2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Pender Island Public Library Association

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
- ☐ 2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS
- ☐ 3. KEY CHALLENGES
- ☐ 4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

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 Pender Island Public Library Association (PIPL) and associated reading centers are situated in the beautiful island archipelago of the Salish Sea in southwestern coastal BC. The greatest change our Southern Gulf Island (SGI) electoral area experienced in 2021 was an average 32% increase in population levels since 2016 (Census Canada 2021). The SGI electoral area now has a population of 5,938 distributed over 5 major islands, covering 180 sq. km. of land. Pender Island is the largest in our area, with the highest concentration of 2,773 residents, followed by Mayne, Galiano, Saturna and Piers Islands in decreasing population. The PIPLA delivers and supports library services on each island, in conjunction with reading centers operated by registered societies.

Our dispersed region is located between BC's two major city centers, Vancouver and Victoria, and local population and activities in our region are greatly influenced by seasonal visitation from these urban centers. Our region is typical of tourism areas, combining a smaller number of full-time residents with a doubling of population numbers during summer months due to an influx of part-time residents and visitors. For a public library, fluctuating visitation levels presents a challenge of meeting the needs of two main types of patrons, locals and visitors, and adjusting to seasonal periods of high and low library usage. For example, locals expect regular library hours, updated physical and digital collections, and community-based programming. Visitors might expect access to high speed internet connectivity and public computer workstations, and borrowing materials with their home library card (BC One Card program).

The demographics of our area encompass an older population of mainly retired and semi-retired people. The median age is 62.6 years (the most popular age), compared to the BC median age of 45.5 years (Census Canada 2016). Most households (>85%) in our region are one or two-person in size, and

this is reflected in a low number of families with young children: about 375 youth (0-18 yrs. old) live in our electoral area. Our library programs, services, online resources, and facility design generally match the demographics of the local population. Of note, working people in our region earn a lower median income, 25% less than the provincial average, primarily due to seasonal tourism and service-based employment. The primary language spoken in our region is English, with 10% of residents also speaking French. Only 2.5% of our residents indicate an Aboriginal identity, and 3% of residents identify themselves as a visible minority. During 2021, we experienced a second year of unusually high influx of new residents moving from urban centres, with an ave. 30% increase in housing values. With continued population growth expected, PIPL and associated reading centres are preparing for increased usage.

This past year, PIPL pursued many goals laid out in our Strategic Plan (2019-2023), with the addition of new goals related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main priorities that were focused on in 2021 included expanding occupational health & safety documentation and procedures, succession planning through additional staffing, refining our financial management, increasing digital library services, and upgrading the library grounds.

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
Pender Island Community Seed Library
Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
The Community Seed Library program is a collaborative outreach initiative that aims to educate the local community in the areas of food security and local food production. To reach these lofty goals, our program is simple in design: provide free seeds to the community and promote materials that encourage local food sustainability through abundance, education, and participation. This program was made possible through a partnership between the Pender Island Public Library (PIPL) and the Gulf Islands Food Co-op, a non-profit group that connects food production on several Southern Gulf Islands, BC (Pender, Mayne, Saturna and Galiano). Launched in February 2021, the Community Seed Library outreach program is permanently housed inside the Pender Island Public Library. PIPL has long supported the community in food production by providing an abundance of reading materials on gardening for home and market gardens. Our collection holds over 500 physical books/magazines on gardening including saving seeds, planting tips, greenhouses, soil management, deer resistant garden design, composting, and more. We went further in 2021 by launching the seed distribution program, providing the physical space, equipment, signage, promotional materials, and library staff training and support to assist users. Our partner, the Gulf Islands Food Coop, provides free seed material in labelled packets, which varies by season and growing conditions.

The Community Seed Library cupboard offers packets of free vegetable, herb, fruit, and flower seeds to encourage local residents to start or enhance their home gardens, while learning food growing skills. Amateur and experienced gardeners are encouraged to grow an abundance of vegetables, fruit, and native flowers in their gardens, with growing tips provided. Special projects focus on welcoming families with young children to participate and develop both knowledge and enjoyment of growing food. Participants are further educated on how to save seeds from their garden bounty, and encouraged to donate labelled seed packages in drop-off bins in the library.

Registration in the Community Seed Library program is voluntary but encouraged, as registrants receive emails with updates on educational courses, speaker series, local food production information, and Gulf Islands Food Co-op news. Our program is part of Gulf Islands Food Co-op activities which include welcoming Indigenous producers from the Coast Salish traditional territories and following key priorities of the Southern Gulf Islands Food & Agriculture Strategy. PIPL is supporting the Co-op's mission to facilitate inter-island cooperation in our region and create new resources and practical supports for our amazing Southern Gulf Islands food producers, valued eaters, and local food sustainability.

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

The Seed Library program directly supports several goals in PIPL's Strategic Plan (2019-2023) under Strategic Priority 4: Community Connections. With this newly developed and launched program in 2021, PIPL met the goals of ongoing evaluation of programming for youth and adults for opportunities, identifying community groups for collaboration on projects, and connecting with select community groups for collaboration and launch of projects.

