



**Virginia Library Association
Legislative Agenda
2011**

Agenda Items:

- No New General Assembly Funding Requested
- No Additional Cuts in State Aid to Public Libraries or the Library of Virginia
- New Approaches to Use of Funds
- Defend Access to Information and Library Resources
- Participate in JLARC Studies of Cooperative Procurement and Coordinating Role of Secretary of Education in K-12

Background Information:

- No New General Assembly Funding Requested: Due to economic conditions and the shortfall being experienced in state revenues in recent years, VLA is not requesting any additional state funding for the 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 fiscal year 2010 state aid is only funded at 56% 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. The 2010 General Assembly approved an additional 15% reduction in state aid for fiscal years 2011 and 2012 which will drop state support to nearly 50% of the state funding required as well as across the board cuts in general state aid to local governments of \$60 million per year which can be produced at local option from additional cuts in library funding. VLA opposes any additional cuts in state aid to public libraries or the Library of Virginia in FY 2011 or FY 2012 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 which JLARC found in 2001 is an effective program that leverages local spending and achieves cost efficiencies and economies of scale. The recent cuts to state aid to public libraries have, for the first time, put federal LSTA funding at risk. LSTA funds are currently the only source of funding for Find It Virginia and the severity of cuts in state support for public libraries has resulted in the loss of \$20,000 of federal funds this year and will grow to the loss of more than \$120,000 in federal funds next year.
- New Approaches to the Use of Funds: VLA supports development of a partnership between local public libraries, K-12 public schools and the Commonwealth of Virginia to adequately fund the Find It Virginia electronic databases as part of a five-year strategic plan. This partnership would commence when Virginia's economic condition improves and state resources are available to meet the state's contribution to this new partnership. Find It Virginia provides online magazines, newspapers and reference books for citizens using public libraries, early childhood educational providers and pre-K-12 schools 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.
- Defend 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.
- Participate in JLARC Studies of Cooperative Procurement and Coordinating Role of Secretary of Education in K-12: VLA will inform JLARC staff and monitor their work to complete two JLARC studies approved by the 2010 General Assembly which present opportunities to demonstrate the benefits to the K-12 community of Find It Virginia and VLA's proposed Find It Virginia partnership.