknesses of the application materials. To assist in assigning an appropriate score, the following will be used as guidance:

Rating	Descriptive Statement
Superior	Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates that it will meet the AAAM's performance requirements, and demonstrates no weaknesses.
Good	Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates a likelihood of meeting the AAAM's requirements, and demonstrates only a few minor weaknesses.
Satisfactory	Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the AAAM's performance requirements. The Application contains weaknesses and/or a number of minor weaknesses.
Marginal	Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet AAAM's performance requirements. The Application contains significant weaknesses and/or a significant number of minor weaknesses.
Poor	Applicant addresses some aspects of the criterion and demonstrates some doubt in the likelihood of successfully meeting the AAAM's requirements. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strength presented.
Not Acceptable	Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion and the information presented indicates a strong likelihood of failure to meet the AAAM's requirements.

**c. Selection**

The Selection Official may consider the merit review recommendation, program policy factors, and the amount of funds available to select applications for funding.

**d. Discussions and Award**

AAAM may enter into discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to: (1) only a portion of the application is selected for award; (2) AAAM needs additional information to determine that the applicant is capable of complying with the requirements of DOI Financial Assistance Regulations, and/or (3)

additional specific terms and conditions are required. Failure to satisfactorily resolve the issues identified by AAAM may result in award cancellation.

**e. Evaluation of Applicant Risk**

Applications selected for funding will be subject to a pre- award risk.

**Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

Projects receiving funding through this Notice of Funding Opportunity will start once funding has been secured and awards have been made. Agreements are not effective until released through Submittable by AAAM Grants Manager. **Do not anticipate a start date sooner than 6 months following the application deadline.**

**FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Award Notices**

Upon being selected for the award, successful applicants will receive notification of the selection of their application for funding. AAAM anticipates funding notifications to the applicants selected for award around 3 months following the application deadline. A notice of selection is not an authorization to begin performance on an agreement. This notice will detail the next steps in the awarding process.

Work cannot begin before the grantee receives a fully executed copy of the grant agreement through Submittable by the AAAM Grants Manager. Any pre- award costs incurred prior to the receipt of a fully executed copy of the grant agreement or written notice signed by a Grants Manager authorizing pre-award costs, is at the applicant's own risk.

Organizations whose applications have not been selected will be advised as promptly as possible.

**Reporting**

**Financial Reports**

All recipients must use the AAAM Financial Report form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

**Performance Reports**

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the

project results. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date.

### **Significant Development Reports**

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the AAAM award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify AAAM in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

### **Conflict of Interest Disclosures**

Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arises during the life of their award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any employee in the funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the award. Recipients may not have a former AAAM employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award. AAAM will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, AAAM will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies AAAM may result in termination of the award.

## **FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

### **Program Technical Contact**

For **programmatic technical assistance**, contact:

**Vedet Coleman-Robinson, Ph.D. - Executive Director, AAAM**

P.O. Box 23698

Washington, D.C. 20026-3698

Telephone:

202-828-3399

Email\*:

info@blackmuseums.org

**\*Email is the preferred method of communication, including questions regarding Submittable.**

### **Program Administration Contact**

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

**Vedet Coleman-Robinson, Ph.D. - Executive Director, AAAM**

P.O. Box 23698

Washington, D.C. 20026-3698

Telephone:

202-828-3399

Email\*:

[info@blackmuseums.org](mailto:info@blackmuseums.org)

**\*Email is the preferred method of communication, including questions regarding Submittable.**

### **Application System Technical Support**

For **Submittable technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages**, contact:

#### **Grants support**

Email\*: [info@blackmuseums.org](mailto:info@blackmuseums.org)

**\*Email is the preferred method of communication, including questions regarding Submittable**

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

#### **Payments**

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through ACH Deposit, unless approved for a waiver by the AAAM program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through ACH Deposit.

#### **Program Information**

Grants are awarded through a competitive process and do not have a matching requirement.

General program information is available on the AAAM website at: [blackmuseums.org](https://blackmuseums.org)

General program information is available about the NPS AACRN at: [nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/african-american-civil-rights-network.htm](https://nps.gov/subjects/civilrights/african-american-civil-rights-network.htm)