LIBRARIES BRANCH 2019 PROVINCIAL GRANTS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Nelson Public Library (NPL) is located in the Central Kootenay and serves the City of Nelson, as well as three adjacent Regional District Areas (RDCK Areas F, H, & E), one (Area E) of which does not contribute to library service through taxation. Residents of this area who wish to use the library pay a yearly membership fee. The total population of this region is just over 18,000 and is comprised of a vibrant mix of people ranging from seniors and families, to youth and the marginalized. Nelson has a national and international reputation as a cultural artistic community which creates a thriving tourist industry. Many tourists and young transients visit our community, and they are heavy users of the Library.

Nelson does not have a major industry and the economy relies on tourism, a post-secondary College, provincial government offices, and thriving art and music schools. Recently Nelson had the honour to be the smallest community in the world to make the short-list as a Smart 21 community under the Intelligent Communities Forum. The designation recognizes Nelson's economic and social transformation as a leading technology center with best practices in broadband deployment and use, workforce development, innovation, digital inclusion and advocacy. This technology infrastructure will continue to attract professionals who work remotely, which is an increasingly important economic driver for Nelson and Area. In 2019 NPL was the recipient of a Columbia Basin Trust $85,000 technology grant. Funds were received and plans developed in 2019 to implement barrier-free access to editing, recording and digitization equipment in 2020 at the Library. NPL is excited to contribute to the development of the City of Nelson as a leading technology centre by ensuring access to and training of technology to all residents.

Though the technology grant has allowed NPL to offer new and valuable services, NPL's biggest ongoing challenge is providing service to the RDCK Area E that does not pay into the library tax base. This is a significant barrier for many people who cannot afford the membership fee. It creates problems with being able to provide school programming as the principals and teachers are reluctant to bring students to a program where everyone cannot participate fully. The Library addressed this to some extent through a grant from the RDCK Area Director that allowed us to issue a library card to every student in the region, however this remains an ongoing long-term challenge. There have been four referenda in the last 20 years but there is an active anti-tax group that has mobilized each time to prevent a positive outcome. Every week there are people who come into the Library to get a card and cannot afford the fee, and who are dismayed and disappointed that they cannot access free library service in BC.

2019 was the second year of NPL's recent strategic plan. The plan aligns with the Provincial Strategic Plan *Inspiring Libraries Connecting Communities* and spans the years 2017-2022. It was completed with extensive community consultation of teens, youth and community partners. The consultation results underline a tension between people's expectations for not only sustaining or increasing existing services, but also evolving to new services. For example, people want the Library to grow the digital offerings, but not at the expense of the physical collections, and to continue to build as a community hub, though not at the expense of quiet individual areas and space given to collections.

The Mission of the Nelson Public Library is to inspire a culture of discovery, creativity and connection.
The Library's key priorities are
1. The Library integrates Strategic and responsive approaches to support discovery, creativity and connections at both the individual and community levels.
2. The Library provides engaging, welcoming spaces to support discovery, creativity and connections.
3. The Library is responsive and accountable to community, ensuring sustainability of facilities and services.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIRES, GOALS, PROGRAMS & SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS

1. IMPROVING ACCESS.
Library Goals that support the priority:
1. **Continue to build the Library facility as a community hub**
2. **Empower discovery of emerging technologies and provide training on digital resources**
3. **Support Literacy and lifelong learning through collections and programs**

Program/Service Supporting Priority	Partnerships	Outputs/Outcomes
1. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES. NPL is one of very few communities in the province that has a population in the region who do not contribute, through taxation, for universal access to library service. In 2016 the area's Regional District Director, granted the Nelson Public Library funding to underwrite the costs of memberships of students in that area. Due to the large uptake (61% of students) to this service in 2016, 2017 & 2018 the Library negotiated similar funding in 2019.	• School District #8 • Regional District of Central Kootenay: Area E	Outputs • 252 students received memberships (95% of student's living in the area). • 15 class library visits from 6 different schools: 233 students. • 13 NPL staff visits to schools Outcomes • Parents report great appreciation for the fact that their children are now able to access a library card without the barrier of a membership fee. • Teachers report more comfort in participating in class visits to the Library knowing that all students have access to library services.
2. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC COMPUTER LAB & INTERNET NPL offers access to 8 adult, 2 teen and 2 children's public computers at no charge to members and visitors. Wifi is also offered free of charge to members and visitors. • In addition to Internet access the public computers are installed with an up-to-date operating system and Microsoft Office suite software and connection to a printer and scanner. • The Lab also offers mobile printing services to residents and visitors; including wireless printing in the library or remotely.	• Nelson City IT Department	Outputs • 22,032 public computer sessions. • 9,149 unique wifi logins, 20% increase over 2018 Outcomes • NPL's computer lab is well utilized with high usage of the wireless services, and is attracting new people to Library services. The increase in usage is suspected to be due to the popularity of smart phones. As smart phones become more powerful, individuals are no longer investing in desktop computers. The trend in software fees moving to subscription based may also be contributing to this trend. • Individuals are using the Library computers to write resumes, fill out online gov't forms & applications, and connect with friends and families • The Library is one of the only public space in the community that offers free access to computers and the Internet. For the increasing homelessness population access to the Internet is one of their few opportunities to connect with services such as health, legal and housing agencies.
3. COMMUNITY SERVICE NAVIGATOR The Library hosted the Community Services Navigator pilot project in collaboration with Nelson at its Best. The service helped residents access information on a variety of government, health,	• Nelson at its Best Ongoing • Columbia Basin Trust	Outputs • 120 drop-in sessions and 180 questions asked. Outcomes

