

Media Alert
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The Virginia Museum of History & Culture Announces Plans to Give Back in Celebration of Giving Tuesday VMHC Establishes Annual History Grant Program to Award Millions to History Projects and Organizations Across Virginia

Richmond, VA – The Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC) is proud to announce the establishment of a new endowment and grant-making program, *The Commonwealth History Fund* (the Fund). Likely the largest of its kind in Virginia, the Fund will provide nearly \$400,000 annually in grants to history organizations and projects across the state, and up to \$2,000,000 in its first five years of operation. The Fund was created principally through generous funding from Dominion Energy.

"History education has never been so important," said VMHC President & CEO Jamie Bosket. "As the state's history museum, we are committed to doing everything we can to save and share our collective story. Through this new endowment fund we will be able to do more on behalf of the whole Commonwealth through direct financial support of history-related work happening in communities across Virginia now and for many years to come. We can't thank Dominion Energy enough for their remarkable support of the VMHC and this innovative and impactful initiative."

The Commonwealth History Fund is among the core initiatives of the museum's current reimagination. The museum's campus and programmatic activities are getting the most expansive overhaul in the institution's nearly 200-year history. Its museum facility is being dramatically renovated to make it a more welcoming, community-centered destination that welcomes all Virginians, and its exhibits and museum experiences are being expanded and redesigned to more thoughtfully reflect and engage all Virginians. Now, through *The Commonwealth History Fund*, this work can continue beyond the museum to reach Virginians in their own communities all across the state.

Considerations for grants will include: the significance of the project or resource and its impact on its community and the Commonwealth; the project's focus on historically underrepresented topics and communities; and the need for funding and the urgency of the project. "Virginia has a unique obligation to make sure our history education is as broad and inclusive as possible," said Governor Ralph Northam. "We have made great strides forward in telling the full and true story of our shared history in Virginia, but there is more work ahead to ensure that all voices and stories are included and represented. This generous endowment is a tremendous step forward in this work."

The Commonwealth History Fund's annual grant-making program will be administered in partnership with Virginia's Department of Historic Resources (DHR). "Until now, a perpetual and stable source of funding has been an unrealized dream. DHR couldn't be more excited to collaborate with our VMHC neighbors as well as partners across the Commonwealth to take the preservation and interpretation of Virginia history to the next level," said Director of DHR Julie Langan.

Applications for the inaugural grant cycle are being accepted now through February. Inaugural grant recipients will be announced, and funding awarded, in spring 2022. Funds can be used for a variety of purposes including preservation, research, publications, acquisition and conservation of artifacts, and educational programming. Eligible recipients include Virginia non-profits, educational institutions, and Virginia Indian tribes. Additional details, considerations, and grant criteria can be found online at VirginiaHistory.org/HistoryFund.

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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 nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

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Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society

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