2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Midway Public Library

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).

The Midway Public Library is located in the heart of the Village of Midway, population approximately 650 people. The Village of Midway is located the Kettle Valley surrounded by mountains, river and farmlands. The Canada-USA border is 2 kilometers from town with the closest larger cities being Grand Forks east (55 kilometers) and Osoyoos west (70 kilometers). The Midway Public Library acts as a hub within the rural community serving the residents in Midway and the surrounding Area "E" of the local Regional District of Kootenay Boundary including Beaverdell, Westbridge, Bridesville, Rock Creek and Midway. This area is home to multiple farms and wood mills. Many community members are self-employed in trade, farm or craft/art-based businesses. There are also multiple families who have one or more family members who work out of town in industries such as oil, gas and construction. There is a large population of retired and elderly people within the communities and many households are multi-generational. Midway and area is particularly challenged by the rural location, access to services and poverty. Many patrons access the library when they come into the Village of Midway to get groceries, get gas, go to the post office, or pharmacy. The Village of Midway also houses the regional high school, skating arena, police department as well as restaurants and businesses. For further services, community members have to travel to communities such as Kelowna, Grand Forks or Castlegar which is challenging as many local people have limited income and access to transportation. Midway Public Library strives to be a friendly, welcoming environment. We are currently serving the community by providing access to computers as well as printing/copying/scanning/faxing services. Midway Public Library has undergone some technology and IT upgrades to increase the quality of services that we can offer. We act as a hub for local information sharing and for social connection for many of our patrons. Patrons are able to checkout physical library materials (book, DVD's, some puzzles/games) from the collection as well as access multiple online resources through their library membership. Due to Covid restrictions, we are currently not able to offer in-person programming but continue to offer book clubs and access to other programs remotely such as Creator's Club, Lego club and virtual book clubs. We have been able to expand our hours in 2021 and we have been working very hard to re-connect with our community as we continue to move through the pandemic.

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
Strategic Network Hardware and Technology Upgrades.

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
This last year, the Midway Public Library had the opportunity to work with a Connectivity Consultant to advise and help us on the connectivity challenges we face. The Connectivity Consultant was from the BC Libraries Cooperative and our time with him was funded by the province. With the help of this consultant, we have identified key areas where improvements would greatly benefit the library and its patrons, especially being quite rural. We have spent the better part of our year improving our connectivity and internal networking to better support both staff and patrons. Our goal was to establish a certified and warranted structured cabling system throughout our library to support the upgraded hardwired infrastructure. We received new Wi-Fi access points and a commercial grade firewall for enhanced cyber security. Our routers have been upgraded to commercial routers and this means our library is now completely hardwired which has doubled our internet speeds and our computers, both patron and staff, are running incredibly well. It has also allowed us to offer better and more secure printing services to our community which is exciting because there is a need here for that. Our Wi-Fi is now extended farther into our parking lot and surrounding areas which has been very welcome within the community as internet is often an issue. To go along side this upgrade, the library has upgraded the two patron computers and the two staff computers. A large TV was purchased for our board room for future meetings and events and to assist the community in having this space, we also purchased a laptop so presentations can be run.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
One of the big goals for our library was to bring technology more on par with other libraries in an attempt to keep up with all the advancements and changes with internet and computers. We also want to improve on the connectivity our community needs regarding internet and making sure that we can be a resource for the community to access what they need to online. Since our upgrades included our board room, we hope that this gives our community another much needed space for gatherings.

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)	This project has allowed better access to stable internet which is a big need in our community where consistent internet is lacking. We have an influx of patrons both within our doors and outside our windows accessing our 24/7 Wi-Fi. This is very welcome because the community doesn't need to wait for our open hours to access this service.
2. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	
3. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Our community has better access to all kinds of government and community resources and services. This has also afforded us to better help patrons and community members with filling out a multitude of online forms for various government services while still being able to keep their privacy intact. Patrons have been able to quickly and safely access information on patron computers or personal devices.
4. **Enhancing Governance** of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	This project has allowed the board and library director to begin planning next steps to enhance our library with this massive upgrade as a stepping stone. We only hope to improve on what has been done here this year, especially with being able to offer more technological 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.

By improving access to more stable internet, people are able to have better access to all kinds of information. In the short term, this means that people have the ability to increase job searches to find better employment or they can resume their education online. Homeschool families also have a reliable internet source for homeschool groups or other educational services. This in turn has the potential to increase early literacy. In the long term, having this kind of access can improve people's quality of life as they now can access better employment and increase their job skills to earn a more livable wage. People can also make better decisions on their health by being able to research different doctors or treatment programs. Having access to online services to apply for EI, Disability or other government programs also eases their mind, creates a less stressful environment and encourages housing and food security. In the end, we are helping people of our community stay connected and to have improved and consistent access to library, community and government services.

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

We partnered with the BC Libraries Cooperative and their Connectivity Consultant, Stephen Forrest. We also received funding through the Strategic Network Hardware Fund. The Strategic Network Hardware Fund is also through the BC Libraries Cooperative and made possible through provincial funding. Stephen spent a lot of time working with us and helping coordinate assessment for our technology needs and was a good go between and advocate for us while we were navigating the upgrades. We also used the provincially funded Tech Grant to purchase the upgraded computers and TV for the board room.

