



Executive Director Report
VLA Executive Committee
June 26, 2020

2020 Membership

- 299 Individual Members
- 71 paid Affiliate Members (4260 employees)/4 not yet renewed (34 employees/\$1950 in lost revenue)
- 41 Life Members
- Institutional Invoices sent (current income \$33K out of an expected \$45K)

Joblines:

53 postings since January
12 Complimentary for Institutional Memberships
\$3625 revenue
5 currently unpaid

VLA Annual Conference: Change to location and dates

Marriott Norfolk Waterside, October 21-23, 2020

Current Activities:

VLA Statement on Racism and Violence was posted to the website, facebook pages, twitter, and emailed to all members. Very positive feedback was received. We also included an anti-racism resource list curated by attendees on our Zoomversation on June 3. Many VLA members have since written to provide more resources, and those have been added.

Submitted paperwork for a \$467000 **CARES Act Grant through IMLS** (please see page 3 of this report for the Abstract.) If awarded, VLA can take 10% of the amount awarded as an administration fee.

Working with **Norfolk Public Library** Trustees on their budget situation; parks and rec and libraries have been asked to absorb 30% of the budget shortfall, and as a result, only 3 of 12 branches will be opened in calendar year 2020. Sat in on Trustee web call this week, have phone call scheduled with their Board President Friday.

Working with ALA to write a letter (to be delivered today) to the **Smyth County Board of Supervisors** regarding their “placeholder of the number zero” in their library budget

released last week. They insist it was an oversight and that they plan to fund the library, but a lot of miscommunication ensued.

Coordinating with Dr. Angela Spranger of CNU to moderate a **VLA online Town Hall** on racism and violence. Should have more information to share next week.

Of note: the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton announced this week they are changing their name. VLA was prepared to write them a letter to ask that they change the name or we would consider moving our VALLA 2020 conference (currently scheduled for September 2020.)

New VLA Logo: Two versions created by April Snider, the graphic artist who has done out conference brochures for the past few years. Executive Committee will review the logos today and vote on implementing one choice, or LRV can go back to April to ask about different colorways. Executive Committee will make the final decision on the rebranding.

VLA has been approached by the Library of Virginia to help host **book clubs** (at our annual conference) for library staff on the book *White Fragility*.

Zoomversation Trivia and Game nights: I was pursuing this idea in May, but it seemed inappropriate to launch in June, given the circumstances of everything. In the next few weeks, though, we'd like to make this happen. The idea is to host a trivia and/or online game night for about 30 minutes, and then let participants go into breakout rooms (a feature in Zoom) to meet reps from CaTS, or Youth Services, or the LGBTQIA+ forums. Then we would all come back together in the main room and chat some more. Just an informal way to meet people.

IMLS CARES ACT GRANT
Onward Virginia Task Force
Abstract

COVID-19 has ushered in long-time-coming advances in the way libraries provide programming and services remotely, and revealed further the disparity of access to library resources due to socio-economic and geographical divides. Libraries must work together and with partners to close these gaps. We can do so by providing high quality programming centered on STEM education and economic and workforce development, and by getting tools into the hands of those who need them. Additionally, because the constant stress a worldwide pandemic brings with it affects participants in the educational system and workforce, we must address mental health education and provide ways for people to access it.

These issues cannot be tackled by a single library system, so the Virginia Library Association (VLA) is partnering with Roanoke County Public Library (RCPL), and several other systems in the state to form the Onward Virginia Task Force, a group designed to steer Virginia libraries into the future. The group represents those who will be assigned to lead an identified region by communicating, distributing materials, helping train, offering public programs, and staying in touch with the project leads. We are prepared to move the entire program to a virtual format.

We will launch an aggressive hotspot and laptop lending program. RCPL will design and/or gather curriculum, and offer training in it. The Task Force will help connect libraries to national, state, and local organizations such as Girls Who Code to grow our reach. We will create technology kits and use tech tools to teach AI, robotics, and coding.

Libraries across the commonwealth will benefit because the more resourced libraries will share information, raising capacity across the entire state. Staff will learn new things as they develop relationships with each other. Communities in need will be identified and served as staff practices their newfound programming and tech skills. We plan to teach everything from resume building to coding for wellness apps to be employed by the robots.

By the end of the project period, the Task Force will have a continuity plan in place to ensure sustainability. We will collect attendance numbers of staff being trained, patrons who attend programs, and feedback via surveys, and small focus groups. We will track new partnerships formed, and the number of kits, hotspots, and laptops distributed. We will share results at VLA's 2022 statewide conference, and publish them in VLA's online journal. We will query national library publications, and submit proposals to present at national conferences.

Moving forward libraries and communities will be more resilient – knowledge is power. Library staff will be offering patrons access to a higher level of information. There will be more future-ready job and college applicants, and more knowledge about mental health. By using a statewide association our reach will be great and we expect results to follow.