



VIRGINIA
ASSOCIATION
of MUSEUMS

Our Vision

A united museum community inspiring the world around us

Our Mission Statement

The Virginia Association of Museums is a statewide network serving the museum community.

Our History

Virginia museum staff began getting together once a year in the late 1950's to share expertise, exchange exhibits and collaborate on programs. As the group grew, it began to expand its activities – a Civil War Centennial Celebration, a magazine, and additional meetings during the year for training and networking.

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 850 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 23-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. Two ex-officio members also sit on our governing Council, representing our two largest contributors and partners, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. The Council meets bi-monthly.

There are currently two full time and two part time staff employed by VAM.

Our Operations

The Virginia Association of Museums is a private, 501(c)3 organization. Our offices 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 Foundation for the Humanities, and partner with the Foundation 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 annual conference income.

Fast Facts

- ✓ VAM created the Virginia Certificate in Museum Management in 2005; it remains the only continuing education certificate of its kind, and currently boasts over 140 enrolled students.
- ✓ VAM's 850 members include museums of all sizes and disciplines, businesses that provide service to museums, and individual museum professionals interesting in contributing more to their field.
- ✓ In FY 2013, over 3500 hours were donated to VAM and its programs by volunteers from across the state.
- ✓ VAM's Top Ten Endangered Artifacts program, launched in 2011, is designed to increase public awareness of the need for collections care funding by all museums, and includes a public voting component to get the general public engaged. In 2013, that public voting component garnered over 180,000 votes. Three other states have launched similar programs based on VAM's successful model.