2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Prince George Public Library (PGPL)

CHECKLIST

For the PLGR to be considered complete, please ensure you have provided information for each of the following sections. Suggested word counts have been included for each question, but feel free to include more or less text as needed – text boxes will expand as you type. Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

1. INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year (up to 500 words).

Established as a municipal library in 1955, the Prince George Public Library (PGPL) serves the residents of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and the City of Prince George, British Columbia. Altogether this represents a service population of approximately 90,000. Located in central BC, the city of Prince George has a population of 76,708, and is the largest city in a region of almost 320,000. The community is located at the junction of major provincial Highways 16 & 97, and also at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers. The Prince George economy is well-diversified across all sectors. This economic diversification reflects the rising importance of Prince George as a regional hub for residents of north central British Columbia wishing to access products and services that otherwise might not be available due to the remoteness of this region relative to other major urban areas. Over recent decades, Prince George has developed from a mainly forest-based economy to a city that has a strong natural resource base, but also supplies goods and services for a broad range of sector activities throughout Northern BC, within Canada and internationally. The region's largest employment sectors are: healthcare and social assistance; wholesale and retail trade; and manufacturing. The community is served by two post-secondary facilities with a combined 11,000 students: College of New Caledonia (CNC) and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC).

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and Prince George have a relatively young population in comparison to BC as a whole, with 38.6% of the population aged 24 or younger in the Regional District and 35.9% in Prince George.

The Prince George Public Library conducts its work on the ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, whose people have occupied this area for more than 9,000 years. Over 15% of the population of Prince George identifies as Indigenous, which is significantly higher than the provincial average of 6%. The largest visible minority population in the community is that of the South Asian, making up 40.14% of the total visible minority population. The second largest group is the Filipino, at 1,035 people. Following Filipino is Chinese, totalling 15.02% of the visible minority population.

The Prince George Public Library has a staff of 65 employees working across two locations: the Bob Harkins Branch in downtown Prince George and the Nechako Branch in the Hart neighbourhood of northern Prince George. With an annual budget of approximately $4.1 million, PGPL has amassed a physical collection of over 170,000 books and other materials. In 2021, patrons borrowed over

600,000 items, visiting library branches a total of 131,372 times. In addition, the library website welcomed an additional 310,000 virtual visits, providing access to thousands of ebooks, audiobooks, online articles, and other digital resources.

2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Please describe any new or major ongoing projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, "copy" the blank table below and insert additional tables as needed using the "paste" function. Use one table per project/program.

Project/Program Name
Library Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
In 2021, the Prince George Public Library Board of Trustees led the organization through a strategic planning process. Soliciting input from library users, community members, stakeholder groups and organizations, as well as library staff, the board created a new strategic plan focused on five key strategic priorities: • **Improving the User Experience**: plan, deliver, and build awareness of library services and programs that respond to the needs of our community. • **Expanding our Reach**: create opportunities for reaching community groups and individuals who are not regular users of the library. • **Designing Welcoming Spaces**: create safe, attractive, inclusive library spaces that the community can take pride in. • **Developing Partnerships & Advocacy**: create safe, attractive, inclusive library spaces that the community can take pride in. • **Strengthening Staff Communications & Relationships**: promote and support collaborative relationships among library staff, encouraging a culture of cooperation and innovation. Library trustees and staff members are focused on continuing to promote the success of the organization through a commitment to achieving the strategic priorities.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
The new strategic plan establishes the strategic direction of the library and ensures that the organization is focused on objectives supported by the community the library serves.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.	
1. **Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	The focus on "Designing Welcoming Spaces" and "Improving the User Experience" reflects the importance of improving access to all types of library resources, facilities, services, and programs, with the goal of "building community resilience by creating welcoming and inclusive spaces for every person to read, connect, and share."

2.	**Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	The new strategic plan provides a framework for guiding the governance activities of the board, as well as operational guidance for the work of the library staff. Developing staff relationships and communication is an explicit strategic priority in the new plan, ensuring that professional development and growth of staff members remains a key focus of PGPL's work moving forward.
3.	**Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Through online/paper surveys and interviews conducted with community partners, the strategic planning process provided an opportunity for community members to contribute their ideas and suggestions to the strategic plan and the future of the library.
4.	**Enhancing Governance** of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	The strategic planning process was effective in engaging library trustees to understand and embrace the key role they play in providing the strategic direction for the library. This enhances library governance by helping library trustees to connect to the values and activities of the library in a meaningful way.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.

The new Strategic Plan provides a long-term framework for ensuring that new and existing services, programs, and initiatives are measured against the key objectives outlined in the plan. Achieving these objectives is the desired outcome of this project.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery?

Library staff and board members, local community groups/agencies, community members all contributed to the strategic planning engagement process.

Project/Program Name
Bob Harkins Branch Entrance Renovation Project

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.

