

EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARY
ANNUAL STATEMENT OF FY2022 ACTIVITY SUMMARY
DECEMBER 2022

Eastern Shore Public Library is requesting funding that meets the Accomack and Northampton County Regional Agreement of 75/25 cost sharing for operating expenses. The library's operating budget is determined by calculating total expected expenses, subtracting the total State Aid and expected contributions and fees income, to arrive at a total of needed local government income. Expenses are based on current year-to-date expenses, cost of inflation, new program, equipment, or technology needs, are COLA for personnel. This year poses a difficult challenge with a State Aid reduction due to aid calculation policy changes by the Library of Virginia. The shortfall will need to be picked up by local government income.

The new fiscal year brings operating changes with the new ESVA Heritage Center. New staff are needed as well as new archival supplies. The goal is for the Heritage Center costs to not diminish library services. The grant-funded consultant determined that 30% of our operating costs should be allocated to the Heritage Center, based on its footprint in the new building. Fortunately, the ESPL Foundation has secured grantfunding to offset equipment and supply costs to date.

The Eastern Shore Public Library serves the citizens of Accomack and Northampton counties through two branches in Accomack and Nassawadox and two affiliated libraries, the Island Library on Chincoteague and the Cape Charles Memorial Library in the Town of Cape Charles. Services and administrative support has been growing for Tangier residents and their Muddy Toes Public Library, but a formal agreement with their museum/library board does not exist at this time.

ESPL has 7 full-time employees and 8 part-time employees. The four locations have more than 112,048 volumes in print, a decrease of 934 from last year to manage the regional library collection in preparation for the move to the new library and all libraries are struggling for shelf-space to meet our readers' demands. Interlibrary loans from outside our system increased 22%, an indication that ESPL's reading needs are demanding. ESPL added 6,986 new print items to its collections all cataloged by ESPL technical services staff with preparatory help from volunteers. Patrons now have

access to over 223,493 titles in E-books and Audio Visual formats, an increase of 28,958, to meet the increase demand and to reduce processing costs. Friends groups' donations have supported this increase.

Library use has rebounded to near pre-COVID activity. Circulation increased 39% to 96,889, bucking the trend of many other library systems' that have decreased use. ESPL staff innovations with new technology and search engines and public outreach have focused on regaining community use and attracting new patrons. Library visits increased from 17,514 to 83,338. 2,041 people attended 69 programs. More programs would have been offered, but uncertainties about moving inhibited planning.

ESPL also provides access to free informational databases which can be accessed in the library or remotely through the library website. The Library of Virginia provides Virginia public libraries FindItVA resources that include free online courses, career resources, and legal forms. Titles include: JobNow, VetNow, and HelpNow. New reading formats include VOX children's audio-picture book combos, Great Courses college lecture series, and Walking Classroom.

848 additional residents now have library cards! This is a 17% increase from the prior year. 11,645 individuals have library cards. This is a decrease of 5,638 patrons due to a "purging" of our registration database as part of our system upgrades. This makes for a truer figure of actual patrons that use the library. ESPL plans assisted Tangier History Museum's Muddy Toes Public Library by providing books, assistance, children's activity packets, shelving, and promoting library e-resources. Books are mailed to patrons in Tangier. A traveling Library of Virginia history exhibit was displayed at the Tangier Combined School in November 2022.

The Eastern Shore Public Library's four locations offer 26 public access computers. Wireless internet connections is available in all four locations with outdoor access at Accomac and Nassawadox. Three AWE early literacy computer stations provided by a grant and Friends donations are available for children. iPad tables make 6 tablets available for children's use as well as 16 available for programs. Our public computers were used 4,918 times, a 47% increase as patrons begin returning to the library post-COVID.

Visits to the library's homepage was 99,612, a 35% increase. A new website design, funded by the Library of Virginia, engaged more patrons and increased use. The design makes finding resources on the website easier. A new website was created for the Heritage Center due to its unique content and search demands. This was a grant-funded project. Library catalog searches was 99,304; this decrease is likely due to patrons returning to the libraries to browse rather than search from home. ESPL has 1,728 Facebook followers, a 20% increase, plus other followers on the several other Facebook pages the libraries manage.

Like most organizations, ESPL has struggled to retain and hire staff. Low compensation, interacting with the public, and required technical and interpersonal skills create challenges in recruiting. Housing costs and shortages also deter prospective employees. This has resulted in reduced hours of operation and system delivery service. Recent new hires will bring hours and services back to six days a week. A decrease in overall hours of operation will continue. The stop-and-start planning for moving to the new regional library has affected programing and budgeting. Staff have made use of pandemic related closures to prepare for the move. This should be resolved in 2023.