Project/Program Name
Virtual Programming

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
Midway Public Library has focused hard on offering different virtual programs on Zoom this year. One of the programs that we are now offering year-round is Creator's Club. We have a few regulars who attend and it a good chance to craft and chat together. Lego Club has been a very popular online offering and we plan on expanding on this program. In addition to the Summer Reading Club for kids and teens, we ran an Adult Summer Reading Club alongside it and it had a very good turnout. Patrons really seemed to enjoy the reading challenge aspect of it and quite a few people mentioned that this helped them get back into the swing of reading while others said that it pushed them to read outside of their comfort zone and read books they never would have thought to pick up otherwise. The children enjoyed their virtual Summer Reading Club meet up hosted by our Canada Summer Jobs student. The Kootenay Library Federation also ran book clubs for Teens and Adults which we have been more than happy to promote and encourage attendance for. We also offer help sourcing books for the local book clubs that meet in the area.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
Our goal is to continue offering programming within our budget that gives children and adults a chance to connect with each other, learn and practice new skills and encourage literacy.

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)	Virtual and take-home programming has allowed people to still access library services while staying home and also living far away. People who otherwise wouldn't have been able to attend, now can.
6. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	

7.	**Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Running these programs have allowed people to share ideas regarding creativity and has sparked interesting conversations around what people are reading. This has led to an increase of book recommendations to patrons in library and out of the library. We are placing more holds and putting more books in patron's hands than ever before and it is very obvious that our community wants to be informed with past and current events.
8.	**Enhancing Governance** of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	

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.

Having virtual and take-home programming running all year long, it gave the community opportunities for people to connect with others while at home during the pandemic. During the summer while we were experiencing the heat dome, evacuations and air quality advisories, people still had a way to stay connected and safe and have activities to help stay occupied and inside. This has led to increased literacy, a sense of self and belonging for attendees. The interest in information and knowledge is at a high through the assistance we offer to area book clubs and through the book clubs through the Kootenay Library Federation. It has also increased patron attendance in the library and more people have been willing to make the trip in to visit to find what they are looking for. In addition, it has helped us stay connected and improve our relationship with the community which is still one of our long-term goals.

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

Through Community Futures and the Kootenay Library Federation, we had funding to run our Summer Reading Club. We also partnered with Canada Summer Jobs through the federal government to have a student be our Summer Reading Club coordinator to help make the Summer Reading Club possible. The KLF also gives us access to Kootenay wide programming.

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)	We managed with our COVID-19 Safety Plan and underwent training to have the conversations with people who didn't want to comply with the Public Health Orders. We continued to offer online only programs because we live in an area with a low vaccination rate and people are struggling with the vaccine passports so offering in person isn't the right choice for our community.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	Thankfully, Midway Public Library was able to stay open during the forest fire season and the heat dome we experienced. Our internet was out for awhile when the fires went through the internet lines but we were able to remain open to the public so people could still access books, DVDs, printing services as well as up to date information on current events. We were also a touch point for our community during evacuations to help people access all the evacuation and evacuee information they needed. We also were here to help people sign up for the alert system apps on their devices. As challenging as the summer was, the sense of community and aide people were able to give each other was high.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	With the new policies in place for Midway Public Library involving safety for the staff, our operating budget has been pushed passed its limit. The last two years, Midway has not been able to run its regular fundraisers which in the past has helped with operating costs. We have also experienced reduced revenues with no sign of them increasing. Without proper fundraising, increased grant funding or revenue we have had to consistently do more with less and that is a huge challenge and ask of small rural library. We can't offer the same kind of book selection, programming or services that a larger library can even though our community has a need for it. We are at risk of closing due to lack of funds because we can't sustain a deficit budget. Increased provincial funding is incredibly important, especially to a rural library like us where we are one of the only essential services in the area. We are incredibly thankful for the online programming that the Kootenay Library Federation puts out and we do rely on that for our patrons at this stage.

Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	This year the library has experienced some staffing changes and has also struggled to find more permanent part time staff. Because we can only offer part time hours at a wage much lower than larger libraries it is hard to find employees. Cost of living is going up and our wages can't reflect that.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	The last year Midway has lost a fair amount of services. The skating arena was not able to open this year and the curling rink is at risk. Medical care isn't going to be the same in Midway moving forward. Midway's one Doctor's lease wasn't renewed and there is currently no replacement. Mental health services are increasingly hard to access. Midway is also facing the potential loss of its elementary school.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	Midway struggles with a lack of functional internet which has made access a lot of virtual programs and schooling harder. Internet is also incredibly expensive in our area which puts a strain on low income housing to stay connected to services that are only available online.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	Our facilities do need an accessibility assessment. We have heavy doors that aren't suited for those who struggle with mobility. We also don't have an elevator which makes accessing the basement harder for patrons who have a harder time with stairs.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	Midway Public Library serves a very large area and people come from 90 km or more away to access the library and its services. For those who don't have cars or access to one, it is a challenge to visit since there isn't any public transit available. Also, as mentioned above, it is really important that we are able to make our doors more accessible.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	Currently, it is a huge challenge to find lower cost housing for people below the poverty line or even housing at all. We are experiencing a huge housing crisis and a house that might have been affordable two years ago, it completely out of range now.
Other (please specify)	

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: *CBScott*　　　　　　Date: March 14, 2022

Board Chair Signature: *L. Anderson-Thibault*　　　Date: March 14/22