

## VML's Legislative and Policy Committee Process

Each year the Virginia Municipal League develops two separate documents -- a legislative program and a compilation of policy statements -- through a process that involves the Legislative Committee and six separate policy committees. The Legislative Committee is responsible for developing the legislative program, but it may also rely on input from the policy committees to do so. The policy committees develop broad policy statements, in addition to submitting specific legislative recommendations for consideration by the Legislative Committee.

### Legislative Committee

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#### **What is the role of the Legislative Committee?**

The Legislative Committee is responsible for considering and developing positions on existing or proposed state and federal legislation or regulations, and urging the enactment or amendment of, or opposition to, such legislation or regulations.

#### **How is the Legislative Committee appointed?**

VML's Constitution spells out the composition of the Legislative Committee. The committee consists of 24 individuals holding local elective or appointed positions, all appointed by VML's President. Of the 24 members, 12 must be representatives of cities and urban counties with populations in excess of 35,000, six must be representatives of cities and urban counties with populations of 35,000 or less, and six must represent towns.

#### **What is included in VML's Legislative Program?**

The legislative program adopted by the Legislative Committee reflects specific legislative objectives that VML hopes to achieve during the upcoming legislative session. It is subject to the approval of VML's membership at the annual conference.

#### **What is the relationship between the legislative committee and VML's policy committees?**

The Legislative Committee meets prior to the policy committees to identify issues that it would like the committees to consider for potential inclusion in the league's legislative program. It meets again after the policy committees have met to consider their recommendations.

### Policy Committees

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#### **What is the role of the policy committees?**

Policy committees receive briefings on select statewide issues, consider possible changes to the policy statement, and develop legislative recommendations for the Legislative Committee to consider.

#### **How are policy committees appointed?**

Policy committee membership consists of elected and appointed officials of full-member local governments. Nomination information is sent in the spring to each locality, and each local government determines which of its officials will be nominated for each of the six policy committees. Each local government may nominate up to two people per policy committee, at least one of whom must be an elected official.

### **What are the benefits of serving on a policy committee?**

VML policy committees offer members an opportunity to learn about current and emerging statewide issues that affect local governments, to develop through policy statements the broad philosophical framework that guides the league, and to network with local officials with similar policy interests.

### **How many policy committees are there?**

There are six policy committees: community and economic development, environmental quality, finance, general laws, human development and education, and transportation.

### **What issues does each policy committee cover?**

- **Community & Economic Development:** Authority, administration, and funding of local governments to manage a full range of community and economic development issues, including business development and retention, international competitiveness, infrastructure development and investment, planning, land use and zoning, blight, enterprise zones, housing, workforce development and historic preservation.
- **Environmental Quality:** Natural resources and the authority of local governments to manage the environment, including water resources and quality, solid and hazardous waste management, air quality and the Chesapeake Bay.
- **Finance:** Powers, organization and administration of local government financing, including taxing authority, debt financing, state aid to local governments and federal policies affecting local finance issues.
- **General Laws:** Powers, duties, responsibilities, organization and administration of local governments, including state-local and inter-local relations, conflicts-of-interest, freedom-of-information, information management and personnel, telecommunications, utilities and law enforcement, jails and courts issues.
- **Human Development and Education:** Management and funding of social services, prek-12 education, health, behavioral health, juvenile justice, recreation, rehabilitation and aging.
- **Transportation:** Development, maintenance, and funding of a comprehensive land, sea and air transportation system for the Commonwealth, and federal, state and local roles in the provision and regulation of transportation.

### **What is a policy statement?**

Each policy committee develops a policy statement that covers issues in its respective area. The policy statement expresses the agreement of VML's membership on matters of interest to local governments. The statement generally addresses broad, long-term, philosophical positions. The VML membership approves the policy statements at its annual meeting.

### **How do policy statements differ from VML's legislative program?**

Policy statements are general in nature. They reflect local governments' positions on a range of issues. The Legislative Program is more specific and immediate. It is limited to legislative positions that VML expects to lobby on during the upcoming legislative session.