Science Museum of Virginia

Impact Report

2026



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Impact is measured in numbers, but it is felt by people—the students who explored something new, seniors who built a connection and guests whose curiosity was sparked by an unexpected experience.

The pages that follow tell the story of our last fiscal year. They show the breadth of our reach and the scale of our accomplishments. Behind every number is a person. Someone asking a new question. A student seeing a different future. A guest leaving with a different perspective on the world. A donor investing in our mission. Those moments are harder to measure, but they are at the heart of why we exist.

Our impact is measured not only by how many people we reach, but also by what happens when we do—when we break through the noise, stretch perspectives, and transform both the way our community sees the world and our power to shape it.

As you explore this report, I invite you to look at the numbers and consider the people behind them. Together, they tell the story of a museum creating meaningful experiences and making a difference, one person at a time.

None of this happens without the people who believe in our mission: our staff, volunteers, members, donors, partners and community. Thank you for making these moments possible and for helping us create a place where everyone can rethink the remarkable world we live in.

Together, we are not simply measuring impact. We are creating it.



Richard C. Conti
Chief Wonder Officer,
Science Museum of Virginia

A Year of Impact

Public programming brings the Science Museum to life, creating unexpected moments of discovery and connection for guests throughout the year.

MAKING IT COUNT

601,360
in Science Museum visitation, marking 3 consecutive years of record visitation.

37,713
guests created in *The Forge* through a Maker Challenge, Maker Workshop or other making opportunities.

1,700
guests learned about the science in The Green by interacting with QR code exhibits placed throughout the space.

88,360
guests saw a giant screen film or astronomy show in The Dome and bought **26,641** buckets of popcorn from concessions to complete the experience.

20,320
guests watched rats dunk during **388** games of Rat Basketball.

30
performances by Virginia Repertory Theater and the VCU Theater team brought science to life.

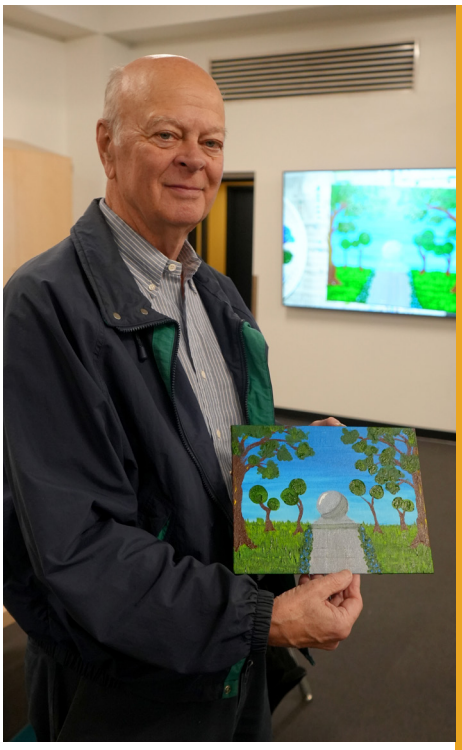
84,462
guests saw *Ultimate Dinosaurs*, making it the most popular touring exhibition ever hosted at the Science Museum.

12,406
guests joined us over 3 days at the Model Railroad Show.

$6.7 million
in earned revenue, a 3.4% increase over the previous year.

From school groups to teens to seniors, the Science Museum provides opportunities for every generation to learn, explore and experience the wonder of science.

EXTENDING REACH





Broad Street Station welcomed **61,490** guests on group visits.

17,765 field trip students experienced an educator-led, Live Science program that helped bring classroom lessons to life.

17% of visiting school students received partial or full financial support to cover their field trip experience.

Over **9** weeks of camp, **542** campers explored over the summer, and **60** campers received scholarships to help ensure that financial barriers do not stand in the way of a pivotal learning experience.

The Mix, our teen-only makerspace, supported more than **500** members and offered **11** weeks of free summer programming where teens developed practical skills and pursued interest-driven projects.

33 teens, from **18** different schools, participated in our Teen Leadership Program and gave **2,410** hours of service.

10 teens participated in the first LEGO-funded internship, providing for an even deeper experience with advanced STEM specialization opportunities.

Through **10** Senior Science events, **264** seniors strengthened their connections to science and to one another.

Through Science Within Reach, the Science Museum works to remove barriers to participation so that everyone can experience the wonder of science, regardless of income, ability, language or circumstance.

OPENING DOORS

23,051

guests visited under the national Museums for All admission program, which offers reduced admission for guests receiving financial assistance.

