

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Resolution to appropriate State Historic Resources Grant Funds to Jefferson School African American Heritage Center - \$500,000 (1 of 2 readings)
Staff Contact(s):	Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager, Krisy Hammill, Director of Budget
Presenter:	Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Date of Proposed Action:	September 21, 2026

Issue

The City of Charlottesville has received notification of an award of \$500,000 for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Background / Rule

The City of Charlottesville serves as the fiscal agent for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center for funds from the Department of Historic Resources. We have received notice that JSAAHC has been awarded \$500,000 from DHR to support their operating cost and staffing for the Center for Local Knowledge.

Analysis

The Department of Historic Resources (DHR) is the State Historic Preservation Office of the Commonwealth. DHR fosters, encourages, and supports the stewardship and use of Virginia's significant architectural, archaeological, and historic resources as valuable assets for the economic, educational, social, and cultural benefit of citizens and communities. A significant responsibility is the administration and review of state and federal historic preservation grant programs for financial and programmatic compliance. DHR is authorized to administer state grants to non-state agencies under the Code of Virginia.

Located in the Jefferson School City Center, The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center's mission is to honor and preserve the rich heritage and legacy of the African-American community of Charlottesville-Albemarle, Virginia and to promote a greater appreciation for, and understanding of, the contributions of African Americans and peoples of the Diaspora locally, nationally and globally. The Center features a permanent historical exhibit, a rotating contemporary art gallery, and a robust calendar of events, all of which combine to highlight Charlottesville's African American history and culture of the African diaspora.

The Commonwealth of Virginia through the Department of Historic Resources will provide \$500,000 to the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center for the exclusive support of the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center Operations and Center for Local Knowledge project.

Funds will be used to support operating cost and for staffing for the Center for Local Knowledge. The JSAAHC's programs acknowledge the reciprocal relationship that give rise to local public history while emphasizing the reality that our research into our community narrative must have an impact on social change. A core purpose of the Center for Local Knowledge is to give voice to local authority by uplifting and amplifying local custodians of the history, memory and lived experiences. We understand that our past informs our present and our future. Thus, JSAAHC endeavors to make our research accessible

and useful to improving the lives of local residents while enriching the sense of place in the region and our nation.

Financial Impact

There is no budget impact to the City as these funds will be provided by the State as pass-thru funds to be distributed to JSAAHC.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the appropriation of the \$500,000 from the Department of Historic Resources to support the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

I move to approve the resolution appropriating \$500,000 from the Department of Historic Resources to support the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center.

Attachments

1. DHR JSAAHC Resolution