



African American
Community Fund

An affiliate of
FOUNDATION FOR APPALACHIAN OHIO



African American Community Fund

2024 Annual Report

Advancing a flourishing Appalachian Ohio



About us

The African American Community Fund (AACF), an affiliate of the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO), provides a way for anyone to support the region's African American people and communities, today and for years to come.

Established by and for the Black community as a way to grow resources and create opportunities, AACF also serves as a vehicle to address disparities and improve the physical, economic and structural conditions that affect quality of life in Appalachian Ohio. A committee of volunteers sets AACF's programmatic direction and reviews grant requests, with FAO providing back-office support.

With the support of our donors, we award grants annually to Black-led and Black-serving nonprofit and public organizations for projects and programs that advance opportunities across five funding areas, known as our Pillars of Prosperity.



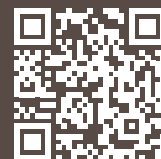
Our investments improve health, create educational opportunities, advance economic development and environmental stewardship, and provide access to arts and cultural experiences.

Our committee

- Ernest A. Bynum
- Rosetta Carter
- Trevellya Ford-Ahmed
- Lawrence Funderburke
- John Jackson
- Mark Lomax
- Ruth Lomax
- Ken Mason
- Michele Reynolds
- Ralph Smithers Jr.

Want to learn more?

For more information about planned giving, to make a gift to AACF or to create a fund to support a cause closest to your heart, please contact us!



740.753.1111



AACF@fao.org



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www.AppalachianOhio.org/AACF

2024 Grants

The African American Community Fund, in partnership with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, awarded 15 grants, totaling \$35,017, in 2024.

ACTION

The Alliance for Congregational Transformation in Our Neighborhoods (ACTION) is on a mission to improve community health in the Mahoning Valley by bringing fresh, nutritious food to areas with limited access to traditional grocery stores. This grant is funding food vouchers for ACTION's Mahoning Valley mobile market, which serves more than 22,000 individuals annually.

Buckeye Review Journalism Institute

This grant is helping fund the development of curriculum and training materials for a new institute dedicated to empowering Mahoning County high school and college students through media and journalism. Through comprehensive training, the program aims to prepare the next generation of reporters who are skilled in their craft and deeply connected to the communities they serve.

Hubbard House Underground Railroad Museum

The Hubbard House Underground Railroad Museum preserves a treasured piece of our region's and nation's history: one of Ohio's northernmost stops on the Underground Railroad. This grant is helping to create two permanent exhibits focused on the cultural history of Africa and the lives and contributions of African Americans in the 1800s to educate and inspire future generations.



ACTION's Mahoning Valley mobile market ensures that individuals living in food deserts and those without reliable transportation have access to fresh and nutritious food while supporting local agriculture and small businesses. A 2024 AACF grant is providing food vouchers for low- to moderate-income families to use at the market.



A 2023 youth-led grant from AACF supported a junior docent training program at the Hubbard House Underground Railroad Museum in Ashtabula County. A 2024 grant is helping with the development of two new exhibits at the museum.



The Kool Boiz Foundation is celebrating 10 years of empowering, mentoring and uplifting boys and young men of color in the Youngstown area – with support from AACF grants for the past three years.

2024 Grants

Inspiring Minds

Each year, hundreds of third- through 12th-grade students from the city of Warren participate in Inspiring Minds' free Summer Enrichment Program. This experience provides six weeks of academics, athletics and activities that span nutrition and culture – all designed to decrease summer learning loss in a safe, nurturing environment. This grant is supporting the 2025 summer program.

John Gee Black Historical Center

Students and visitors from near and far travel to Gallia County's John Gee Black Historical Center to learn about the culture, heritage and contributions of Black Americans living in southeastern Ohio. This grant is funding equipment for the Digitizing Gee project, capturing and sharing voices and oral histories to supplement exhibits at the center.

Kool Boiz Foundation

For the past three years, AACF grants have supported the Kool Boiz Foundation's Young Men's Empowerment Series Mentoring Program, providing boys and young men of color in Youngstown opportunities to explore long-term success through education, leadership, life skills and hard work. This grant is continuing to support the program, which has served more than 350 students in grades 7-12.



Deryck Toles, founder and CEO of Inspiring Minds, engages with students in the nonprofit's after-school program. An AACF grant is supporting Inspiring Minds' Summer Enrichment Program, focused on education, college and career readiness, exposure to new experiences, health and wellness, and personal development.

