



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2008

FUNDING REQUESTS—IN PRIORITY ORDER

- **FIND IT VIRGINIA**

Find It Virginia provides 15 databases with collections of online full-text magazines, journals, newspapers, and reference books for all public libraries, K–12 schools, and community colleges. It is similar to the VIVA information database system for Virginia colleges and universities which receives state funds; but, unlike VIVA, *Find It Virginia* is overwhelmingly funded with federal funds through the Library of Virginia. 32 other states provide state funds to support service similar to *Find It Virginia*.

The Virginia Library Association is requesting \$2M from the Virginia General Assembly for each year of the biannual budget to cover increased cost of databases for this important information resource.

- **BOOKS**

Since the late 1930s, the Commonwealth of Virginia has acknowledged its role in the support of public libraries through the provision of funds designated primarily for the purchase of materials for library collections. In the FY 2007/08 budget, this state assistance was funded at \$17.7M or 74% of the full program funding level of \$24.2M.

The Virginia Library Association is requesting \$2M from the Virginia General Assembly for each year of the biannual budget as part of a four-year program to restore full funding for this essential program.

- **TECHNOLOGY**

The Library of Virginia provides vital assistance to libraries throughout the Commonwealth. It also serves as the official repository of Virginia's government, housing permanent government records of importance to all citizens. The Library of Virginia's mandated role to preserve and provide access to public records is an increasingly challenging one in the electronic age, as the cost of the systems, applications, and personnel that store and manage the state's permanent electronic records are substantially higher than in a paper-based environment.

The Virginia Library Association supports the request of the Library of Virginia for \$750,000 for each year of the biennial budget to cover the cost of hardware, maintenance, upgrades, staff training, and the addition of two staff positions to manage the state's permanent electronic records.

Background Information on reverse →

Background Information:

• **FIND IT VIRGINIA**

▶ *Find It Virginia* is an essential resource for K–12 schools in preparing their students for success in SOL testing and for higher education. Students in Fairfax County and students in Grundy have access to a core set of resources that are available at school during the day and at the public library or at home in the evenings and weekends. Having the same resources available in the school library media center and at the public library is critical to homework help. Most school students use the public library after school for help with homework. Skills learned in using these resources are key to success at the college level.

▶ State funding is critical to continuing resources. Existing federal funds will not cover increased costs of databases. *Find It Virginia* was unable to renew databases important to the K–12 community due to lack of state support. Additional resources are greatly needed to support the K–12 curriculum in the areas of literature and science.

▶ Cost to provide these resources is less than one school lunch per child.

▶ In addition to supporting the K–12 education program, these resources provide important information to public library users. Seniors use these resources for health care and financial information for retirement. Young families use these resources to improve job skills often through distance education programs, as well as information on buying a first home, consumer information, and parenting skills. Small business owners rely on these resources to get current information without having to leave their businesses unattended.

• **BOOKS**

▶ 78% of state aid is used for books and library materials. For many systems, state aid is the only funding source for materials. State aid funding has sustained cuts in the past which have placed libraries consistently under full funding. State aid for FY 2008/09 is budgeted at only 69% of the funding level provided for in the *Code of Virginia*.

▶ State aid ensures that no matter where Virginia citizens live they have access to current materials. This is critical to the public libraries' ability to provide adequate research and homework support to students, as well as resources and programs for families with young children to ensure that they start school ready to learn.

▶ Public libraries are the only place for Virginians without computers to access e-government services. The public library staff is key to teaching residents how to use e-government. Approximately 10% of state aid is used to support public use computers. However, additional resources for connectivity, computers, and staff are urgently needed to meet this growing demand for assistance.

▶ The state aid funding formula rewards local effort in the provision of public library service.

• **TECHNOLOGY**

▶ The Library of Virginia is required by law to acquire, preserve, and provide access to the records of state government. Due to the increasing use of electronic formats by government, the Library has added a substantial amount of electronic material to its collection in recent years, posing storage, migration, technical processing, and access issues never before faced by librarians and archivists.

▶ The cost of preserving and providing access to digital content is considerably more expensive than providing users with paper-based information. Technology allows users more convenient, comprehensive, and ready access to government information, but those benefits have a high hidden cost that the Library is not able to absorb.

▶ Without considerable additional technology funding, there will be substantial delays in the Library's ability to make rapidly expanding digital content available to the public. In addition, electronic records cannot wait for processing the way that paper records can. If they are not processed within a year or two of receipt, they are in danger of being lost forever. Without staff with the appropriate technical expertise to prepare these records for public use, the Library's archival program will not be able to fulfill its mission.