



National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Grants



GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM PROGRAM?

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 (P. L. 105-203) directs the National Park Service (NPS) to establish a program that tells the story of resistance against the institution of slavery in the United States (and related territories) through escape and flight. This story is illustrative of a fundamental tenet of this nation that all human beings embrace the right to self-determination and freedom from oppression. Through the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program (NTF), the NPS acknowledges the significance of the Underground Railroad not only in its contribution to the eradication of slavery in the United States, but also as the cornerstone for a more comprehensive national civil rights movement that followed.

The Program is coordinating preservation and education efforts nationwide, and is working to integrate local historical sites, museums, and interpretive programs that have a verifiable association with the Underground Railroad into a mosaic of community, regional, national, and international stories.

2021 GRANT INFORMATION

In collaboration with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the NTF will be making small competitive grants in 2021 to sites, programs, or facilities listed in the Network to Freedom. Due to the amount of funds available (\$180,000), minimum awards will be \$1000 and maximum grant awards will be \$10,000. Matching funds are encouraged, but not required. Priority will be given to listings that have previously not been awarded grant funding. These grants are intended to strengthen research, interpretation, heritage tourism, and preservation efforts of Network to Freedom members, and may be used for markers or signs.

The NTF invites private and non-profit organizations, as well as Federal, state, tribal, and local governments to submit applications for these 2021 grants. Please note that eligible proposals from religious properties listed in the Network to Freedom are restricted to preservation projects or NTF signs only.

Completed applications must be **received by** the NPS, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program on or before **May 14, 2021**. Late applications will not be considered.

Applications submitted under this program are requests for consideration for a grant, and not a promise for funding. No work covered in this application is to begin until the applicant has been notified in writing that funds have been awarded, and has accepted in writing the terms and conditions of the grant. The owner of the site, program or facility applying must be the signatory official and the grant recipient. The target date for announcing awards is June 11, 2021, but please allow some flexibility with the current COVID-19 situation. Projects **MUST** be completed by **December 31, 2022**.

Grants will be administered in accordance with all applicable Federal and state laws, regulations, policies, requirements and guidelines, including OMB Circular A-102 and A-110 (as applicable), Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, non-discrimination on the basis of handicap (Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and equal employment opportunity and labor law requirements of Federal grants.

PREREQUISITES FOR NETWORK TO FREEDOM GRANT ASSISTANCE

1. This grant assistance is available for preservation and related research of sites, programs, and facilities accepted in the Network to Freedom. “Applied” research projects which make previous research available to the public such as through interpretive or educational products are also eligible.
2. Preservation/restoration projects funded under this program constitute “undertakings” as defined by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 USC 470). Accordingly, for properties listed in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, grant recipients must complete the consultation process with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation prior to the receipt of funds. The consultation process aims to ensure that proposed work will not cause any adverse effect to the historic features of any National Register listed or eligible property.

All work on National Register listed or eligible properties must be conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Rooted in over 120 years of preservation ethics in both Europe and America, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are common sense principles in non-technical language. A series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations, they were developed to help protect our nation's irreplaceable cultural resources by promoting consistent preservation practices. Information about the Standards can be found on the Internet at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm> or by contacting a NPS Network to Freedom regional program manager.

For preservation or restoration work, grantees must ensure that staff or consultants who are thoroughly familiar with the concepts, methods, and techniques of historic preservation are employed to perform the grant-assisted work. Proposed work must contribute effectively to the long-term preservation of the historic property. Grant awards will be made for specific

structures or landscapes. Grants will not be awarded for projects already underway.

In accordance with the terms of the authorizing legislation, no change or alteration may be made to a property for which a grant is used except with the agreement of the property owner and the NPS. Conversion, use or disposal of a property receiving a grant for purposes contrary to the purposes of the Network to Freedom Act, shall result in a right of the United States to reimbursement of an amount equal to the grant.

WHO MAY APPLY

Any individual, private or non-profit organization as well as Federal, state, tribal, and local governments that have sites, programs, or facilities that have been listed as members in the Network to Freedom.

