

**HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY**  
**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR & GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**FOR FY 2024**

**§ 24-507(b)(12)**

Submitted by  
John L. Seidel, Ph.D., CEO  
Historic St. Mary's City Commission

17 January 2024

P.O. BOX 39, ST. MARY'S CITY, MARYLAND 20686

Wes Moore, Governor    John L. Seidel, Ph.D., Executive Director    Rear Admiral Tim Heely, USN (retired), Chairman

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# HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY

A MUSEUM OF HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY AT  
MARYLAND'S FIRST CAPITAL

January 17, 2025

**The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor**  
**100 State Circle**  
**Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925**

**The Honorable Bill Ferguson**  
**President**  
**Senate of Maryland**  
**State House, H-107**  
**Annapolis, MD 21401**

**The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones**  
**Speaker**  
**Maryland House of Delegates**  
**State House, H-101**  
**Annapolis, MD 21401**

**Re: Report required by State Government Article § 24-507(b)(9) (MSAR # 14818)**

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Attached is Historic St. Mary's City Commission's annual report for the years 2022-2024. The report requirements include:

- i. The number of students served as well as the type and numbers of all other visitors;
- ii. The number of volunteers and total hours contributed to the operation of the museum;
- iii. The amount and types of private and nonstate funds donated, pledged, or otherwise provided; and
- iv. Recommendations or requests the Commission considers appropriate to further the mission of Historic St. Mary's City."

On behalf of the Commission, we are grateful for the support of the Moore-Miller Administration and the Maryland General Assembly that enables the Commission to fulfill its mission to preserve and protect the archaeological and historical record of Maryland's first

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colonial capital and to appropriately develop and use this historic and scenic site for the education, enjoyment, and general benefit of the public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JL Seidel', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John L. Seidel, Ph.D., CEO /Executive Director

**cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)**

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MARYLAND'S FIRST CAPITAL

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR FY 2022-2024

17 January 2025

The Historic St. Mary's City Commission is pleased to provide this report for FY 2024, as required in Education Article § 24-507(b)(12) (MSAR # 14818). Due in part to a transition in leadership at the Commission, it appears that no reports were filed for the previous two years, FY 2022 and 2023. Data for those two years therefore are also included in this report in Table 1. This report therefore covers these three fiscal years, FY 2022-2024.

**TABLE 1: Fiscal Year Visitation & Funding Data for the Historic St. Mary's City Commission  
Education Article § 24-507(b)(9) (MSAR # 14818)**

Visitors	2022 Act.	2023 Act.	2024 Act.
General attendance (including members)	8,584	7,797	8,304
School children (scholastic tours)	4,674	7,897	7,306
Site use for recreation	30,357	28,507	13,000
Paid events and partner events (Receptions, Beerfest, SMCM Gala)	8,313	7,408	5,771
Free admissions (MD Day, Riverfest, public relations)	1,848	1,779	2,216
Summer Archaeology Field School	9	17	16
<i>Total served on-site</i>	<i>53,786</i>	<i>53,405</i>	<i>36,613</i>
Off-site outreach events attendance (Dove sails, Youth Programs)	232	4,500	2,427
<i>Total</i>	<i>54,018</i>	<i>57,905</i>	<i>30,040</i>
<b>Revenue</b>			
Commission Earned Revenue (including admissions, gift store, land lease, Bed & Breakfast, programs)	\$ 631,928	\$ 642,262	\$ 543,145
Donations/contributions	\$ 87,169	\$ 73,924	\$ 76,304
Federal Grant Funds	\$ 43,595	\$ 50,825	\$ 45,961
<b>Volunteers</b>			
Number of Volunteers	105	339	178
Number of Volunteer Hours	3,798	9,409	5,144

General visitation in FY 2024 remained strong - museum attendance nationally continues to be at historically low levels in the aftermath of COVID, but Historic St. Mary's City's numbers have improved at a rate well above the national average. We are particularly pleased at the way

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visits by school children rebounded after COVID. The slight downturn in school visits in FY 2024 over FY 2023 is attributable to school budget constraints and transportation costs. We anticipate that this will continue in the future and are therefore taking steps to address this with schools. Decreases in site usage for recreation may reflect a retrenchment after increased usage associated with COVID, when more people sought outdoor recreation. The decrease in events is linked to a transition in event management at HSMC. We anticipate increases in both areas for FY 2025.

The statute asks that the agency include with the annual report any recommendations or requests that the Commission considers appropriate to further the mission of Historic St. Mary's City (HSMC). We have two primary recommendations:

1. As noted in the 2021 HSMC Master Plan, staffing levels for a museum of this size have historically been well below those of our peer institutions, and they remain so. This stretches across the agency, but is particularly acute in the Facilities Management and Finance Departments. Furthermore, many employees are paid below the living wage for this region and are 9-month contractual employees. These issues, combined with the hiring power of the nearby Pax River Naval Air Station (and associated contractors and businesses), make staff recruitment and retention a serious challenge at HSMC. Moving more HSMC employees to full-time status, converting some of the long-term contractual positions to PIN'd positions, and increasing compensation to at least a living wage standard would have a very positive impact on staffing and agency efficiency. Although HSMC is working hard to increase non-state revenue through gifts and grants, bringing the museum to a par with its peers and improving recruitment and retention will require an increased state investment in the HSMC operating budget.
2. We particularly urge close attention to the looming 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State of Maryland in 2034. The birth of the state occurred at St. Mary's City, and the site will be a focal point of this celebration, seeing increased state-wide and national attention. The spotlight on HSMC and the state's unique history offer a remarkable opportunity for regional economic development associated with heritage tourism, but as noted in the HSMC 2021 Master Plan, capitalizing on this unique opportunity will require continued and expanded investment, even in the face of tighter state budgets. Of particular importance are capital projects, which have a long-time horizon between conception, design, and completion. Although nine years seems like a long time, the window for such projects is already exceedingly narrow and closing. We urge support for the many projects and site improvements that are necessary to maximize our impact. Based on the experience of nearby states such as Virginia, we believe strongly that the return on investment will be substantial.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this report and are particularly grateful for the continued support of Governor Moore's administration and the General Assembly of Maryland.

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<b>Historic St. Mary's City Commission</b>			
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Free admissions (MD Day, Riverfest, public relations)	1,848	1,779	2,216
Total served on-site	53,776	53,388	36,597
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