ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUMS

February 2, 2020

Dr. Dan Filer
Chesapeake Watershed – CESU
Center for Environmental Science – Appalachian Laboratory
301 Braddock Road
Room 304
Frostburg, MD 21532

Dear Dr. Filer:

I write, with great pleasure, to endorse the application of the Association of African American Museums (AAAM) to represent the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) as a non-federal partner. Founded in 1978, AAAM is a non-profit member organization established to support African and African American focused museums nationally and internationally, as well as the professionals who protect, preserve and interpret African and African American art, history, and culture. We have an active membership base within the Chesapeake Watershed region, and I am confident that through our partnership, our members would provide subject matter expertise to each CESU study within our purview.

AAAM would be honored to become a CHWA-CESU partner and continue the legacy that many other non-federal partners have contributed to the unit. Our members are comprised of both cultural and natural resource professionals who all have the common goal to preserve, protect, and interpret African and African American focused art, history, and culture. Through our interdisciplinary and cross-generational membership base, AAAM will not only continue to bring value to the CESU but will also be an asset to the unit. I strongly believe that acceptance into the CESU will allow AAAM to continue to be of service not only to our members but also the CESU's respective communities.

Sincerely,

LaNesha Debardelaben
AAAM President

ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUMS

Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit –
The Association of African American Museums (AAAM) Application

- **Confirmation that the institution/organization has read the CESU agreement and agrees to support the CESU mission and goals and fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a nonfederal partner, as described in the CESU agreement Joint Venture Agreement.**
    - AAAM confirms through the submission of this application that the organization has read the CESU agreement and agrees to support the CESU Mission and goals to support the roles and responsibilities of a non-federal partner, as described by the CESU agreement Joint Venture Agreement. AAAM's Executive Director, Vedet Coleman-Robinson, supports the submission of this application and will be named as the primary contact and will work closely with institutional members, individual members, faculty, staff, and students who are connected to AAAM. Through this partnership, Mrs. Coleman-Robinson, will make certain that all aspects of a nonfederal partner are met.

- **Description of the institution/organization, its mission, and the primary focus of collaborative activities to be supported through the CHWA CESU in the context of the CESU mission.**
    - Founded in 1978, AAAM is a non-profit member organization established to support African and African American focused museums nationally and internationally, as well as the professionals who protect, preserve and interpret African and African American art, history and culture.

      Established as the single representative and principal voice of the African American museum movement, the Association seeks to strengthen and advocate for the interests of institutions and individuals committed to the preservation of African-derived cultures.

      The services provided by AAAM enhance the ability of those museums to serve the needs and interests of persons of African ancestry and those who wish to know more about the art, history and culture of African-derived cultures.

      While, AAAM is a national and international organization, the association's executive director's office is located in Washington, D.C. It is through this office that Mrs. Coleman-Robinson is able to work with institutional and individual members throughout the country to make certain each member is able to receive support as well as professional development opportunities. Through our membership-based organization, we are able to reach a host of African and African-derived museums, several Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), graduate students, historic societies, academics, state and local parks, researchers, the general public, as well as several other cultural institutions throughout the nation. To date, our membership

includes over 450 institutions and individual members who are trained in the museum field to accurately preserve, protect, and interpret African and African American history and culture. AAAM also has a database of over 1,150 contacts who all work with the common goal to make certain that African and African American history is presented properly to the public. If selected as a non-federal partner, AAAM will be able to meet the CESU's mission through soliciting our subject-matter experts throughout our network to make certain each project is completed.

AAAM is a cross-generational organization and is proud of our community of scholars and researchers on every level needed to provide diverse and accurate studies. We have a wide array of committed museum professionals as well as undergraduate and graduate students. We are also an organization that takes pride in mentorship and relationship building and cultivation. This aspect of our organization is highly visible during our annual conferences. It is during our time together that we are able to truly gauge the various talent within our organization. We have several members who continuously are awarded federal grants, awards, and training opportunities and they share their knowledge with colleagues so that they, too, can be successful in the various processes. AAAM is the conduit for each of our members and we will be able to be a viable and capable partner for the CESU.

Lastly, AAAM is in a unique position with the National Park Service, as our current Executive Director worked in with the Historic Preservation Grant Fund for over eleven years and was a top performer as a grants management specialist. Mrs. Coleman-Robinson also has initiated a partnership between AAAM and the NPS to provide trainings for NPS sites on digital humanities. She also has strong ties to the National Trust of Historic Preservation and the National Park Foundation. Through her leadership, AAAM also recently began a partnership with several NPS and local state sites to help facilitate community engagement meetings as well as assist with re-interpreting African and African-American history accurately in particular sites. Through these partnerships, Mrs. Coleman-Robinson makes certain to contact our members to solicit their knowledge and expertise to ensure the results are up to the standard of the NPS.

