



**400 Years of African American Heritage Commission,
the National Underground Railroad Network to
Freedom Program, and the Association for the Study of
African American Life and History**

APPLICATION GRANTS: GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The 400 Years of African American History Commission has generously provided \$150,000 in funding for the Network to Freedom to award for a 2022 round of grant funding. Commission members will be participating in the review of proposals submitted along with NTF program staff. \$100,000 is set aside for project grants and \$50,000 are to be awarded to applications for new listings in the Network to Freedom. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History will administer the grants.

These instructions are for Application Grant Proposals.

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.

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program is grateful to *the 400 Years of African American History Commission* for funding the grants for this round. The Network to Freedom Program is grateful to *the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)* for partnering with the Network to Freedom to administer this grant program.

WHAT IS THE 400 YEARS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY COMMISSION?

The 400 Years of African American History Commission Act, signed into law January 8, 2018, established a 15-member commission to coordinate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in the English colonies.

Beyond the anniversary year, the Commission's purpose is to plan, develop, and carry out and support programs and activities throughout the United States that recognize and highlight the cultural contributions and resilience of Africans upon arrival and bridge divides for generations beyond 400 years. The Commission will promote inclusion, public education and will encourage work by civic, patriotic, historical, educational, artistic, religious, and economic organizations, particularly efforts to increase understanding and respect for the trials and triumphs of African Americans and inclusively with those who have aided in the story of this nation and its greatness. Dr. Rex M. Ellis serves as Chair of the 400 YAAHC.

WHAT IS THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE AND HISTORY?

Founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1915, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) has the mission to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community. In 1926, Dr. Woodson initiated the celebration of Negro History Week which was expanded in 1976 to Black History Month and ASALH sets a theme each year for this celebration.

2022 PROJECT GRANT INFORMATION

Through the generosity of the 400 Years of African American History Commission (400YAAHC), the National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program (NTF) is pleased to announce there will be two categories of grants that are available in 2022, project grants and new application grants. These instructions are for the new application grants.

2022 NTF APPLICATION GRANT INFORMATION

This category is \$50,000 for grants that will be competitively awarded for completing new Network to Freedom applications. All categories of listing, site-facility-program, are welcome to apply. Grant amounts will range from \$1000 to \$ 5,000. The review process will rank funding requests on a 100 point scale with extra points awarded for meeting the goal of highlight lesser-known parts of the Underground Railroad story. Some of these lesser-known aspects include topics such as the involvement of women, maritime elements, escapes south to Spanish Florida, the Caribbean, or Mexico, and involvement of indigenous nations, among many others. To apply for a grant to complete a Network to Freedom application, the following must be included:

- Applicant Name and Contact Information
- Site or Facility or Program name
- Address of site, facility or program
- Any current designations (Local, State, National Register or National Historic Landmark), if applicable
- Underground Railroad Connection (Rating: 20 points + Bonus)
- Research Plan (Rating: 40 points)
- Feasibility (Rating: 40 points)
- Letter of consent from the property owner. Without this submitted as part of the application, the grant will not be approved.

IMPORTANT DATES

- April 6, 2022- Application period opens.
- April 21, 2022- Zoom presentation to announce grants and answer applicant questions
- May 13, 2022- 11:59 PM EST- Application period closes.
- May 17-18, 2022- Proposal Review Dates.
- May 31, 2022- Target for Grant Awards Announcement.
- June 30, 2023- Mandatory Project completion date.

WHO CAN APPLY

The 400 YAAHC and the NTF invite individual, private or non-profit organizations as well as Federal, state, tribal, and local governments are welcome to apply. Federal agencies cannot directly receive these grants, but partner organizations can receive a grant to designate federally owned property with the written consent of the managing agency.

Please note that eligible proposals from religious properties to be listed in the Network to Freedom must focus the application on direct and specific connection to Underground Railroad history.

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 provide written consent. The target date for announcing awards is May 31, 2022, but please allow some flexibility. Projects **MUST** be completed by **June 30, 2023**.

