

**D17B0151**  
**Historic St Mary’s City Commission**

**Program Description**

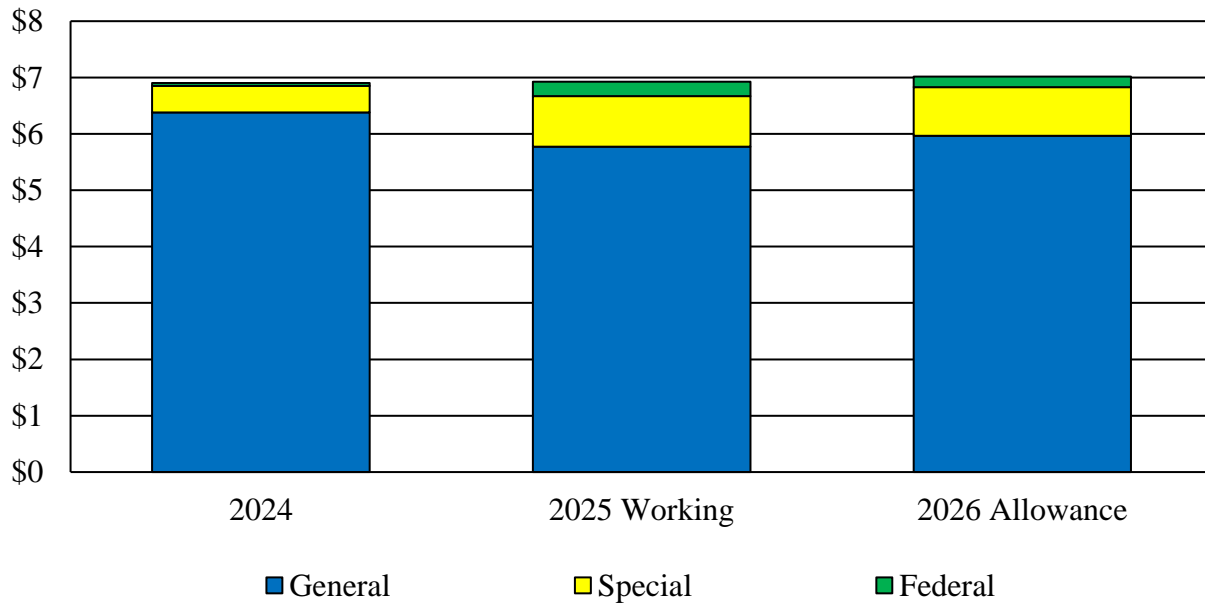
Historic St. Mary’s City is an outdoor history and archaeology museum that preserves, researches, and interprets the site of Maryland’s first capital. The Historic St. Mary’s City Commission (HSMCC) is an independent unit of State government.

The mission of HSMCC is to preserve and protect the archaeological and historical record of Maryland’s first capital and to appropriately develop historic and scenic sites for the education, enjoyment, and general benefit of the public. The goal of the commission is that the archaeological sites and collections, scenic views, and rural character of the historic city be safeguarded by preservation and research practices consistent with its status as a National Historic Landmark District.

***Operating Budget Summary***

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**Fiscal 2026 Budget Increases \$93,598, or 1.4%, to \$7.0 Million**  
**(\$ in Millions)**



Note: The fiscal 2025 impacts of statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and adjustments are not reflected in this agency’s budget. The fiscal 2026 impacts of the fiscal 2025 statewide salary adjustments appear in this agency’s budget. The fiscal 2026 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in DBM and are not included in this agency’s budget.

