



## LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

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### SIGNS OF THE TIME: COVID-19 IN VIRGINIA

## Library of Virginia Collects Photographs of Pandemic-Related Signs

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(Richmond, Va.) – The Library of Virginia is currently collecting images of COVID-19-related signage from the public through a "Signs of the Time: COVID-19 in Virginia" [Tumblr page \(va-signsofthetime.tumblr.com\)](https://va-signsofthetime.tumblr.com).

In the midst of the current pandemic, many Virginia businesses are shutting their doors to slow the spread of COVID-19, while others remain open with reduced hours to provide essential services. It can be a challenge to convey information to the public in such quickly changing circumstances. Often created in haste, these impromptu paper signs are taped to doors and shop windows indicating where to collect or drop-off products, reminding people to practice social distancing, and communicating other safety best practices.

Community photos of these temporary signs will help future generations visualize what life was like for Virginians during the disruption to business and social interaction caused by COVID-19. The Library is not encouraging people to leave home in order to take photos, but rather to help us document signs you might see as you venture out for supplies or takeout food in your Virginia communities.

Photographs of storefronts and signs can be submitted via desktop or mobile device by clicking the "Submit" option in the menu on the [Tumblr page](https://va-signsofthetime.tumblr.com). "We chose Tumblr because it's easy," said Dale Neighbors, the Library's Visual Studies Collection coordinator. "It seemed one of the most convenient ways for people to submit their images."

The Library of Virginia has two main focuses in its COVID-19 collecting. As the archival agency of the commonwealth and home to the records of state and local governments, we want to document the official response and the changing landscape of governmental guidance during the crisis. Secondly, with our strategic focus on civic and community life, we want to collect representative examples of how Virginia communities are affected by the virus.

"For the Visual Studies Collection specifically, I wanted to express through visual imagery how Virginians' public lives were impacted with the halting of regular business and social interaction," said Neighbors. "As businesses and restaurants were just beginning to post signs announcing changes in hours and services offered, I wanted to seize the moment before such items, and the memories associated with them, faded away. Photographing these ephemeral signs and submitting them to the Library is a way of preserving history as it's happening."

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The Library looks forward to a time when COVID-19 signs will be a thing of the past. As Virginia enters phase one of its reopening from the pandemic, many of the original signs are already being removed or altered, but the photographs submitted will serve as a reminder of these times for generations to come.

For more information, contact Dale Neighbors at [dale.neighbors@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:dale.neighbors@lva.virginia.gov) or [804.692.3711](tel:804.692.3711).

### **About the Library of Virginia**

*Founded in 1823 to preserve and provide access to the state's incomparable printed and manuscript holdings, the Library of Virginia will celebrate its 200th year in 2023! We acquire, preserve, and promote access to unique collections of Virginia's history and culture. Among the most heavily used research institutions in the country, the Library is nationally recognized for its excellence. Our collection of more than 129 million items documents and illustrates the lives of both famous Virginians and ordinary citizens. Our resources, exhibitions, and events attract more than 100,000 visitors each year—while our website gets almost 4 million yearly visitors. Visit [www.lva.virginia.gov](http://www.lva.virginia.gov).*

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