



About the Library of Virginia Board

What is the Library Board?

The Library Board serves as the policy board for The Library of Virginia, which is the official library agency of the Commonwealth, the official archival agency of the Commonwealth, and the reference library at the seat of government.

What is the difference between a governing board and a policy board?

As defined in the Code of Virginia, governing boards (also known as “supervisory boards”) have full fiduciary, budgetary, and operational authority over an agency. They are charged with implementing an organization’s mission, ensuring legal compliance, and often hold the power to unilaterally hire staff and manage assets.

Policy boards, by contrast, are specifically charged by statute to promulgate public policies, regulations, standards, and/or guidelines that guide the agency’s operational decisions rather than actually making the decisions themselves; they may also be charged with adjudicating violations of those policies or regulations. Policy boards are not responsible for supervising agency operations or employing personnel, and while they may review and comment on agency budget allocations and requests, they usually have no direct fiduciary responsibilities.

How are members of the Library Board chosen?

The Board consists of fifteen members, appointed for five-year terms by the Governor. Appointments to fill vacancies are for the unexpired term. No person is eligible to serve as a Board member for more than two successive full terms. Prior to appointments being made, the Board may submit nomination lists to the Governor based upon interest and knowledge, geographic representation, participation in community affairs, and concern for the welfare of the Commonwealth. However, the Governor is not bound to make appointments from among the Board’s nominees; it is strictly an advisory list.

What are the Board’s primary responsibilities?

The Library Board, as a policy board, approves regulations and policies that are then implemented and overseen by The Librarian of Virginia, the agency head and principal administrative officer, and the other members of the agency’s senior leadership team.

Under the Code of Virginia, the Board is responsible for establishing policies governing the operation and use of the Library of Virginia; conferring the honorary patron of letters degree; setting qualification standards for professional librarians employed by the Commonwealth and larger public library systems; overseeing the publication of historically significant materials; and establishing eligibility standards for state and federal library aid. They are additionally responsible for promulgating regulations and standards governing the creation, management, retention, and disposition of public records under the Virginia Public Records Act and regulations governing the administration of the State Publications Depository Program, which ensures the collection, preservation, and public distribution of Virginia state government publications.

What is the Board's organizational structure?

The Board elects a chair and vice-chair from their membership. The Librarian of Virginia serves as the Board Secretary. The Board has the power to create any committees and advisory bodies as it deems advisable, and may also create an executive committee composed of a minimum of five Board members to exercise powers vested in and perform duties imposed upon the Board by the Code of Virginia, to the extent designated and permitted by the Board.

What are the Board's current committees, and what do they do?

The Library Board currently has one standing board governance committee, the Executive Committee, and five additional standing committees:

1. **Bylaws Committee:** Regularly reviews the Board's bylaws and recommends revisions as needed to keep them current and effective.
2. **Collections and Archives Committee:** Works with the Chief of Collections and Archives to assess and advise on the Library's collections development, processing, preservation, and public access needs. It reviews and recommends updates to LVA's Collections Development Policy and relevant program funding priorities, monitors the physical storage, conservation, and preservation needs for Library materials, promotes public understanding of the Library's collections, periodically reviews compliance with the Virginia Public Records Act and suggests updates to records management policies and procedures, and provides updates on programs supported by special funds.
3. **Executive Committee:** Convenes at the Board's direction or in response to urgent matters, evaluates the Library's overall operations, and conducts the annual performance review of the Librarian of Virginia.
4. **Government Relations and Finance Committee:** Works with the Librarian of Virginia, the Director of Governmental and External Relations, and other designated staff to advise on legislative strategy, budget priorities, and fiscal needs affecting the Library and Virginia's public libraries. It additionally advocates on behalf of legislation and funding to state and legislative officials when appropriate and monitors technological developments relevant to its responsibilities.
5. **Public Library Development Committee:** Works with the Chief of Library Development to discuss trends in public library services and usage across Virginia, develop and maintain criteria for state aid and recommend action on waiver requests, support state aid legislation in coordination with the Government Relations and Finance Committee, and recommend policies that encourage collaboration and networking among Virginia libraries.
6. **Researcher and Public Engagement Committee:** Works with the Chief of Researcher Engagement to advise on policy updates related to the Library's public services (including reference, research, interlibrary loan, and circulation), support the Library's public outreach and educational initiatives, monitor patron satisfaction and service-related technological changes, and recommend funding priorities for public service, education, and outreach programs.