784

guests with disabilities and their families explored the Science Museum in a welcoming environment during **4** free Minds of All Kinds events.

3,763

guests visited for free via the Community Visit Initiative, an outreach program serving groups like SOAR365, Nexus Community Services, the Center for Families in Transition and the Faison Center.

1,169

families have joined under the Science Museum's $25 Museums for All membership and visited **20,286** times last year using that membership.

1,821

free visits were made possible through the Library Pass Program, which is now in **38** libraries across Virginia. Library systems report an average waitlist of **65** people for a pass.

14,520+

community members were reached through outreach events, from Mission Tomorrow and community festivals to the Autism Society of Central Virginia's Duck Race.

12

Dome features now have audio descriptions available to guests with low vision.

671

guests participated in STEM workshops, universally designed challenges in *The Forge* and tactile learning resources created with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

5

interns gained experience this summer under the Science Museum's paid internship program, helping reduce financial barriers for students pursuing careers in museums and STEM education.

The Science Museum of Virginia Foundation provides more than 25% of the Science Museum's operating budget, made possible through the generous philanthropic support of community members who believe in and advance the Science Museum's mission.

GENERATING SUPPORT







Last year, generous donors contributed **$5,499,788** to the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation.

A **$2 million** gift from NewMarket Corporation—one of the largest corporate gifts in the Science Museum's history—helped bring the new *Orbit* exhibition to the community. Opening in phases beginning this fall, the exhibition will introduce **7** new space-related experiences.

Nearly **$900,000** in accessibility programming was provided last year, a portion of which is supported through private giving to the Science Within Reach program.

202 guests attended last year's Up+Atom event, which raised **$121,497** in support of Science Within Reach.

44 gifts from **37** corporate partners supported **16** initiatives across the Science Museum.



The Science Museum is active in the community! Cherita Paul, shown top right, leads our Science Within Reach programs. This year, she received the Community Connector Award from Richmond Region Tourism for her contributions to community engagement and outreach.

