



## **PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT 2020**

### **OVERVIEW**

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 (70kms). 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 and gas. There is a large population of retired and elderly people within the communities. 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, dentist 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. 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 Co-vid restrictions we are currently not able to offer in-person programming but continue to offer book clubs and access to other programs remotely.

**Midway Public Library's strategic plan goals are:**

- 1) Community Service: to engage and support community members**
- 2) Community Partners: to engage in opportunities to develop strong relationships with others from our community organizations, local government, and the local business community to make our community stronger, including those from Area 'E'.**
- 3) Sustainability: to advocate for more secure operational funding.**
- 4) Facility: to make existing facilities more accessible and functional.**

**BC's Strategic Goals for Library Services**

**PRIORITY 1 - IMPROVING ACCESS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIANS**

During 2020 patrons have been able to access online services such as e-books, audiobooks and databases. The library staff continued to help community members print, copy and scan documents. Wi-Fi has been provided throughout the pandemic 24 hours per day. It has been improved on the patron computers and in the library to run more efficiently. At the end of 2020, issues with the patron computers and wi-fi had been resolved and patron computers were again available and reliable to use.

Staff supported local book clubs to continue running throughout the pandemic by bringing books in through Interlibrary Loans and offering use of online platform for meeting (Zoom). The library website is in the process of being updated to increase ease of access. Handouts were created to give to patrons including step by step directions on how to make online holds. Those patrons who are challenged by technology and/or do not have internet access were supported by staff in placing holds, often with staff placing holds for them. A paper list of New Items in the library to help patrons choose while library was closed to browsing. Staff continued to provide daily help to patrons in finding library materials that they wanted to borrow as well as with accessing technology.

Midway Public Library is in the process of setting up a computer lab for patron desks and desks have been put into place where patrons can use their own devices or the library computers as needed.

**PRIORITY 2 – BUILDING CAPACITY**

Midway Public Library staff and board work to maintain and develop positive relationships with community partners. Advertising within the various communities about library services was expanded. There has been an increased partnership with Regional District of Kootenay Boundary in order to continue providing quality library services to Area E residents. When possible, meeting space has been provided to local training groups to help community members in building their skills and capacity. Staff are available for exam invigilation as needed by community members.

### PRIORITY 3 – ENHANCING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Midway Public Library acts as a community information sharing location with a community bulletin board and local events posted regularly. Library space is made available when possible to help promote community connections, reduce social isolation and develop skills. In 2020, quilting groups, book clubs and medical groups used the library as a hub for meeting.

### PRIORITY 4 - ENHANCING GOVERNANCE

Midway Public Library continues to work towards the 2019-2023 strategic plan by maintaining connections and communication with local funding partners such as the Regional District of the Kootenay Boundary (RDKB), the Village of Midway and the Libraries Branch. Regular communication with the Association of Public Libraries Directors (ABCPLD), Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) and other library partners has helped in developing staff and board member skills.

### ADDITIONAL REPORTING FOR 2020

#### TECHNOLOGY GRANT – FINAL REPORT

Due to staffing changes and COVID 19 related disruptions in 2020, Midway Public Library is in the beginning stages of upgrading and increasing connectivity within the Library and for patrons. We have engaged with the Provincial Technology Consultant for support in determining how best to improve library connectivity to patrons. A technology assessment is currently in progress to help determine what is needed and how best to meet the needs to community and library. This process has been slow due to COVID 19 and aims to be completed in early 2021.

A computer was bought for patron use and the patron Wi-Fi and computer access was fixed. There are now patron computers and in-library Wi-Fi use for patrons. The community is able to access Wi-Fi outside of the library 24 hours per day. In 2021 we plan to continue to increase the number of public computers on site and add lendable devices to our collection.

We have been working to improve and update the library website. Our hope for 2021 is to update the entire website ensuring that accurate and current information about Midway Public Library can be found online. Additionally we plan to provide guides to how to access the diverse plethora of online services available to patrons.

We are in process of turning our board room into a more useable teaching space with a TV and laptop allowing staff to help patrons in learning how to use technology. This set-up will also allow for socially distanced programming and meetings to take place.