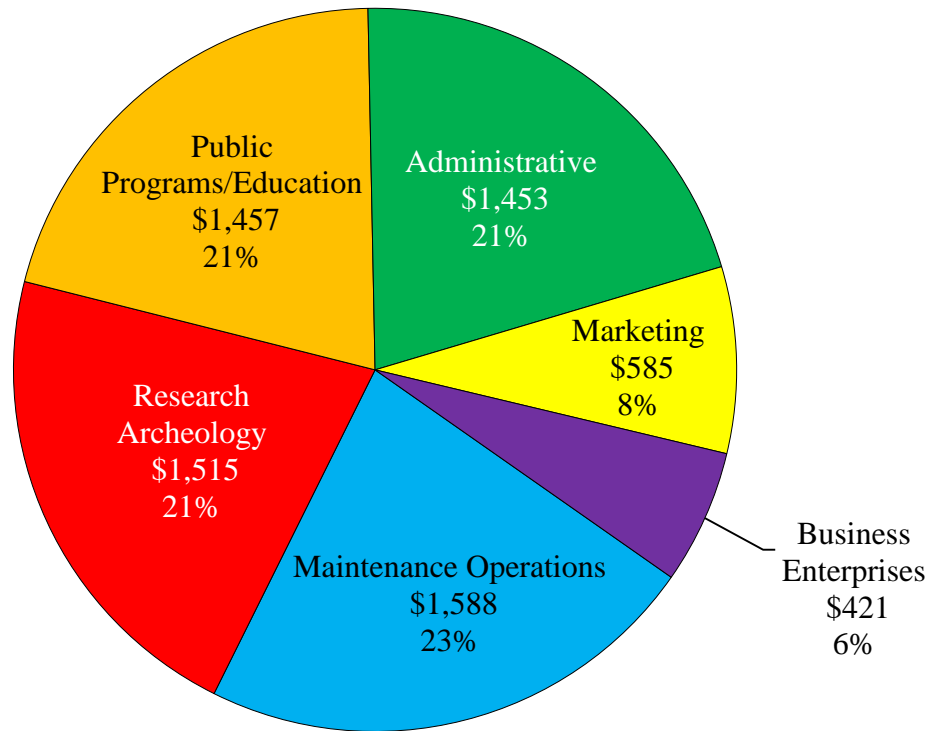
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## Fiscal 2026 Overview of Agency Spending

HSMCC’s fiscal 2026 allowance totals \$7.0 million. A breakdown of the proposed budget is shown in **Exhibit 1**. Maintenance operations at the 1,000-acre outdoor historical park make up \$1.6 million (23%) of the allowance. Historic St. Mary’s City has more than 300 archaeological sites spanning approximately 10,000 years of history, including the recently rediscovered fort that was the first European settlement in the area. Research archaeology receives \$1.5 million (21%) in the fiscal 2026 allowance. Public and educational programming, such as historical reenactment and interpretation, workshops, and school visits, make up \$1.5 million (21%), and administrative costs make up a further \$1.5 million (21%) of the budget. Marketing (\$585,000, 8%) and business enterprises such as the on-site gift shop (\$421,000, 6%) account for the rest of the allowance.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Overview of Agency Spending**  
**Fiscal 2026 Allowance**  
**(\$ in Thousands)**



Note: The fiscal 2026 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget.

Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2026 Budget Books

**Proposed Budget Change**

The fiscal 2026 allowance is about \$94,000 higher than the prior year, with most of the growth due to personnel costs, as shown in **Exhibit 2**. The fiscal 2026 allowance includes 7 contractual conversions for existing employees, which HSMCC believes will help with employee retention, which results in a net increase of approximately \$106,000.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Proposed Budget**  
**Historic St Mary’s City Commission**  
 (\$ in Thousands)

