

Essex County Library

Statement of Purpose

The Essex County Library (ECL) is the community's connection to information resources and services for the residents living in the 7 municipalities within the County of Essex.

The ECL is governed by the direction of the Essex County Library Board (ECLB) and its Mission to "welcome you to a world of discovery, creativity and lifelong learning through accessible resources, programs and innovative services".

Service Description

ECL is connecting communities through 14 branch locations and a 24/7 online service centre:

Town of Amherstburg	Amherstburg Branch, Amherstburg, Ontario
Town of Essex	Essex Branch, Essex, Ontario
	Harrow Branch, Harrow, Ontario
	McGregor Branch, McGregor, Ontario
Town of Kingsville	Cottam Branch, Cottam, Ontario
	Highline Branch, Kingsville, Ontario
	Ruthven Branch, Ruthven, Ontario
Town of Lakeshore	Comber Branch, Comber, Ontario
	Toldo Foundation Branch, Emeryville, Ontario
	Stoney Point Branch, Stoney Point, Ontario
	Libro Centre Branch, Woodslee, Ontario
Town of LaSalle	William (Bill) Varga Branch, LaSalle, Ontario
Municipality of Leamington	Leamington Branch, Leamington, Ontario
Town of Tecumseh	Cada Branch, Tecumseh, Ontario
24/7 online service	www.essexcountylibrary.ca

The ECL provides direct access to, and staffing support for, its collections, programs, and services. The 24/7 online service strengthens the Library's collections and resources by providing access to its expanding digital content of eBooks, eMagazines and Databases, and supporting membership through self-service options.

It is the vision of the Board to provide welcoming spaces for its membership where:

- Knowledgeable staff are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the community
- Innovative ideas and cutting-edge technology are embraced
- Engaging programs and current comprehensive collections are created
- Creative partnerships encourage social interaction and cultural vitality

Staffing Chart

Staffing	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016 Actual (\$000)	2017 Actual (\$000)	2018 Budget (\$000)	2018 Actual (\$000)	2019 Budget (\$000)
Full-Time	19	19	21	21	884	1,066	1,368	1,180	1,403
Part-Time	89	89	84	84	861	1,533	1,853	1,678	1,853
Total	108	108	105	105	1,745	2,599	3,221	2,858	3,256

2018 Budget Development

For 2018, the ECLB budget was developed to return to base budget funding after the 2016-2017 strike. The proposed budget was developed to allow ECL to continue to maintain its standard of service and set new goals. The budget focused on staff training (cultural survey), reengagement of community partnerships and outreach services, and preparing for branch renovations.

Unanticipated 2018 events that influenced ECL's ability to achieve service goals included a high rate of staff vacancies and site renovations that dominated ECL's attention.

During the year, ECL continued to experience a high rate of staffing vacancy due to retirements, illness, and pregnancy/ parental leaves, creating a positive variance in salaries and wages; benefit plan participation was higher than anticipated, creating a negative variance; and Capital projects not completed allowed anticipated funding to remain in ECLB reserves for future use.

The ECLB focus on staff training was further supported by the direction to expand the scope of their contracted consultant. ECLB extended the contract to include facilitated meetings, training and support focused on rebuilding staff relationships. The Board maintains their commitment to training by supporting an ongoing focus on performance appraisals, staff development and health and safety training.

Prior Year Performance

Salaries and Benefits

In 2018, the ECLB continued to experience staffing vacancies and changes resulting in a variance in the salaries and benefits costs. Staffing vacancies due to extended illnesses and disability claims, pregnancy/ parental leaves and retirements created vacancy gaps between the time positions were vacated and subsequently refilled. The

ECLB predicts the rate of staffing changes to continue with the number of staff eligible for retirement.

The 2018 budget reflects the adjusted costs for Group Life, Health Insurance, Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability. The adjustment was due to the increased number of staff registered, and the increased volume of use of current insurance plans.

Staff Expenses

Training

Training maintains the ECL vision of providing “knowledgeable staff” that can identify and meet the needs of their communities.

