OTHER PROGRAMS

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 Marian Anderson sang from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Congress passed the African American Civil Rights Network Act in December 2017 and it was signed into law in January 2018.

The AACRN program offers a comprehensive overview of the people, places, and events associated with the civil rights movement of the 20th century. Since February 2018, twenty-eight sites, facilities, and program have been chosen for inclusion in the AACRN, including: Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas; the Mary McLeod Bethune Home in Florida; Pullman National Monument in Illinois; and the Leona Tate Foundation for Change in Louisiana.

FY 2021 Appropriations Request

Please support $2 million for grant programs within the African American Civil Rights Network in the FY 2021 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 2020 Enacted Funding: $250,000
FY 2021 President’s Budget Request: $250,000
FY 2021 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.
Hosted by the National Park Service

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.

Leona Tate Foundation for Change, LA
In November 1960, six-year-old Leona Tate and her classmates Gail Etienne and Tessie Prevost became the first black students to desegregate a public school in Louisiana. Nearly fifty years later, Tate founded the Leona Tate Foundation for Change dedicated to the idea that every person is deserving of affordable, comparable opportunities, particularly in education. Now part of the AACRN, the foundation is working to turn the old public school that Tate attended into The Tate, Etienne, and Prevost (TEP) Interpretive Center. The center will provide exhibits and programs on New Orleans’ civil rights history, a community educational space, and affordable housing for seniors.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, Jackson, MS
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. He was the first field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and he and his wife established the NAACP office in Jackson. After Medgar’s assassination in their home in 1963, Myrlie became the national chairwoman of the NAACP, established the Medgar and Merlie Evers Institute, and worked to bring her husband’s killer to justice.

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