

In the 2023-2024 Biennial budget, the General Assembly made a first-time \$50,000 allocation to the Virginia Holocaust Museum in the general fund. This funding supported the Alexander Lebenstein Teacher Education Institute (TEI) to support the advancement of experiential learning opportunities for K-12 students. These funds are intended to support high-quality learning experiences, educational content, and exhibitions for students to engage in educational content aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning, related to the history of the Holocaust and other genocides. Although funded in the first year of the biennium the legislature did not carry this funding through to the second year of the budget. To ensure the continuation of the projects started in FY23 and to continue to expand access to TEI, we are requesting funding be increased in FY24.

**In FY23, VHM will be able to host 80 teachers across two sessions each cohort spans 2 and a half days.** In its current curriculum, it costs approximately \$1,500 for one teacher to successfully complete TEI. This cost includes materials, partnership with Longwood University, educator & volunteer time, guest speakers, meals, travel and subsidizing travel and lodging for those program participants outside of a 50 radius. Due to an increased demand to participate in the program and an expanded curriculum, the session has grown from two full days to two and a half days allowing for a deeper dive into material. An increase in state funding would ensure VHM's ability to sustain the growth of TEI, providing and preparing teachers across the Commonwealth with the resources they need to return to their school districts and educate their students in an accurate and impactful way about the Holocaust. Teachers also leave TEI with an ongoing relationship with the Museum educators and Speaker's Bureau, providing them with a free and engaging educational tool for the classroom.

**The increase in dollars will also allow Virginia Holocaust Museum to:**

- Continue expansion of the *Holocaust History Traveling Trunks* program
  - For grades 6-12, a program that provides teachers with a classroom set of books on the topics of the Holocaust and human rights. It aligns with the Virginia Standards of Learning and includes a trunk user guide for the teacher and reference materials for students and teacher
- Expansion of community outreach and community-based programming through programs such as our Speaker's Bureau, or nationally recognized guest speakers and experts on the Holocaust and other genocides
- Continued expansion of student programming through curriculum development, transportation scholarships, and increased access to resources

**About the education efforts of the Virginia Holocaust Museum:**

- The Alexander Lebenstein Teacher Education Institute assists educators with their understanding of the Holocaust and genocide. Sessions focus on historical background and pedagogy linked to the Virginia Standards of Learning requirements. TEI is offered in partnership with Longwood University. This is a two-week intensive program hosted at the museum over the summer.

- In the past, regular school groups visited the museum for tours. These tours are led by museum staff or docents who provide a comprehensive learning experience for all ages and grade levels.
- The museum has a Speaker's Bureau that schools frequently utilize. This allows students to hear from Holocaust survivors and their first-hand accounts of the Holocaust. In Richmond, and across the Commonwealth, to have a community of Holocaust survivors that are willing to share their stories to highlight the dangers of intolerance while also looking to inspire with their message of survival and hope, is impactful for school-age students.
- Virginia Holocaust Museum staff are trained historians and educators that speak to students, community groups, or organizations on a wide range of Holocaust and genocide-related topics. The museum makes its staff available at no cost to bring a speaker to your school, organization, or community group.
- In 2018 a study by the Schoen Foundation\* found that the more Americans know about the Holocaust, the more likely they are to keep away from racism, intolerance, and antisemitism. The reverse is also true. When people have not heard about the Holocaust, they are more likely to tolerate antisemitism.