

# Fairfax County Public Library

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LOB #96:

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

### **Purpose**

The Historic Preservation LOB enriches the County by collecting and properly maintaining the history and information of the community. Historical preservation is one of the tools that allows and encourages individuals and small groups to learn to identify as larger communities. Throughout recorded history, libraries and archives have been the primary vehicle whereby historical knowledge is preserved, and more importantly, made available to people. Legal research, case law, and historical uses of property and background on historical and archeological resources have both social and financial impacts on the community. This LOB also assists and advises agencies in the appropriate management and disposition of organizational information.

### **Description**

This LOB is comprised of two discrete programs: Archives and Records Management and the Virginia Room located at the City of Fairfax Regional Library. The entities approach the goal in separate, yet interlocking ways. The goal of both Archives and the Virginia Room is to enrich the lives of County residents by providing a sense of community and providing historical information in a timely manner. In addition, the Archives and Records Management branch provides records management training and advice and services to County agencies in order to increase efficiency of service, reduce costs and control legal liabilities.

Records Management. The Archives and Records Management Branch was established by Fairfax County Procedural Memorandum 100 in 1980 to assist and advise agencies in the management and disposition of organizational information (i.e., Public Records). The Virginia Public Records Act (VPRA) requires local jurisdictions to designate at least one records officer to serve as a liaison to the Library of Virginia for the purposes of implementing and overseeing a records management program and coordinating legal disposition, including destruction, of obsolete records. The County Archivist is the Designated Records Officer for Fairfax County. In addition to records retention and disposition, the VPRA also covers issues relating to the security of and access to public records including efficient business delivery by County agencies, compliance with legal mandates, liability protection for the County, protection of the integrity of public records and preservation of history.

Archives supports the Historic Preservation role by identifying public records of historical value, preserving them from loss, and making them available for use by both government agencies and the public. It is an official repository of public records created under the auspices of the Board of Supervisors and subordinate agencies. It appraises, identifies, and preserves County records for their evidential and informational content; maintains preservation and storage of original records; recreates and maintains archival repositories for electronic records; and works cooperatively with other County agencies to enhance public access to historical resources and reduce redundancy in services.

The program is provided through the Fairfax County Records Center located at the Springfield Warehouse. Educational programs for county employees are offered and consulting services are provided by telephone, email and onsite with County agencies.

The program is performed by library staff and has been operational since 1980.

# Fairfax County Public Library

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Virginia Room. The Virginia Room is the largest and most comprehensive collection of historical and genealogical information in Northern Virginia. In addition, this program maintains extensive legislative and governmental documents on Fairfax County. The reference collection focuses on the history and government of the Commonwealth of Virginia with particular emphasis on Northern Virginia. The collection contains unique photographs, manuscripts, maps, newspapers, and other materials. Subscriptions to online genealogical and historical resources are supplemented by locally produced finding aids and research tools. The Virginia Room has staff experts in genealogical and historical research who also possess deep knowledge of the local region and are equipped to handle casual inquiries, provide homework level support, make available advanced genealogical and historical studies, and professional researchers, archeologists, and historians.

The program is performed from the second floor of the City of Fairfax Regional Library. This facility was built specifically for the collection. The facility contains a climate controlled storage vault for the preservation of valuable and delicate materials.

The program is performed by library staff and volunteers. The program has been operational since 1962.

## Benefits

The Virginia Room's local history collections (manuscripts, photographs, and print) and the Archives preserved public records are a unique cultural resource available nowhere else. Historic Preservation contributes to building livable spaces by making it possible to study the people, forces, and events that created them. Historic districts and landmarks allows residents to connect the past and present. The personal knowledge of the environment lends a depth that elevates a "place" to a "community." A relationship with the past allows those in the present to imagine the future.

Archives offers records management services to all County agencies. Training in basic records management, electronic records, email and electronic communications strategies and skills, and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) issues are offered to the entire County through EmployeeU and to individual departments on request. Archives offer expert consultations to assist agencies to maintain compliance with the numerous laws covering the collection, retention, security, and dissemination of public records. These services benefit the County through compliance with legal mandates, decreased liability, increased efficiencies, and savings on management and storage costs. These services benefit the County through compliance with legal mandates, decreased liability, increased efficiencies, and savings on management and storage costs.

The Historic Preservation LOB supports the following Vision Elements: Building Livable Spaces, Connecting People and Places, Creating a Culture of Engagement, and Exercising Corporate Stewardship.

