

2019  
**PROVINCIAL  
LIBRARIES  
GRANT REPORT**



# Introduction

The Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) is one of the largest public library systems in Canada. We serve a population of approximately 400,000 people spread over a diverse geographic area the size of Ireland. The ORL provides service through our 31 physical branch locations and an ever-growing provision of online services and partnerships. This includes some of the fastest growing urban areas of Canada, such as the cities in the Central Okanagan, as well as very rural and sparsely settled regions. The demographics of our population vary, but in general our citizens tend to be older than average as the ORL includes areas containing a large number of retirees. However, a vibrant and expanding economy particularly in the Central Okanagan as well as the continuing growth of UBCO, Okanagan College, Hi-tech firms and other services have drawn many younger people as well.

Each year, the ORL delivers millions of service transactions thru providing physical and online material, connecting people to the web, delivering programs and learning sessions, providing provision of community space, offering public tech equipment and training, and assisting with research and referral to other resources.

The ORL is a regional library governed by a 24-member board, entirely comprised of elected councillors and mayors of municipalities, directors of regional districts and First Nations. We have a staff of 265 people or approximately 115 FTE. Direct service points include 30 full service branches, one pocket unstaffed location within UBCO, 2 active book deposits run by volunteer organizations, as well as our website. The Library also has numerous local partnerships.

The increasing majority of our funding (over 92%) comes from local tax revenue. Provincial Government grants have been frozen for many years causing them to drop to about 5% of our funding from close to 25%. Provincial funding is particularly important in regional systems that

face significant additional costs in servicing rural and remote areas due to distance, geography, and lack of connectedness. It is more challenging, inefficient, and costly to service a widely spread population using many smaller points than the same size population gathered in one urban area. Our Board is constantly reviewing how the ORL distributes resources to assure local taxpayers that they are receiving at least the same amount back in local services to the tax money related to that area. Over the past 5 years approximately \$1 million of our annual funding has been reallocated mostly from rural branches and central operations primarily to fast growing urban areas. Provincial grants, which provide more per capita to rural areas than urban ones are critical to ensuring rural services do not need to be curtailed and it is hopeful that they can soon be increased annually to recognize these increased costs.

The ORL is well into the final term of its strategic plan for 2016-2019. Its vision statement lines up very closely to the provincial priorities

## VISION

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THE ORL PROVIDES  
FOR LEARNING,  
INNOVATION,  
CREATIVITY AND  
A CONNECTED  
COMMUNITY.

as do our 4 strategic directions & themes :

## **Our library advances learning, creativity, and imagination**

Our priority has always been on reading and learning, but technology is changing the way people learn. The library is evolving to reflect that.

## **Our library is an integral part of life in our diverse communities**

Our communities are diverse, but we are stronger together. This Direction is about listening to those in our communities and addressing their unique needs. It is about making ORL a library system that represents the best of working cooperatively combined with the best of providing flexible service responses.

## **Our library branches are innovative, inviting and reflect their communities**

Is the library a bit bland? Maybe. Does it need to be? No! We have the unique opportunity to refresh and reinvent in response to changing needs in our communities. Bring it on.

## **Our library is focused on customer service, staffed by learners confident in their abilities**

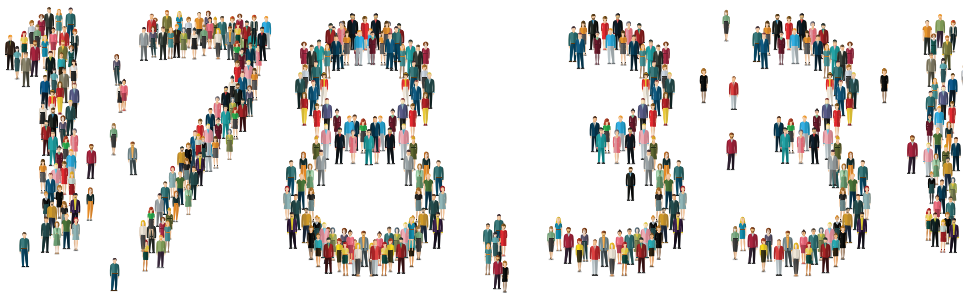
ORL staff care about their patrons – we see it every day. We need to make structural changes to enable staff to provide effective services that continue to make a difference in peoples lives.