- **Description or list of the primary programs, departments, or other institutional divisions of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will likely be engaged in CHWA CESU activities. Include website addresses for further information as appropriate**.

  Through AAAM's membership we are able to locate museum professionals and historians that have the requisite skills and expertise for the CESU. An example of this would be through the mission of historic and historic preservation as listed in the CESU. We have an array of professionals and student members who preserve historic artifacts, historic buildings, conduct educational outreach and deal with primary sources on a daily basis. We also have members who are experts in bringing the research to the public through digital files. These members range from students to individuals with terminal degrees.

- **A list of and brief description of the staff or faculty with expertise in disciplines and subject areas of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies (do not submit CVs).**

  While AAAM's membership base includes several knowledgeable and capable scholars, the organization is submitting the names of our Board of Directors as our main researchers and/or individuals who are able to identify additional subject matter experts within the field. They include:

  1. **LaNesha DeBardedelaben,** President, Executive Director of the Northwest African American Museum (Seattle, Washington).
  2. **Marion McGee**, Vice President, Museum Program Specialist, National Museum of African American History and Culture (Washington, D.C.)
  3. **Tsitsi (Tee) Jones**, Treasurer, Director of Finance, National Civil Rights Museum (Memphis, Tennessee).
  4. **Dr. Robert E. Luckett**, Secretary, Executive Director, Jackson State University, Margaret Walker Center (Jackson, Mississippi).
  5. **Malika Polk-Lee**, Member-at-Large, Executive Director, B.B. King Museum (Indianola, Mississippi).
  6. **Timothy Barber**, Executive Director, The B lack Archives Historic Lyric Theater (Miami, Florida).
  7. **Dion Brown,** President/CEO, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (Cincinnati, Ohio).
  8. **Jacqueline Dace,** Deputy Director, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (Cincinnati, Ohio).
  9. **Dr. Robert "Bert" Davis,** President/CEO, America's Black Holocaust Museum (Milwaukee, Wisconsin).
  10. **Dr. Nicole. Ivy,** Assistant Professor, The George Washington University (Washington, D.C.).
  11. **Dr. Ashley Jordan,** Executive Director, Evansville African American Museum (Evansville, Indiana).
  12. **Dr. Brenda Tindal,** Director of Education and Engagement, International African American Museum (Charleston, South Carolina).
  13. **Shirl Spicer,** Museum Manager, Montgomery Parks (Silver Spring, Maryland).
  14. **Ahmad Ward,** Executive Director, Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park (Hilton Head Island, South Carolina).

- **For academic institutions, include a description of student demographics and the institution's status as a minority-serving institution (e.g., as defined by the U.S. Department of Education).**

  Not applicable as we are not an academic institution, however, we have several student members who are enrolled in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) as well as students in non-minority schools who are part of affinity groups that tailor to minorities.

- **Description or a list of facilities, equipment, centers, or institutes that would provide support to the research, technical assistance, or educational activities of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CHWA CESU activities.** Not applicable.

- **Description or a list of past research, technical assistance, and educational services supported through federal financial assistance awards that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CHWA CESU activities.**

  While AAAM has not conducted any past research, technical assistance, and/or educational services supported through federal assistance awards that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies, our Executive Director, Vedet Coleman-Robinson has served on several case studies and has been a subject matter expert for African American theme studies during her employment within the National Park Service.

- **Description or a list of current formal agreements and informal relationships with federal agencies that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CHWA CESU activities.**

  AAAM is currently providing a training for the NPS for digital humanities within African American focused sites. This project will take place in the spring and summer of 2020. The organization also has an informal relationship with several NPS Sites who hold membership within AAAM. Through these informal relationships, AAAM has agreed to promote each site's public engagement activities as well as provide support to the organization when called upon. There are also informal relationships with these NPS sites to help locate interns and viable candidates to fill positions. The sites and divisions are:

  1. NPS Office of Partnerships & Civic Engagement
  2. State, Tribal, and Local Plans and Grants Division (Cultural Resources Directorate)
  3. Colonel Charles Young Home and Monument
  4. Dr. Carter G Woodson Home
  5. Mary McCleod Bethune Council House
  6. Frederick Douglass Home
  7. Colonial National Historic Park

- **Confirmation of the institution's/organization's willingness to accept a limited overhead rate of 17.5% and cost items to which the rate is applicable for activities conducted through the CESU, including research, technical assistance, and educational services (this overhead rate applies to the entire institution/organization for CHWA CESU activities). This confirmation must be on organizational letterhead and signed by the appropriate authority.**

  AAAM President, LaNesha DeBardelaben supports this application and acknowledges that the organization will accept a limited overhead rate of 17.5% and cost items to which the rate is applicable for activities conducted through the CESU.

