



*Virginia Museum of*  
**NATURAL HISTORY**

**2024-2025**  
**Annual Report**



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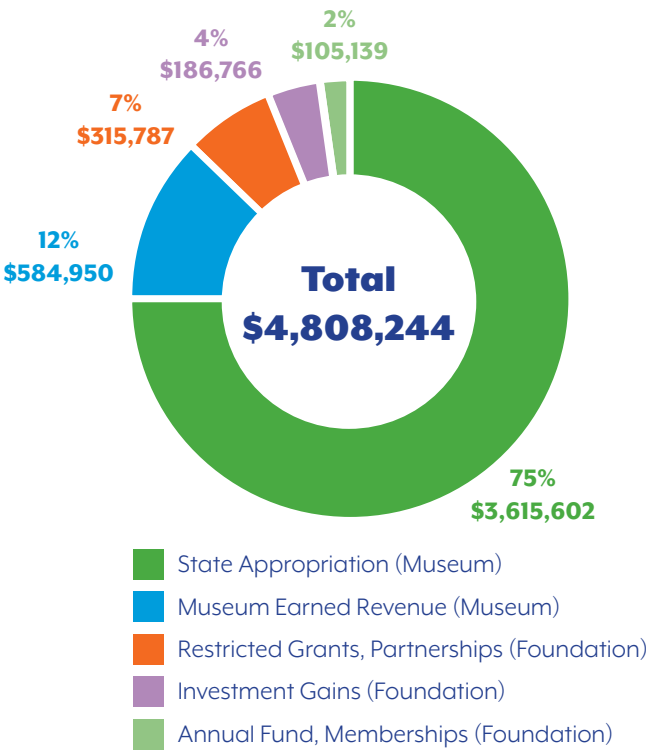
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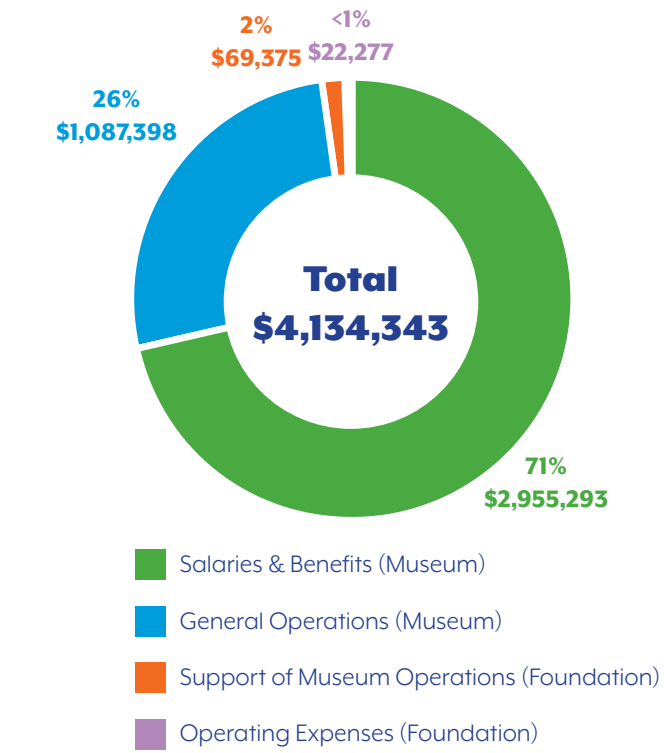
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# Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025)

Revenue



Expenses



# By the Numbers

**7,648** visitors receiving free admission through the *Museums for All* program

**12,328** students participating in VMNH education programs

**774** donations to the VMNH Foundation

**43** Corporate Partnerships



# Strategic Planning & Projects

## AAM Reaccreditation

The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) received reaccreditation from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) in Summer 2025. AAM accreditation is the highest national recognition afforded to the nation’s museums and a status that VMNH has maintained since 1994.

National accreditation brings recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for over fifty years, the Alliance’s museum accreditation program is the museum field’s primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation, and public accountability, and strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable to provide the best possible service to the public.

## Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion

The museum hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion on July 24, 2025. Named for the late Jean S. Adams, a long-time museum supporter and former trustee, the 3-season, open-air programming and visitor area is the largest physical space addition to the museum’s Starling Avenue facility since its 2007 grand opening.

Accessible via the Harvest Foundation Hall of Ancient Life, the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion overlooks neighboring J. Frank Wilson Memorial Park and consists of informative signage interpreting the flora and fauna of the park. The pavilion is highlighted by a life-size replica of the extinct Pelagornis – the largest flying bird known to science with a wingspan of 20 feet – suspended from the pavilion’s canopy. The multi-use pavilion not only creates an enhanced museum experience for general visitors, but also provides essential additional space for the museum’s wide variety of educational programming and special events.

