



**Virginia Library Association
Legislative Program Goals
2015-2016**

- 1. Strengthen State funding for public libraries to improve childhood literacy and invigorate STEM-focused instruction in schools.*

VLA proposes that the Commonwealth strengthen State funding for public library materials and programs that target childhood literacy and STEM instruction before and during school-age years, using traditional library materials as well as contemporary digital library materials including ebooks, audiobooks, streaming media, and electronic databases.

**FY2017 \$2.5 million
FY2018 \$2.5 million**

Recent studies document significant improvement in childhood literacy that result from summer reading programs and strong access to print and digital materials provided by public libraries. Data from Virginia public libraries also show strong demand for and use of print and digital materials that extend STEM learning outside the classroom and support STEM-focused curriculums. This funding will help Virginia's public libraries provide the 21st century library materials needed by school programs focused on foundational literacy and STEM education throughout Virginia.

This funding also would represent a modest step forward in restoring the viability and vitality of the State Aid program, which the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) found in 2001 to be an effective investment that leverages local spending and achieves cost efficiencies and economies of scale. State Aid to Public Libraries has been deeply cut over the past 15 years, declining by over \$5 million in constant dollars to a level last seen in FY 1999. State Aid now falls nearly \$12 million short of the calculated funding level set forth in section 42.1-48 of the Code of Virginia.

- 2. Support the Library of Virginia.*

VLA supports the Library of Virginia's legislative and budgetary priorities and proposes that the General Assembly continue the work begun in fiscal 2013 to strengthen its financial foundation.

*Approved by VLA Executive Committee June 11, 2015
Approved by VLA Council June 12, 2015*