

VLA 2009 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- No New Funding Requested: Due to economic conditions and the shortfall being experienced in state revenues in the current fiscal year, VLA is not requesting any additional state funding for the current and next fiscal year.
- No Additional Cuts in State Aid to Public Libraries or the Library of Virginia: State aid to public libraries has been cut dramatically since full-funding was last achieved in FY 2001. In the current fiscal year (2008-2009) state aid is only funded at 67% of the level mandated by the Code of Virginia which has produced a shortfall in state aid to public libraries of nearly \$7 million per year. VLA opposes any additional cuts in state aid to public libraries or the Library of Virginia beyond any across-the-board cuts proposed by the Governor. Any additional cuts in state aid to public libraries represent a serious threat to the viability of this program. JLARC found in 2001 that state aid to public libraries is an effective program that leverages local spending and also achieves cost efficiencies and economies of scale by encouraging regional libraries.
- New Approaches to Use of Funds: VLA supports development of new approaches to funding the Find It Virginia electronic databases in FY 2010. Find It Virginia provides online magazines, newspapers and reference books for all public libraries, K-12 schools and community colleges and can be accessed from home by any person with a library card. While 32 states provide state funds to support similar programs, all Virginia state funds have been eliminated from this program due to state budget shortfalls. The federal funds currently used to support this important program are losing their buying power as prices from publishers increase. New approaches need to be developed to infuse state funding into this important and cost-saving program.
- Access to Information and Library Resources: VLA will continue to oppose any legislative proposal that restricts access by library patrons to information or library resources.