

## Vermont Historical Society FY2025 Budget Request

All funds from General Fund

	<b>FY23 ACTUAL</b>	<b>FY24 ACTUAL</b>	<b>FY25 SUBMITTED</b>	<b>FY25 GOVERNOR'S BUDGET</b>	<b>FY25 REQUESTED</b>
OPERATING GRANT	\$762,659	\$796,792	\$820,696	\$777,499	\$820,696
GRANT TO COVER FEE FOR SPACE	\$252,811	\$263,987	\$271,824	\$315,021	\$315,021
<b>TOTAL (AS SEEN IN BUDGET)</b>	<b>\$1,015,470</b>	<b>\$1,060,779</b>	<b>\$1,092,520</b>	<b>\$1,092,520</b>	<b>1,135,717</b>

### Reason for deviation from the Governor's Recommended Budget

The Vermont Historical Society's yearly appropriation from the general fund is made up of two parts, an operating grant that covers our work as defined by statute and a grant that covers fee for space that allows the Vermont History Museum to serve the public from the Capital Complex.

Vermont Historical Society has generally followed the recommendation of the Governor's office in budget construction, usually a 3% increase, though sometimes 0% (as in FY22). Fee for space has historically fluctuated, though generally staying between 3% and 4%. The Governor's budget has always increased the grant to cover the fee for space for any change outside of 3% with no harm to the operating portion of the appropriation.

Since the fee for space is calculated after budget submission, we were informed verbally that this arrangement would be the same for FY25. As you can see, the fee for space increased 19% for the coming year; yet no change was made to the overall total of our budget as submitted. This resulted in an over 5% reduction in our operating appropriation, most of which covers fixed costs we are required to bear per statute.

The following pages include revenue and expense detail as well as traditional budget narrative.

## **Vermont Historical Society Budget Narrative (as it appears in Governor's Budget)**

### ***Mission***

The Vermont Historical Society engages both Vermonters and "Vermonters at heart" in the exploration of our state's rich heritage. Our purpose is to reach a broad audience through our outstanding collections, statewide outreach, and dynamic programming. We believe that an understanding of the past changes lives and builds better communities.

Further detail on mission, vision, and institutional values can be found here:

<https://vermonthistory.org/mission-and-strategic-plan/>

### ***Strategic Goals:***

1. Provide Vermonters and Vermonters-at-Heart the resources to access Vermont's rich historical collections from anywhere in the world.
2. We will recognize and support local history efforts; understanding that local societies are an integral part of sharing and preserving Vermont's story.
3. Vermonters will increase their knowledge of our state's past and understand how their unique experience impacts and shapes this ongoing narrative. Guests will enrich their visit through deeper understanding of Vermont and its people.
4. To build resilient and connected communities, students will understand Vermont's history and its place in the broader world.

Summary plan document can be found here:

[https://vermonthistory.org/client\\_media/files/Strategic%20Plan%202019-2024\\_ExternalUse\\_WebB.pdf](https://vermonthistory.org/client_media/files/Strategic%20Plan%202019-2024_ExternalUse_WebB.pdf)

### ***A unique collaboration – VHS and The State of Vermont:***

- Chartered by the legislature in 1838, and thus the oldest cultural heritage organization in the state, VHS collects, preserves, and exhibits objects and documents related to Vermont's past (22 V.S.A., sections 281-285). The Vermont Historical Society is the only institution in Vermont that collects artifacts and documents that reflect the entire history of the state, every geographical area, and every chronological period, including the present.
- In the event of dissolution of VHS, management of its collection and related property will become the responsibility of the State (22 V.S.A., section 284).
- Employees of VHS are classified by the state classification system as if they were state employees and receive all general pay increases granted state employees (22 V.S.A., section 285).
- The State of Vermont requires participation in the Vermont State Employee Retirement System by qualified employees of VHS, as well as access to group coverage for health, dental, and life insurance. The premium for this coverage is paid entirely by VHS and its employees.
- VHS is both tenant and a landlord of the State of Vermont. Fee for space is assessed annually to VHS for the area occupied by the Vermont History Museum in the Pavilion

Building. The State of Vermont leases space in the Vermont History Center for the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center and Vermont State Library.

- With the change in scope and purpose of the State Library, VHS has become the primary research library for study of our state's history. Much of the VHS collection is searchable online, with more materials added daily.
- VHS provides secure, climate-controlled space and curatorial oversight for the state's collection of historic flags and other select holdings.
- VHS provides access to meeting rooms in both the Pavilion space and History Center without charge to state agencies.
- The Vermont History Center in Barre is delegated for use by state agencies as an alternative worksite in the event of natural disaster or other emergency.
- VHS provides curriculum support and supplemental learning for students and teachers throughout Vermont. VHS education staff work closely with State House staff to coordinate field trips that include tours of the State House and Vermont History Museum.
- VHS supports approximately 200 local historical societies and museums throughout Vermont and advances their vitality in the communities they serve.

***Key Budget Issues:***

The Vermont Historical Society has eliminated structural deficits endemic to prior operations. Upward pressure on expenses continues to be exerted by fixed staff salaries and benefits as defined through the state employee contract, pension obligations that grow each year, maintenance of a 50,000 square foot historically important building in Barre, and operating costs associated with running the Vermont History Museum and serving Vermont students free-of-charge.

VHS is seeing an outsized budget impact by pension obligation growth. It was determined that even though VHS is required to participate in the pension program, it was not eligible for the relief provided by 2022 legislative action. Therefore, VHS contribution to employee pension has risen to over 28% this current fiscal year and over 29% in the next, a huge obligation for an organization of its size.

COVID-era Federal grants were put to good use by VHS in retaining staff and growing digitization and education programs that benefited residents statewide. These programs and grants are largely behind us so we must look to State support and private fundraising to fill gaps. We anticipate private fundraising to be challenging as inflation and rising interest rates, as well as climate, health, and human services needs impact Vermonters' ability to give.

***Results:***

Please see attached summary annual report. The report may also be found at:

[https://vermonthistory.org/client\\_media/files/About/FY23%20Annual%20Report.pdf](https://vermonthistory.org/client_media/files/About/FY23%20Annual%20Report.pdf)