



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
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The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation launches \$600 million Power of Place campaign

*Fundraising initiative aims to accelerate Foundation's impact on
American history and civics*

WILLIAMSBURG, VA (Oct. 30, 2023) — The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation announced “[The Power of Place — The Centennial Campaign for Colonial Williamsburg](#)” at a campaign launch event on Saturday to raise funds and awareness for the Foundation’s preservation, education and civic engagement priorities. The campaign is designed to support numerous projects that inform and inspire people across the country and around the globe in the lead-up to 2026, the year of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the Foundation’s own 100th anniversary.

“Colonial Williamsburg is the world’s largest U.S. history museum and one of the nation’s most trusted cultural institutions,” said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. “The power of this place, which was home to many of the events leading up to the American Revolution, provides us with the opportunity to offer a more complete, research-based understanding of our collective history.”

The campaign will preserve iconic spaces in Colonial Williamsburg’s Historic Area like the Capitol, Governor’s Palace and Raleigh Tavern, while also supporting the restoration and reconstruction of additional sites like the [Williamsburg Bray School](#), [Historic First Baptist Church](#) and the new [Colin G. and Nancy N. Campbell Archaeology Center](#).

The campaign will also equip the Foundation to become the world’s largest digital U.S. history museum. The [Colonial Williamsburg Innovation Studios](#) will drive this evolution, which will include relaunching the history.org website as a central place to find trusted educational content from a consortium of America’s leading U.S. history museums. A key campaign priority, Innovation Studios is also home to the dynamic [Ben Franklin’s World](#) podcast and other digital programs now under development to share America’s complex founding history with students, educators and other audiences.

The leadership phase of the campaign began in January 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the Historic Area and Art Museums for much of the year. Despite these extraordinary operational challenges, the Foundation has already raised over \$325 million toward the \$600 million goal set for the campaign, which is projected to conclude in early 2027. The organization benefited from a record-setting fundraising

year in 2021 and a second-best year in 2022. Four gifts of \$10 million each were given by individual donors.

“The work being done at Colonial Williamsburg today is truly inspiring and is already resonating with donors and visitors alike,” said Carly Fiorina, board chair of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. “The early success of this campaign proves that there is an appetite for history told completely and truthfully, and no organization is better positioned to provide that than Colonial Williamsburg.”

Campaign project spotlight

A nationally recognized project to examine, reconstruct and interpret the site of First Baptist Church’s original building in Williamsburg’s Historic Area was [awarded a \\$3 million grant](#) by the Lilly Endowment Inc. earlier this year. The First Baptist Church of Williamsburg is one of the country’s earliest Black congregations and was founded in 1776 by enslaved and free Black worshipers. The project, when [announced in 2020](#), received support from more than 300 donors who had never previously given to the Foundation.

In 2022, the Mellon Foundation awarded the Williamsburg Bray School Project with a [\\$5 million grant](#). The grant, which was the largest the Mellon Foundation had awarded through its Monuments Project, supports the work of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and William & Mary, advancing the project that [began in 2021](#).

The school is believed to be the only remaining colonial-era building in the country that was dedicated to the education of Black children. The Williamsburg Bray School was a British-chartered institution that operated from 1760-1774. The Foundation is restoring the building and will open the site in the fall of 2024 on the 250th anniversary of the school’s closing.

Excavation of the original Bray School site, the Historic First Baptist Church site and many other locations in the Historic Area has resulted in new discoveries and many additions to the Foundation’s collection of more than 60 million archaeologically-recovered artifacts. Despite nearly 100 years of excavations, only 20 percent of the Historic Area has been examined using modern archaeological techniques. To continue this vitally important work, the [Foundation has broken ground](#) on the new Colin G. and Nancy N. Campbell Archaeology Center, a donor-funded campaign project that is slated for completion in 2025.

While the campaign has enjoyed early success, much work remains to be done. For more information and the opportunity to make a gift to Colonial Williamsburg’s The Power of Place campaign, visit <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/give/power-of-place/>.

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About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers and 18th-century inspired culinary options from historic taverns situated along historic Duke of Gloucester Street. Colonial Williamsburg Resorts complement the experience, offering guests five unique hotel properties including the iconic Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star, AAA Five Diamond Williamsburg Inn, newly renovated Williamsburg Lodge-Autograph Collection, Williamsburg Woodlands Hotel and Suites, the Griffin Hotel, and authentic 18th-century Colonial Houses. The resort offers a range of events and amenities including four historic taverns, 15 food and beverage outlets providing exquisite culinary experiences from casual to elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and his son Rees Jones, a world-class full-service spa and fitness center, pools, meeting and flexible event spaces, and scenic gardens providing the perfect venue for weddings and special events. Merchants Square, built alongside the Historic Area in 1935 as one of the first planned shopping districts in the United States, features more than 40 specialty boutiques with products ranging from apparel to fine jewelry, art, specialty foods and gifts. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

– CWF

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