Mahoning Valley Sojourn to the Past

Mahoning Valley Sojourn to the Past has been educating local residents since 2007 on historic and modern civil rights issues and social and racial justice. This grant is supporting its Racial Justice Education for Mahoning Valley program, including Non-Violence Week; Freedom School, a summer program for students in grades 4-9; and community education events throughout the year.



Local students chalk the walk outside the Mahoning County Courthouse during Mahoning Valley Sojourn to the Past's 2024 Non-Violence Week.

Muskingum County Social Justice Coalition

In 2024, an AACF grant helped 21 students participate in the Muskingum County Social Justice Coalition's Career Connections Camp for middle school-age youth who identify as African American. This grant is supporting the 2025 camp, which provides visits to college campuses and local employers, interactive workshops and classroom instruction – including a new STEM curriculum.

Nelson T. Gant Foundation

In the future, visitors to the Nelson T. Gant House will be greeted by a 7-foot-tall bronze statue of Gant, who was born into slavery and became a successful businessman – and a source of inspiration – in Zanesville. This grant is supporting the development of the Nelson T. Gant “Freedom Walkway,” which will feature that statue.

Signal Ohio

Signal Ohio strives to provide all Ohioans with the news and information they need to thrive, with an emphasis on underserved regions known as “news deserts” – often in rural communities. This grant is helping to fund an assessment of news and information needs in Adams, Lawrence, Pike and Scioto counties with a goal of identifying how to fill information gaps.



Approximately 50 students, ages 10-18, participate in the Steubenville-based Sycamore Volunteer Service Corps Mentoring Program, where they develop skills while serving their community. The program is being supported by a 2024 grant from AACF.

Ohio Valley Youth Network

This grant is supporting the Sycamore Volunteer Service Corps Mentoring Program, serving primarily African American children in grades 5-12. The Steubenville-based program combines community service, such as feeding those experiencing homelessness, with job readiness training, including hands-on learning through cooking, sewing and carpentry classes, to provide students practical skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Our impact in 2024



**\$876,845
IN ASSETS**

For the people of
Appalachian Ohio



**\$35,017
AWARDED**

Across AACF's family
of funds

5 FUNDS

Partnering with AACF in service to our community

- African American Community Fund
- Black Appalachian Regional Community Fund
- Ernest E. Bynum Memorial Fund for African American Communities
- Ken and Adele Mason Family Fund
- Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church

2024 Grants

Tablertown People of Color Museum

The Tablertown People of Color Museum in Athens County is developing plans for an African American Heritage Trail connecting significant Underground Railroad and Black heritage sites across six southeastern Ohio counties, with the goal of registering the sites with the National Park Service's "Network to Freedom" program. This grant is supporting an architect or engineer cost estimate for the project.

Ugata

For the past 15 years, Ugata has offered cultural programming, environmental education and African drum classes and events at various venues in southeast Ohio. This grant is supporting the inaugural event at the nonprofit's new site in Athens County – an African drum teacher training class and team-building retreat held in collaboration with Rising Appalachia and Solid Ground Farm.

Warriors 2 Wilderness

Roseville-based Warriors 2 Wilderness provides immersive retreats to promote mental health and wellness among veterans, particularly those who have been diagnosed with or are at risk for PTSD. The retreats combine the serenity of nature, structured therapeutic activities and the crucial element of peer support. This grant is supporting therapeutic retreats for African American veterans with PTSD.

Community highlight



AACF committee members (from left) Ralph Smithers Jr., Dr. Tee Ford-Ahmed, Ernie Bynum, Lawrence Funderburke and Ruth Lomax are pictured with FAO President and CEO Cara Dingus Brook outside the Lincoln Theatre in Columbus. AACF hosted a Central Ohio Meet and Greet in September 2024 at the theater, a landmark in African American and jazz history. The event brought together individuals from within and outside the region to celebrate our shared commitment to growing resources and creating opportunities for the region's African American community.

WovenCare Advocacy Services

WovenCare Advocacy Services' Community Health and Empowerment Initiative is working to address health, social and economic disparities faced by African American residents in Athens County. This grant is helping to fund counselors, trainers and facilitators focused on mental health resources, economic empowerment, community education and Affordable Care Act enrollment.