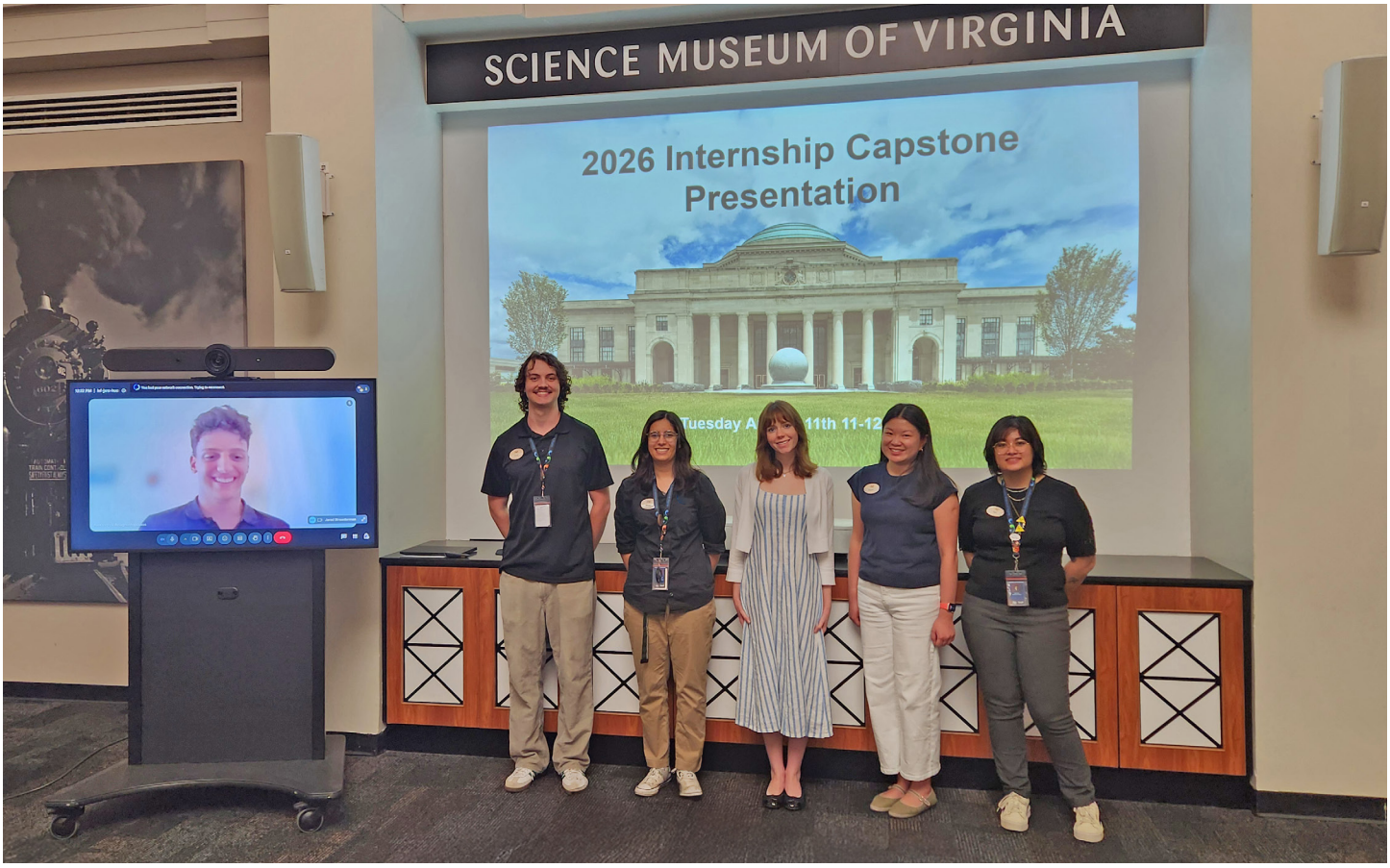


The Science Museum works with community partners—including the Autism Society of Virginia, Best Buddies Virginia and DC, DBVI, Chesterfield Parks and Recreation—to develop and deliver programs to have the biggest impact on different groups within the community.



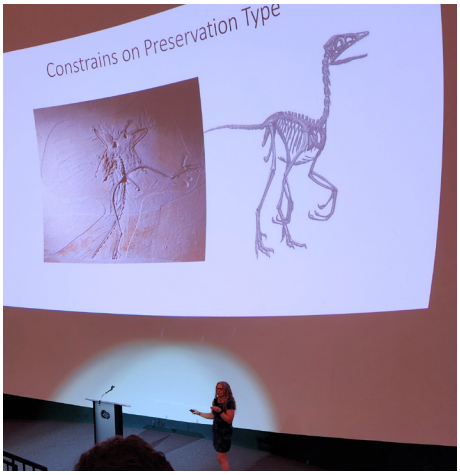


The Forge hosted several collaborative projects last year with organizations such as the Groundwork RVA Green Team, Compass Academy, Sacred Heart Center, John Rolfe Middle School, Metropolitan Boys in Business and the Red Shield Boys & Girls Club.



For the second year in a row, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia selected the Science Museum as a “Top Employer for Interns.”





We welcomed five Sunrise Science speakers last year, from a paleontologist to a landscape architect. Each event draws 150+ members of the community and is free and open to the public, creating an accessible opportunity to connect with STEM professionals and learn about the exciting work happening in our community and beyond.




UNITED
STATES
RELATIVITY BOOTH

Fifty Years of Wonder: The Next Chapter

Next year, we will celebrate 50 years as a community institution, with our sights set firmly on the next 50 years of impact.

The largest project in our history, the Northern Virginia Science Center, will open next year. Together with our campuses in Richmond and Danville, the new Northern Virginia campus will create a stronger statewide network for discovery, learning and innovation, bringing the transformative power of science to more Virginians than ever before.

Growth will also continue in Richmond. Design for the East Green is progressing, with construction on the first phase of this living landscape set to begin in 2027. This new environmental gallery will expand capacity for Live Science programming, participatory science and hands-on learning, while creating a space for the community to gather, connect and explore.

At the same time, the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation will launch a capital campaign to address critical capacity needs at Broad Street Station. Visitation has increased 156% over the past 15 years, and the building has reached its practical limit for usable public interior space. We are increasingly forced to turn away community events, limit school group programming, cap summer camp enrollment and constrain other mission-driven activities.

The need—and the opportunity—have never been greater.

At a time when conversations about science are often shaped by distrust or disinterest, what we see every day tells a different story. Virginians are not losing interest in science. They are hungry for more opportunities to experience it in ways that are hands-on, awe-inspiring and personal. During the 50th campaign, we'll expand our capacity to reach more people in every community, across every age and ability. We'll create more opportunities to spark curiosity and inspire discovery, empowering people to understand and shape their world.