WHAT IS FUNDED

Congress authorized the creation of the NTF within the NPS to research, interpret, and preserve sites and resources associated with the Underground Railroad. As part of the national network program, the NPS supports projects that achieve the goals of preservation, interpretation, and education of Underground Railroad history. Specifically, the projects should support or enhance the Underground Railroad associations for which site, program, or facility was listed in the NTF. Examples of projects that support these objectives include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Markers or signs identifying the site as being in the NTF
- Interpretive markers, brochures, exhibits, websites;
- Historical research in support of interpretation or publications;
- Oral history and documenting oral traditions;
- Educational curricula and lesson plans;
- Cultural Resource surveys;
- Archeological surveys;
- Preservation and restoration of historic buildings, structures, landscapes;
- Projects to enhance accessibility of sites and programs (including installation of ramps or lifts)
- National Register documentation and nominations;
- Workshops and public educational programs;
- Technical assistance in associated site and/or landscape identification; and
- Preservation and stabilization of cultural artifacts, collections, and documents.

WHAT IS NOT FUNDED

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program does **NOT** fund acquisition projects. Other projects that are not funded include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Projects already started or currently underway;
- Research for, and preparation of, new Network to Freedom applications;
- Purchase (in fee simple or interest) of historic sites, buildings, structures, objects, or cultural artifacts; Operational funds or administrative salaries;
- Equipment purchase;
- New construction (in contrast to repair of existing features), with the limited exception of new construction required to create access for the disabled to historic resources.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. A Project Sign must be erected at the site of the grant-assisted preservation work during the duration of the project to acknowledge NPS grant assistance. For non-construction projects, NPS grant assistance must be acknowledged on any products resulting from the grant.
2. All grant projects require monitoring and approval by NTF staff before payment will be released. For interpretive products, markers, websites, etc, NTF staff must approve content and design in the draft stages.
3. Grant recipients must ensure that projects are carried out in a timely and professional manner. Grant funds not expended by will expire and be “re-captured” by the federal government.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. Proposals for research projects must provide a research plan that explains the research question that the project will address. The plan should also describe the primary sources (i.e., newspapers, diaries, letters, tax records, census records, military records, etc.) that will be consulted as part of the research and the type of information that the sources are expected to provide that will address the research questions.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESERVATION/RESTORATION PROJECTS

1. The grant recipient must ensure that all architectural or engineering services necessary for the investigation, documentation, design, or construction work will be conducted or supervised by a professional meeting the qualification requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards. (The NPS can advise whether an individual's education and preservation- related experience meet the Professional Qualification Standards.)
2. Grant recipients that do not have a structural engineer, architect, or historical architect on their staff must indicate in their grant application how they will contract for, or otherwise obtain, the expertise needed to enable them to monitor and approve the grant-assisted work. Because Federal funds are involved, professional service contracts must be awarded through the competitive negotiation method. If vendors/consultants/contractors are already

selected, it is critical the procurement (hiring) process meets the requirements of the grant program.

3. Each grant recipient is responsible for ensuring that all necessary predevelopment research, investigation, or design development has been completed, reviewed by the SHPO and NPS, and approved **prior to** the commencement of work for the construction phase of repair work. This must be accomplished before construction work is advertised or let for bids.
4. Grant recipients must provide a sufficient summary description of proposed work to confirm that proposed treatments are in compliance with the appropriate Secretary's Standards. Adequate photographs and color slides of the property to be repaired must accompany the grant application (see item 5 in the Application).
5. All work done on the property during the grant period, whether funded by the grant or not, must meet the Secretary's Standards.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS

1. Progress Reports will be required during the term of the grant, as specified by the Grant Agreement. Onsite inspections during construction projects may be conducted by NPS staff or contractors on a regular basis. Draft work products must be reviewed and approved by NPS staff for other project types.
2. A Final Progress Report must be submitted that describes whether the work was carried out as proposed. For preservation projects, it should describe the work accomplished, and whether the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties were met. Additional guidance on the reporting requirements will be provided in the Grant Agreement.
3. Costs for construction work that does not meet the Secretary's Standards will not be reimbursed. Photographs of the overall property and close-up shots of the grant-assisted work performed must be attached to the Final Report.
4. For projects supported by matching funds, requests for reimbursement must show that part of the project costs were covered by the match. For example, if the grant proposal outlines a 50 percent match, then for each payment request transmitted to NPS by the grantee, 50 percent of the costs incurred will be borne by this NPS grant's Federal share, and 50 percent will be paid by the non-federal matching share contributed by the grantee. Failure to provide the required non-Federal matching share will be grounds for terminating the Grant Agreement.
5. Grantees must submit a request for reimbursement form for payment, according to the procedures outlined in the grant agreement. All expenses charged to the grant (including the non-federal matching share) must be: directly related to the approved objectives and budget of the NPS-approved Grant Agreement; eligible in accordance with OMB Circular A-21; and supported by approved contracts, purchase orders, requisitions, bills, or other evidence of liability consistent with generally established purchasing procedures and generally accepted accounting principles.

