

Historic Onancock School Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Approved by majority vote of the Board of Directors, November 30, 2017

Our Vision: As the heart of our diverse community, the Historic Onancock School Community & Cultural Center contributes economically, culturally and educationally to the quality of life on Virginia's Eastern Shore while preserving the community character.

Our Mission: Friends of Onancock School (FOS) is a 501-c(3) non-profit dedicated to strengthening the economic and cultural vitality of the Eastern Shore's diverse community through the rehabilitation of the Historic Onancock School and its adjoining campus. FOS achieves its goals with the support of a broad based and engaged population involved in community service and recreational activities, the arts, educational programs, and small business entrepreneurship initiatives.

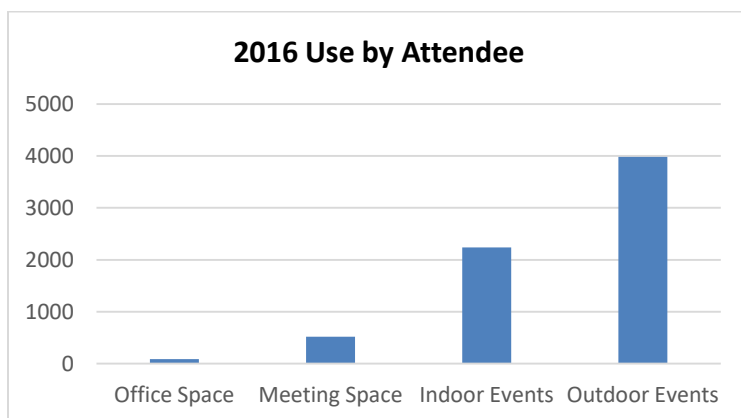
Our Values: What we believe and what we stand for

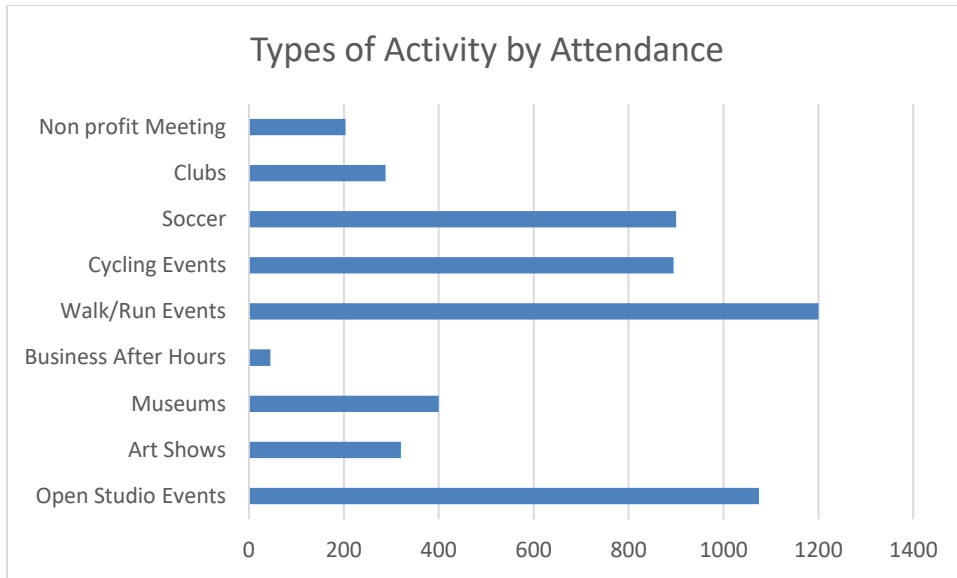
- Integrity
- Heritage
- Enrichment
- Diversity
- Environment

Who We Serve:

