African American Civil Rights Network

The African American Civil Rights Network (AACRN) program authorizes the National Park Service (NPS) to identify and interpret sites that commemorate and honor the history of the modern Civil Rights movement (1939-1968). The AACRN encompasses all NPS units and programs related to the struggle for African American equality as well as places included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and other directly related sites with permission of the owner.

Background

Patterned after the National Underground Railroad to Freedom Network, the African American Civil Rights Network recognizes sites associated with African American civil rights from 1939 to 1968. This date range was identified because 1939 was the year Marion Anderson sang from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Congress passed the African American Civil Rights Grant Network Act in December 2017.

Since February 2018, five sites have been designated as part of the AACRN, including:

The Marian Anderson mural at the Department of the Interior; the Lorraine Motel, in Memphis, Tennessee; the Kennedy-King Park in Indianapolis, Indiana; the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home in Jackson, Mississippi; and the A.P. Tureaud, Sr. Home, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

FY 2020 Appropriations Request

Please support $2 million for grant programs within the African American Civil Rights Network in the FY 2020 Interior Appropriations bill.

APPROPRIATIONS BILL: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
AGENCY: National Park Service
ACCOUNT: Operation of the National Park System
ACTIVITY: Resource Stewardship, African American Civil Rights Network

Recent Funding History:
FY 2019 Enacted Funding: TBD
FY 2020 President’s Budget Request: TBD
FY 2020 NTHP Recommendation: $2 million

JUSTIFICATION: Increased funding for the African American Civil Rights Network would be used for National Park Service staff, program materials, and grant making.
**African American Civil Rights Network: Highlighted Sites**

**Marian Anderson Mural, Washington, DC**

The Marian Anderson mural, located in the Department of the Interior, was the first site designated under the AACRN. The mural depicts the famed opera singer performing at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 after she was prevented from singing at Constitution Hall due to the color of her skin. The concert attracted an integrated audience of 75,000 and became a symbol of the early Civil Rights movement.

**Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home, Jackson, MS**

Now owned and preserved by Tougaloo College since the 1990s, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home was designated as the fourth site in the AACRN. Recently passed legislation provides for the congressional establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Medgar Evers spent his life fighting for equal rights, including assisting black Americans with registering to vote, gathering evidence in the case of the murder of Emmett Till, and leading economic boycotts. His assassination in his home in 1963 helped lead to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**The Lorraine Motel, Memphis, TN**

Designated as the second site in the AACRN, the Lorraine Motel was where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in April 1968. King had traveled down to Memphis to support the 1,300 African American sanitation workers striking for better working conditions and pay. The motel now serves at the home of the National Civil Rights Museum, which interprets the people, events, and stories of the Civil Rights Movement.

For additional information, contact Tom Cassidy, Vice President of Government Relations, TCassidy@savingplaces.org, (202) 588-6078.