ECLB contracted a consultant to lead the organization through a Cultural Survey and to identify areas of need to support better working relationships. In 2018, the ECLB was presented with the results of their Cultural Survey. To support the needs of the organization the board extended the consultant’s scope of work to facilitate meetings, staff engagement sessions and training support. The extension of the contract was not anticipated in the current budget and accounted for the funding variance.

Library Materials

ECLB’s vision is to provide a current and comprehensive collection for our communities. A comprehensive collection provides access to information through a variety of resources, such as the printed book, online databases, and digital and alternative content.

ECLB continued to maintain the Library Materials budget at status quo to minimize the budget increases. The ECL continued to develop a collection relevant to the needs of our communities by providing current and comprehensive collections that support user engagement. In 2018, ECL continued to provide alternative formats such as loanable eReaders with preloaded titles (5 titles per device). This format provided library patrons the convenience of an eReader without the need for internet or wireless services.

Annually, ECL assesses their collection spending as it can fluctuate as a result of publication cycles, ordering processes and resource availability. Near year end, ECL typically would assess the current budget and available funds to further enhance their alternative format collection (Launch pads, eReaders, accessible format devices).

In 2018, the ECL administration recognized that due to the relocation of the Leamington Branch, fewer collection items were being purchased creating a positive variance. ECL further recognizes that the restocking of resources for this space will impact the 2019 budget. To support restocking of the collection, ECLB proposed that the variance from the 2018 tangible book surplus (\$80,000) be directed to the Essex County Library Rate Stabilization Reserve, and these funds be used to support a one-time purchase of new resources to restock the Leamington Library as part of the 2019 budget.

Operating Expense

Repairs and Maintenance

With aging facilities, unexpected repair costs were incurred. The cost to address water damage, cleaning services and replacement of electrical fixtures created a negative variance within this budget line.

Advertising

ECLB continues to support the replacement of the exterior sign at the Essex Branch by allocating \$10,000 from ECLB Capital Reserves. As the Town of Essex did not proceed with the project, the funds will remain in reserves for use in 2019.

Purchased Services

Legal costs for 2018 continued to impact the annual budget due to the number of grievances and outstanding arbitrations. The ECLB budget anticipated \$15,000 from base funding, with any additional costs being funded through the ECLB Reserves.

The ECLB continued to increase the number of janitorial contracts as the current staff retired from their positions (attrition). In 2018, three additional sites were shifted to contractual service. The cost of contract service was further impacted as vendors increased their rates due to the ESA adjustments for minimum wages.

Capital Expenditures

In 2018 the ECLB identified several branch locations that were in need of renovations to replace dated furnishings and equipment, and upgrades to meet AODA standards by 2025. The Board and several local municipalities were in the initial conversations to consider possible renovation projects. The 2018 Capital Expenditures of \$600,000 was budgeted to support initial project developments. This estimated amount would be adjusted as projects were confirmed and the scale and scope of the renovations were presented to the Board and local Councils for their consideration. Capital projects would be funded through Capital Reserves and would not impact base budget requests.

In 2018, Capital funds were directed to projects at the Town of Amherstburg and Leamington. The Town of Amherstburg addressed damage to the lower level of the Library, due to water seepage. The ECLB purchased new equipment and furnishings for the reopening of the lower level space. The Municipality of Leamington finalized renovation contracts, and the ECLB supported some of the cost to relocate and set up a temporary location. Finalization of the Leamington project is anticipated for the spring of 2019.

Final Variance

The ECLB estimates a favourable variance of \$97,950 from the 2018 Budget (this is in addition to the \$80,000 carried over for materials at the Leamington branch). The Board

recommends the funds be directed to the ECLB Rate Stabilization Reserve (ECLB Resolution #18/59) to support the future renovations and upgrades of library branches.

Proposed Budget – Current Year

The proposed 2019 Budget is mindful of financial limitations and constraints, yet strives to maintain a provincial standard for buildings, collections and staffing. This budget supports the Mission and Vision for library services, as approved by the ECLB.

The ECLB reviewed the proposed budget at their November 15, 2018 meeting and approved the final recommendations (#18/58) for the 2019 Essex County Library Budget to be submitted to County Council. The ECLB proposes a 4.6% increase, or \$242,050 over prior year. The Board budget supports the following objectives:

- To address the residual impacts of the 2017 0% budget due to the 2016-2017 strike
- To support the 2019 ECLB operational projects.

