

Commonwealth History Fund

Presented by Dominion Energy

About The Commonwealth History Fund

The Commonwealth History Fund (Fund) was established by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture to support and encourage meaningful history education and preservation projects throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Made possible by generous funding from Dominion Energy and others, the Fund is designed to provide grants of approximately \$400,000 per year and nearly \$2,000,000 overall in its first five years of operation.

The Commonwealth History Fund is a restricted fund owned and managed by the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC) and is facilitated in partnership with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR).

About The Virginia Museum of History & Culture

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society—a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of more than nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible grantees include Virginia nonprofit, tax exempt organizations 501(c)(3), state and federally recognized American Indian tribes, and local government agencies. Political/partisan organizations or projects for religious purposes or lobbying are not eligible.

Eligible Projects

- Eligible projects/activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Restoration, rehabilitation and other related building and construction projects, preservation projects, research and documentation, publications, acquisition of property, land, and objects, conservation, landscape or infrastructure improvements, project planning, educational programs and outreach, digitization and website projects.
- Ineligible projects/activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Endowment support, general operating support, and advertising/promotion (however, some of these expenses may be eligible if part of a larger eligible project/activity).

Virginia Museum of History & Culture

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Grant Conditions & Criteria

- Preliminary grant conditions include, but are not limited to:
 - The awardee must provide a thorough and compelling application.
 - The awardee must sign a binding contract agreeing to the terms of this program, and to obligate them to the successful completion of their project.
 - The project must begin within 6 months of the awarding of the grant.
 - A final report and financial accounting of the expenditures of the grant must be submitted to the VMHC based on a timetable detailed in the grant award documentation.
- Preliminary grant criteria include, but are not limited to:
 - The significance of the project or resource and its impact on the community and Commonwealth.
 - The project's focus on underserved people, communities, narratives, etc.
 - The need for funding and the urgency of the project.
 - The project's budget, how funds will be allocated, and the applicant's proven ability to secure all necessary funds.
 - The project's timeline, scope, scale, and level of professionalism.
 - The qualifications of the key personnel, volunteers, consultants, etc. and their proven ability to complete similar projects.
 - The applicant's history of support via the Fund, and the proximity to other Fund supported projects (multi-year grants are not given; but applications over consecutive years are allowed).
 - The applicant's ability to secure matching funds via other grants or various forms of in-kind support (not required, but encouraged).

Grant Application Requirements

- Proof of organizational eligibility and location within Virginia.
- A full list of applicable governing body, key staff, consultants, etc.
- Letter of consent from property owner or governing body (if applicable).
- Up to three letters of endorsements and/or references (not required, but recommended).
- A detailed description of the project with a timeline, budget, explanation of need and impact, and relevant images, charts, and reports.
- If awarded, digital images and relevant logos/tribal seals/branding for use by the VMHC.

Application Review Process

Grant applications will be accepted September 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023, with award notification occurring in early 2024 and funds distributed thereafter.

- Applicants must submit a complete application package electronically. For submission instructions, please email HistoryFund@VirginiaHistory.org. No print materials or other physical submissions will be accepted.
- Grant applications will be reviewed by VMHC staff for completion and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed.
- All grant applications sufficiently completed will be reviewed and ranked by a volunteer Review Committee.

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- All ranked grant applications will be presented to a volunteer Award Panel. This panel will make final suggestions to the VMHC President & CEO for funding consideration.

Grant Award Funds Disbursement

Funds will be distributed to grantees with the following considerations:

- Fifty percent of the total grant amount will be disbursed shortly following grant award notification and the awardee's completion of necessary paperwork.
- All remaining funds (after the initial disbursement) will be provided on a pre-determined reimbursement schedule described in the grant award documentation.
- Between 20% and 50% of the overall grant award may be withheld until the project's successful completion and the submission of final reporting.

Staff Assistance

Direct all questions about the Commonwealth History Fund to HistoryFund@VirginiaHistory.org.

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