	<b>General</b>	<b>Special</b>	<b>Federal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>How Much It Grows:</b>	<b><u>Fund</u></b>	<b><u>Fund</u></b>	<b><u>Fund</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Fiscal 2024 Actual	\$6,382	\$472	\$46	\$6,900
Fiscal 2025 Working Appropriation	5,775	895	255	6,925
Fiscal 2026 Allowance	<u>5,964</u>	<u>867</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>7,019</u>
Fiscal 2025-2026 Amount Change	\$188	-\$28	-\$67	\$94
Fiscal 2025-2026 Percent Change	3.3%	-3.1%	-26.2%	1.4%
<b>Where It Goes:</b>				<b><u>Change</u></b>
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>				
Costs associated with 7 new regular positions from contractual conversions.....				\$581
Salary and associated fringe benefits, including fiscal 2025 cost-of-living adjustments and increments.....				186
Employee and retiree health insurance.....				-141
Other fringe benefit adjustments .....				24
<b>Other Changes</b>				
Maintenance and operations costs.....				23
Event food services increase due to rising catering costs .....				13
Marketing, advertising, and other publications .....				13
Software.....				8
Utilities .....				7
Consulting with Piscataway Tribe and others to demonstrate and interpret 17th century trades and practices .....				2
Shared statewide services allocation .....				-8
National Endowment for the Humanities grant for museum exhibit disbursements of \$190,000 in fiscal 2025 and \$125,000 in fiscal 2026.....				-65
Archaeology spending declines due in part to less external grant funding .....				-76
Contractual personnel costs associated with 7 contractual conversions .....				-475
Other.....				1
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$94</b>

Note: Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding.

***Personnel Data***

	<b><u>FY 24 Actual</u></b>	<b><u>FY 25 Working</u></b>	<b><u>FY 26 Allowance</u></b>	<b><u>FY 25-26 Change</u></b>
Regular Positions	32.00	32.00	39.00	7.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>29.54</u>	<u>37.72</u>	<u>30.72</u>	<u>-7.00</u>
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>61.54</b>	<b>69.72</b>	<b>69.72</b>	<b>0.00</b>

***Vacancy Data: Regular Positions***

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	0.00	0.00%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/24	0.00	0.00%
Vacancies Above Turnover	0	

- The fiscal 2026 allowance includes 7 contractual conversions. These are all for current contractual employees who have been in their positions for two years or more. The converted positions are a social media coordinator, membership coordinator, strategic engagement coordinator, senior accountant, and 3 archaeology technicians.

