Augusta Chissell and Margaret Hawkins were important African American leaders of the women’s suffrage movement in Baltimore City in the early twentieth century. Chissell, her neighbor Margaret Hawkins, and activist Estelle Young were part of a black middle class who lived and worked in neighborhoods now part of the Old West Baltimore Historic District. The close proximity of these organizations’ members, driven by residential segregation, made it convenient for them to hold meetings in their homes along Druid Hill Avenue.

PHOTO COURTESY MARK YOUNG

The Underrepresented Community Grant Program is a small but important program that enables the National Park Service (NPS) to better recognize, preserve, and interpret the stories of historically disenfranchised and underrepresented groups. Grants support projects to survey, inventory, and nominate new sites or amend previous listings to increase diversity represented in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and as National Historic Landmarks (NHL).

As we approach the centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment and beyond, the Underrepresented Community Grant Program can help improve the recognition of women’s sites and stories on the National Register.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

Underrepresented Community Grant Program

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Background

The National Register and NHLs are inventories of the nation’s historic and archaeological places considered “worthy of preservation.” Yet, these repositories do not tell the stories of all Americans. The FY 2014 federal budget justification for the NPS notes that less than 8% of National Register and NHL designations reflect diverse stories. This competitive grant program was created to better recognize places that tell a richer American story, including women, African American, Asian American, American Indian, American Latino, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, and LGBTQ sites and stories.

FY 2021 Appropriations Request

Please support $1 million for the Underrepresented Community Grant Program in the FY 2021 Interior Appropriations bill.

APPROPRIATIONS BILL: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

AGENCY: National Park Service
ACCOUNT: Historic Preservation Fund
ACTIVITY: Competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks associated with communities currently underrepresented

Recent Funding History:

FY 2018 Enacted Funding: $500,000
FY 2019 Enacted Funding: $750,000
FY 2020 Enacted Funding: $750,000
FY 2021 President’s Budget Request: $0
FY 2021 NTHP Recommendation: $1 million

JUSTIFICATION: Increased funding for the Underrepresented Community Grant Program will further protect and interpret America’s diverse heritage and support economic opportunities in local communities. It would also allow for more nominations to the National Register or NHL, or amendments to existing nominations to be more inclusive. An emphasis on women’s history should be a particular focus this year.
Underrepresented Community Grant Program: Highlighted Projects

**Organized Village of Kake Nomination Project, Alaska**
*FY 2015 $33,153*

The NN Cannery History Project was created to preserve the stories of the diverse and often underrecognized cannery workers who labored at the old NN Cannery, Alaska’s most important salmon fishery. This grant was used to nominate the Diamond NN Cannery Maritime Historic District to the National Register and organize a Digital Storytelling Workshop in Naknek with Bristol Bay High School students.

**Historic Context for Women’s Suffrage and Social History in Nevada, Nevada**
*FY 2018 $46,415*

The Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (NVSHPO) will use this grant to conduct archival research and outreach to women’s organizations in Nevada to draft a report of women’s history in the state, with an emphasis on suffrage and women in leadership. They will also use this report to identify places that tell a woman’s story with the goal to nominate a site to the National Register. The NVSHPO is currently seeking subgrant proposals to complete this important work.

**Rio Vista Farm Historic District National Historic Landmark, Texas**
*FY 2016 $19,800*

The Rio Vista Farm became a processing center for the Bracero Program, a program that brought skilled Mexican guest-workers to address farm laborer shortages in America between 1942 and 1962. The $19,800 grant will enable the City of Socorro to nominate this significant but overlooked site as an NHL.

**California Mission System Project, California**
*FY 2017 $41,872*

The State of California will use this grant to submit National Register nominations of missions built along the El Camino Real—the California Mission Trail—to tell a fuller story of Native American interactions with the mission system.

**New York City LGBT Historic Sites Survey and Nomination Project, New York**
*FY18 $25,000; FY16 $49,999; FY14 $49,999*

Over the years, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has received multiple grants to support the NYC LGBT Sites Program, an effort to expand public recognition of sites associated with LGBTQ communities in New York City. As of December 2019, six properties have been successfully added to the National Register and nearly 250 sites across the city have been documented.

**Women’s Suffrage Sites Nomination Project, Maryland**
*FY 2017 $30,500*

Over the last four years, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) has undertaken a multi-year, multi-phased survey and research project documenting the women’s suffrage movement in Maryland. As part of this effort, MHT will list or update districts and individual properties in the National Register, as well as prepare new or updated Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties forms. The Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore, the houses of Margaret G. Hawkins and Augusta T. Chissell at 1532 and 1534 Druid Hill Avenue, and the Army of the Hudson Hike from New York to Washington, DC, are just a few examples of this documentation work.

For additional information, contact Christine Grubbs, Associate Manager of Government Relations, CGrubbs@savingplaces.org, (202) 588-6115.