



## Press Release

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### National Park Service Recognizes Cleveland's Role in Civil Rights

*Cleveland's role in African American Civil Rights History recognized by large National Park Service grant for Preservation of St Mark's Church*

Earlier this week, the National Park Service (NPS) awarded a landmark Cleveland project \$750,000 as part of the Historic Preservation Fund's [African American Civil Rights grant program](#), which focuses on the preservation of historic sites directly associated with the struggle of African Americans to gain equal rights.

With the NPS grant, [Famicos Foundation](#) will restore historic St. Mark's Presbyterian Church on East Blvd and Superior Ave, and transform it into [St Marks Family Center](#). The impressive structure is a highlight of the East Blvd Historic District, bordering Rockefeller Park and the Cultural Gardens. Cleveland played a pivotal role in the African American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Several national civil rights organizations were present and active in Cleveland, working with local groups towards the passage of Ohio's Civil Rights Act, the election of Carl Stokes as Cleveland's first African American mayor, and the desegregation of Cleveland's public schools. St. Mark's Presbyterian Church was a prominent site for African American activists to gather during that time. By restoring this building and preserving its historic elements, Famicos will celebrate Cleveland's rich history and transform a long-vacant building into a community center, event and performance space for Cleveland residents. Careful restoration of historic elements like masonry, floors, and windows are required to give the building protected historic preservation status. The building's footprint of 35,000 sq ft leaves this project with an overall budget of \$9 million and Famicos is on its way to securing the entirety of the capital stack.

The Historic Preservation Fund's African American Civil Rights grant program awarded \$23.4 million to 39 projects in 16 states. Ohio hosts two of the 39 projects funded, one in Cleveland and the other in Oberlin.

*Established over 50 years ago, Famicos Foundation is a community development corporation that provides affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization in the Glenville, Hough, and St Clair-Superior neighborhoods of Cleveland and social services across Cuyahoga County.*

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ST MARKS FAMILY CENTER RENDERING:

