



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
**FINANCE
& PURCHASING**

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TO: Ande Banks, City Manager

FROM: Luke Morgan, Grants and Programs Analyst

SUBJECT: Summary of City Application for History of Equal Rights Grant Program

DATE: June 29, 2023

The National Park Service's (NPS) History of Equal Rights Grant Program (HER) awards competitive grants to preserve sites related to the struggle of all Americans to achieve equal rights. HER grants are funded by the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), administered by the NPS, and will fund a broad range of pre-preservation planning activities and physical preservation work for historic sites that are listed in or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Congress has appropriated \$5 million for the HER Grant Program.

The Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Department is planning to submit an application to HER for funding for physical preservation activities at the Lucy F. Simms Center. The Simms Center is currently on the National Register of Historic Places and requires minor repairs that will need to be funded with City funds in the near future if no grant funding is received. Currently, the window frames on the original portion of the building are rusting, which may lead to significant damage to the windows and frames if not repaired.

City staff will be requesting approximately \$155,000 to remove rust around the existing windows, apply a rust inhibitor, and repaint the frames. Included in this cost is the addition of storm windows over all windows on the original building. This addition will protect the Simms Center's original windows from extreme weather events and will provide energy efficiency benefits by reducing energy loss through the windows. The noticeability of the storm windows will be minimal as their frames will be painted to match the color of the original window frames they are covering.

If funding is awarded, the City will be required to place a ten-year preservation covenant or easement on the site. This project will not change the original structure or spirit of the Simms Center, and it will help to ensure that this valuable community site is preserved for future generations. Grant applications are due on July 11, 2023, and the NPS anticipates awarding funds in November 2023.