



Essex County Library



Service Delivery Promise

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

ECL is governed by the Essex County Library Board, and its Mission is to create a space of discovery for all at the heart of our communities.

It is the vision of the Essex County Library to be a trusted community partner, enriching the lives of residents by providing responsive services and creating connections to information, entertainment, and knowledge. As a cornerstone of our County, ECL fosters engagement and lifelong learning through spaces and services that evolve to meet the needs of the community.

Level of Service Statement

ECL connects residents to resources through our community branch locations and through 24/7 online service at www.essexcountylibrary.ca

Town of Amherstburg	Amherstburg Branch
Town of Essex	Essex Branch Harrow Branch McGregor Branch
Town of Kingsville	Cottam Branch Highline Branch (Kingsville) Ruthven Branch
Municipality of Lakeshore	Comber Branch Stoney Point Branch Toldo Branch (Emeryville) Libro Centre Branch (Woodslee)
Town of LaSalle	William Varga Branch (LaSalle)
Municipality of Leamington	Leamington Branch
Town of Tecumseh	Cada Branch (Tecumseh)

Through its 14 branches, 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.

Opportunities, Challenges and Risks for 2026

The Essex County Library enters 2026 with a renewed focus on adaptability and community engagement. ECL continues to see strong growth in program participation and circulation, including potentially record-setting levels of adult participation in programming. This trend—combined with the dramatic growth of drop-in programming—presents an opportunity to reimagine adult services in 2026, including targeted outreach across a broad spectrum of demographics such as seniors and other historically underserved County residents.

The reopening of the Stoney Point Branch and the relocation of the Cottam Branch mark significant progress in ECL's long-term facilities strategy. These capital investments, along with the continued focus on system-wide furniture 'refresh' projects demonstrate ECL's commitment to modern, flexible, and welcoming spaces all while maintaining a fiscally responsible position.

ECL's implementation of new digital tools—including the *Mugo* book club management platform, an internal IT ticketing system, and staff cybersecurity training through the *CIRA Awareness Program*—has increased operational efficiency and aims to reduce or prevent service disruptions. Building on these gains, 2026 offers the opportunity to strengthen the library's digital infrastructure, expand staff cyber-awareness and provide better, more efficient customer service.

Demand for both physical and digital collections continues to grow. Circulation of eBooks, eAudio, and streaming media increased by roughly 15% in 2024 with further upward trending in 2025, while the use of physical materials remains high. Managing this dual service model—within a largely static budget—requires the strategic reallocation of resources, careful collection development, and sustained investment in online platforms.

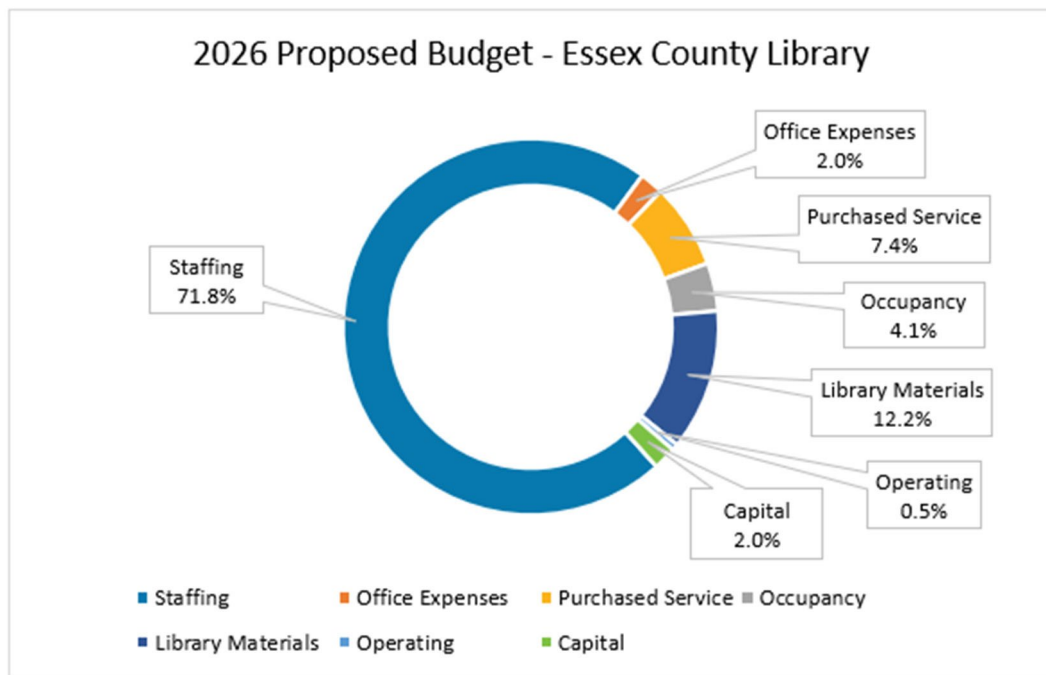
Proposed 2026 Budget Plan

Costs associated with maintaining library collections are impacted by several factors, including inflation in manufacturing costs of physical resources, pricing for content licensing for eResources, and fluctuation of the US exchange rate.

The proposed 2026 Budget does not request a significant increase in spending, however it does demonstrate a re-allocation of funds to account for circulation trends, and to mitigate increases related to content licensing for eResources.

While the proposed 2026 Budget does not seek to increase the staff complement, it does include contractual wage increases and benefit cost increases.

The following graph illustrates the key areas of proposed 2026 Budget spending at the Essex County Library:



Overall, the proposed 2026 Budget for Essex County Library net of recoveries, totals \$7,165,280 (an increase of \$158,820 (2.3%) over the 2025 Budget of \$7,006,460).

Alignment with Strategic Plan Initiatives

Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results

Included in the ECL Strategic Plan is an increased emphasis on developing partnerships with community stakeholders and municipal organizations to increase visibility and name recognition. Additionally, leveraging support from County Administration further deepens the Essex County Library’s ties to ‘Team Essex County’.

A Government Working for the People

ECL continues to ensure that all programs, services, and facilities remain welcoming, barrier-free, and accessible to every resident. Improvements to digital access, adaptive technology, and inclusive programming reflect ECL’s commitment to equitable service and its role as a trusted, people-focused public institution.

Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County

In 2025, ECL expanded community partnerships, enhanced digital offerings, and revitalized branch spaces to foster learning and connection. In 2026, through its collections, programs and spaces, ECL will continue to empower residents of all ages to participate fully in the cultural and civic life of Essex County.