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)	With funding from the provincial Library Technology grants in 2020, PIPL improved the stability and dependability of our internet service through new equipment and upgrades. Participants in our new Community Seed Library Program can now access online information related to local food production through the library's public computer terminals and improved Wi-Fi signal speed, range, and multiple user capacity (24/7).
2. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	We built capacity in our front line staff by supporting the delivery of the new Community Seed Library program. Staff received training in several areas and are able to provide dependable service delivery when assisting program participants, providing research and educational materials, Staff also gained personal growth, learning, and showed enthusiasm for positive endeavours such as this program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.	**Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	The Community Seed Library program advanced citizen engagement by promoting our library as a space to provide access to government resources and tools. Our local food producers could use our library's public computers and wireless internet to access crucial and timely information during the global pandemic in 2021, including the BC Ministry of Health - Regional Health Authorities (Temporary food permits and markets), BC Centre for Disease Control (Farmers Markets guidelines), BC Ministry of Agriculture (Direct farm marketing and agri-tourism), as well as local Farmer's and Women's Institutes.
4.	**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.

Short term Outcomes
Participants in the Community Seed Library program will have the opportunity to immediately access information and seed materials directly from our public library, facilitating their start-up or expansion in home food production. The program offers a gateway to learning about simple food production in home gardens with free planting materials.

Intermediate Outcomes

Participants will gain greater skills to produce additional food items from home and market gardens, and become informed on food security issues. Participants will become both users and donors of seed materials to the Community Seed Library program, and the program will grow in number of users and plant inventory. As well, participants may become members in our partner organization, the Gulf Islands Food Coop, and participate in activities that promote food sustainability in our region.

Long term Outcomes/Impact

Over time, participants in our Community Seed Library program will become experienced food producers and may market abundant crops to other members of the local community. Participants will become well informed advocates of food sustainability actions, seek funding/support for broader food security initiatives, and may influence other local organizations and local government policy.

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

Yes, PIPL partnered with the Gulf Islands Food Co-operative, who was fundamental in providing both ideology and materials for the Community Seed Library program. The Co-op's role is to provide in-kind educational outreach activities, a varied supply of free seed materials (identified and packaged), and to welcome program participants as members to their organization, as appropriate.

[Copy and insert additional tables below for each additional project/program as needed]

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)	The most significant impact in 2021 continued to be the COVID-19 pandemic and safety protocols, with repeated changes in workplace safety policies/plans and procedures. A high level of uncertainty was present in operational planning as successive waves of restrictions were imposed or lifted, causing a strain on staff and Board Trustees. As compared to 2019, library opening hours to the public continued to be restricted (25% reduction), visitation and new memberships continued to be reduced, and no in-person programming was offered. Additional library funding was reallocated to digital collections. To address these issues, PIPL moved very slowly in implementing operational changes and maintained steady, although reduced, library services to provide patrons and visitors with a consistent library experience. For programming, promotions were made using social media and the library website to connect our patrons with online programs offered by other libraries and organizations. Our Tech Tutor service resumed in 2021, assisting patrons with gaining access to the digital collection, as well as basic technology questions and resources. We were fortunate to receive additional funding for staffing in 2021 from the Capital Regional District (see details below).
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	

Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	In 2021, our proposal for additional funding for staffing was generously granted by our elected Director at the Capital Regional District. Although a small increase was received, this funding resulted in hiring of two part-time Library Assistants/Clerks to provide circulation desk services. The addition of new staff was a great bonus to existing staff for delegation of tasks, for implementing COVID-19 protocols, and for providing excellent and consistent customer service to new and regular patrons.
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)	
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	The lack of public transit on our rural island impacts community members who must travel by private vehicle to our library facility. This especially impacts lower income families and seniors, residents without vehicles, and people with special needs. The lack of safe, designated cycling paths or pedestrian trails to our library further enforces the use of personal vehicles. In 2021, our Library Director participated in a Southern Gulf Islands Transportation Integration project, providing feedback for an important initiative of seeking CRD funding for community buses (public transit), active transportation networks (for walking, cycling and rolling), and integrated opportunities for additional inter-island travel. Our library may participate in further activities on transportation prior to a referendum in October 2022.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	

Other (please specify)	Our rural islands have long suffered from the lack of an affordable and available housing market to meet a variety of housing needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a surge in new buyers, coupled with an average 30% increase in housing values, has pushed our housing needs to a crisis level. This directly impacts PIPL staffing levels due to loss of affordable housing for staff, especially for younger working families and under-employed residents. It also impacts library use as our facility becomes a daily refuge for those with unsecure, transient, or illegal accommodations. The Library Director will continue provide feedback to various levels of government and community groups considering new housing initiatives, which may include broad changes to community-use plans and land-use designations.
Housing	

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _C. Olenkevich_ Date: _March. 10/2022_

Board Chair Signature: _Jame U_ Date: _March 10, 2022_