Program/Service Supporting Priority	Partnerships	Outputs/Outcomes
housing, employment, parenting (and more) topics. The project was funded through a Columbia Basin Trust grant.		• The project provided community service agencies along with the Library data on the types of information community members were seeking, and how they search and seek information. • The majority of questions focused on housing, health and financial issues. • Though there is no continued funding to support this position on a regular basis, data and a summary report has been shared with service providers and local government for future exploration.
4. **LIBRARY OUTREACH** Nelson Public Library provides Library services beyond the its walls. • Staff visit two seniors assisted living facilities in Nelson monthly, providing residents with reading materials in a variety of formats (large print, audio books, digital books) and instructions on how to use Library digital services such as ebooks and downloadable audio books. • Slocan Valley: library staff provide a monthly family storytime and visit a Seniors Centre in a neighbouring community approx. 40 minutes from Nelson: delivering books and providing assistance with online Library services • North Shore: the Library partners with Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy to provide Storytime for families to a number of small communities on the North Shore of Kootenay Lake (approx. 30 min from Nelson). • Granny Goose: the Library partners with Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy providing an integrated storytime with families and residents of a Nelson assisted living facility.	• Lakeview and Mountain Lakes Retirement homes • RDCK Area H Rec. Commission • Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy: Nelson & Slocan Valley	Outputs • A total of 51 outreach sessions with 1059 attendees Outcomes • Library outreach helps breakdown social isolation for individuals that are homebound and live in rural areas with poor access to transportation. • Granny Goose promotes intergenerational interaction, early years literacy development and parent education for literacy at home through songs and rhymes.

2. DEVELOPING SKILLS

Library Goal that supports the priority:

1. **Support literacy and lifelong learning through collections and programs.**
2. **Empower discovery of emerging technologies and provide training on digital resources.**
3. **Facilitate community connections to inspire creativity and knowledge creation.**

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Program/Service Supporting Priority	Partnerships	Outputs/Outcomes
1. **ONLINE SAFETY TRAINING FOR SENIORS** • Online Safety for Seniors program is aimed at empowering seniors to stay safe in our digital world. • Library staff received training from Telus through their TelusWise program. The program provides	• Telus • Columbia Basin Alliance for Lit. • Learning in Retirement	Outputs • 3 sessions: 56 participants • Library staff completed the TelusWise training which includes training materials and course outlines. Library staff are now equipped to deliver this type of training. Outcomes

seniors the information and tools to navigate the online world safely. The training covers passwords, common identity theft scams, updating software and apps, mobile devices, social media, and online dating,		• After the training Seniors feel more confident using online services and their personal digital devices. • Participant feedback indicated that most participants were going to change their behaviour online in order to be safer based on the workshop.
2. READING BUDDIES A school age child and teens are matched up in buddy pairs to meet regularly in the library for reading practice..	• School District 8	Outputs • 4 teen Reading Buddies and 5 learners. • 38 sessions Outcomes • Children are guided in fostering literacy skills, gain confidence in their reading abilities, resulting in more fluent and keen readers. • Teens developed leadership and mentoring skills, helping them acquire skills that are transferable to the job market.
3. ONLINE RESEARCH SKILLS WORKSHOPS Nelson Public Library partnered with Community Futures to offer basic online searching skills for the Self Employment program at Community Futures • The workshop aimed to help new entrepreneurs in the market research stages find the information that will help guide them in their planning process and be successful in launching their business.	• Community Futures	Outputs • 2 sessions with 14 participants Outcomes • Local economic development agencies are aware of the resources public libraries offer for small businesses increasing the reach of library services to different audiences • The entrepreneurs are better consumers of online information. They can search more efficiently, find better and more relevant information and are able to evaluate the accuracy and authority of that information. These are skills that will not only continue to help them as their business grows, but is also an important life skill.
5. BOOK-A-LIBRARIAN In September 2019 the Library introduced Book- a-Librarian: one-on-one technical basics and help with online Library resources. • Library staff are available for 1 hour sessions to help individuals with their technology questions. • Provides Library members with one-on-one assistance on how to access and use Library online resources such as ebooks, and downloadable audio books	• Kootenay Library Federation • BC Libraries Cooperative	Output • 23 sessions (from Sept to Dec.) Outcomes • Library staff are honing their training skills and learning what technology challenges the public are facing. This knowledge is used to better serve our members. • Participants increased their digital literacy skills. • Participants developed greater confidence accessing online resources • Increased awareness of Library online resources. Challenges • In the past a federal grant allowed the Library to hire students to provide technology help to residents. Though the funding is no longer available the need is still there. This program was developed to fulfill the need. With no increase in staffing hours to provide this valuable service, NPL staff are stretching their already full