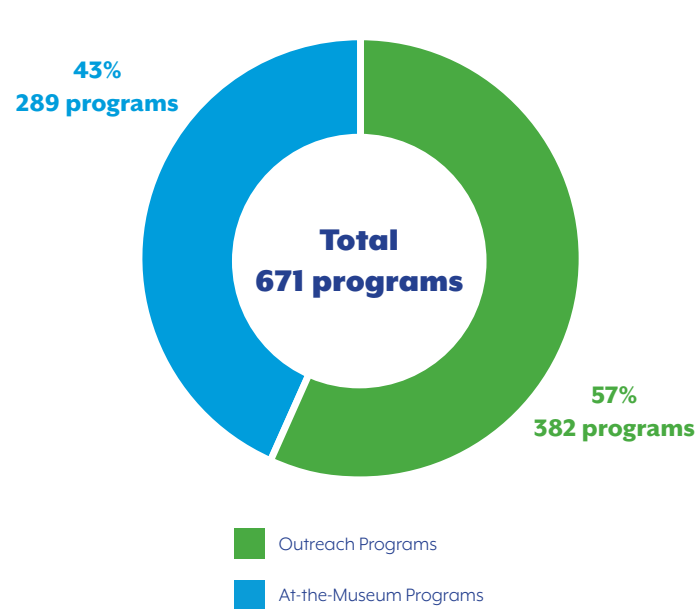
## Museum Without Walls

The museum completed its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and is set to launch a new strategic plan (2025-2030) in late 2025.

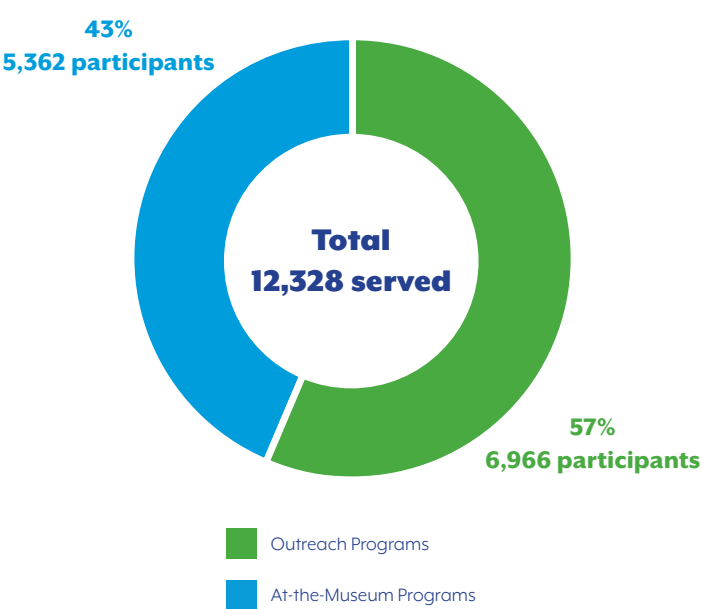


# Education & Outreach

## Educational Programs



## Total Served



The VMNH Education and Public Programs Department provided 671 programs, serving 12,328 students during the 2024-2025 school year.

The department continues its scholarship program for local and surrounding under-served school districts each year. Scholarships are made possible through various grants from local and regional community partners, covering museum exhibit admission and SOL- correlated education program costs. The department has seen a 40% growth in Homeschool Science & Engineering Academy participation since its inception in 2011. The Academy includes a series of bi-monthly programs that takes place from September through May and is designed to supplement students’ learning and knowledge of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics. The department will expand the Academy sessions during the 2025-2026 school year to accommodate the continued growth.





# Research & Collections

For more information about scientific research at VMNH, visit [www.vmnh.net/research-collections](http://www.vmnh.net/research-collections).

## Archaeology & The Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab

The VMNH Archaeology Department has developed new capabilities over the past year to position itself as a research enabler for Virginia archaeology. This includes the development of three new reference collections (archaeobotanical, shell, wood) and building capacity for underwater archaeological survey.

The VMNH Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab (CHML) has played a significant role in international affairs through the use of advanced satellite technologies to identify impacts to cultural heritage from conflict and natural disaster. Publishing an average of one report per month through the Smithsonian Institution, CHML Director Dr. Hayden Bassett and his team's reports have received more than 41,000 reads to date.

## Paleontology

VMNH Associate Curator of Paleontology Dr. Adam Pritchard presented research on fossil reptile anatomy at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology and Southeastern Geological Society of America conferences. Dr. Pritchard also submitted papers on early snakes in Virginia and a toothless reptile from the Triassic of New Mexico.