## Mandates

The Records Management Function is mandated. The Virginia Public Records Act (VPRA) ([Code of Virginia §42.1-76 ff.](#)) requires local jurisdictions to designate at least one records officer to serve as a liaison to the Library of Virginia for the purposes of implementing and overseeing a records management program and coordinating legal disposition, including destruction, of obsolete records. The County Archivist is the Designated Records Officer for Fairfax County. In addition to records retention and disposition, the VPRA also covers issues relating to the security of and access to public records including efficient business delivery by County agencies, compliance with legal mandates, liability protection for the County, protection of the integrity of public records, and preservation of history.

# Fairfax County Public Library

## Trends and Challenges

**Trends:** Due to readily available online information, libraries and archives offering special collections must move more quickly to keep pace with modern technology that provides immediate, direct and unfettered access to special collections. Local historians and genealogists are digging deeper to find original source materials, creating more demand for fragile materials such as photographs and manuscript collections. Trends in managing reference and archival collections are pointing staff to solutions such as providing access to special collections via a single unified interface for customers and staff. Special collection materials include photographs, manuscript collections, and file collections. A unified interface will simultaneously increase access to and reduce pressure on physical items.

**Challenges:** To a greater degree than in the past, modern researchers expect content that is immediately accessible including special collection materials, such as photographs and fragile manuscript materials, which must be managed with care and specificity in order to preserve irreplaceable and valuable objects. With limits to the current capacity to digitize information imposed by resource constraints, such information is not always retrievable. It is also challenging to provide resources to researchers looking for non-local family history information.

## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #96: Historic Preservation</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$445,187	\$471,417	\$523,870
Operating Expenses	42,841	50,570	61,581
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$488,028</b>	<b>\$521,987</b>	<b>\$585,451</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund</b>	<b>\$488,028</b>	<b>\$521,987</b>	<b>\$585,451</b>
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	9 / 9	9 / 9	9 / 9
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>9 / 9</b>	<b>9 / 9</b>	<b>9 / 9</b>

# Fairfax County Public Library

## Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Number of Items in the Virginia Room Collection	NA	NA	44,911	45,000	45,000
Number of Outreach/Training Visits (Archives & Records Management)	16	16	18	18	18
Document Requests Shipped Within 24 Hours per FTE (Archives & Records Management)	10,106	10,479	9,938	8,900	8,900

The Fairfax County Public Library's Virginia Room maintains a collection rich in local, regional, and Virginia history and genealogy focused on Virginia and Fairfax County, as well as local and state government information and legal resources. A particular strength is Confederate Civil War military history, including a complete microfilmed set of service records for Confederate soldiers (from all states, not just Virginia). The Virginia Room's collection includes maps, an extensive photographic archive, manuscripts, a large microform collection of local newspapers, rare books, Virginia election materials (brochures, fliers and sample ballots from state and local races from 1960 to the present), and online databases numbering approximately 45,000 items. This collection includes many items that are not included in the library's catalog such as the 51 boxes in the Beth Mitchell collection and the 206 boxes of the Mackall Library. With limited resources available for the purchase of new materials, it is expected that the number of items within the Virginia Room collection will remain stable over the next several years. However, an effort is underway to better document the Virginia Room's entire collection which will help better inform the actual size of the collection. Located on the upper floor of the City of Fairfax Regional Library, staff and volunteers assist with searches of specific pieces of property in the County, help make sense of the Census, and access Social Security death records. Customers can search the Virginia Room's website: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/vr](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/vr).

The Archives and Records Management Branch provides professional assistance and advice to County agencies on the management, retention and storage of their records. Archives staff ensures that legally mandated retention schedules, preservation standards, security measures and levels of access are followed for both permanent and non-permanent records regardless of the physical format or location of such records. The Archives and Records Management Branch conducted 18 outreach visits in FY 2015 along with daily telephone consult/training sessions with county agencies. It is expected that the number of outreach/training visits will continue over the next several years as agencies have become more familiar with County records retention standards are better at carrying out retention policies.

It is the responsibility of each individual agency to assure that they maintain compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) ([Code of Virginia §2.2-3700](#), et. seq.) and provide appropriate and timely access to public records. Not all County records are maintained at the Records Center. Most current records are retained by the creating agency. Additional records are either created electronically or converted to a digital format for retention by the agency. Therefore, any citizen requesting access to material that may be stored in the Records Center must contact the originating agency first in order to do so. The Records Center strives to provide requested materials within 24 hours. For FY 2015 the Records Center reported 99 percent of all document requests were shipped within 24 hours, with nearly 10,000 requests per FTE. Though the volume of these requests can spike at any given time, the projection is for the number of requests to decrease slightly over the next several years as agencies become better trained and more familiar with records management and preservation.