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## Introduction

The Eastern Shore Public Library Board of Trustees and staff are eager to move library services in a new direction, which includes moving the main, regional library to a new facility. This document is a strategic plan to facilitate improvements. Additionally, the Library of Virginia requires a five-year strategic plan and 2016 was the deadline to produce a new plan.

I became the new Director of the ESPL System in January 2016. This did not present much time to do a proper environmental assessment, however, during the referendum campaign some data was collected. Much of the assessment was obvious and more in depth analysis of community needs is part of this new plan's tasks. The community is invited to respond to the plan by submitting comments to me, the Library Director.

This plan was approved at a library board meeting on July 11, 2016.

Cara Burton  
Library Director  
July 15, 2016

## Planning Process

On April 12, 2016, the ESPL Board of Trustees convened at the Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce for a planning retreat facilitated by Martha Walker, PhD, of the Virginia Cooperative Extension. The event was open to the public per open meeting laws. Staff were in attendance, but did not participate in the planning process. Trustees were surveyed prior to the meeting with the survey results being used as basis for discussion. Out of this meeting came the mission, vision, core values, and core functions. The Director was then responsible for developing these into goals and tasks.

On May 11, 2016, ESPL staff had a retreat at the ANPC conference room in Accomac. During the staff planning retreat, the following were identified as barriers to or issues with library access:

- Public knowledge of what the library offers
- Knowledge of “free” access
- Books in primary non-English language (on Shore, Spanish and Creole)
- “Registration” being a concern for patrons without US citizenship
- College student awareness of library resources for coursework
- Staff personalities (aversion to a particular staffperson)
- Lack of library contact as a youth that carries using a library into adulthood
- Convenience/location
- Transportation
- Fines
- Technology help/training:
  - Patrons have one-time needs that require more intensive assistance
  - Concern for confidentiality: both patron concern for using public computers AND/OR Staff concern helping patrons that are working with confidential information
  - Circulation desk too busy to provide adequate assistance
  - Many patrons have very low tech skills require high demands of staff time
  - Using staff to “do their work”; expectations of what staff should help with
  - No structured training
  - Need to be able to refer to structured training
  - Identity theft
  - Over-helpful patrons assisting patrons in need, because staff does not have time; and patron confidentiality no ensured
  - Juggling length of time required to properly assist someone vs. properly staffing the circulation desk and helping other patrons

Staff then brainstormed ideas to overcome these barriers using the core functions as a guide.



## EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARY

### **Mission:**

The Eastern Shore Public Library is a regional library system which enhances the quality of community life and serves the citizens and visitors of Accomack and Northampton Counties by providing access to information to meet their educational, personal, professional, and recreational needs.

### **Vision:**

The Eastern Shore Public Library system is an innovative, community-oriented resource providing an inviting environment for life-long learning.

### **Core Values:**

The board, staff, and volunteers of the Eastern Shore Public Library believe that all residents of our community should have the opportunity for literacy, lifelong learning, continuing education and personal development. Therefore, we value:

- Diversity** - We serve all members of the community equally.
- Respect** - We serve our patrons with dignity.
- Literacy** - We foster an appreciation of information and learning.
- Partnership** - We build collaborative relationships with the community.

*Approved by the ESPL Board of Directors on June 6, 2016*

## Core Functions

### **Facilities**

Each ES Library has its own unique facility reflecting the support and environment of its community. They are required to meet ADA requirements, though areas within the libraries may currently be inaccessible. ESPL and Northampton Free Library are owned and maintained by ESPL. Cape Charles Memorial Library is owned by the Town of Cape Charles. Chincoteague Island Library is owned by the Library. The Parksley facility, future home of the Main library, is owned by ESPL.

### **Lifelong Learning**

The libraries serve all ages and foster learning at each stage of life.

### **Materials**

Each library maintains its own unique collection of books, magazines, DVD's, manuscripts, and audiobooks. Formats include print, online/electronic, disc, magnetic tape, and microfilm. Access is both physically and electronically. Material are owned, by subscription, or borrowed through interlibrary loan. Books are normally purchased and processed by the ESPL Technical Services team and delivered via the ESPL courier system. Funding for materials is mostly through the Library of Virginia, but also through private donations, grants, and some local funding.

### **Public Awareness**

We value our relationships with other organizations and the community. It is important that they are aware of what we offer to support their needs.

### **Public Perception**

We want to impress the community of the importance of our mission in the quality of their life.

