

FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR THE ESSEX PUBLIC LIBRARY

2017-2022

VISION:

Essex County is a rural crossroads for retail, professional and educational services. The citizens of this economically challenged community need strong primary and secondary educational resources, marketable employment skills and support for lifelong learning.

The Essex Public Library is a rich resource for enhancing the lives of our citizens with educational, employment and recreational opportunities. It stands as the community's third place – the place people gather when not at home or at work/school. Third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place. The library seeks to become a nesting ground for entrepreneurial development, where the combination of print, digital and on-line resources coupled with “people” space ignites the spark of small business development, as it dovetails into such traditional library services as the door to pre-school learning and good citizenship for our youngest ones, and the storage of cultural and entertaining literature for adults.

MISSION:

The Essex Public Library provides a space for people, materials and services to help community residents meet informational, educational and recreational needs, placing a special emphasis on providing a safe space, community information, promoting strong healthy families, supporting informational needs of school children and people in transition, and providing a variety of high interest, high demand materials to our rural population

CATEGORIES OF LIBRARY SERVICE:

The Library of VA has developed a series of standards for broad **categories of library service**, with guidelines for three different levels of each service: Essential, Aspiring and Excel. Following are the broadly defined components that go into creating a library.

1. Governance
 - a. Library Boards
 - b. Administration
 - c. Planning
2. Access
3. Library Services
4. Collections
5. Facilities
6. Technology
7. Personnel
8. Community and Public Relations

The Library Board will nurture an institution which meets the Essential guidelines for all categories. The board will adopt Aspiring or Excel guidelines in certain designated areas.

NEED AND RESPONSES:

The Library Board has identified several **community needs** that can be addressed by certain appropriate library services. While all of these needs have been addressed at some level, the following issues are to be targeted over the next 5 years:

1. A low income population with one third living in poverty, with limited life skills and a need for enhanced workplace skills to increase income potential
2. A school system that is not accredited by Virginia's Department of Education
3. Citizens and service providers who do not always connect and are unaware of specific needs or existing services.
4. A changing economy that demands entrepreneurial growth and opportunities as well as traditional work paths
5. A world where everyone must have computer and keyboard skills
6. Inadequate space for people to gather in a variety of configurations and for housing library materials
7. A rural population with limited recreational opportunities, particularly for teens
8. Local citizens and visitors who wish to explore genealogy and local history
9. Severely limited or even disappearing funding from state and local governments

The board intends to address these issues with the following **service responses** as described in the ALA manual Strategic Planning for Results:

1. Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen and Family Literacy
 - a. Adults and teens will have the support they need to improve their literacy skills in order to meet their personal goals and fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens and workers.
2. Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development
 - a. Adults and teens will have the skills and resources they need to identify career opportunities that suit their individual strengths and interests.
3. Succeed in School: Homework Help
 - a. Students will have the resources they need to succeed in school.
4. Create Young Readers: Early Literacy
 - a. Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write and listen.
5. Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services
 - a. Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.
6. Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure
 - a. Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want, when and where they want them, and will have the help they need to make choices from among options.
7. Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Nonprofit Support
 - a. Business owners and entrepreneurs will have the resources they need to develop and maintain strong, viable organizations.
8. Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access
 - a. Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.
9. Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces
 - a. Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

10. Discover your Roots: Genealogy and Local History

- a. Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community.

11. Fundraising

- a. The library board will direct fundraising efforts to support capital improvements, special projects, as well as to build an endowment fund for the library.

SHORT AND MID-TERM GOALS:

We've identified 6 areas of focus for the library's next 5 years. Each of them includes one or more of the broad **categories of library service** listed above, addresses one or more **community needs** using one or more **service responses**. Each of them has at least one unique project. Two projects are quick actions that can be put together within a year and start effecting change and progress in the library immediately. Two projects will take a little longer to achieve, though we must begin working on them right now. They are both important and moderately hard to do. Also, they'll build on and take advantage of the success of the previous two. Two are strategic projects of great importance that will require the largest investment of money, staff and effort before results are obvious.

Below are four areas with their corresponding goals, 2 short term and 2 mid-term. An action plan for each goal can be found in the attachments.

