

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nolan T. Yelich, Librarian of Virginia

FROM: Conley L. Edwards III, State Archivist and Director,
Archival and Records Management Services Division

DATE: December 4, 2006

RE: Annual Report on Reducing the Archival Backlog

Per the Commonwealth's Appropriation Act, Chapter 951, Section 1-71, Item 257, Paragraphs B.1 and B.2, for the fiscal year ending 30 June 2006, the Library of Virginia annually receives \$650,000 in General Fund monies to support fifteen full-time positions "to relieve the 54-year backlog in processing significant archival, special, and other historical collections."

The following report is submitted in compliance with the Budget's instructions that the Librarian of Virginia and the State Archivist shall report annually to the Governor and to the Chairs of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees on the Library's "progress to date in reducing its archival backlog."

This report is for the period 1 July 2005 through 30 June 2006, and thus covers the seventh fiscal year under the special program, instituted 1 July 1999.

Staffing: The Library's Archival Description Services and Local Records Services programs currently includes fifteen positions in Description Services and thirteen positions in Local Records Services for assessing and processing local, state, and non-governmental archival records.

Of these twenty-eight positions, six are assigned to organizing and describing Private Papers collections, seven for State Records, and ten for Local Records. One position thus far is dedicated to coordinating electronic records, and four positions provide administrative coordination as well as processing assistance. Budget reductions in fiscal years 2002 and 2003 reduced project funding and staffing within the Appropriation Act, from \$787,943 annually in support of seventeen positions to \$650,000 each year and fifteen positions.

Collections Processing: For the twelve-month period 1 July 2005–30 June 2006, the Library processed 451.8 cubic feet (approximately 677,700 items) of Private Papers, an additional 593.3 cubic feet (approximately 889,950 items) of State Records, and 356.7 cubic feet (approximately 535,050 items) of Local Records Collections.

Cubic feet processed for the period total 1,401.8 (approximately 2,210,700 items), or 116.8 cubic feet per month, exceeding the target of 904 cubic per year by 55%.

The total does not include 154 megabytes of electronic and digital collections received and processed, or the 32 Web sites received at the end of the Warner Administration.

The average rate of processing over the first seven years of the program equals 1,087.2 cubic feet per year, or 90.6 per month—versus the annual target of 904 cubic feet, or 75.3 cubic feet per month. An overview of collections processed by category is provided as follows:

	Local Records	State Records	Private Papers	Yearly total
1999-00	446.9	332.5	233.2	1012.6
2000-01	485.4	344.5	233.0	1062.9
2001-02	570.0	393.5	228.9	1192.4
2002-03	448.4	409.0	227.0	1084.4
2003-04	361.9	282.3	169.0	813.2
2004-05	353.5	349.7	339.6	1042.8
2005-06	356.7	593.3	451.8	1401.8
To date	3022.8	2704.8	1882.5	7610.1

Multiple factors affected the processing total, all of which shed considerable light on several challenges facing this program. One key element over the past two years was the significant amount of staffing and funding increasingly required to address collections involving electronic media—either collections “born digital” or other media received damaged or in an unstable format. Both require reformatting to an appropriate digital yet archival-quality surrogate. There are few standards or guidelines for the archival processing of digital records and other institutions are watching the Library of Virginia as staff carefully develops our best practices. These sorts of activities—and expenses—are not captured in the overall project statistics.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a report on progress to date.

C: Sandra G. Treadway, Deputy Librarian, Library of Virginia
 Ann N. Harris, Director, Finance and Administrative Services, Library of Virginia
 Angela S. Murphy, Division of Legislative Automated Systems