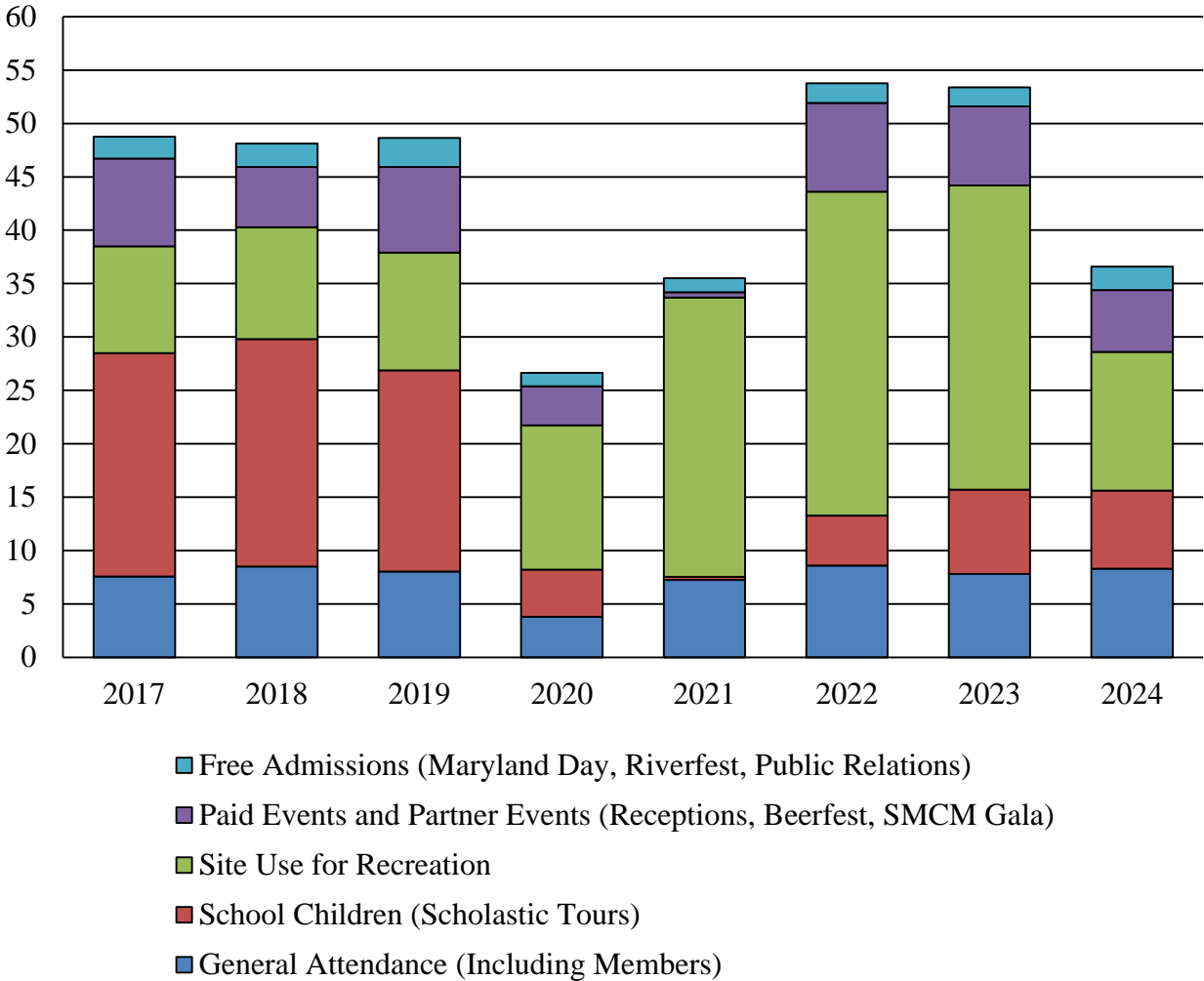
## ***Key Observations***

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### **1. General Admissions Increase Slightly, Recreational Use Falls**

HSMCC aims to educate members of the public by increasing the number of visitors of all backgrounds to its site. As shown in **Exhibit 3**, on-site attendance levels fell 31% in fiscal 2024 overall, driven by a decrease in the recorded number of recreational visitors from 28,500 in fiscal 2023 to 13,000 in fiscal 2024. This follows an increase in recreational visitors using the trails and other outdoor spaces at the park in the years immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic but remains above the prepandemic level of around 10,000 or 11,000 recreational visitors per year. HSMCC attributes the lower number of recreational visitors to several factors, including the closure of the on-site bakery in July 2023, a reassessment of estimated hiking trail usage, and excessive heat during summer 2023, which led to multiple park closures. The number of children visiting on school tours remains lower than prepandemic levels. There were about 7,300 school visitors in fiscal 2024, a decline from about 7,900 in fiscal 2023 and well below the fiscal 2019 total of 18,800. HSMCC said it is contacting schools for input on why they have not returned postpandemic.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Visitors to Historic St. Mary's City**  
**Fiscal 2017-2024**  
**(in Thousands)**