Salaries and Wages

Salaries, Wages and Benefits is the largest portion of the ECLB Budget. The 2019 increase of 1.09% for Salaries and Wages supports Collective Agreement obligations. An increase of 4.52% for Benefit funding reflects the anticipated cost of employment insurances, pension contributions and taxes, along with premium adjustments for health and welfare benefits.

Board Expenses

Mileage

The 2019 Budget for Board Expenses proposes an increase of \$1,000 to support the mileage for ECLB members to attend regular board meetings, and to attend additional meetings as required.

Planning

The 2019 Budget acknowledges a new term of the Board and the opportunity for the current Mission and Vision statements to either be supported or reimagined, and for the Board to engage in planning sessions to map out how their visioning objectives will be achieved during their 4-year term. The proposed funding supports contracting a consultant to assist with strategic/ business planning within the first year of the new term. As this project will be supported by ECL Reserve funds, it will not impact the overall budget increase.

Staffing Expenses

Mileage

The proposed funding adjustment is to support: staff attending outreach and programming within the community, staff travel for employment purposes, and staff travel for training purposes.

Training

The 2019 Budget proposes funding for staff training to support the following objectives:

- Commitment to the ECLB and Corporation of the County of Essex to provide additional Health and Safety training for all employees.
- Commitment to the Performance Appraisal process and assisting staff to develop skills to meet current work obligations and to support succession planning processes.

The proposed increase for Staffing Expenses is 17.47%.

Library Materials

The ECLB continues to maintain the Library Materials budget at status quo to minimize the budget increases. The base budget will maintain materials that support current and comprehensive collections. ECL will continue to seek alternative formats, such as: loanable eReaders and tablets, to provide direct access to ECL's digital resources; formats to support early literacy development; resources that support the development of trans-literacy skills (skills required for web-based learning and communication), and a collection that addresses accessibility needs. ECL will continue to seek grant funding to support and maintain alternative collections.

ECLB recognizes that the restocking of resources after the renovation of the Leamington Library will impact the 2019 Budget. To fund this project, the ECLB directed the 2018 tangible book surplus (\$80,000) to the Essex County Library Rate Stabilization Reserve. These reserve funds will be accessed to support a one-time purchase of new resources to restock the Leamington Library as part of the 2019 Budget. Total cost of resources and service support to restock the space is estimated at \$100,000. The cost difference will be supported through the general 2019 Tangible Books budget fund.

As ECLB continues to experience a demand for digital content, and as the expenses for digital content is prone to fluctuation due the cost per item and the rate of exchange on US currency, the ECLB proposed a modest funding increase to support patron demand and access to virtual (intangible) collections.

Operating Expenses

Repair and Maintenance

The ECLB budget anticipates an increased demand to repair and maintain the interior spaces at branch locations. As branches age, the demand for repair increases, while the new branches' repairs are generally due to public use. The 2019 Budget proposes an increase of \$4,000 to maintain site locations.

Advertising

The ECLB advertisement budget supports the organization's ability to promote its services, resources and programs to local and neighbouring communities, to draw awareness to site locations, to work with community partners to support local community projects, and to advocate for the value of library services.

ECL 2019 Budget maintains \$10,000 to support the anticipated replacement of the exterior sign at the Essex Branch. Replacement is dependent on the local Council approving the joint project. The project is funded through the ECL Capital Reserves and will not impact the overall base funding request.

Purchased Services

The ECLB maintains the budget for legal services with \$15,000 of base funding, with additional cost of purchased services supported through ECLB reserves.

Janitorial Services – since 2014, through attrition, the ECL has been contracting independent janitorial services to clean the branch locations. The 2019 Budget anticipates 2-3 additional branches will receive purchased services.

Inspections – in 2016, the ECL implemented regular inspections of branch locations for bed bugs. Locations are inspected monthly, bimonthly or quarterly depending on their hours of operation and potential for risk.

