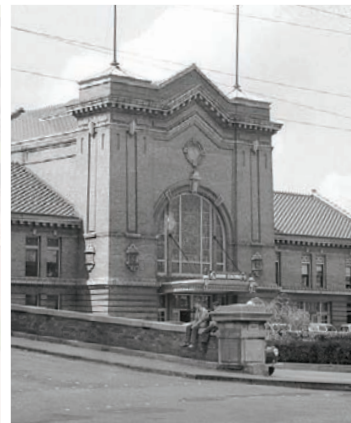


# LEXINGTON HISTORY MUSEUM

## Strategic Plan FY2026-2028





## Creating Our Desired Future

LexHistory is where Lexington's stories live—where the past is preserved, the present is explored, and the future is inspired. With this Strategic Plan, we step into a new chapter with a clear purpose: to become the city's most trusted and visible source for history, education, and storytelling.

This plan is the result of a year of reflection, collaboration, and community input. We began by reviewing our progress, listening to our board and staff, and engaging more than 100 community members through surveys and forums. Their message was clear: LexHistory matters. It strengthens Lexington's identity, supports education, boosts tourism, and enhances quality of life. But it must do more—and reach more.

In response, we worked closely with the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government to align our goals with city priorities and build a plan that is both ambitious and achievable. With this plan, LexHistory is embracing growth, innovation, and deeper community connection. Our vision is bold, our purpose is focused, and our commitment is strong: to make Lexington's history more visible, inclusive, and impactful than ever before.

We are:

- **Connecting People Through Story**

Creating welcoming experiences that bring people together—celebrating the stories that shape Lexington's identity and fostering a sense of belonging across generations and neighborhoods.

- **Expanding Access for All**

Reaching more students, families, and lifelong learners—especially those historically underserved—through engaging exhibits, digital platforms, and community programs that spark curiosity and pride.

- **Strengthening Our Civic Role**

Welcoming new voices, growing our community of supporters, and deepening our partnerships to become a vital force in Lexington's educational, cultural, and civic life.

We are also laying the foundation for long-term sustainability, with plans that support financial health, institutional growth, and a permanent museum home worthy of the stories we steward. Every step we take is designed to build trust, foster belonging, and inspire future generations to see Lexington's history as their own.

This is more than a plan—it's a shared vision for what LexHistory can become. It reflects the voices of our community, the dedication of our team, and the belief that history should be accessible, inclusive, and inspiring for everyone. We invite you to be part of this journey as we build the future of LexHistory, one story at a time.



# VALUES

## INCLUSIVITY

Our museum is open and welcoming to everyone.

## CURIOSITY

We inspire a love for exploration, discovery, and learning with engaging programs and exhibits.

## INTEGRITY

We provide honest and transparent information.

## CONNECTIVITY

We create meaningful connections with visitors, members, donors, volunteers, and partners.

## CONSISTENCY

We consistently provide appealing, high-quality, relevant, and thought-provoking experiences.

## MISSION


Inspire our future by collecting and preserving Lexington's history and telling our stories.

## VISION

Be the recognized and respected leader on Lexington's history.







Lexingtonian Margaret Ingels was the first woman to earn an engineering degree from the University of Kentucky. Ingels went on to have a distinguished career, working as an engineer and educator, and she became an advocate for women in engineering. Her work led to the commercial availability of home air conditioners.



# PRESERVATION

## GOAL 1:

**Collect, archive, and preserve the essential, relevant, and accurate records and artifacts of Lexington's history.**

### **Deliverable Outcome 1.1.**

By June 30, 2027, complete a digital catalog for the LexHistory collection using museum best practices.

#### **Performance Measure:**

- Completion of Digital Catalog

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 1.1.1. Establish baseline expectation for time and personnel (staff + volunteers) needed to complete catalog within set dates.
- 1.1.2. Recruit and train volunteers to develop the item-level digital catalog, including reporting expectations and staff oversight to track number of cataloged items.
- 1.1.3. Publish completed catalog for public access, with the accompanying rights and reproduction fee schedule.

### **Deliverable Outcome 1.2.**

By June 30, 2028, create a collections care plan that identifies and prioritizes collection needs, treatment options, and funding structures to stabilize fragile items or unstable materials in the museum collection, using guidance and standards of the American Association of Museums and the American Alliance for Museum's Core Document program.

#### **Performance Measures:**

- # of items classified
- \$ dollars raised
- # of items stabilized

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 1.2.1. Using completed catalog, identify collection items that need preservation attention with a ranking system for immediate needs and for the long-term.
- 1.2.2. Identify and work with collections care specialists to create collection care plans for items identified in strategy #1.
- 1.2.3. Secure funding for expertise, environmental controls, and materials necessary to stabilize items based on the identified ranking system in strategy #1.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## GOAL 2:

**Enhance engagement and growth of the Lexington History Partnership Council to expand LexHistory's role as a key partner throughout the city.**

### **Deliverable Outcome 2.1.**

By June 2028, LexHistory will solidify the Lexington History Partnership Council as a leading cultural advisory group in the city.

