



Strategic Plan, 2026-2031

Guiding Principles

Vision:

To foster the growth of strong, connected libraries that uplift communities and cultivate a thriving organization where every member library feels supported and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Mission Statement:

Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc. empowers libraries by connecting them to resources, services, and expertise, building vital communities.

Core Values:

- **Transparency**
We are committed to open communication, honesty, and accountability in all our actions.
- **Kindness**
We believe that consideration, respect, and generosity are fundamental to building strong relationships and a positive environment.
- **Empathy**
We listen to understand, value diverse perspectives, and demonstrate compassion and sensitivity in our interactions.
- **Encouragement**
We foster a culture of inspiration, promoting personal and professional growth through positive reinforcement and celebrating achievements.
- **Support**
We stand together as a team, offering resources, assistance, and collaboration for our community to thrive.

Purpose (State Regulations):

- Interlibrary loan
- Technology Support
- Cooperative programs
- Consultation
- Training and staff development
- Collection development
- Support of public service
- Consortium purchasing
- Grant administration

Strategic Goals & Objectives

Advocacy and Funding

Promote and strengthen ESRL's role in advocating for decisions that support and protect public libraries and library funding, while preparing for situations where new laws or decisions could limit funding or services.

- Establish a proactive strategy to manage potential funding shortfalls, including budget prioritization, and potential partnerships to maintain essential library services during financial challenges.
- Advocate for favorable policies and increased government funding at local, state, and federal levels by engaging with policymakers and stakeholders.
- Equip library supporters, staff, and volunteers with tools, training, and resources to effectively advocate for library needs within their own communities.
- Promote the value of public libraries through networking and outreach initiatives to build public understanding and support.

Strengthening Regional Collaboration & Communication

Implement clear, consistent, and frequent communication strategies to enhance organizational performance and foster stronger connections with staff and member libraries.

- Increase the frequency of meetings internally and externally to enhance transparency, foster stronger relationships and shared goals.
- Leverage existing communication channels to improve communication internally and between ESRL and member libraries.
- Implement organizational communication guidelines and standards to ensure consistent messaging across all internal and external communications.
- Establish a structured introduction program (onboarding) for new trustees, library directors and staff, providing clear documentation on ESRL's role and services.

Enhancing Technology & Cybersecurity

Ensure that ESRL and member libraries can utilize technology effectively, with strong cybersecurity awareness and reliable security measures, ensuring compliance with industry standards to safeguard sensitive data and critical assets against evolving threats.

- Conduct a comprehensive security assessment of the technology infrastructure at ESRL and member libraries, identifying key vulnerabilities and recommending remediation actions.
- Develop a cybersecurity plan that includes implementing best practices and regular training for member libraries, utilizing globally recognized industry standards.
- Conduct a feasibility study to explore the potential to expand IT services and equipment ownership, to reduce operational risks and improve service continuity.

Build a Responsive and Collaborative Framework for Disaster Response

Ensure that the organization can continue operating or quickly recover in the face of disruptions.

- Establish an Emergency Response Plan as part of our organizational risk management strategy, ensuring rapid and effective response to emergencies.
- Develop and document a Continuity Plan that outlines comprehensive protocols during disruptive events, such as disasters or malicious attacks or significant loss of funding.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Disaster Recovery Plan to ensure the continuity and rapid restoration of critical systems and operations following a disruption.

Expanding Training & Professional Development

Foster a culture of continuous learning and professional growth for the consortium.

- Conduct regular needs assessments, analyzing professional development opportunities and identifying gaps in trainings provided.
- Develop trainings and materials that are ESRL specific to explain our role within the consortium.
- Organize specialized training sessions for a regional staff development day.
- Develop and enhance professional development tools and resources online.
- Provide ongoing technology training and support for library staff to ensure proficiency in technology and emerging digital tools, including cybersecurity.

Implementation & Review Process

By implementing this strategic plan, ESRL aims to fortify its role as a vital resource for the libraries of the Eastern Shore, ensuring sustainability, innovation, and enhanced services over the next five years.

- This plan is designed to be flexible and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities. Adjustments will be communicated when necessary to ensure our efforts remain relevant and effective.
- The strategic plan priorities (goals) and objectives will be evaluated as progress is made and reviewed annually through the annual report provided at the September ESRL Board of Trustees meeting.
- Updates will be communicated using the most appropriate methods to ensure clarity, transparency and engagement across stakeholder groups.