SMCM: St. Mary’s College of Maryland

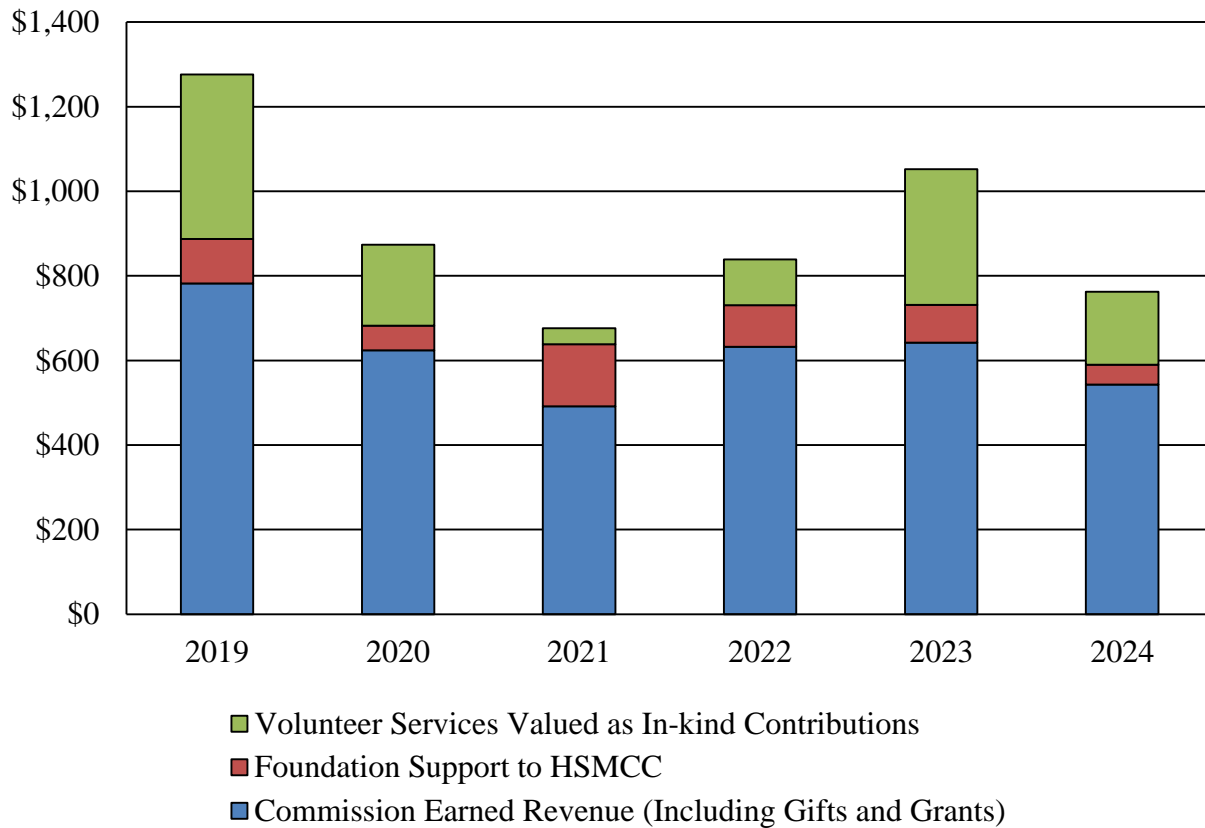
Source: Department of Budget and Management; Historic St. Mary’s City Commission

Construction is almost complete on a new Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center to replace the existing visitors center with the facility expected to open in spring or early summer 2026. More about HSMCC’s ongoing capital projects can be found in the analysis for DB01 – HSMCC – Capital.

## 2. Special Fund Revenue Decreases

HSMCC receives some revenues that are available for it to use as special funds. These include revenues that the commission earns from ticket sales, gift shop income, site rentals, gifts, and grants. The Historic St. Mary’s City Foundation also provides some support to the commission that is recorded as revenue, and volunteer services are valued as in-kind contributions. Along with the reduction in attendance, discussed in Key Observation 1, revenues declined in fiscal 2024, as shown in **Exhibit 4**.

**Exhibit 4**  
**Historic St. Mary’s City Commission Revenues**  
**Fiscal 2019-2024**  
**(\$ in Thousands)**



HSMCC: Historic St. Mary’s City Commission

Note: Excludes Foundation earned revenue.