Paleontology staff implemented the second year of a National Science Foundation-funded project covering fieldwork in the Jurassic of Wyoming, with the grant also providing funding for six VMNH interns in Fall 2024.

Dr. Pritchard received \$10,000 from the Luck Companies Foundation to support a student internship to three-dimensionally model a reptile skeleton from Virginia. Paleontology lab activity also included preparation of the skull, limbs, and tail of Petra the cave cat, along with the tail vertebrae and limb skeleton of a giant carnivorous dinosaur.



## Vertebrate Biology and General Ecology

Dr. Collin VanBuren started in February 2025 as a Visiting Scholar in Vertebrate Biology. In his first few months, Dr. VanBuren had a paper accepted in the journal Integrative Zoology, resubmitted a manuscript with reviewer comments, and submitted two additional manuscripts that are in their first round of review. Dr. VanBuren has also joined the Ecological Forecasting Initiative and the Southeast Beaver Alliance, which held a virtual conference attended by ~100 people on June 26th. Ongoing work includes mapping beaver contributions to ecosystem services and reconstructing ancient herbivore dynamics on rangelands, along with developing new projects to support Virginia's natural history.

## Vertebrate Zoology

VMNH Vertebrate Zoology has continued to expand the museums conservation efforts and public outreach programming through collaborations with other non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and public entities. Collections staff have sustained efforts to develop a more complete comprehensive reference collection highlighting some of the most unique fauna of the mid-Atlantic.

Assistant Curator of Herpetology Dr. Arianna Kuhn and Biology Research Technician Marshall Boyd played pivotal roles in the Virginia Herpetological Society (VHS) non-profit organization for coordinating herpetofauna biodiversity documentation throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and also strengthened the relationship between VHS and their counterpart in North Carolina by co-hosting the first ever joint meeting of the two organizations.

## Recent Invertebrates

Staff continued the update and reorganization of VMNH's pinned insect collection, which is near completion. Over the past year, 25,018 specimens were curated and inventoried, bringing the total number of specimens in the collection to 158,054. Curators documented the status and distribution of the three most significant invasive ant species in the U.S.; reviewed the millipedes of the family Chelodesmidae of the Antilles and the Bahamas; explored the arthropod diversity of shallow subterranean habitats in the southern Appalachians; and are currently documenting the recent expansion of the invasive Argentine ant in Virginia.

VMNH Curator of Recent Invertebrates Dr. Kal Ivanov and Assistant Curator of Recent Invertebrates Dr. Jackson Means initiated the *Millipedes of Virginia* project, and continued work on the *Ants of Virginia* and the *Spiders of Virginia* projects. Ongoing work includes the first world catalogue of the family Chelodesmidae; description of new genera and species of millipedes from Brazil; research into new isopod-ant associations; an updated checklist of the terrestrial isopods of Puerto Rico; a review of the invasive ants of Florida, and the first documented occurrence of the invasive African planthopper *Leptodelphax maculigera* in Paraguay.



# VMNH Waynesboro

The 2024-2025 fiscal year saw the final steps to complete detailed design for the VMNH-Waynesboro branch campus, representing 100% building design and 25% exhibit design. The remainder of the exhibits, as well as landscaping and other considerations, will be completed when VMNH moves to the Commonwealth's Capital Construction Pool and produces the working drawings.

Many thanks to the volunteers who have provided support during the City of Waynesboro's Saturday Farmer's Market hours and other special events by hosting the VMNH Mobile Science Outreach Trailer! Over the past year, the team hosted over 1,200 visitors who experienced a taste of the exhibits that the museum will bring to the Shenandoah Valley.



## Science Festivals

VMNH science festivals were key drivers of science outreach, tourism growth, and quality of life for visitors from across the Commonwealth and beyond, drawing more than 9,000 visitors across 3 festivals over the past year. Science festival goals include 1) increased museum visitation, 2) expanded science outreach, and 3) growth in memberships, partnerships and community engagement. Upcoming VMNH science festivals include:

### Bonez & Booz

**October 25, 2025**

*Sponsored by:*

*Atlantic Union Bank, Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Materials Company, Carter Bank, Hooker Furnishings, The Patterson Trust*

### Reptile Festival

**April 25-26, 2026**

*Sponsored by:*

*Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Materials Company, Hooker Furnishings, The Patterson Trust, Virginia Tourism Corporation*

### Dino Festival

**July 24-25, 2026**

*Sponsored by:*

*Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Materials Company, Hooker Furnishings, The Patterson Trust, Virginia Tourism Corporation*



## Thank you to our supporters!

For a complete list of donors in fiscal year 2025, please visit [www.vmnh.net/donors](http://www.vmnh.net/donors).