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 APPLICATION GRANT ASSISTANCE

1. **SITE** Application Preparation Projects are available for sites that can demonstrate a strong connection to Underground Railroad history and a well-developed research plan and submission timeline to merit awarding funds.
2. **PROGRAM** Application Preparation Projects are available for programs that use primary source documentation to tell the authentic history of the Underground Railroad.
3. **FACILITY** Application Preparation Projects are available for facilities that demonstrate their holdings or collections are important to doing Underground Railroad research and are available to be used by the public.

SELECTION PROCESS

A committee of reviewers, including NPS Network to Freedom regional program managers, other NPS staff, reviewers selected by the 400 YAAHC, and a reviewer selected by ASALH will rank applications and make funding recommendations. The target date for announcing awards is May 31, 2022.

SELECTION CRITERIA

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

Underground Railroad Connection (20 points)

- Description of what you want to nominate to the NTF, including dates relevant to the Underground Railroad connections
- Describe connection to Underground Railroad and what evidence exists to support the history

Research Plan (40 points)

- Bibliography of available documentation—identify secondary sources, documents, sources, etc.
- Planned research—what is known and what is unknown? list archives/records collections, type of records to search and information you are expecting to find

Feasibility (40 points)

- Project workplan/timeline- must include at least three or more meetings with the NTF regional manager assigned to the project in the schedule.
- Project budget
- Budget justification: Include all budget categories and how the figures were calculated. For example, include hourly rates and number of hours proposed to be spent.
- Application Preparer: Who is doing the work, what is their connection to the property? And include a biography or resume that describes their experience with UGRR research

Bonus: Lesser-Known Underground Railroad Associations (10 points)

Awarded for designations that highlight lesser-known aspects of the Underground Railroad such as (but not limited to) the Underground Railroad going to Mexico or the involvement of indigenous nations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT EXTRA POINTS FOR NEW APPLICATION PROJECTS: HIGHLIGHTING LESSER-KNOWN ASPECTS OF THE UGRR

Projects that highlight lesser-known aspects of the Underground Railroad will be awarded 10 bonus points. Some lesser-known aspects include, but are not limited to, such stories as the movement south to Spanish Florida, Mexico, or the Caribbean, escapes to maroon communities, or the involvement of indigenous nations. Make the case in the project description and the review committee will determine if bonus points are to be awarded in their evaluation. **(10 points)**

A 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.

- A signed and dated Applicant Certification Form.
- For sites, include photographs which illustrate the property in general.
- For application writing projects, include the resume of the proposed author of the application.
- 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.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS

1. Progress Reports will be required during the term of the grant, as specified by the Grant Agreement. Drafts of the application must be reviewed and approved by the NTF program manager assigned to your project.
2. A Final Progress Report must be submitted that describes whether the work was carried out as proposed. Additional guidance on the reporting requirements will be provided in the Grant Agreement.

Tips for Successful Applications

In order to ensure that your proposal receives the best consideration possible, here are some suggestions from our office that you may find useful in preparing your application.

- proofread your application!
- make sure the grant amount requested on the first page of the application matches the grant amount indicated in the budget section.
- check your math in the budget section to make sure that all the budget detail amounts add up to the budget summary.
- the budget justification should include all cost elements of the proposed budget and how the figures were derived.
- remember that application reviewers may not be familiar with your proposed project, so you will need describe the historic resource so that they can understand why it is important.
- clearly state what it is you want to accomplish with grant funding - a reviewer should be able to read your application and know what you are proposing.
- there must be a connection between the proposed budget and the project; every budget item should be discussed in the narrative section(s) of the application so that reviewers can understand why items are necessary.
- a longer response is not necessarily better.
- remember to answer every part of each question.
- be realistic with a proposal's timeline and remember to budget for reports and reporting requirements.
- if possible, use good photographs to illustrate your project.
- submit ahead of the deadline if you can, to avoid internet submission issues that would have your application miss the deadline.