		schedules to accommodate the need, as such residents can wait up to a month for an appointment.

6. COLLABORATING ON SHARED GOALS

Library Goals that supports the priority:
1. **Continue to build the Library facility as a community hub.**
2. **Explore opportunities for expanding Library spaces to respond to community needs, including outreach services.**

Program/Service Supporting Priority	Partnerships	Outputs/Outcomes
1. BC INTERLIBRARY CONNECT The Nelson Library continues to participate in the Provincial resource sharing system InterLibrary Connect. The system that began in 2015 has grown to include in 2019, 44 public libraries. • Through a click of a button InterLIbrary Connect provides access to the collection of 44 public libraries for BC Citizens. It increases citizens' informational options exponentially. • InterLibrary Connect is made possible because of the shared library system Sitka (developed and managed by the BC Libraries Cooperative). The system provides a single access point for library members to search and request items from 43 public libraries.	• 44 BC public libraries. • BC Libraries Cooperative	Outputs • In 2019 Nelson Public Library members' borrowed 7037 items through InterLibrary Connect; an increase of 5% from 2018 and 72% since its introduction in 2015. Nelson Public Library loaned 2726 items an increase of 18% over 2018. • Staff time to process interlibrary loans has drastically been reduced because of the single access point. Outcomes • Staff time normally spent on processing traditional InterLibrary loans is now dedicated to helping members with more multifaceted and value added services. Nelson residents have direct access to the collections 43 BC public libraries. • The service supports the informational, educational and recreational needs of British Columbians by expanding the range of materials available beyond the physical and electronic collections of their home library (e.g. Nelson). Because of the convenient, fast and efficient delivery of this service, NPL members' usage of the service is growing yearly.
2. PARENTING WORKSHOP SERIES After a successful collaboration with community partners in 2018 hosting a similar workshop the Library partnered with Nelson Community Services to host the an additional parenting workshop series in 2019.: • 4 sessions: focused on parenting children from toddlers to tweens. • 4 sessions focused on parenting teens. • The sessions were conducted by professional family educator that has been working in the field locally for over 20 years.	• Nelson Community Services • Nelson Early Childhood Action Committee	Outputs • 4 workshops (parenting children): 94 participants (close to triple the attendance in 2018) • 3 workshops (parenting teens): 59 participants Outcomes • Parents developed parenting skills in a barrier free environment. • Parents increased their confidence by using tools introduced to them at the workshops. • Parents developed networks to help improve their parenting skills outside the workshops. • Development and delivery of the series strengthened the partnership between the

Program/Service Supporting Priority	Partnerships	Outputs/Outcomes
• The workshops were free and childcare was provided to reduce barriers.		three organizations. Each organization brought a specific skill, knowledge and community connection that resulted in a successful event.

3. **CHILDREN & TEEN SERVICES CONFERENCE**
After two successful conferences held in the Kootenays, for member libraries of the Kootenay Library Federation, in 2019 Nelson Public Library partnered with Okanagan Regional Library and the BC Library Association and made it a provincial conference.
• This Children & Teen Services conference is the only kind of its sort to be offered outside of the lower mainland.
• Attendees came from rural and urban libraries representing, the Kootenays, Okanagan, Thomson Nicola region, the Lower Mainland and northern BC
• Attendees had access to 9 sessions
• There were no conference fees making it affordable for all size of libraries to attend.
	• Okanagan Regional Library
	• BC Library Assocation
		Outputs
		• 70 attendees from 26 libraries
		• 9 professional sessions offered
		
		Outcomes
		• The 2019 conference built upon the success of the 2018 conference; new connections were made between attendees, more ideas were shared, and further plans were made to work together through the coming year.
		• The conference is affordable and accessible professional development. Similar opportunities are normally only offered in the Lower Mainland with a focus on services for large urban libraries.
		• Comments from participants:
		  • I appreciated that it was an alternative to a lower mainland conference.
		  • It was so nice to hear from speakers from various libraries, many of them rural
		  • I appreciated the affordability (it was free!) of attending the conference
		  • I like that there was time to share ideas and not just listen."