Source: Managing for Results

Earned revenue, the largest source of special funds, declined from \$642,000 in fiscal 2023 to \$543,000 in fiscal 2024. Ticketed sales decreased by 9% to about \$103,000, and residential and commercial leases for property that HSMCC owns that is not part of the park decreased by 20% to about \$96,000. Donations increased by 48% to \$32,000. **HSMCC should provide an update on its efforts to secure non-State sources of revenue.**

### **3. Implementation of Audit Recommendations**

An independent audit submitted in March 2023 recorded a number of findings and areas of improvement in HSMCC’s business practices. The audit found that HSMCC lacked documented policies and procedures for multiple aspects of its work, did not have up-to-date memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other written agreements with key partners, and had insufficient supervision of purchasing cards and cash management among other issues. The 2024 *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR) requested that HSMCC provide an update on the steps that it has taken to resolve the audit findings and implement its recommendations.

In its report, HSMCC confirmed that it had implemented all nine of the recommendations from the audit report and included documentation developed as a result. The agency has developed a personnel manual, written policies for employee evaluations, and key performance indicators for personnel to provide a more professional approach to evaluations. In summer 2024, the agency conducted a confidential internal survey of staff about their experiences and satisfaction while working at Historic St. Mary’s City. The survey found generally high satisfaction with the work itself and the mission of HSMCC but noted a need for more training and development opportunities as well as internal recognition and opportunities for advancement.

On the budget side, the audit noted a lack of written policies around cash management, so HSMCC has developed and implemented processes for cash and credit receipts using corporate cards and driving State-owned vehicles. HSMCC owns a number of rental properties in an area with a lack of residential housing, so it has developed policies for rentals, including how waiting lists are managed. HSMCC has also updated MOUs with its key local partners, including St. Mary’s College of Maryland, the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (overseen by the Maryland Department of Planning), and the Department of Natural Resources.



## ***Operating Budget Recommended Actions***

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1. Concur with Governor’s allowance.

**Appendix 1**  
**2024 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency**

The 2024 JCR requested that HSMCC prepare one report. Electronic copies of the full JCR responses can be found on the Department of Legislative Services Library website.

- ***Audit Recommendations Implementation Report:*** The agency submitted a report on actions that it has taken in response to the findings of an external audit in March 2023. This report is discussed further in the Key Observations section of this analysis.

**Appendix 2  
Object/Fund Difference Report  
Historic St Mary's City Commission**

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 24 Actual</u>	<u>FY 25 Working Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 26 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 25 - FY 26 Amount Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
<b>Positions</b>					
01 Regular	32.00	32.00	39.00	7.00	21.9%
02 Contractual	29.54	37.72	30.72	-7.00	-18.6%
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>61.54</b>	<b>69.72</b>	<b>69.72</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Objects</b>					
01 Salaries and Wages	\$ 3,159,158	\$ 3,575,829	\$ 4,226,451	\$ 650,622	18.2%
02 Technical and Special Fees	1,610,299	2,059,814	1,584,462	-475,352	-23.1%
03 Communication	39,417	38,750	40,000	1,250	3.2%
04 Travel	30,460	25,000	25,000	0	0%
06 Fuel and Utilities	145,644	160,775	166,000	5,225	3.2%
07 Motor Vehicles	212,276	42,780	45,720	2,940	6.9%
08 Contractual Services	1,357,876	780,853	658,374	-122,479	-15.7%
09 Supplies and Materials	185,225	170,695	180,000	9,305	5.5%
10 Equipment – Replacement	33,009	12,070	15,000	2,930	24.3%
11 Equipment – Additional	96,300	10,000	15,000	5,000	50.0%
13 Fixed Charges	30,819	48,890	63,047	14,157	29.0%
<b>Total Objects</b>	<b>\$ 6,900,483</b>	<b>\$ 6,925,456</b>	<b>\$ 7,019,054</b>	<b>\$ 93,598</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Funds</b>					
01 General Fund	\$ 6,382,132	\$ 5,775,475	\$ 5,963,891	\$ 188,416	3.3%
03 Special Fund	472,390	894,820	866,755	-28,065	-3.1%
05 Federal Fund	45,961	255,161	188,408	-66,753	-26.2%
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 6,900,483</b>	<b>\$ 6,925,456</b>	<b>\$ 7,019,054</b>	<b>\$ 93,598</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Note: The fiscal 2026 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.