VML's Policy Committee Process

Each year the Virginia Municipal League convenes policy committees to involve members in the development of policy statements to guide the League staff and members through the coming year.

Policy committees give members an opportunity to hear from subject matter experts on issues of interest and to talk with colleagues from VML's member localities about issues of common concern.

Policy committees also help develop potential positions for inclusion in VML's Legislative Program by looking at issues referred to the committee by the Legislative Committee and providing input to that Committee.

The policy committees meet once during the year, typically in late July. Meetings will be held on Zoom.

FAQs about policy committees

What is the role of the policy committees?
Policy committees receive briefings on select statewide issues, consider additions and updates 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 five 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 affecting 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 five policy committees: 1) community and economic development; 2) finance; 3) general laws; 4) human development and education; and 5) infrastructure (comprised of transportation and natural resources issues).

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.

- **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 and courts issues.
- **Human Development and Education**: Management and funding of social services, prek-12 education, health, behavioral health, juvenile justice and jails, recreation, and aging.
- **Infrastructure**: Development, management, maintenance, and funding of environmental programs including water resources and quality, air quality, and waste management as well as transportation system management and funding.

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.