The overall impact of increase costs of purchased services is 8.75% or \$16,050.

Occupancy Expenses

The County of Essex is now the sole owner of the Civic Centre. Since 2018, a portion of the operating costs for the Civic Centre have been shared between all departments and outside organizations who use or require space within the facility. An allocated occupancy expense increase of 2.5% is proposed in the ECL 2019 Budget. With an allowance for increased insurance premiums, the overall Occupancy Expense represents an increase of 1.16% or \$2,740.

Capital Expenditures

Branch Renovations

Capital improvements for branch libraries in 2019 will focus on the renovation and refurbishment of the Leamington Branch. The proposed budget of \$400,000 will replace

furnishing and equipment within the space. The proposed budget takes into account the anticipated increase to the cost of goods, delivery and tariffs. Capital projects are funded through Capital Reserves and do not impact base budget requests.

The 2019 ECLB Budget does not propose any additional capital projects for facilities, as the ECL Administration has not received communication from the local municipalities of their plans to proceed with renovation projects in the 2019 budget year.

The following branches will need to be assessed for the replacement and upgrade of equipment and furnishings, and if necessary AODA compliances:

- Tecumseh – Cada Branch
- Lakeshore - Stoney Point Branch
- Lakeshore – Comber Branch
- Kingsville – Cottam Branch
- Kingsville - Ruthven Branch
- Essex – Harrow Branch
- Amherstburg – Amherstburg Branch

The ECLB will continue to work with the local municipalities to assess how to best provide library services within the community, and to address aging facilities to meet AODA compliances by 2025.

Furnishings and Equipment

With aging facilities it is anticipated that furnishing and equipment replacements will increase for ECL to maintain its standard of service. It is recommended the funds support the replacement of service desks, patron kiosks, and general equipment as needed. Of the proposed \$55,000 budget, it is recommended that the ECLB support \$40,000 through the Capital Reserve.

Vehicle Replacement

In 2015, ECLB had a vehicle lifecycle replacement schedule with the expectation that ECL would maintain two vehicles for delivery services. The vehicles would be purchased five years apart, and each vehicle would be replaced every 10 years.

In 2015, ECL purchased a new Ford Transit. In 2016, ECL sold the older of the two vehicles, the Mercedes Sprinter, as it was costing more to maintain than to replace. At this time, ECL decided to not repurchase a second vehicle but to wait and assess service needs.

ECLB proposes the following adjustments to the Vehicle Lifecycle Replacement Schedule.

1. 2019 - purchase a smaller second vehicle that can be used for multiple purposes such as: providing a backup vehicle when the primary larger vehicle is being serviced/repaired; to be available for maintenance use when the large vehicle is not available, or a larger vehicle is not required; providing access to a secondary delivery vehicle for computer and smaller equipment replacements; and for outreach services.

2. Adjust the replacement cycle of each vehicle to be every 6 years, as it is anticipated the larger vehicle will accumulate high mileage from the daily delivery cycle.
3. Gradually increase the annual contribution to the Vehicle Capital Reserve to support the adjusted replacement cycle.

Computer Equipment and Software

The ECLB proposed budget for Computer Equipment and Software supports lifecycle replacement schedules for equipment and software required for daily operations.

For 2019, the ECL funding for the anticipated people counter project will be redirected to investigate and trial equipment that can provide multiple functions. The equipment would still satisfy the need for people counters at site locations and provide additional functioning that would support the use of RFID (radio frequency identification) technology and security access points. The equipment will be tested at select branch locations to assess its value and ease of use. It is estimated that \$20,000, from ECLB Capital Reserves, will support this trial equipment.

Provincial Grant

The 2019 Budget anticipates grant funding from the Province of Ontario in the amount of \$273,620 to support operating costs.

The 2019 Budget, as proposed by the ECLB, addresses the residual impacts of the 2017 0% budget due to the 2016-2017 strike and supports the 2019 ECLB operational projects. The ECLB approved the contribution of \$729,500 from their reserves to reduce the impact of budget requirements on the 2019 Levy, and an increase of 4.6% to the base funding to support and maintain the ongoing services and resources and programs ECL provides for all communities with the County of Essex.