This is not simply a campaign for a building or a budget line. It is an investment in Virginia—in a Commonwealth of people who are curious, engaged and empowered to understand and change their world. For 50 years, the Science Museum has invited Virginians to wonder. What we build next is up to us.

If you want to learn more about our plans, please contact the Foundation office at 804.864.1540 or email us at foundation@smv.org.



"Fifty years ago, the Science Museum began changing perspectives on the world through science. I've seen it happen—people who thought science wasn't 'for them' until they experienced the wonder of science firsthand. Leading this campaign isn't just an honor, it's personal. We have the chance to reach more people, in more corners of Virginia, than ever before. I'm excited because I know what's possible when this community rallies around something bigger than itself—and I've never seen momentum like this. Let's build the next 50 years of wonder together."

Bobby Thalhimer,
Honorary Campaign Chair

FY26 Financial Review

Science Museum of Virginia Foundation, Inc.

Statement of Activities for the year ending June 30, 2026. (Audited)

Revenues, Gains and Other Support

Contributions		
Individuals	$	1,623,648
Foundations	$	536,750
Corporations	$	2,608,687
Government & Nonprofits	$	35,574
Total Contributions	**$**	**4,804,658**
Membership, special events, and other	$	719,158
Investment income, net	$	2,115,416
Net realized and unrealized gains on investments	$	2,674,750
Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support	**$**	**10,313,982**

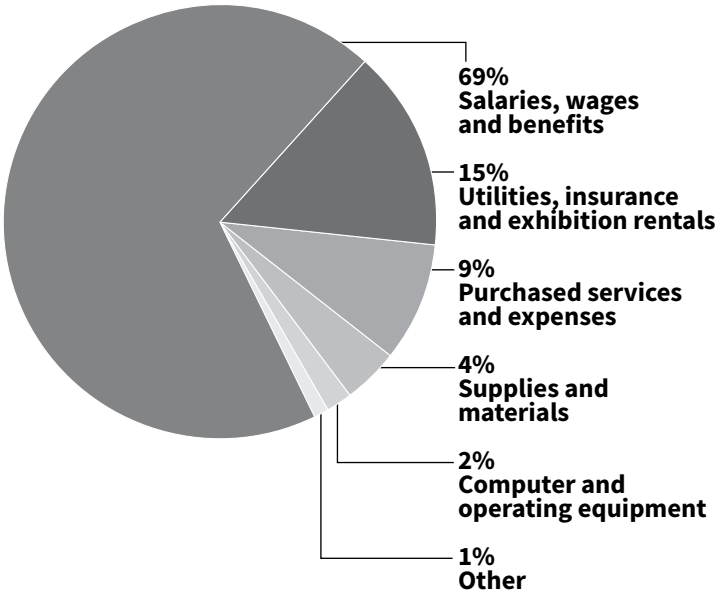
Grants and Expenses

Grants to Science Museum of Virginia operations	$	1,214,179
Expenditures to or on behalf of the Science Museum	$	1,275,878
Indirect Science Museum support	$	128,339
Management and general	$	384,535
Fundraising	$	1,009,263
Total Grants and Expenses	**$**	**4,012,194**
Change in net assets	$	6,301,788
Net assets at beginning of year	$	33,386,751
Net Assets at End of Year	**$**	**39,688,539**

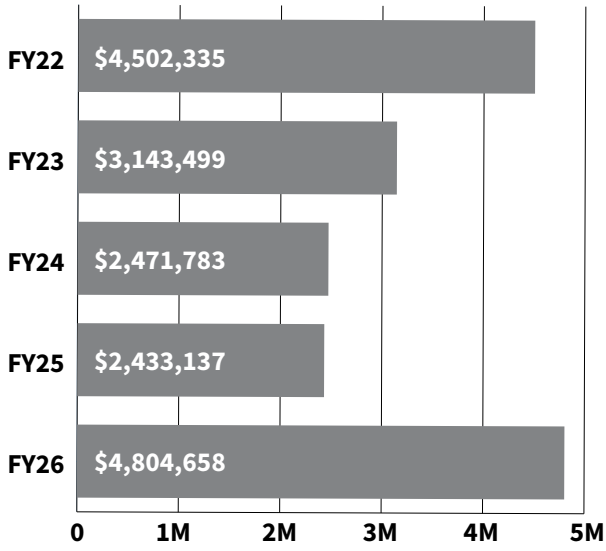
Science Museum of Virginia Financial Overview

Operating expenses from all sources for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2026.

