



VAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

MISSION

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.

VALUES

- **ACCESSIBILITY**

We believe in providing access for everyone. We will create a welcoming, safe, and engaging association that is inclusive and representative of our exceptionally diverse membership throughout the Commonwealth.

- **INNOVATION**

The Virginia Association of Museums seeks to be a national leader driving aspiration and excellence in the museum field. We will inspire and enable our members to boldly address difficult stories; spearhead new initiatives; practice inclusiveness and understanding; and produce the next generation of museum leaders.

- **INTEGRITY**

We will build and strengthen our members' trust through transparency, open dialogue, honesty, and commitment to our mission. We believe in embracing the unique attributes, characteristics, and perspectives of every individual and listening to every voice.

- **RELEVANCE**

Museums are essential to the communities in which they serve as anchors. Our resources help our members be more responsive to the needs and interests of their audiences so they can play a vital role in the well-being of their communities.

- **UNITY**

We believe in a united museum association. We will champion diversity and equity in the museum field through respect and understanding to form a unified organization that best serves the needs of our ever-evolving membership. We are stronger together.

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.

Critical Issues:

During the course of meeting members over the past three years, these issues were identified as critical to the profession and are integrated throughout the plan:

- 1) Provide enhanced support options for the emerging professional community in the museum field.
- 2) Advocate for the profession and for museums to entities and organizations outside the museum community.
- 3) Develop a robust focus on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion for our profession and within our own organization.
- 4) Assist our museums to become well-prepared to tackle issues requiring conflict resolution.
- 5) Support our museums with the effort to reach broader communities through digital programming.
- 6) Become an advocate for the museum profession as a career path.
- 7) Facilitate an ongoing dialogue on change in the profession and our museums so that our museums can become better prepared to adapt.
- 8) Provide expanded programming that supports the needs and interests of a wider range of staff roles in the museum field, while still meeting the needs of our long-time members.
- 9) Become a resource for museum board training and education on the profession, operations, and best practices for museums.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. MEMBER PROGRAMS & BENEFITS

Goal 1: Provide a robust slate of opportunities to keep members active and engaged.

Objective 1: Create a Member Engagement Plan and provide opportunities for museum professionals to deepen their engagement with VAM.

Objective 2: Review and update current member benefits.

Objective 3: Provide enhanced support options for the emerging professional community in the museum field.

Goal 2: Evaluate and prioritize existing programs to offer meaningful and innovative products to the membership.

Objective 1: With our members, analyze the impact of VAM's programming and explore collaborations, program improvements, and alternative program models to meet the changing needs of museum professionals.

Goal 3: Support Virginia museums to actively engage in a changing museum field.

Objective 1: Foster partnerships with related organizations, vendors, and state/local government agencies to address issues of importance to the broad museum field.

Objective 2: Embed Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion into VAM's programs, certificates, standards, and best practices.

Objective 3: Recognize, celebrate, and support ambassadors and change agents in the museum field.

B. ADVOCACY

Goal 1: Create a shared understanding of what advocacy is – elected officials (federal, state, local), community, stakeholders.

Objective 1: Create a toolkit for members to do advocacy.

Objective 2: Year-Round Education and Training: host an advocacy-based workshop annually and one advocacy session at the annual conference.

Objective 3: Host annual Virginia Museum Advocacy Day event.

Objective 4: Collaborate with AAM on National Museum Advocacy Day.

Goal 2: Include Advocacy as part of VAM's new Communications Plan.

Objective 1: Send out regular updates on state and federal bills impacting museums.

Objective 2: Revise advocacy page on website, to include toolkit materials.

Objective 3: Use new tech – videos/multimedia approach on web for advocacy (include in Communications Plan).

Goal 3: Work with education institutions and museums to promote the museum profession as a career path.

Objective 1: Create a VAM professional work force program, to provide paid internships at qualified member institutions.

Objective 2: Increase annual conference internship opportunities, considering feasibility of including registration and lodging.

Objective 3: Create collaborative partnerships with education institutions to assist in providing opportunities for students in museum studies (or similar) programs.

C. MARKETING & OUTREACH

Goal 1: Create and maintain a Communications Plan to better engage with members online.

Objective 1: Recruit and retain staff dedicated to communications and marketing.

Objective 2: Reevaluate VAM's current methods of communication and address necessary changes to be more effective.

Objective 3: Embed VAM's core values as part of the overall Communications Plan.

Goal 2: Build greater understanding and public support for the wide-ranging work of museums.

Objective 1: Collect and share stories about the valuable role museums play in the Commonwealth.

Objective 2: Support museum professionals' efforts across the Commonwealth to identify and address community needs and to measure and communicate the impacts their museums have.

Objective 3: Develop and implement plan to enhance communication outreach to small museums, for example collaborations with the Small Museum Association, and help them become more engaged in the overall Virginia museum community.

D. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Goal 1: Expand membership throughout the Commonwealth to reach the broadest possible community of museums and professionals.

Objective 1: Reach out to lapsed members to reengage, and implement routine process for lapsed member outreach.

Objective 2: Develop and implement strategy to invite upper tier member institutions to consider leadership membership.

Objective 3: Proactively recruit new-to-VA museum leaders and professionals, as well as other cultural organizations throughout the Commonwealth, who may not already know about VAM.

Goal 2: Develop a Fundraising and Business Plan to grow philanthropic support and earned revenue.

Objective 1: Draft, adopt, and implement a Business Plan to grow earned revenue, considering opportunities to expand current or previously offered fee-based services.

Objective 2: Draft, adopt, and implement a Fundraising Plan to grow contributed revenue, including an annual fundraising calendar and strategies for annual appeal, state support, foundation and federal grants, benefactor/project-based giving, and in-kind giving.

Objective 3: Develop a plan to increase engagement with small, women, and minority owned businesses.

E. GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Goal 1: Develop an energized and efficient staff to meet the needs of the institution and membership.

Objective 1: Evaluate current staff structures and implement recommended changes.

Objective 2: Invest in the professional development of staff.

Goal 2: Build a strong Council to govern VAM.

Objective 1: Review current Council structure, process, and composition, and recommend changes to strengthen organizational leadership.



Adopted by Council 2023-07-14

Objective 2: Consider ad hoc governance committee recommendations and implement as approved.

Goal 3: Institute a thorough planning process.

Objective 1: Integrate Board and staff progress reports at each council meeting.

Objective 2: Conduct holistic review of the organization according to plan every two years.