## **Both the Okanagan Regional Library Vision and Themes mentioned above and the Provincial Priorities are closely aligned to:**

- Help communities be connected and have access to information and resources
- To increase our capacity in technology, innovation, and creativity
- To work together and build sustainable partnerships where possible
- To develop in such a way that we are sustainable and well-governed

The 2019 key measurement statistics show the use of the ORL as compared to the same measurements two years previously. They reveal that the ORL continues to connect and grow in use within our communities. They also show some continuing trends, including:

- Significant Programming and in-person attendance - 8% increase in attendance at programs and meeting spaces, a 44% increase in ORL programs, and 3% increase of people in our doors
- The continuing trend toward the use of electronic and digital services including 10% increase in hours spent learning new languages with Rosetta Stone, 56% increase in ORL e-book and e-audiobook checkouts, 14% increase in skill learning hours through Lynda.com, and 11% increase in logins to ORL wifi.



Patrons attended  
ORL programs and used  
Library meeting spaces

8% increase since 2017

649,679

ORL eBooks &  
eAudio Checkouts



56%

INCREASE  
SINCE  
2017

1164

Hours spent  
learning new  
languages through  
Rosetta Stone

10%

INCREASE SINCE 2017



1,327,579

Number of times patrons logged on  
to use wifi

11%

INCREASE  
SINCE  
2017



1,644,273

Patrons walked through  
our doors

3%

INCREASE  
SINCE  
2017



434,274

PressReader  
Articles  
Read

-26%

DECREASE SINCE 2017

DECREASE DUE TO  
DISCONTINUATION OF  
POPULAR NEWSPAPERS

Active cardholders in 2019

1% INCREASE  
SINCE 2017



106,950

# 355

Public use computers  
system wide

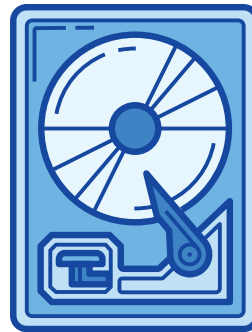
26% INCREASE SINCE 2017



# 2,409,939

Patrons visited our website

7% INCREASE SINCE 2017



# 59 TB

Terabytes of wireless  
data traffic



# 7,660

ORL programs ran in 2019,  
44% INCREASE SINCE 2017



# 2,689,749

Physical books, magazines and  
other materials borrowed  
6% DECREASE SINCE 2017

# 3,864

Adults attended  
programs

8% INCREASE SINCE 2017



# 2,505

Hours spent learning new  
skills though Lynda.com

14% INCREASE SINCE 2017



# How did we help our communities be connected and have access to information and resources?

That is our principal reason for everything we do. But some specific items from 2019 deserve mentioning

WE CONTINUED TO INCREASE PROGRAMMING THROUGHOUT OUR BRANCHES. OUR BRANCHES ARE VERY BUSY AND ACTIVE PLACES.

## Significant programs include

Summer reading club continued to work to maintain literacy skills during the summer period. Total registration was 6006, an increase of 5% over 2018. SRC programs offered increased 15% to a total of 285, and total attendance at those programs increased 4% from 2018 to 13,181 children



Steam programming continued to build as more staff became trained and more shared system-wide resources were purchased. Most branches were able to offer at least some technology-related programs.



American Sign Language programs were also offered at several branches in partnership with other organizations



Adult programming continued to evolve, including things like book clubs, language learning groups, games groups, technology training sessions, and local interest speakers covering a wide range of topics. Kelowna branch also once again hosted citizenship ceremony sessions for new Canadians.