4. ENHANCING GOVERNANCE

Library Goals that supports the priority:
1. **Ensure library services are delivered efficiently and effectively.**
2. **Communicate about library services and their value to ensure they are widely understood.**
3. **Ensure governance and management practices support the Library's goals and objectives.**

Program/Service Supporting Priority	Partnerships	Outputs/Outcomes
1. **NPL BOARD DEVELOPMENT** In addition to regular board duties in 2019 the board took it upon themselves to develop annual goals and objectives. In a workshop the board reviewed the key focus areas of the Library's strategic plan and identified board actions.		Outputs • Board Goals & Objectives identified with clear actions for those responsible and a timeline developed to accomplish the goals Outcomes • Trustees have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. • Trustees have a better understanding of the Library's strategic plan, where the board fits into the plan and they can speak with confidence to the plan to community stakeholders.
2. **NPL TRUSTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** • Nelson Public Library trustees' participation in the BC Library Trustees Orientation Program	• BC Library Association	Output • 1 NPL trustees attended and the Chief Librarian attended the BCLA and BCLTA 2019 conferences

hosted in Nelson and co-sponsored by the Kootenay Library Federation.
• Nelson Public Library Trustee and the Chief Librarian attendance at the BC Lib. Conference trustee sessions and the BC Library Trustees Forum
	• BC Libraries Trustee Association
	• Kootenay Library Federation
		• 4 trustees completed the provincial trustee training program.
		Outcome
		• The conference and provincial trustee training provided trustees with
		   o a new network with other trustees
		   o an understanding of trustees' roles and responsibilities
		   o strengthened advocacy skills.
		   o a better understanding of provincial resources available to them.

3. USE OF CAR SHARE PROGRAM FOR LIBRARY OUTREACH In 2019 the Library became a member of the Kootenay Carshare program. Library staff use the carshare program when delivering outreach library services in neighbouring communities. By using the carshare Library staff are supporting the Library's strategic priority of ensuring the Library operates in an environmentally sustainable manner in all areas.		Output • Delivered 40 outreach programs using the carshare program Outcomes • As a result of this one library staff member sold her car as she no longer needs it for work, reducing the number of cars on the road. • The carshare has an electric car resulting in many of our outreach programs being emission free.

SUMMARY

In 2019 NPL board and staff continued to develop and strengthen relationships with local government and community partners while simultaneously accomplishing a number goals set-out in the library's strategic plan; some of which are outlined in this report. Library staff and the Board are excited to build upon these accomplishments to advance the priorities further in 2020: NPL's centenary. In January 2019, the board struck a Centenary Committee tasked with developing celebrations to mark this momentous occasion. The committee raised just over $20,000 from donations and community grants to help with the celebrations; highlighting the value community places in their public library. A number of celebrations are scheduled for 2020 showcasing NPL's history and engaging community by asking what they envision for NPL in the coming 100 years.

Nelson Public Library's greatest challenge continues to be trying to find resources for new initiatives while maintaining the trusted and respected programs and services people expect. In addition, NPL is increasingly becoming a safe place for homeless populations and those suffering from mental health issues; adding a new aspect to its services. Though NPL is pleased to be seen as a barrier-free and welcoming space, it requires frequent revaluation of policies and procedures to help ensure, to the best of its abilities, the safety of visitors and staff. Due to this, Library staff are faced with challenging situations almost daily. To counter these challenges Library staff have access to specialized training, sponsored by the Kootenay Library Federation. Without the sponsorship NPL would have had to make a difficult decision of eliminating other training or services in order to provide this training.

Static funding from the province, along with increased demand from our members and new provincial initiatives is not a sustainable situation. The Library finds it increasingly difficult to manage these conflicting priorities with funds that have lost inflationary value over the past decade. Fortunately local government continues to recognize the value of the public library in our community and has provided inflationary increases to the Library's operational budget over the yaers. Nelson Public Library continues to provide innovative programs and services in response to evolving community needs. The Library is viewed as a trusted community partner at the many community tables in which Library staff participates. Nelson Public Library is indeed a creative and responsive public service organization inspiring a culture of discovery, creativity and connection in our community.