### **Key Strategies:**

- 2.1.1. Develop list of potential sectors not currently represented.
- 2.1.2. Develop recruitment and outreach strategies to targeted sector representatives.
- 2.1.3. Track attendance, outcomes of meetings, and partnership opportunities created.

### **Performance Measure:**

- Growth in membership
- # of members attending/participating
- # of new partnership opportunities created



# PARTNERSHIPS

## GOAL 3:

**Grow the diversity of membership and create new programming and outreach opportunities through LexHistory's leadership of the Lexington History Collective.**

### Deliverable Outcome 3.1.

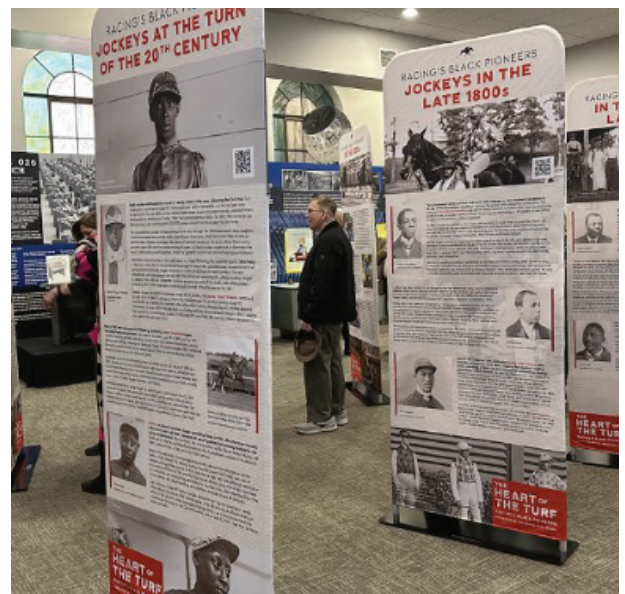
By June 2028, the Lexington History Collective will include a total of 20 members.

#### Performance Measure:

- Increase in total membership
- % diversity of members
- # of new programs
- # of outreach opportunities created.

#### Key Strategies:

- 3.1.1. Identify organizations that reflect Lexington's diverse history but are not currently involved in the History Collective.
- 3.1.2. Invite non-participating organizations to join.
- 3.1.3. Collaborate with History Collective members to create new programs and outreach across Fayette County.



# PROGRAMMING

## GOAL 4:

**Offer diverse and inclusive educational and engagement opportunities to the broadest possible audiences using multiple methods of communication, settings, and formats.**

### **Deliverable Outcome 4.1.**

By June 30, 2026, introduce the museum to and engage with new and younger constituents (ages 18-44).

#### **Performance Measure:**

- # of targeted constituents (ages 18-44) reached
- # of targeted constituents attending events.

#### **Key Strategies:**

4.1.1. Establish the methods of data collection through voluntary, demographic reporting of visitors, donors, and event attendees.

4.1.2. Conduct non-attendance and post-attendance surveys of events and programs, including demographic inquiries.

4.1.3. Analyze and apply demographic data to update and create new programming for target constituencies.

### **Deliverable Outcome 4.2.**

By June 30, 2028, increase by 15% the number of K-12 students in Title 1 Fayette County Public Schools and students from the parochial and private schools in Fayette County who are accessing LexHistory.

#### **Performance Measure:**

- % increase in K-12 students from Title 1 schools and from parochial and private schools in Fayette County
- # of schools served
- # of on-site
- # of classrooms visits

#### **Key Strategies:**

4.2.1. Develop a list of target Title 1 schools, and parochial and private schools in Fayette County.

4.2.2. Develop and conduct specific outreach to targeted schools.

4.2.3. Track # of students, grade-levels, on-site and classroom visits, and schools served.





LexHistory partnered with The Lexington Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and Why We Write, Inc. to challenge girls to explore the forgotten history of girls and women in celebration of the 250th anniversary of America's founding



# PRESENCE

## GOAL 5:

**Be the most visible and accessible resource on the history of Lexington for all residents and tourists... anytime, anywhere, and on any device.**

### Deliverable Outcome 5.1.

By June 30, 2027, create a plan for digital museum experiences to expand our reach beyond the walls of the museum and our physical operations.

#### Performance Measure:

- Plan, timeline, and required budget developed.

#### Key Strategies:

- 5.1.1. Define state-of-the-art digital museum experiences based on research and national best practices.
- 5.1.2. Identify and evaluate LexHistory assets to determine ability to create digital museum experiences.
- 5.1.3. Develop plan, timeline, and budget.