- **Designation of a technical representative AND administrative representative (with full contact information – name, title, full address, phone, fax, email) to serve on the CHWA CESU steering committee.**

  The following people are designated as technical and administrative representatives for the CESU:

  LaNesha DeBardelaben
  Executive Director
  Northwest African American Museum
  2300 South Massachusetts Street
  Seattle, Washington 98144
  206-518-6000
  LNDebar@naamnw.org

  Vedet Coleman-Robinson
  Executive Director
  Association of African American Museums
  P.O. Box 23698
  Washington, D.C. 20026
  202-633-2869
  ED@blackmuseums.org

- **Participation in the CESU annual/semi-annual partner meetings, and facilitation of internal and external communication, promotion, and response to CESU correspondence and administrative actions (e.g., announcements, new member applications, processing agreements/amendments, five-year reviews).**

  AAAM agrees to participate in the CESU annual/semi-annual partner meetings, and facilitations of internal and external communication, promotion, and to respond to CESU correspondence and administrative actions.

- **Agreement to relay agency-specific research, technical assistance, and educational needs and associated funding opportunities to other institutional/organizational members (e.g., faculty, students).**

  AAAM agrees to relay agency-specific research, technical assistance, and educational needs and associated funding opportunities to other institutional/organizational members.

- **Signature (or endorsement) from an appropriate official, with authority to commit institutional resources in a binding multi-year federal cooperative and joint venture agreement (e.g., president, executive director, chief financial officer, vice president for research, director of sponsored programs).** Please refer to the enclosed letter from Mrs. Vedet Coleman-Robinson, Executive Director of the Association of African American Museums.

- **Letter(s) of support from one or more CESU federal agency partners sponsoring the new partner's application, including a description of successful past collaborative work supported through federal financial assistance awards. –** Please refer to the enclosed letter from Ms. Eola Dance of Colonial National Historic Park

ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUMS

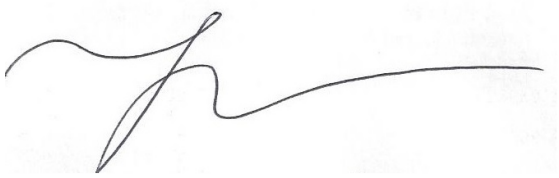
Dear Dr. Filer:

I am writing as an official of the Association of African American Museums (AAAM) with authority to commit our organization's resources into a binding multi-year federal cooperative joint venture agreement.

Please accept this document as official correspondence of our commitment to the CESU.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at 202-731-2525 or ED@blackmuseums.org.

Sincerely,



Vedet R. Coleman-Robinson
Executive Director
Association of African American Museums
202-633-2869 (office)
202-731-2525 (direct)
ED@blackmuseums.org

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Colonial National Historical Park
P.O. Box 210
Yorktown, VA 23690

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 3, 2020

Dr. Danny Filer
Chesapeake Watershed CESU Research Coordinator
National Park Service
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science/Appalachian Laboratory
301 Braddock Road, Room 304
Frostburg, MD 21532

Dear Dr. Filer:

I share this letter of support on behalf of the Association of African American Museums (AAAM) to participate in the Chesapeake Cooperative Studies Unit (CESU) network. I had the opportunity to collaborate with leadership from AAAM since 2001, and that professional relationship has resulted in research, training and preservation assistance throughout the NPS and with several sites in the National Capital Area over the years. For the past two years I've participated in the development of annual meeting workshops providing best practices in engaging underrepresented communities in difficult topics in American history. This work demonstrates AAAM's commitment and network of museum professionals at local, state, and federal institutions representing community museums, NPS sites and parks, and several museums of the Smithsonian. As an interdisciplinary organization AAAM leadership and membership possess the specialized skills and abilities concerning history, culture, natural science and collections; with a specialized knowledge in the African American experience. The expertise demonstrated by executive director, Vedet Coleman Robinson, the Board of Directors and membership will make AAAM an invaluable partner to the National Park Service. Therefore, it is without hesitation I submit support for the AAAM application for participation in the CESU.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this letter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at eola_dance@nps.gov or by phone at 757-856-1225.

Sincerely,

Eola Dance

Eola Dance, Supervisor
Resource Stewardship and Science