AREA #1 PUBLICITY

- Categories of library service:** 3, 4, 8
- Community Needs:** 2, 7
- Service Responses:** 5, 11

GOAL The library will develop a broad reaching publicity campaign that will tell the library's story, inform the public of all the services we offer and can be used in promoting a building program to expand the library's footprint. By January 2018 this campaign will be in place with routines that make the job of promoting the library as efficient as possible. A budget of \$2,500 for publicity costs plus 4 staff hours a week will be allocated. In January of 2018 an evaluation of this goal will be presented to the library board.

AREA #2 STRONG FAMILIES

- Categories of library service:** 2, 3, 4, 8
- Community Needs:** 1, 2 and 3
- Service Responses:** 1, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9

GOAL The library will develop a program whereby families with loved ones who are far away can book a video call using technology such as Skype or Facetime. A designated day and space will be assigned in the meeting room with furniture and equipment, including duplicate copies of books that distant parents can read to their small children. A budget of \$2,000 plus 100 staff hours will be allocated for the first year. In January of 2018 an evaluation of this goal will be presented to the library board.

AREA #3 SEMINARS AND SKILL BUILDING

- Categories of library service:** 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8
- Community Needs:** 1 - 8
- Service Responses:** 1 - 10

GOAL The library will develop quarterly skill building seminars on a diverse array of topics that will promote academic success and economic prosperity in our community, with a special emphasis on reaching that 35% of families in Essex who are living in poverty.

AREA #4 BOOTSTRAP BUSINESS CENTER

Categories of library service: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Community Needs: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Service Responses: 2, 7 and 8

GOAL: The library will create a mobile business center with at least 3 laptops loaded with employment and business start-up software, access to a color printer, a collection of business resources for the entrepreneur on a mobile cart and will designate the meeting room as the Bootstrap Business Center two afternoons a month. Staff will create a database of local jobs and update it monthly by calling and/or emailing area businesses. Staff, in partnership with allies, will also develop training opportunities, workshops and classes.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS

Below are two long-term goals that were identified by planning committee. At this point no action plans have been created for these goals but the many members of the community who helped develop the four previous plans have agreed to return on March 6, 2017, to create these two, more extensive, action plans. A plan is a dynamic document and as such can be addressed and enhanced, improved and expanded at the pleasure of the library board.

AREA #5 SPACE AND STUFF FOR TEENS AND TWEENS (long-term Strategic)

GOAL: The library will create a space for teens and tweens that is safe, secure, and offers an array of materials, programs and opportunities that are age appropriate. A teen and a tween council will be created to help in the development of this youth center. The library will seek nearby but perhaps off-site space to create this branch of library services.

AREA #6 MORE LIBRARY SPACE i. e. ADDITION, NEW BUILDING (long-term Strategic)

GOAL: The library will increase its square footage by a minimum of 4,000 feet.

Internal administrative and financial goals

GOAL The Essex Public Library will achieve and maintain essential standards of library service in all areas and excel standards in certain designated areas, as defined in Planning for Library Excellence.

- Objective #1: The Library Board will develop its skill at governing the library by increasing its knowledge and understanding of library operations and needs.
 - The Board will review its bylaws every 5 years. The next review is due in 2018
 - The Library Board will present an annual report of the library to funding officials.
 - Each library board member will attend at least one on-line, regional or state workshop on library management during his term in office.

- Objective #2: Library administration will continue to provide an orientation session for new board members within 6 weeks of their election to the library board.
- Objective #3: Library administration will systematically monitor the library's 5 Year Plan. The library will also monitor the community needs on a regular basis in order to respond to changes in both the community and in technology, in order to develop and provide programs and services that meet those needs.
 - At the October Board meeting the Library director will report on the progress toward achievement of the plan's goals.
 - At the January Board meeting the Library Board will adopt the updated 5-year Plan.
 - Each year the library staff will analyze a specific service for accuracy and satisfaction to library users via interviews and surveys of patrons.
 - 2016-17 Hours, periodicals
 - 2017-18 Adult fiction collection
 - 2018-19 Children's collection, Children's programs
 - 2019-20 AV; titles and formats, Electronic services,
 - 2020-21 Non-fiction, Adult programs

Objective #4: The Library will monitor and update the procedures manual bi-annually.

- Objective #5: By July 2021 the library will have 5 full time paid employees.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Nelson, Sandra (2008) *Strategic Planning for Result*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association
 Virginia. Library of Virginia. Library Board (2009). *Planning for Library Excellence: Standards for Virginia Public Libraries*

Adopted January 18, 2017