### Deliverable Outcome 5.2.

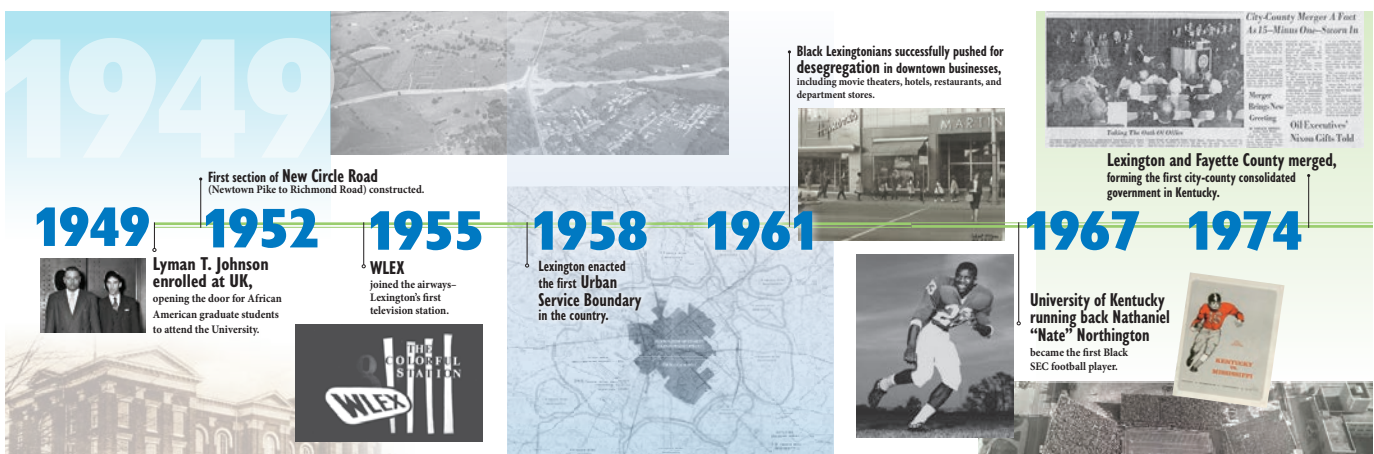
By June 30, 2028, increase annual visitation and membership numbers each by 30%.

#### Performance Measure:

- % increase in annual visits
- # of members

#### Key Strategies:

- 5.2.1. Evaluate LexHistory membership offerings and benefits compared to other benchmarks museums.
- 5.2.2. Survey members about the value of membership offerings and benefits.
- 5.2.3. Develop a marketing and communication plan to reach a larger audience of potential visitors and members.







The first federal prison dedicated to those addicted to drugs was located in Lexington. Called the U.S. Narcotic Farm, it was located off Leestown Road and viewed as both groundbreaking and controversial. The facility cost \$4.2 million to build, opened in 1935, and operated for 41 years.



# PERMANENCE

## GOAL 6:

**Strengthen our physical and financial foundation to build enduring trust and ensure the museum's long-term sustainability.**

### **Deliverable Outcome 6.1.**

By January 1, 2028, create a museum facilities master plan, and conduct a fundraising feasibility study for a permanent museum.

#### **Performance Measure:**

- Creation of Facilities Master Plan
- Completion of Fundraising Feasibility Study

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 6.1.1. Identify and engage vendor for facilities master plan.
- 6.1.2. Identify and engage vendor to conduct fundraising feasibility study based on facilities master plan needs.

### **Deliverable Outcome 6.2.**

By June 30, 2026, launch a signature fundraising event.

#### **Performance Measure:**

- Net dollars raised from event

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 6.2.1 Create an Event Committee to plan and implement an inaugural signature fundraising event.
- 6.2.2 Conduct inaugural signature fundraising event.
- 6.2.3 Evaluate outcomes of inaugural signature fundraising event and seek feedback from attendees to iterate for the future.



### **Deliverable Outcome 6.3.**

By June 30, 2026, create a long-range endowment growth plan.

#### **Performance Measure:**

- Completion of Endowment Growth Plan

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 6.3.1. Assign the creation of a long-range endowment growth plan to the LexHistory Finance Committee.
- 6.3.2. Seek board approval of endowment growth plan

*continued*



## GOAL 6, continued

### Deliverable Outcome 6.4.

By June 30, 2028, develop long-range recruitment and succession plans for the board to align with the standards and expectations commonly used among selected benchmark institutions.

#### Performance Measure:

- Formal Succession Plan for Board of Trustees

#### Key Strategies:

- 6.4.1. Research benchmark institution's practices and examples.
- 6.4.2. Develop formal succession plan for Board approval.
- 6.4.3. Implement plan for FY29 and beyond.

### Deliverable Outcome 6.5.

By June 30, 2028, develop a long-range staffing plan.

#### Performance Measure:

- Completion and adoption of Long-range Staffing Plan

#### Key Strategies:

- 6.5.1. Conduct peer institutions review, including ROI analysis where possible
- 6.5.2. Develop a long-range staffing plan for approval by the Board of Trustees.
- 6.5.3. Implement a long-range staffing plan for FY29 and beyond.





**Lexington History Museum, Inc.**

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