6. The grants are made on a reimbursable basis. Receipts or invoices should be provided with requests for reimbursement under the grant. Payments will be made within 30 days of requests for reimbursement.

FUNDING LEVELS AND MATCH

The grant award for fiscal year 2021 is up to \$10,000 for the Federal share. The minimum grant award will be \$1000.

Matching funds are not required for these grants, though they are encouraged. Matching funds must be cash match, in-kind match does not qualify for bonus points. At least a 50% cash match is required in order to receive bonus points. Proposals submitted with matching funds of 50% will be awarded 5 bonus points and those with a 100% match or greater will be awarded 10 bonus points in the review process, which will rank projects on a 100 point scale. To qualify for these bonus points, applicant must submit sign and dated Match Certification Form and provide appropriate supporting information documenting the match as "in hand" by **May 14, 2021**. Any proposal that includes matching funds that cannot provide the documentation of availability by that date will not receive the bonus points in their final ranking by the review committee.

SELECTION PROCESS

A committee of reviewers, including NPS Network to Freedom regional program managers, other NPS staff, and non-NPS reviewers will rank applications and make funding recommendations. The target date for announcing awards is June 11, 2021, but please allow some flexibility with the current COVID-19 situation.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used by the above Committee to rank project applications:

Need for the Project (Section 5A). How this project addresses the goals and objectives of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. How the project enhances the values and associations for which the site, program, or facility was listed in the Network to Freedom. **(30 points)**

Work Plan and Timeline for Project Completion (Section 5B). How project objectives, activities, and desired results are to be designed and achieved, and a reasonable time schedule that provides for the completion of the project. List project personnel, including their qualifications and experience, and describe their responsibilities in carrying out the project. Describe the process used. For research projects, clearly articulate the research design in terms of research questions to be addressed and source materials to be consulted. **(20 points)**

Project Benefit/Outcomes (Section 5C). The proposed project must produce tangible products or benefits for the NTF member. **(20 points)**

Project Budget and Justification (Section 6). The budget must be clear and all listed items must be eligible, reasonable, and relevant to the project. Please note that equipment may be rented for the project, but grant funds cannot be used for acquisition of construction or similar equipment. **(30 points)**

Bonus: New Grant Recipients (Section 7A). Projects proposed by listings that have previously not been awarded grant funding will receive bonus points. **(5 points)**

Bonus: Matching Funds (Section 7B). Projects which include funds matching at least 50% of the grant amount requested will be awarded 5 bonus points in their evaluation, and those with 100% or greater will be awarded 10 points in their evaluation. To qualify for these bonus points, all of the match must be cash, not in-kind. The match must also be documented as “in hand” by **May 14, 2021**. Any proposal that includes matching funds that cannot provide the documentation of availability by that date will not receive the bonus points in their final ranking by the review committee. **(5-10 points)**

Bonus: Civil Rights (Section 7C). The Underground Railroad was just one part of a larger movement for social justice, which continues in the present. Projects that highlight the connections between Underground Railroad activism and struggles for access to education, suffrage, and/or public accommodations will be awarded bonus points in their evaluation. **(5 points)**

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications must be submitted electronically by e-mailing completed applications to network_to_freedom@nps.gov. All submitted applications, should use the following naming convention in the subject line of the email: 2021 NTF Grant_[NTF listing name]. If you are unable to submit the application electronically, please contact the email provided above or by phone at 470.388.8045. Applications received after the deadline of **May 14, 2021, 11:59 pm EDT** and incomplete applications will not be considered. Additional materials sent separately from an application will not be considered part of the application and will not be included in the evaluation of the application.

COMPLETE APPLICATION PACKAGE INCLUDES

- One electronic application, using the attached template. Must be typed, handwritten applications not accepted.
- An Owner Concurrence Form signed and dated by the owner of record for the listing, if the applicant is not the owner.
- A signed and dated Applicant Certification Form.
- For preservation projects, minimum of four (4) digital photographs which illustrate the property in general with details of the area proposed for preservation.

- Detailed budget, including Match Certification Form and documentation of the non-Federal match, if applicable. The Match Certification Form must be signed by a person legally authorized to commit the funds to the grant project. In-kind matches are not eligible. Please make sure to **black out** any **account numbers** or **personally sensitive information** contained in financial documentation that is submitted.