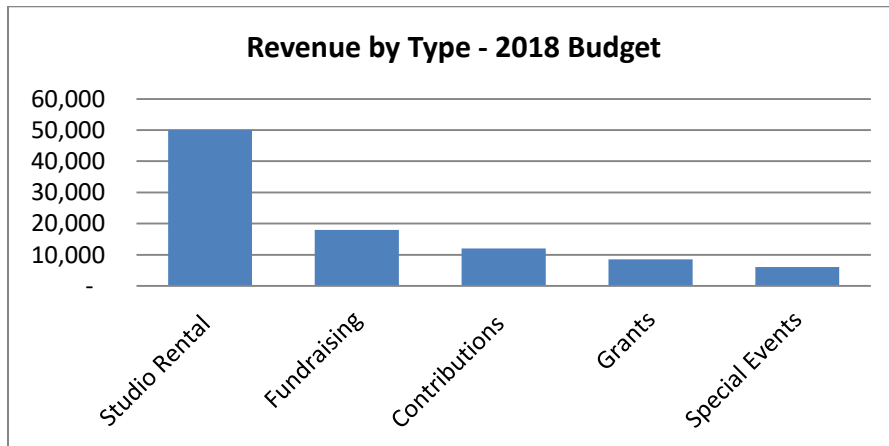
The Historic Onancock School (HOS) is a nonprofit entity. The main floor of the 28,000 square foot building is the primary usable space, with a large meeting room that provides space for indoor events such as parties, meetings and lectures. A service kitchen is also available for meal set up and service. The main floor also contains studio space for artists. There is museum space on the lower level as well as additional studio space currently used for exercise and fitness. The grounds and building combined provide a venue for large primarily outdoor events. The grounds, which are open to the public from dawn to dusk, include athletic fields, a handicap accessible children's playground and a nature trail with native plants.

With a mission that strives to meet the needs of the whole community, HOS users represent diversity and a wide range of events and activities.





To support the many activities at HOS, revenue is raised in a variety of ways.



Our Programs and Services:

- The grounds of the Historic Onancock School, including a children's' playground, are open to the public at all times for enjoyment, recreation and fitness.
- The building provides a venue for small indoor events such as galas, parties, exhibits, lectures or mini concerts.
- The building serves as studio rental space for individual artists and small businesses, as well as providing space for non-profits, a museum and rehearsals.
- The grounds and building provide a venue for large outdoor events, runs, concerts, bike rides, etc. Many of these events are sponsored by local non-profits as fundraisers to benefit their organizations.
- The building contains a large main room and several smaller rooms that provide space for meetings for many local groups and organizations.

Our Goals: 2018 - 2021

1. Continue to improve the building and open space of the Historic Onancock School.
2. Ensure sufficient income to cover operational expenses and to increase contingency / capital funds.
3. Increase the usage of the building and open space.
4. Establish an identity which incorporates existing and future direction. This identity will capture the essence of who we are and what we do.

Background and Context

Background:

The Historic Onancock School (HOS) is located at 6 College Avenue, one-third of a mile from the town of Onancock's commercial district. The main building, built in 1921, features Neo classical architecture with a brick facade. Currently, the building encompasses 28,000 square feet and is situated on 13 acres, bordered on the south and north side by the Joynes branch of the Onancock Creek. This property serves as park and open space as well as a community center for residents of Onancock as well as residents of the Eastern Shore's two counties - Accomack and Northampton.

In 2006 the Town of Onancock regained ownership of the building and grounds from the County of Accomack. The town council appointed an ad hoc committee to assess the value of saving this building and in 2007 a 40-year lease of the building and grounds was secured by a group of concerned citizens, who established Friends of Onancock School (FOS) as a non-profit organization. Over the past 12 years, FOS, has put forward a focused effort to secure and restore the neglected building and to redefine its purpose in a way to financially support restoration and use expansion.

Onancock Virginia is a town of 1,100 residents located between the Onancock creek and its tributaries. Listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, Onancock supports pedestrian life and with its walkability, access to healthcare and shopping offering its residents the ability to age in place. The town itself is physically beautiful with an outdoor landscape complimented by the many historic and renovated homes that line its streets. The Onancock wharf is an active working wharf, with Chesapeake Bay access for large boats and sailing vessels. The downtown shops include many artisan galleries featuring works unique to the culture and history of the Eastern Shore. There are many dining options including a bakery that has been in operation for over 40 years. A movie theatre, a community playhouse and other retail shopping are also part of the downtown experience.

Despite the active downtown area there are still many vacant store fronts. Many of these buildings have been vacant for greater than 10 years. And though there is movement to fill some vacancies, the population of Onancock is not enough to sustain economic recovery and growth.

Virginia's Eastern Shore had a population of 45,142 in 2014, more than a 12% decrease from the 51,398 population in 2000. Although a slight increase is projected for 2020, Northampton and Accomack Counties are lagging far behind the rest of Virginia which saw growth of almost 18% from 2000 to 2014. Approximately one-third of Eastern Shore residents are located in Northampton County, with two-thirds in Accomack County.