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An Affiliate of the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio

HELP SUPPORT THE PEOPLE, PLACES AND FUTURE OF APPALACHIAN OHIO'S AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

**Gifts to the African American Community Fund are
tax-deductible and can be made in a variety of ways.**

GIVE TO AACF

Gifts to the African American Community Fund's endowment fund permanently grow grant funding, with priorities locally determined, for nonprofit and public organizations working to increase quality of life in our communities. Your generosity supports efforts that improve health, create educational opportunities, advance economic development and environmental stewardship, and provide access to arts and cultural experiences.

CREATE A FUND

Provide sustained support for the causes closest to your heart by establishing a named fund through the African American Community Fund. We can help you create endowments to support specific charitable organizations or schools; donor-advised funds for family giving; corporate funds for a company's charitable grantmaking; and more.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Include charitable giving in your estate planning, giving you the peace of mind of knowing the communities and causes closest to your heart will continue to receive your support beyond your lifetime. The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio can assist you and/or your advisors with charitable research, provide options and create necessary documents or language for your plan.

How to make a gift



Mail to:

African American Community Fund
c/o Foundation for Appalachian Ohio
35 Public Square, Nelsonville, OH 45764

or



Online:

www.AppalachianOhio.org/AACF
or www.tinyurl.com/GiveAACF

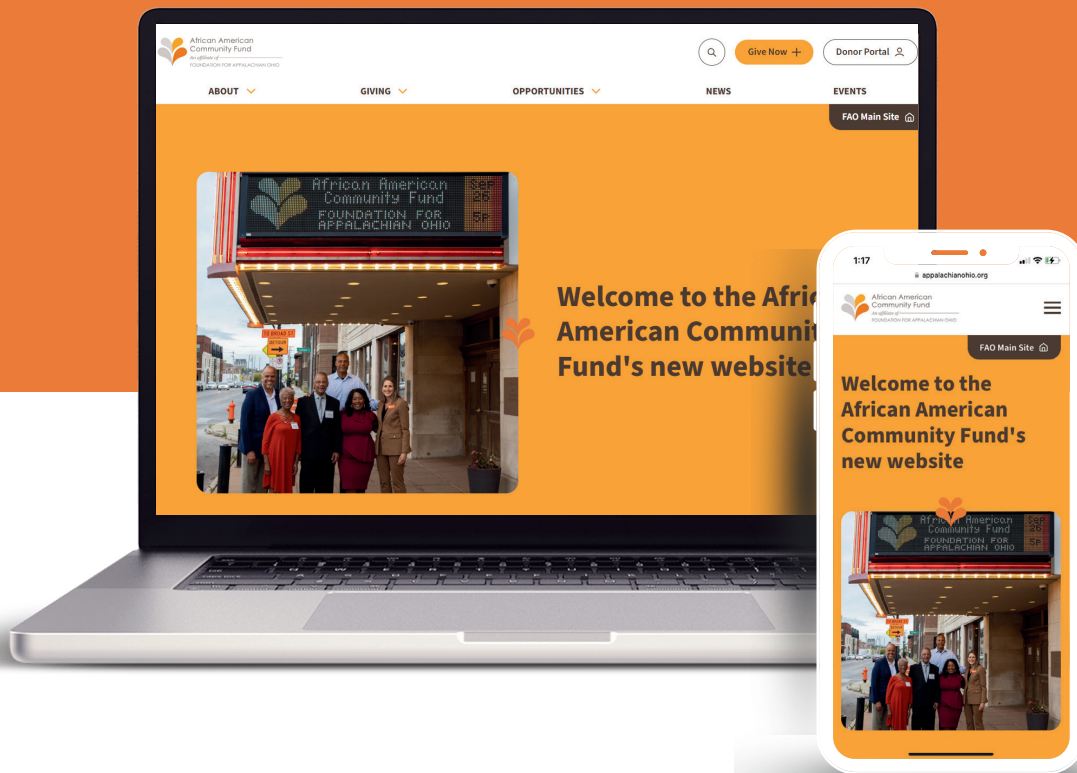
For information about establishing a named fund or planned gift, email AACF@ffao.org or call 740.753.1111.

GIFTS OF ALL SIZES AND KINDS – CASH, STOCK, REAL ESTATE, ROYALTIES OR QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS FROM IRAS – MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



Our new website!

LIVE NOW



www.AppalachianOhio.org/AACF



Featuring more stories of impact, easier navigation and a lot of inspiration, **our new website** tells the story of the African American Community Fund and a community of givers who are championing our people and communities. Discover how far we've come, where we're going and how you can leave your legacy for generations to come.