# WE CONTINUED TO WORK ON INNOVATION, INSPIRATION, AND CREATIVITY

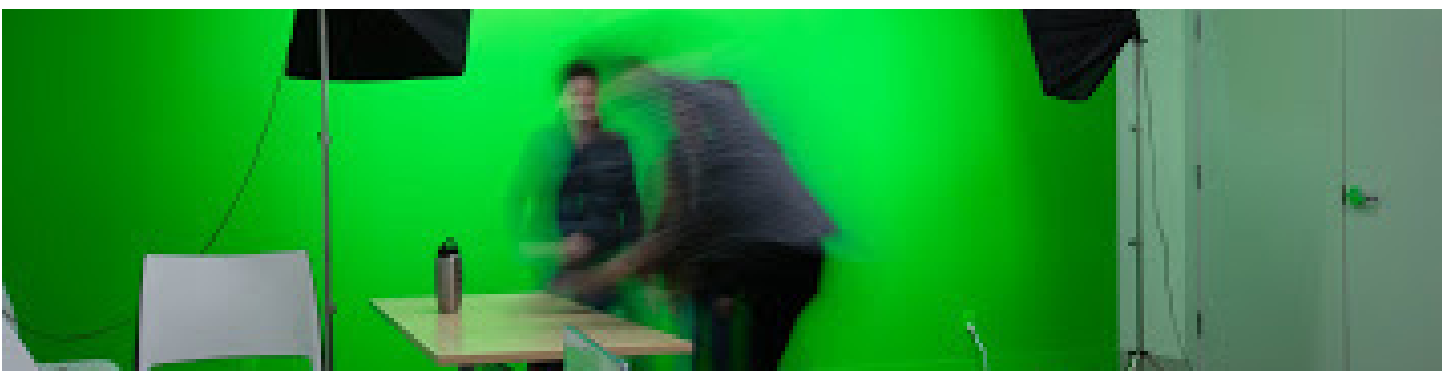
## INCREASED FOCUS ON DIGITAL LEARNING

In 2019 we started to introduce digital learning centers in some of our branches. In February, on the lands of Westbank First Nation, we opened the Westside Learning lab. This branch includes an audio recording booth and technology, video recording equipment, technology to convert old formats to digital, a multipurpose teaching room, a laptop teaching lab, and other digital equipment. This was followed in July by a digital learning space in the Kelowna branch with some of the same sorts of equipment and staffing, and in October by a digital training space in Golden Library. Much of the equipment was provided through donations from corporate and public sponsors, and other partners.



## TRAIN AND HIRE TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANTS

We also continued to train and hire technology assistants in several locations whose training and primary work focused on assistance with digital teaching and learning. We are also working with regular library staff to train and develop familiarity with new technology and opportunities.



## UPGRADE OUR NETWORK AND BANDWIDTH

We continued to upgrade our network and bandwidth so that we are responsive and current. In several of our communities, we are the main public internet service and have been a catalyst to new connectivity for the Community being brought in.

We added a significant number of additional public use computers to a total of about 355 (26% above 2017). Along with our increased bandwidth and wifi, citizens and visitors in all of our communities have access to the full range of resources available on the web. And from the number of logins, hours of wifi use, and terabytes of wireless traffic, we can see it is increasingly well used.

This continues to help level the playing field for all members of the Community.

## WE CONTINUE TO TRY TO REACH ALL SEGMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

Championed by one of our librarians with a special passion and background in this, we developed an online list of “diversability” resources for children and teens with special challenges. This also included a list of service providers. These ideas and lists have been picked up by communities right across Canada, as this is something that fills a needed vacuum for people dealing with these things.

We also were able to host a diversability staff training program, which had over 75 attendees. This allowed for library workers from our system to get some additional training and networking to help deliver better support to their communities.

We continue to run all of our library staff through training in safety and particularly in dealing with the homeless and disadvantaged segments of our society. This has helped to keep our branches safe while at the same time ensuring inclusiveness for people of all backgrounds and socioeconomic status.

