



Maryland African American Museum Corporation (MAAMC)
(dba Reginald F Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture)
Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Budget & Taxation Committee
Education, Business & Administration Subcommittee
Senator Nancy J. King, Chair
February 6, 2025

Appropriations Committee
Education & Economic Development Subcommittee
Delegate Stephanie Smith, Chair
February 5, 2025

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture agrees with the legislative analyst's report for the fiscal year 2024. The Museum's mission remains the same, to document, interpret and preserve the complex experiences, contributions and culture of Black people. We serve as a catalyst for sustained change by providing programs and exhibitions and bold conversations that educate and challenge.

Legislative Analyst, Scott Benson has accurately captured our fiscal year 2024. I was pleased to host Mr. Benson on a visit earlier this fall to better understand the work of our organization. As noted, the greatest expense for the museum is its staff expense. We have 27 full time and 6 part time staff. During fiscal year 2024 we enhanced the staff with a Chief Curator, Director of Development, and a Director of Marketing and External Relations. At the beginning of fiscal year 2025 we carved out a role for a Director of Operations, much needed to manage the 20 year-old facility, our retail operation and our front-line visitor experience staff. With these additions, I believe we have a very capable group of senior team members to both strategize and execute the work of the Lewis Museum. However, it is of note that staff costs for our very small agency are exacerbated by the requirement to pay into the state pension system which requires the Museum to pay 14% of full time salary expense to support the pension fund, which equates to approximately \$500,000.

The second largest expense as noted by Mr. Benson is for contracts and consulting. Though the category title is deceiving, this category includes our costs to design, fabricate and install new exhibits. During fiscal year 2024 we were proud to host three exhibits – Afro-Futurist Manifesto:

Blackness Reimagined; Blacks in White: African Americans in Healthcare; and Black Woman Genius: Elizabeth Talford Scott Tapestries of Generations. Also included in that category are costs for security which we maintain 24/7; and housekeeping, a new expense in 2024. The third area of significant cost for the museum is technology and office occupancy. The necessity of updating our systems and computers as well as significant increases in energy costs have contributed to the increase in this category. All of these expenses are expected.

This year, fiscal 2025 we are excited about the celebration of our 20th anniversary. We have chosen to create a new exhibit in honor of our namesake. TITAN: The Legacy of Reginald F. Lewis will open to the public on Saturday, February 8, 2025. We hope this exhibit will expose our visitors to the incredible business acumen of Reginald F. Lewis. Born in East Baltimore, he became the first African American to complete a billion dollar deal on Wall Street. This exhibit will remain open through April 2026.

Our investment in a strong marketing and external relations staff is yielding benefits. We have a very active digital presence that has gained significant traction over the past eight months. And our recent exhibition openings, including the Lynching in Maryland exhibit, funded through a federal appropriation and is now a part of our permanent exhibition, have garnered significant broadcast and print media attention. In a few months we will unveil our updated logo and brand. And on Juneteenth, June 19th 2025, the Museum will have a community celebration acknowledging our 20th anniversary!

Our public programs and educational offerings to the public remain strong. Our High School Juried Art Show is a favorite. This year we featured youth artists from 8 counties and the City of Baltimore. Counties included Montgomery, Howard, Washington, Baltimore, Harford, Prince George's, Charles and Worcester. We held the African American Children's Book Fair, presented by BGE, an Exelon Company. And hosted several author talks including a discussion of author Jonathan Eig's book, King A Life and Dr. Ibram X Kendi's, Barracoon: Adapted for Young Readers.

Although our year over year growth in admissions was small, it was growth nevertheless. And membership at this writing stands at 611 versus the 441 reported at the end of the fiscal year. As noted by Mr. Benson, volunteers allow us to expand our activity. Our volunteer numbers have increased this year. They include significant pro bono support from SGK and Fufu and Grits for our rebrand that will be launched this May.

Overall, I am excited about the progress of the Museum. Everything we do focuses on the mission mentioned in my first paragraph. That said, raising revenue continues to be a struggle. Our development team and our board of directors works hard to identify new donors for the organization. We hope to capitalize on our 20th anniversary to raise new funds and new friends who believe in and support the mission of this great institution.