Our hope is that the technology assessment which is scheduled to be completed in early 2021 will help our Library to determine how best to upgrade our outdated technology and infrastructure to better meet staff, patron and community needs. From this assessment we will determine how the Technology Grant will be best utilized hopefully including infrastructure, hardware and overall technology upgrades.

## COVID 19 AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

2020 was a particularly challenging time for Midway Public Library. The COVID 19 pandemic and a change in library director in early November resulted in multiple challenges to the library and community as a whole.

The COVID 19 pandemic resulted in library closure between March 18 to June 8, 2020. The library re-opened for take-out pick-up library services on June 8, 2020 greeted with much enthusiasm by avid library patrons. Staff continued to provide loanable library materials to patrons as well as support, both by phone and in-person, with how to make holds and access the online library materials. Many patrons come in regularly to say hello to staff and have a social outing. Regardless of the adaptation to take-out style service, community members continue to access the library as a social hub and connection to the community.

Though in-person programming has been a challenge due to COVID 19 restrictions, library staff continued to support local groups such as the knitting group and various book clubs to use library outdoor space and access library materials to support the meetings. This has been increasingly challenging as restrictions on gatherings increase and our patrons are reluctant to use online forums due to limited knowledge and/or comfort with technology combined with spotty internet connections around the area.

COVID 19 social distancing requirements have led to challenges with our library space and the need to rearrange and restructure how the space is laid out for staff as well as in the public space. Additionally, the increased protocols for cleaning and disinfecting have led to increased staff hours as it is difficult to ensure we are up to date on COVID 19 related information and following these protocols effectively within the typically allotted hours. Figuring out how to provide the highest level of services to the public within the confines of the Public Health Orders and COVID 19 restrictions has been a primary challenge to staff. Closure of our public bathrooms was a difficult decision to make and added to the community struggles in accessing local services. We have been eager to re-open to the public for browsing and to offer services such as groups to patrons but have struggled to have enough staff time and resources to do this in the time period we had hoped.

## SUMMARY

2020 was a particularly challenging year with the COVID 19 pandemic causing the closure of our library in mid-March. Though there have been many challenges staff remained committed to providing the highest level of services available with limited staff time and resources. Patrons continued to access online and physical materials and appreciate the social connection of talking to library staff when they come in to pick up their items. Our hope is that 2021 will see the completion of technology upgrades within our library as well as programming and services to meet the “new normal” within the pandemic.



612 6<sup>th</sup> Ave

250-449-2620

Midway BC V0H 1M0

[midwaypubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:midwaypubliclibrary@gmail.com)

### 2020 Library Technology Grant – Interim planning Report

The Midway Public Library has worked on a plan to improve connectivity for the public, as well as improve access the public has to new technologies. In our area of the Boundary, there is a great need for reliable wifi connection and support to help get you connected with your device or one of ours. We have improved already our wifi access and routers and also made our wifi available to the public 24/7. Another part of our overall plan is to purchase 4 -7 e-readers over this next fall/winter season, and to improve our e-book collection licensing as part of our collection development plan. We will also improve and increase the number of computers available to the public, from one at this time with 4 -6 being our goal, we will also improve the printers for the public. The Libraries other goals are an improved website with the ability to showcase more of what we have to offer to the public in a way that is easy for the patrons to use and access. We want to improve the patron's ability to renew or to get a membership, renew books, book computer time, with possible links or access to online courses. The outcomes that we see for our patrons are reduced barriers to digital inclusion. Improved connectivity helps reduce barriers to digital inclusion and equality for those patrons who rely on the library for internet access and more. We would like to say in conclusion that this grant is very much appreciated, it will be one of the biggest catalyst for change at the Midway Public Library in the last 10 years. We thank you for the opportunity.

Chris Condon – Director

Lynda A-T – Board Chair

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: [MIDWAY PUBLIC LIBRARY]

Total Technology Grant Amount: [\$6400.00]

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Patron loanable devices: e-readers  New e-readers to support readers of e-books.	Loanable devices help reduce barriers to digital inclusion and equity for patron who rely on the library for access to computers and the internet	Increased use of e-books  Loan each e-reader 2times per quarter	Accessible, loanable devices support the provincial strategic priority to improve access for British Columbians.			Fall 2020			