### **Public Programs and Service**

Each library and its Friends group offer a variety of programs and services for different age groups. These are supported by donations, fundraisers, grants, and local funds. They may take place both within library, on library grounds, online, or out in the community. They are usually free, but may require a fee to support the cost of the program or service.

### **Public Support**

Funding for Eastern Shore public libraries come from Virginia, county, and town funds. Earned income comes from overdue fines, fees, and reimbursements. Private donations, fundraisers, endowment distributions, and grants help supplement the balance of expenses. The Main/Accomac library and its branch in Nassawadox is funded 70% by Library of Virginia (LVA), 23% by Accomack and Northampton, and the remaining by the variety of other sources. Chincoteague and Cape Charles have cooperative agreements with ESPL.

### **Staff**



## Strategic Plan, 2016-2021

ESPL has a Director who is required to have a Masters in Library Science by LVA. The Director reports to the Board of Trustees. ESPL has four full-time library specialists and eleven part-time staff that work at Main/Accomac, Nassawadox, and Chincoteague. Chincoteague mostly has volunteers operating the library. All library staff are considered public employees.

### **Technology**

ESPL has a variety of technology available to the public including standalone computers with broadband Internet access, networked color copier that serves as a printer, fax machine, wifi, microfilm readers and printer, and a scanner. There is no working server. The library has twenty ipads, a Nook, a Kindle, and two generic tablets, which are not currently accessible to the public unless they are used for a special program. A digital projector and screen are owned for staff, Friends, Foundation, and Board use. There are two checkout stations with associated STAR printers and hand barcode scanners. Equipment is currently replaced as funding is available. Copiers have maintenance contracts. A consultant provides monthly updates for computers and service calls.



### EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARY Core Function Expectations

#### Facilities

- The libraries will be clean.
- The libraries will be safe.
- The libraries will have comfortable seating.
- The libraries will have adequate interior and exterior lighting and easy-to-read signage.
- Staff will set up yearly maintenance checks on building and equipment (i.e. heating and air-conditioning).
- The libraries will be arranged and furnished so that patrons can easily utilize materials and services.
- Libraries will be accessible for physically challenged patrons in all public and common work areas of the libraries.
- The meeting rooms will be available for group usage during and after hours of operation.
- The libraries will become the third space for users: home, work/school, libraries

#### Lifelong Learning

- Resources will be available for work, school, personal, and educational purposes.
- Programs will be provided for ages from babies to teens.
- Readers advisory will be available for patrons and book groups.

#### Materials

- Our collections will be relevant to time and place.
- Materials in the library will include: best sellers, large print, children's, CD's, DVD's
- Materials in the library will be available in languages other than English to meet demographic needs.
- Materials, equipment, and resources will be provided for people with visual impairment.
- Local history materials will reflect the diverse history and culture of the Eastern Shore and Virginia.

#### Public Engagement

- Community programs will take place both on and off-site and be adequately funded.
- Outreach will include collaboration with other organizations that support Accomack and Northampton County citizens.
  - These organizations will include, but not be limited to:
    - The Literacy Council
    - Boys and Girls Club

## The Eastern Shore Public Library Systems: 2016-2018 Plan of Action

### LIBRARY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

**Goal 1: Programs will be planned that will be of value to the community serving a variety of ages and interests.**

Objective #1a: We will search for ideas for value-added programs and develop marketing to better promote their value.

Objective #1b: Programs will be developed that celebrate the diversity of the community.

**Goal 2: Workforce development resources and programs will be offered including topics like resume writing and wordprocessing, job readiness, and STEM.**

Objective #2a: Classroom space will be made available at all hours for workforce development agencies/npo.

Objective #2b: Programs and collections will promote entrepreneurship related to the assets on the Shore.

Objective #2c: Partnerships will be developed to meet community workforce development needs.

Objective #2d: STEM resources and programs will be developed.

**Goal 3: We will improve access to relevant library resources.**

Objective #3a: The Library facility will be available to meet community needs.

Objective #3b: Library communications and materials will reflect the language needs of patrons.

Objective #3c: The local history and genealogy collection will be more secure and accessible.

Objective #3e: Reader advisory will assist patrons with materials selection.

**Goal 4: Staff will receive training for development in their job role.**

Objective #4a: Technology skills of staff will improve to better serve patrons.

Objective #4b: Patrons will be better served by staff with developed customer service skills.

Objective #4c: Staff will clearly understand expectations and goals of the organization.

**Goal 5: Public services will be responsive to public needs and interests.**

Objective # 5a: Patron identity theft will be minimized.

Objective #5b: Feedback from patrons will guide program and resource planning.

June 30, 2016