

Legislative Agenda 2021
of the
Mary Riley Styles Public Library Board of Trustees

This is based on the 2020 adopted position of the Library Board and the recent changes to firearms ordinance legislation.

Priority for Funding

1. Fully Fund State Aid for Public Libraries to improve services in every community across the Commonwealth.

The Library Board of Trustees for the Mary Riley Styles Public Library urges the Legislature to fully fund its State Aid for Public Libraries program as called for in the Code of Virginia. Public Libraries provide critical service to the disadvantaged and all Virginians every day.

Virginians visit their public libraries every day, relying on their library to bridge the digital divide, assist their job search, and support early childhood literacy and education initiatives. But there is more that they would do if they had the additional resources called for in the Code of Virginia for supporting State Aid for Public Libraries. Based on local needs, public libraries will be able to improve and expand access to these services to improve the community.

State Aid to Public Libraries has been deeply cut in the recent past, declining by over \$5 million in constant dollars to a level last seen in FY 1999. This happened despite the 2001 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study that found the State Aid program to be an effective investment that leverages local spending and achieves cost efficiencies and economies of scale. In recent years we have seen modest increases to State Aid, however it still falls short.

In 2018 the General Assembly increased the funding to state aid for libraries in the amounts of \$250,000 for FY2019 and \$500,000 for FY2020. The funding worked like step increases – 1.6% in FY19 and 3.2% in FY20 or a cumulative increase of 4.8% to the State Aid base funding in last two years. Estimates for FY2021 are still pending.

Background:

The State Aid funding formula rewards local effort in the provision of public library service. Statewide, library systems use State Aid to fund 78% of the books and library materials purchased, and for many library systems it is the only funding source for materials. **In Falls Church, 100% of State Aid monies are used for the purchase of books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, audio-books, e-book/e-audiobooks for the public.**

To show the recent history in State Aid funding for the library:

- In FY2009, the library was to receive \$171,461, but the State cut the grant to \$164,306.
- In FY2010, the library was eligible for \$169,535, but it was reduced mid-year to \$159,838.
- In FY2011, the library received \$140,789, or a reduction of 12% from the previous year.
- In FY2012, the library received \$138,522, or another reduction of 1.6%.
- In FY2013, the library received an increase of \$265 due, in part, to the increase in the official population of the City. The State Aid total for FY2013 was \$139,787.
- In FY2014 for Mary Riley Styles Public Library had an increase of \$3,443 for a total of \$142,230 due to an increase in State Aid at the state level.
- In FY2015, the library received \$142,001, or a reduction from the previous year of \$229. However, due to the State's projected budget shortfall, the Aid to Localities was reduced, which did impact how much State Aid the library actually got. The final total was \$137,802 (a reduction of \$4,322).
- In FY2016, the library received \$141,028.
- In FY2017, the library received \$145,120. To there was no reduction to this amount, although the State has faced severe budget shortages.
- In FY2018, the library has received \$144,430 (a reduction from last year of \$690).
- In FY2019, the library was awarded \$146,025 (an increase of \$1,595 from last year due to the increase from the General Assembly).
- In FY2020, the library was awarded \$153,156 (an increase of \$7,131 from last year due to the increase from the General Assembly). This is still only 60% of full funding.
- In FY2021 the library was initially awarded \$158,293 this may change depending on the final budget passed by the General Assembly and approved by the Governor.

2. Legislative and Budget Support for the Library of Virginia

The Board of Trustees supports the Library of Virginia's legislative and budgetary priorities and proposes that the General Assembly continue the work begun in fiscal year 2013 to strengthen the financial foundation for Virginia's only public research library.

Strategies

Because of the continued need for State Aid to public libraries in Virginia, it is necessary to make legislators aware of the Board's concerns. Therefore, the following strategies are suggested:

- Library Board members and City/County governing bodies should attend the State budget hearings that are held throughout the state and advocate that funding be restored to State Aid as soon as economically feasible.

- Library Board members and the Library Director should meet with their legislators to make them aware of the needs of their local libraries and their stances on the issues noted above.
- The Library Board of Trustees encourages patrons to write their legislators stressing the needs of the Mary Riley Styles Public Library and promoting the positions listed above.

This 2021 Legislative Agenda was adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on 11/XX/2020.

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