In December of 2020, construction work was completed on a new public entrance for the main branch of the library. After years of advocacy and effort by library board, municipal, and library staff members, the library now has an attractive, welcoming, and accessible library entrance. The new entrance features a heated accessibility ramp that automatically melts snow and ice in winter, automatic sliding glass doors that improve sightlines, and an oversize elevator large enough to accommodate mobility scooters. Library patrons can now visit all levels of the library from the main elevator, and as the customer comment submission included here confirms, are able to access staff assistance or library services from any service point.

> *"I realize you may get messages from people complaining, but I want to say thank you. With changes to the entrance, I was skeptical and thought it was a waste of money, but everything has improved. I can go right where I need and be helped, and the staff doesn't send me away anymore. The service has been improved tenfold."*

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?

The new entrance supports two of the library's key strategic priorities: "Improving the user experience" and "Designing welcoming spaces." Patrons now have much safer access to the branch as they no longer have to use what was intended as a service entrance that is narrow, poorly lit, with an elevator too small to accommodate many strollers and mobility scooters. The new entrance also replaces an uncovered concrete staircase that was a safety hazard in icy winter conditions. This upgrade improves the user experience significantly. The new entrance also removes barriers for those with mobility limitations that might previously have prevented them from visiting the branch.

How does this project/program support the **B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service**? **Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.**

1. **Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	Increases access to the library facility by making it easier for patrons with mobility limitations to navigate the building. Provides a safer library experience by removing risks associated with poor visibility and narrow access routes. Attractive, newly renovated spaces serve to attract additional visitors to the library.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.

The intermediate outcome of the Entrance Renovation project at the main branch of the library is to eliminate existing safety and accessibility barriers to accessing the facility, ultimately leading to increased numbers of patrons visiting the branch and achieving the strategic priority to "create safe, attractive, inclusive library spaces that the community can take pride in."

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery?

The municipality of Prince George was a key funding and delivery partner, but many other community groups/members contributed ideas, support, etc. to the project.

Project/Program Name
eduroam Wireless Internet Access

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
In November of 2021, the Prince George Public Library became the first public library in the province of BC to launch the education roaming service (eduroam), making it possible for students, faculty, and staff at participating institutions to seamlessly connect to their post-secondary wireless internet network from within any PGPL branch facility. Developed in partnership with BCNET, eduroam allows library visitors affiliated with participating institutions, including University of Northern British Columbia, College of New Caledonia, and Northern Lights College, to access their wireless network exactly as they would on their home campus. As BCNET president and CEO Bala Kathiresan confirmed, "the intent in expanding eduroam across the Province is to help bridge the digital divide. It became even more important during the pandemic, allowing for online course delivery and improved connectivity for students."

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
Supporting postsecondary students, faculty, and staff to access their campus wireless network from within the public library aligns with the strategic priority of "Expanding our Reach." The initiative welcomes those who may not traditionally be frequent library users. This is particularly timely given the recent completion and opening of a student apartment building immediately next to the main branch of the public library.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.	
1. **Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	Expanding wireless internet access helps to improve access for all British Columbians, encouraging library use by segments of the population not used to relying on the public library for services.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.
The immediate desired outcome of the eduroam network partnership was to increase access to library facilities for students, faculty, and staff at participating institutions, leading to an increase in the number of library visits from community members from those demographic groups, and removal of a barrier for those unable to purchase internet access on their own.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery?
BCNET was a key partner in initiating the project and supporting its implementation through setup and configuration of technical aspects.

Project/Program Name
Teen Art Showcase

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
The Teen Art Showcase is an annual event held in partnership with the Community Arts Council of Prince George. The event kicks off in the Fall with a workshop led by local artists. The workshop provides an opportunity for teens to benefit from the expertise and encouragement offered by the artists. Following this consultation process, teens are encouraged to implement the guidance they have received and then produce art submissions that are then displayed in the library the following Spring. The 2021 Teen Art Showcase featured 40 art submissions competing in five different categories, including a "People's Choice Award" that garnered more than 230 ballot submissions.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
The Teen Art Showcase aligns with the library's strategic priority of "Expanding our Reach" by providing an opportunity for teens with an interest in creating art to take advantage of a supportive environment to develop their skills and sell their own artistic works to the public. The program also beautifies the library facility by decorating its walls with the art submissions displayed as part of the program. This supports the library's strategic objective to "create safe, attractive, inclusive library spaces that the community can take pride in."

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.

1. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	As a result of participating in the Teen Art Workshop and Showcase, teens gain mentorship opportunities, confidence in exhibiting their work, the opportunity to learn about pricing and selling art, skills in preparing for exhibition, and connections with fellow teen artists. The program provides a forum for youth to express their views and perspectives and introduces them to new experiences that might help them better understand who they are and who they want to be.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.
The Teen Art Showcase offers an opportunity for teens to meet together at the library to learn about showcasing their art. The immediate intended outcome is to improve not only their artistic skills, but also their knowledge of the industry and eligibility to pursue artistic careers and education programs. The ultimate goal is achieving the library's strategic priority of "Expanding Our Reach" to those who are traditionally not regular users of the library.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery?
The Community Arts Council of Prince George is a partner in planning and delivery of this program, including soliciting help from volunteers to participate on the judging panel, as well as supplying funding for cash prizes awarded to the winning submissions.

Project/Program Name
LinkedIn Learning Platform

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
With in-person learning opportunities scarce in 2021, PGPL was pleased to be able to direct library patrons, staff, and board members to two quality digital learning platforms, LinkedIn Learning and Gale Courses. PGPL is grateful for the funding support provided by the provincial Libraries Branch that made it possible for BC public library patrons across the province to enjoy free access to LinkedIn Learning. Although challenges in configuring secure access to LinkedIn Learning delayed the launch of the resource until June of 2021, by the year's end the platform had seen over 1000 video views by PGPL users. Both LinkedIn Learning and Gale Courses provide vital training support for library staff and board members on a wide array of topics.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
Online training/education platforms like LinkedIn Learning and Gale Courses help PGPL achieve its strategic objective to "create opportunities for reaching community groups and individuals who are not regular users of the library." Supporting community members who are unable to visit library facilities to access educational opportunities is a great way to expand the reach of the library. Since a large part of PGPL's service area is located in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and not within easy distance of a library branch, online resources are of particular importance in reaching these community members.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.	
5. **Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	LinkedIn Learning and Gale Courses form part of a suite of digital resources that improve access to important learning and educational opportunities for British Columbians, especially for those unable to visit a library branch in-person.
6. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	Online learning platforms like LinkedIn Learning and Gale Courses help library staff develop their skills and knowledge, ensuring that they are updated on the latest concepts and technologies needed to successfully perform in their roles at the library.
7. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Providing access to and supporting the use of the library's online resources helps to build the digital literacy skills of British Columbians, which assists in building communities that are capable of succeeding in the challenging digital landscape of contemporary society.

8. **Enhancing Governance** of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	LinkedIn Learning and Gale Courses enhance library governance by ensuring that library trustees are able to access desired learning opportunities.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for examples of how to write short, medium, and long-term outcomes.
Increased usage of online learning platforms is the immediate goal of this project, with the long-term objective of supporting the provincial priority of enhancing citizen engagement and building capacity of staff and board members.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery?
The BC Libraries Branch provided crucial funding to support long-term access to LinkedIn Learning for British Columbians around the province.

3. KEY CHALLENGES

The following topics have been identified as recurring themes in previous years' PLGRs. The intent of this section is to collect detailed information in a structured, consistent format.

Please select the most significant challenges that the library has faced in the past year that you wish to comment on. Leave any other listed topics blank.

Use the 'Other' row to include any ongoing or past challenges that are not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please insert additional rows into the table.

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2021. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	Staffing shortages caused by the pandemic led to difficulties in maintaining service levels and open hours at PGPL. COVID-19 illnesses among staff added further stresses to library staff. Municipal and provincial funding support assisted in acquiring the needed equipment, cleaning supplies, etc., to ensure that the library was safe for staff and patrons.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	Wildfires in this region present an annual challenge, and the library is one of a number of community organizations looking for ways to provide services to British Columbians forced to relocate to this area as a result of wildfires. PGPL has established procedures for permitting visitors relocated to Prince George due to wildfires to borrow library materials and access computers and other library services during their stay in Prince George, even if their permanent residence is outside of the library's service area.

Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Maintaining collections, staffing, equipment, facilities, services, at current funding levels is an ever-increasing challenge. Funding support for PGPL is strong (and much appreciated) at provincial, municipal, and regional district partners, however funding increases are not sufficient to cover increasing costs and make service growth extremely challenging.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	Like many other organizations, PGPL is experiencing challenges in recruiting and retaining staff during/following the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to staffing shortages, the library's open hours have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	The Nechako Branch of PGPL is a smaller, store-front facility located in an aging strip mall. Water leaks, outdated heating/cooling systems, etc. are representative of the frequent issues that lead to ongoing closures and reductions in service.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	The main branch of the library is located in the downtown core of the City of Prince George, where there is a significant population of community members experiencing homelessness, substance use and mental health issues, and other challenges. The library supports the efforts of the municipality to address these issues and implement effective solutions. The library branch is one of the only public washrooms in the downtown area to which these vulnerable community members have reliable access. Substance use and other behavioural issues in library facilities present an ongoing and significant risk to the health and safety of staff and patrons.
Other (please specify)	

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____   Date: __April 27, 2022__

Board Chair Signature: _____   Date: __May 2, 2022__