



2019 PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Burnaby Public Library empowers the community to engage with and share stories, ideas and information. Our dream is a welcoming community where all people can explore, learn and connect. Our four library branches offer books, magazines, DVDs, audiobooks and other materials in a dozen different languages, including innovative collections such as My First Language Kits, which provide families with materials and information to support home language development and cultural identity in the early years. Through our website, Burnaby residents can download free e-books and audiobooks, stream independent films and music, and access online magazines and newspapers.

Our innovative programming for children, teens and adults provides opportunities for more people in our community to interact with ideas and with each other, and seeks to excite and engage people's curiosity and imagination. We offer in-person programs at all four of our branches, including storytimes for babies, toddlers and families, Man in the Moon for male caregivers, and bilingual ASL storytimes. The Library is a gateway to literacy and online learning, and we provide opportunities for learning in-person through classes and individual help, and online through databases that help people learn a language or develop software, business and creative skills.

BPL's branches are important public spaces, meeting places and centres for discovery and dialogue. We provide access to computers and Wi-Fi, and our expert staff help people access the information that they need for work and study, and to navigate essential services online. Library staff work outside our branches too. The Home Library and Accessible Service Department provides personalized service and an exclusive collection of library materials to patrons who are unable to come to our branches due to health reasons or a physical disability; we visit private residences, care facilities, assisted living spaces and other institutions, and through services such as NNELS offer materials in alternative formats to clients who are print-disabled. BPL offers services to newcomers to Burnaby through partnerships with immigrant service organizations, and through our Library Champions program, which trains community members to connect newcomers with library programs and services. And our pop-up libraries, outreach van and Burnaby Public Library enable staff to reach community members at neighbourhood events, schools, farmers' markets and other community gathering spaces.

In 2019, 1.8 million people visited Burnaby Public Library branches. We know from the public, via conversations and via our comment card program, about the importance of the library as a place of solace and of refuge – as the city becomes more densified and private space shrinks, people are finding the space and community connection that they need at the public library.

In 2019:

- Patrons borrowed more than 3 million items;
- we signed up 23,000 new library members;
- we answered 97,000 reference questions
- to attend a program – we delivered 1300 programs to 40,000 people.

Guided by a board of citizen volunteers appointed by City Council, the Library is an integral part of the services offered to Burnaby residents. These dedicated board members work to ensure that the Library supports the City's goals and contributes to making Burnaby an outstanding place to live, learn, work, invest and play.

About Burnaby

Burnaby is the third most populated urban centre in British Columbia with more than 233,000 residents. It is a diverse community within a rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Burnaby of today is characterized by high density residential areas and major commercial town centres blended with an abundance of parks and dedicated green space, rapid transit, high technology research and business parks, comprehensive industrial estates and major post-secondary institutions.

Burnaby's population is growing:

- The population increased by 4.3% from 2011 to 2016 (232,755), and the *Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy* projects that Burnaby's population will reach 277,700 in 2021 and 345,000 in 2041;
- From 2011 to 2016, Burnaby's senior population grew by 19%;
- Burnaby's Indigenous population grew by 27% in the same time-period.

More Burnaby residents are immigrants than are non-immigrants:

- In 2016, just over 50% of Burnaby residents were immigrants;
- 14.1% of Burnaby's population immigrated to Canada during the previous 10 years;
- A majority of Burnaby residents (56.4%) have a mother tongue other than English, and 34.6% most often spoke a language other than English or French at home.

While Burnaby's diversity and the variety of languages spoken in Burnaby is one of this city's greatest assets, it does pose a significant challenge for the library – in terms of collections, programming and staffing. BPL is fortunate to be a member of Public Library InterLINK and reciprocal borrowing helps BPL address some of the demand for materials in languages other than English. BPL's participation in the NewtoBC initiative, funded initially by the Province of BC through Welcome BC and now by the federal government, has also greatly contributed to BPL's ability to serve people who speak and read in languages other than English. The Library

Champions project has been particularly important to BPL's ability to connect with community members, and the Library Champions themselves have been powerful advocates. In addition, BPL works closely with settlement-serving agencies in Burnaby and other community partners to provide programming in several languages, including Chinese and Korean. The library actively seeks people with proficiency in languages in addition to English when recruiting new staff.

Strategic Plan

The BPL Strategic Plan 2019-2022 launched in January 2019. In developing the plan, the Library Board heard from:

- 509 people who completed our online survey
- more than 400 people in our four branches
- 782 community members in conversation with staff and board at community gathering spots and on the street
- 12 community leaders in one-on-one conversations
- 166 library staff in small group meetings

The 2019-2022 BPL Strategic Plan looks outward to our community and inward to our capacity to develop services that support our community's needs. The Board outlined four main priorities:

Connect with Community

- Discover and understand our communities' needs and aspirations
- Identify and remove barriers to library services
- Act as a hub, connecting people to each other
- Recognize and celebrate Burnaby's diverse communities

Encourage curiosity and exploration

- Inspire learning and critical thinking
- Cultivate imagination, creativity and play
- Support skill development and digital knowledge
- Enable creation and sharing

Create welcoming and innovative spaces

- Build a new Cameron branch
- Reimagine existing spaces
- Activate new spaces
- Enhance virtual spaces

Invigorate people and culture

- Support staff to reach their full potential
- Deepen our learning and integration of the principles of Truth and Reconciliation
- Transform our work processes and systems
- Strengthen our partnerships
- Promote our services

ADDRESSING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Provincial funding has helped Burnaby Public Library to address our community's priorities, in line with the four strategic priorities identified in *Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities*.