Unemployment in Accomack County in 2016 was 4.8%, higher than Virginia's 4.0%. Median household income (2011 - 2015) was \$39,412 compared to Virginia's \$65,015. The percentage of persons living in poverty in Accomack County was 20.4%, compared to 11% for Virginia.

Importantly, the Historic Onancock School's building and grounds provide free or affordable space for a host of community activities for the residents of Onancock and Virginia's Eastern Shore. Several thousands of people each year, both local and visitors to the Shore, make use of the open space and the building meeting space. We strive to ensure that the Onancock Community and Cultural Center provides "A space for all".

Organizational Strengths:

Organization Development:

FOS continues to strengthen the organization by maintaining a dedicated and enthusiastic Board of Directors whose responsibility is to establish strategic direction for the organization and to monitor progress. The Executive Director manages the organization's operations and provides input into potential improvements and future direction. Outside experts provide guidance to the organization as needed or requested. There is an emphasis on developing sound policies and procedures to guide decisions and activities.

Location:

Historic Onancock School is located on 13 acres of open space which is adaptable for a variety of community events such as meetings, classes, sport programs, outdoor camps, music events, individual fitness and recreation. The existing building and land not only features a beautiful setting on the creek but also offers significant historical relevance for the Town of Onancock and the Eastern Shore. The property enjoys easy access within town and from US 13.

Community connections/partnerships:

This project recognizes and features the Culture/history of this community. It is a place of history blended with new direction to promote entrepreneurship for local talent and young businesses. Networks among the tenants, community users and alumni together with a strong supportive and collaborative relationship with the Town contribute to establishing HOS as a gathering spot across our community and a destination for community events.

Historic Onancock School

Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Our Goals: 2018 - 2021

Goal 1: Continue to improve the building and open space of the Historic Onancock School

The 96 year old building is in need of repairs and improvements to maintain a safe and inviting place for rentals and special event use. The large open space surrounding the building provides an ideal location for a great number of uses. Those involved with the Historic Onancock School are committed to continuing to improve these valuable assets to make them more inviting to all who visit and spend time here.

Objectives:

- a) Develop a prioritized list of needed repairs and improvements to the building and open space.
- b) Complete repairs and improvements according to timeline.
- c) Identify and quantify "big ticket" items that will need specific funding strategies.

Goal 2: Ensure sufficient income to cover operational expenses and to increase contingency / capital funds

As a non-profit, the Friends of Onancock School need to continue to explore and take full advantage of all potential sources of income in order to fulfill our Mission.

Objectives:

- a) Identify revenues needed to cover operational expenses and revenues needed to fund contingency / capital needs.
- b) Increase funding from studio rentals and special events by 15% over the next 3 years.
- c) Increase net income from fundraisers to \$20,000 per year within 3 years.
- d) Increase contributions and support income to \$25,000 with three years
- e) Identify and pursue three to five funding sources for major improvements.
- f) Investigate and pursue opportunities to develop Artisan Market as a source of income.

Goal 3: Increase the usage of the building space and open space

As a Community and Cultural Center, the Historic Onancock School is a space that should be welcoming to all citizens of the Eastern Shore as well as to visitors to our area. We feel that there are segments of our population who are not aware of the opportunities we provide. We plan to increase that awareness within the community and identify ways to increase usage.

Objectives:

- a) Identify local business / organization partnership opportunities.
- b) Identify ways to increase "community center" awareness.
- c) Identify ways to increase Artisan market awareness.
- d) Become a mid-shore Virginia Welcome Center affiliate.

Goal 4: Establish an identity which incorporates existing and future direction. This "identity" will capture the essence of who we are and what we do.

Several terms are applied to our "identity". Friends of Onancock School, which actually refers to the 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization which raises funds and manages the day-to-day operations and currently is a part of our logo. The building itself and the open space which were the Onancock High School are now referred to as the Historic Onancock School, capturing the identity of the "place". The Onancock Community and Cultural Center is more descriptive of the use that is being made of the facilities. All these terms can be confusing to the community. Our goal is to develop a consistent message.

Objectives:

- a) Determine the identity to be adopted.
- b) Create the brand for the identity by designing visual products as well as messages that embody the brand.
- c) Develop strategies to promote the new brand.