



Our Vision

We envision a network of collaborative museums and passionate museum professionals throughout the Commonwealth serving as essential community anchors working together to enhance cultural awareness and community identity for all.

Our Mission Statement

VAM advocates for the importance of museums in our communities and strengthens the cultural sector by supporting museum professionals throughout their careers with professional development, networking, and thought leadership.

Our History

The Virginia History Federation was incorporated in 1968 to promote and support Virginia's historical museums and sites; it was granted 501(c)3 status by the IRS in 1969. In 1978, the name was changed to the Virginia History and Museums Federation to reflect the broadening of its mission to include all museum disciplines. The name was changed once more, in 1980, to the Virginia Association of Museums (VAM) to further establish its identity as an organization whose purpose is education and support for all museums and similar cultural institutions in the Commonwealth.

Today, it is the largest state museum service organization in the United States, with over 3,000 members. VAM focuses its efforts on professional and career development opportunities for museum professionals and advocacy at the state and national levels. VAM has taken the lead in providing Virginia's museums with the tools necessary to face the challenges of the 21st century, and make constructive and adaptive changes to improve the stewardship of our historic and cultural heritage. It is a network of museum staff and volunteers who work together to promote professionalism in the museum field.



Our Structure

VAM is governed by a 28-member Council made up of museum professionals from across the Commonwealth. Council members are elected at our annual meeting in March, and represent a cross section of the museum community in the state, both by discipline and region. Three (3) ex officio members also sit on our governing Council, representing our three (3) largest contributors and partners, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Virginia Department of Education, and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

The Council meets bi-monthly.

There are currently one full-time staff, two contract staff, and two part-time staff.

Our Operations

The Virginia Association of Museums is a private 501(c)3 organization. Our offices currently reside at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, which provides those offices free of charge as a contribution to our operating budget. We also receive an annual grant from the Virginia Humanities, and partner with this organization on many initiatives designed to better serve museums throughout the Commonwealth.

The remainder of our operating budget is made up primarily of membership dues and program revenue. Currently, 79% of our budget goes directly to programs that serve our members.

Fast Facts

- ✓ VAM created the Virginia Certificate in Museum Management in 2005; it remains the only continuing education certificate of its kind in the museum field, and currently boasts over 140 students.
- ✓ VAM's over 3,000 members include museums of all sizes and disciplines, businesses that provide service to museums, and individual museum professionals, volunteers and students interested in contributing more to their field.
- ✓ The average year sees about 3,000 hours donated to VAM and its programs by volunteers from across the state; these volunteers are Council members, workshop and conference speakers, committee members, program hosts, and much more.
- ✓ We have eight (8) museums that have become Leadership Level contributors to VAM, giving \$2,500 per year.



- ✓ VAM is a founding member of COSMA, the Coalition of State Museum Associations. COSMA is still in its infancy, but is designed to help all state museum associations connect to each other, share resources, and speak with one voice at the national level.