Improving access

BPL's Home Library & Accessible Service offers delivery of materials to residents in their home homes and in group facilities. In 2019, HLAS staff worked with City of Burnaby staff and a BCIT intern to develop a map of all facilities visited. This has enabled staff to more effectively plan delivery routes to maximize time spent with patrons. HLAS staff are also offering technical support to patrons at home in addition to traditional readers' advisory services. In 2019, BPL also purchased a new HLAS van to ensure that the service continues to operate efficiently. Patrons can also access HLAS in person, but this service is currently limited to office hours in the Metrotown branch. HLAS staff are working to train staff in all locations to provide information about the service and to sign patrons up for the service from any location, during all open hours.

BPL doubled its annual spending on e-books and downloadable audiobooks in 2019, purchasing additional copies of popular titles to shorten hold queues and increasing unique titles in the collection. Patrons looking for e-books and downloadable audiobooks will see more titles in all genres, but especially teen manga, romance and science fiction. They'll also find a selection of new cookbooks, knitting books and poetry – three subjects that were previously underrepresented in e-book format.

BPL has maintained an internal language bank for many years, which identified languages other than English spoken by staff. These language skills, though accessible to staff, have until now been invisible to patrons. This summer, Graphics Technician Tina Artuso updated staff badges for staff who want indicate that they speak another language. Staff have already reported having more conversations in languages other than English with patrons in the library and out in the community. Some examples below:

မြန်မာစကားပြောဆို့

¡Hablo español! | 我会说普通话!

Ek praat Afrikaans

나는 한국말을 합니다

私は日本語が話せます

سوء اتلوب ودراسىم

ਮੈਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲਦਾ ਹਾਂ

मैं हिंदी बोलते हैं

Dobar dan, kako ste?

Developing skills

BPL significantly expanded digital literacy programs in 2019, offering both traditional software-based programs, and more innovative exploratory programs. BPL is supporting curriculum changes by including coding and other technology programs for kids and teens. BPL has invested in spheros, osmos, makey-makeys, lil bits and virtual reality headsets. Staff are offering drop-in programs to try this technology out, and also taking the technology into the community through visits and programs. Community Librarians visited an art studio run by the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) for artists of all abilities. Since the group was interested in incorporating technology into their artwork, staff also brought Spheros to experiment with. The artists dipped the Spheros into different colours of paint and drove them around a canvas to create paintings. Studio staff were excited that the activity held the interest and attention of some of the artists who usually have a hard time engaging with activities. The group expressed how much they enjoyed the experience and worked together to create two pieces of art to display in their studio. BPL is starting to lend this technology to patrons and will officially launch the Curiosity Collection in 2020.

Collaborating on shared goals

BPL added a new community librarian position in 2019, which enabled us to dramatically increase the number of organizations and community members we connect with. In 2019, we connected with 14,295 community members through 618 outreach visits.

Recently, Burnaby opened a permanent emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness. Community Librarians began working with staff at the shelter to provide books for the guests using the space. They also visited the shelter and spoke with many of the guests while signing them up for library cards. One guest commented that he was very excited to get a card because though he has been going to the library for years, he has never been able to get a card because of permanent address issues. Many of the guests also expressed that they would like to use computers for things like learning new skills, resumes and contacting friends and family. Through conversations it became apparent that one of the main barriers to library service was the need to use public transportation and the associated cost to access the closest branch. In response to these needs, library staff planned visits to provide guests with access to laptops and technology help.

Teen librarians worked to establish a community collection at the Youth Custody Centre in Burnaby. Youth sometimes spend only one night in custody, and most of them return to communities outside of Burnaby. Books are labelled “this book can be returned to any public library in BC” in the hope that youth will make a connection with their local public library when they return to their home town. We continue to look for opportunities to build connections with youth and staff at the custody centre.

As part of a partnership with Fraser Health that started with raising staff awareness about addiction and overdose response, the Metrotown branch offered a workshop for the public about the overdose crisis. Participants got a chance to learn how to recognize the signs of an overdose and practice how to respond. There were also some free naloxone kits available for patrons to take away.

Enhancing governance

Almost 100 BPL staff and board participated in KAIROS blanket exercises to increase our shared understanding of Indigenous experiences and of Truth & Reconciliation. BPL offered programming and established an Indigenous awareness working group. The library is also working closely with the City of Burnaby as it strives to build government to government relationships with local First Nations.

SUMMARY

Burnaby Public Library is excited to continue work on the ambitious goals in our new 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and our dream of a welcoming community where all people can explore, learn and connect. The BPL Board and staff are determined to build on our successes in serving the needs of our dynamic and diverse community.

Burnaby Public Library would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Education and the Minister for the financial support we received from the province of British Columbia in 2019.