



## NATIONAL TRUST AWARDS HISTORIC MITCHEVILLE FREEDOM PARK AWARDED GRANT TO HELP PRESERVE AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

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The call to action by American citizens during this year has made us all rethink how we view American history. Protestors have demanded the nation target injustice and fix the systems that promote the unequal treatment of African Americans. The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund was founded at a similar time of crisis, after the 2017 rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, that led to the creation of a national preservation campaign meant to uplift and honor the Black American experience, including Historic Mitchelville.

“The AACHAF was created out of the recognition that we in the field of preservation needed to do more,” said **Brent Leggs, executive director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund**. “We realized that the American story we often tell repeatedly negates the transformative contributions of African Americans, whose capability, intellect, and creativity were and still are invaluable to the building of this nation. The Trust decided then and there to create the Action Fund as a way to help fill in those gaps. We realized that preservation of historic sites, where African Americans changed the American landscape, could be one way our nation comes to understand the need to create a more fair and just society. We saw a more inclusive approach to historic preservation as one step on the long road to heal the divisions between us.”

Through its [African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund](#), the Trust is investing more than \$1.6 million in grants to 27 sites and organizations across 22 states and the District of Columbia. Thanks to our partnership and a generous grant provided by [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#), we are funding communities to protect, restore, and interpret African American historic sites and uncover hidden narratives of the African American contribution to the American story.

“The Action Fund plays a crucial role in elevating Black voices and stories in our national dialogue about arts and culture, and in expanding our collective knowledge and understanding of African-American history,” remarked **Mellon Foundation President Elizabeth Alexander**. “We are thrilled that the 2020 Action Fund grants will continue to provide transformative support to Black cultural organizations and heritage sites throughout the country.

**Leggs** underscored the importance of this work, noting, “The recipients of this funding exemplify centuries of African American resilience, activism, and achievement, some known and some yet untold, which tell the complex story of American history in the United States. Over the past two years, the Action Fund has funded 65 historic African American places and invested more than \$4.3 million to help preserve landscapes and buildings imbued with Black cultural heritage. With urgency and intention, the



must value the link between architecture and racial justice and should fund these and other cultural assets to ensure their protection and preservation.”

Grants are given across four categories: capacity building, project planning, capital, and programming and interpretation. The list of all 27 grantees and a short blurb about each is attached. A link to a fuller web version of the list can be accessed here: <https://savingplaces.org/2020-action-fund-grant-recipients>.

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