**Annual Report on Reducing the Archival Backlog at the Library of Virginia (FY2025)**

**Introduction**

The Library of Virginia serves as the Commonwealth's official archives, responsible for preserving state and local government records and private materials documenting more than four centuries of Virginia history. Under Title 42.1 of the Code of Virginia, the Librarian of Virginia and the State Archivist report annually to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Secretary of Education on archival preservation needs and progress in reducing the backlog of unprocessed materials.

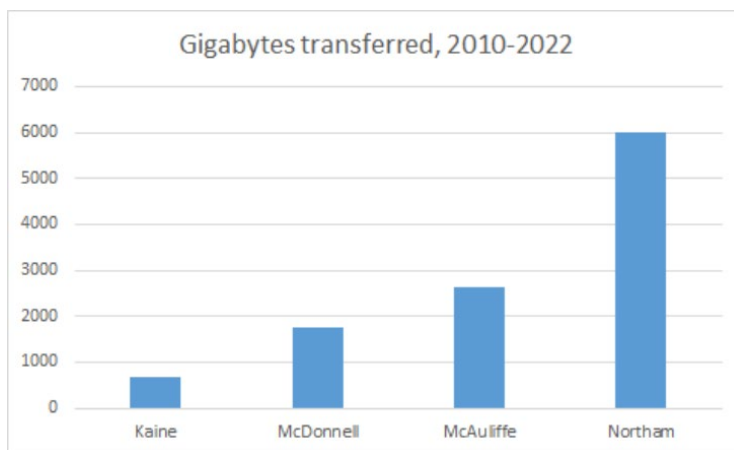**Summary of the Archival Collections**

The Library of Virginia's archival collections encompass state and local government records as well as materials created by private individuals, businesses, and organizations, spanning from the colonial period to the present. The Local Government Records collection preserves historically significant city and county records from the 1600s to the early 20th century, including wills, deeds, tax lists, and extensive Chancery Records. The Private Papers collection contains Bible and church records, business and organizational documents, genealogical materials, and personal papers. The State Government Records collection, the Library's largest, includes the official records of Virginia's executive, legislative, and judicial branches from 1776 to today offering a comprehensive documentary history of Virginia governance.

**Report**

The Library's Division of Government Records Services faces significant challenges driven by 50% staffing reduction over 20 years, limited resources, and rapid growth in electronic records. Current backlog is 36,023 cubic feet of paper records and roughly 20 terabytes of unprocessed electronic materials. The volume of paper records is gradually declining but a massive and growing electronic backlog has emerged.

| Collection Description | FY23 Backlog (cubic feet) | FY24 Backlog (cubic feet) | FY25 Backlog (cubic feet) |
|---|---|---|---|
| State Government Records | 18,778 | 17,844 | 17,998 |
| Local Government Records | 12,275 | 1,2145 | 11,989 |
| Private Papers | 5,864 | 5,874 | 6,036 |
| Total Backlog | 36,917 | 35,863 | 36,023 |

Gubernatorial administrations now generate millions of emails and diverse digital files requiring complex review, redaction, and long-term management.  The existing backlog is expected to grow significantly when Governor Youngkin's term concludes in January 2026.  Currently, securely storing permanent records costs approximately $60,000 per year.  The cost will increase as electronic collections grow.



Gigabytes transferred, 2010-2022

To address this accelerating challenge, the Library issued a Request for Information (RFI) to evaluate how Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools might support or streamline the processing of electronic records. Also, the recent hiring of an experienced and highly qualified Chief Technology Officer will further strengthen the Library's capacity to assess and guide the use of AI and other emerging technologies for archival processing and preservation.

Ensuring long-term access to Virginia's public records will require sustained investment in staffing, modern digital management tools, the migration of outdated media, and strategic prioritization of high-value collections. Without additional resources and innovative solutions, both paper and electronic backlogs will continue to impede the Library's ability to meet its statutory responsibilities.