Total Operating Expenses $13,623,014



Science Museum of Virginia Foundation Fundraising Totals*



*Total excludes membership revenue.

Volunteer Leadership

We are grateful to the dedicated individuals serving as Trustees, Directors, and members of our Advisory and Liaison Councils as of June 30, 2026. Their generosity of time, talent and expertise plays an important role in advancing the Science Museum's mission and impact.

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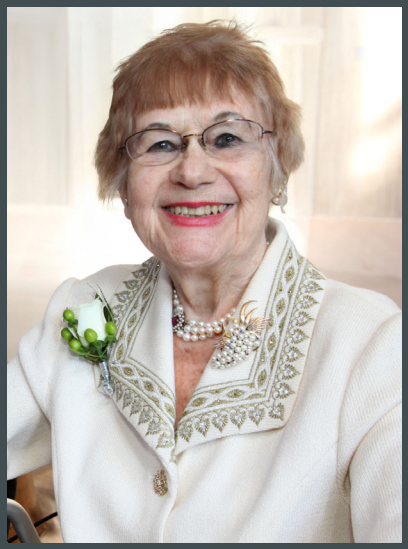
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John Russell Pope Society

The John Russell Pope Society recognizes those whose generosity extends beyond their lifetime through a legacy gift to the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation. These donors are creating a lasting impact on discovery and learning for generations to come. We invite you to consider the difference you would like to make. To learn more about creating a lasting connection to the Science Museum through your estate plans, please contact the Foundation office at 804.864.1540. Donors marked with an asterisk (*) are deceased.

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A Lasting Legacy

This year our community lost one of the most ardent supporters of science and education in the region, Inger Rice. Inger's extraordinary philanthropy and steadfast commitment to the Science Museum helped shape the institution in lasting and meaningful ways, including our Inger Rice Learning Center. Her partnership, vision and belief in the importance of science education will continue to inspire future generations through the many lives she touched and the legacy she leaves behind.

In Gratitude

We are grateful to the individuals, foundations, organizations and corporations whose generosity during the past fiscal year (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026) helped inspire curiosity, spark discovery and connect our community with the wonder of science. Because of your support, the Science Museum of Virginia was able to offer innovative programs and exhibitions that make science accessible, meaningful and fun for all.

Thank you for helping create opportunities for people of all ages to explore, discover and see the world in new ways.

A plus sign (+) indicates gifts made through Component Funds or Supporting Organizations of the Community Foundation for a greater Richmond. An asterisk (*) indicates a deceased donor.

Platinum Society

Recognizing gifts of $20,000 or more

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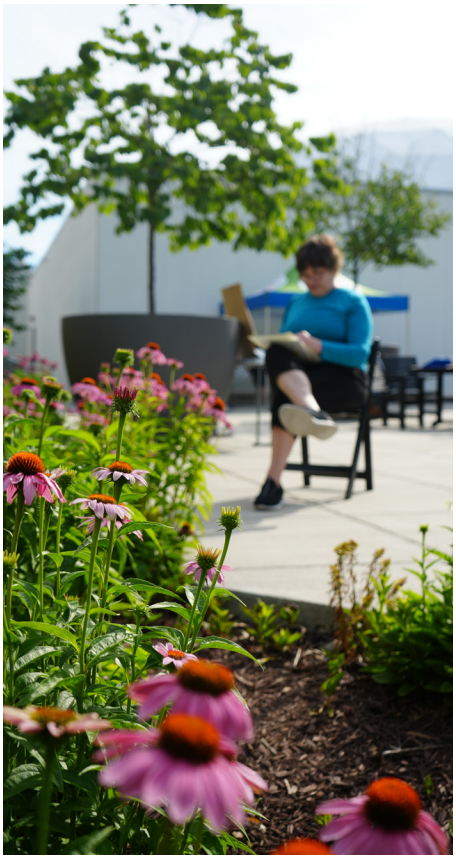
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In Memory of Rebeccah Yarborough

We are deeply grateful to every donor whose generosity makes the Science Museum's work possible.





Senior Science offers connections to science inside and out. The Green provides not only a source of inspiration while painting nature scenes, but also a source of education about native and migratory birds and pollinators. Senior Science is generously sponsored by Genworth.









The Virginia Lottery's generous support as presenting sponsor expanded access to science learning through Virtual Demonstration Experiences and made possible a free appreciation and planning event for educators. At the September 13, 2025, Teacher Resource Fair, educators explored group programs, gathered classroom inspiration and connected with statewide educational organizations.



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