We also hosted the first provincial CATS conference with Kootenay Library Federation with about 80 attendees from around the province and Alberta covering a variety of youth services programs.

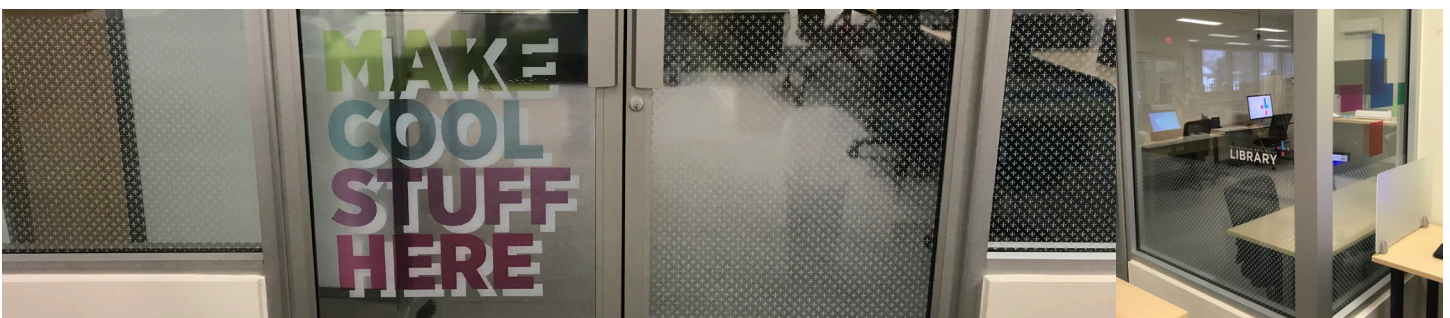


We held a special training session for Board and senior staff on inclusion and diversity.

We continued to try to build sustainable partnerships with other organizations. This is a gradual process, but we work with literacy groups to help support literacy training, Okanagan College for some training spaces, and other groups. UBCO also has a librarian located in our downtown Kelowna Library to provide service while we have a pickup branch offering our resources within the UBCO library at the Kelowna campus. We also work with local schools and homeschoolers to partner in education.



As previously mentioned we were able to partner with Columbia Basin Trust to renovate the Golden Library and purchase equipment for the new technology lab in Golden. This has greatly increased the opportunities for connectivity and training in the Golden Community. Although it opened in late fall, it is already seeing a number of training sessions and users. The Columbia Basin Trust will also be partnering with us in 2020 to complete renovations and purchase equipment for a similar learning lab in Revelstoke.



**In each of our communities, the Library staff are working to connect to the needs of that particular Community. Depending upon the needs, they will offer space or develop a program to try to meet those needs or connect people to those resources.**

# SUMMARY

Starting in January 2020, the ORL Board is developing our new Strategic Plan, which we hope to have accepted by the Board by summer 2020. This new plan will continue to build on the work of the current strategic plan.

In a system as large and diverse as the ORL, initiatives are constantly happening in each area of service. Each year we renovate or build new spaces, begin new partnerships and programs, adapt with new or expanded technology, hire more knowledgeable and specially trained staff, and allow our citizens to connect to more materials and resources. Through being a regional service, we share resources, ideas, and staff so that we can do more with less than would otherwise be required. While we applaud the achievements of 2019, we look forward to new and exciting things that will build off this foundation in the years to follow.





## SERVING 31 COMMUNITIES:

Armstrong  
Cherryville  
Enderby  
Falkland  
Golden  
Hedley  
Kaleden

Kelowna  
Keremeos  
Lake Country  
Lumby  
Mission  
Naramata  
North Shuswap

Okanagan Falls  
Oliver  
Osoyoos  
Oyama  
Peachland  
Princeton  
Revelstoke

Rutland  
Salmon Arm  
Sicamous  
Silver Creek  
South Shuswap  
Summerland  
UBC-O

Vernon  
Westbank  
Westside Learning Lab



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