

**PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT (PLGR)
2019
MCBRIDE & DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY**



The Provincial Public Library Grants Report (PLGR) provides an opportunity for libraries to showcase their achievements and use of provincial funding. This report must include specific information demonstrating the value, impact and outcomes of your library's programs and services and how they help meet the current provincial strategic plan, Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities (2016) and key initiatives.

For more information on reporting requirements, please review the [PLGR instructions available through the Libraries Branch website](#).

INTRODUCTION

The McBride & District Public Library serves 1650 people in the Robson Valley, a region nestled between the Rocky and Cariboo mountain ranges in North-Central British Columbia. Most residents are involved in forestry, farming, public service, and the service industry. Outdoor recreation opportunities are abundant and developing, and our arts community is vibrant.

We continue to face a number of challenges common for rural areas, including:

- a small population and the resulting impact on business, school class size, and volunteer services;
- distance from essential services coupled with a lack of public transportation;
- lack of seniors' long-term care and affordable housing;
- challenges for rural education based on the current funding model;
- a decline in the tourist industry last summer due to a very rainy summer;
- lack of tourism infrastructure and services; and
- lack of reliable, affordable Internet access.

Despite our challenges, new residents continue to settle in the Valley because of its affordable housing and the rural lifestyle.

In 2019, a number of positive initiatives took place with the help of volunteers and our community partners including:

- Our library's move to its new location at the Robson Valley Exploration and Learning Centre on Main Street has become a community hub with increased circulation and activities for all ages.
- The old library building sold in the spring, and our iconic Swallow boat made its last voyage down Main Street as part of the Pioneer Days parade.
- We celebrated our first year, jointly with the museum, when 300 local residents attended a BBQ, thanks to financial and cooking help from the McBride Community Forest.
- We have drafted exciting plans for our outdoor space.
- We created a Meeting Room Gallery and launched our first show on Halloween.

2019 was a year of reflection, setting down roots at 521 Main Street and looking forward with renewed vision. Early in the year, board and staff worked together to develop a strategic plan for our new space. Our mission is now “to be the heart of community connections” and our vision is “a community where everyone enriches the world in their own way”. Considering community input, our goals for the next three years are to:

1. **Be responsive to technology;** Together with Robson Valley Community Services we will again offer Gale online courses which we will market as “back to school” for all ages. The computer lab was incredibly busy over the summer months, perhaps due to our rainy weather. One of our volunteers hosted a 3-day Lego camp over the summer. Our staff computer tech joined the McBride Village committee seeking to improve Internet services to the area.
2. **Be a community hub for diverse ages and interests, responding to changing community needs;** We’ve begun to lend our dementia-friendly resources that support caregivers, in cooperation with Northern Health and funding from the North Central Library Federation. This summer’s natural history speaker and film series, hosted together with the Museum and Community Literacy Program was very well attended. Sessions included Local Geology, the Winged Migration film and a Castle Creek Glacier speaker. Together with the RCMP we hosted a bike safety rodeo. Leif the Magician drew 76 people of all ages in July, thanks to funding from the NCLF. More than 35 businesses and organizations participated in a Robson Valley Explorer program. Close to 45 children participated and collected badges by visiting each business and responding to required tasks from each business. Our community literacy coordinators again hosted a Kid’s Summer Food Camp.
3. **Be a conduit for community resources;** We took library resources to the Senior’s Fair and preschool fairs. We worked together with RVCS and Community Literacy to host “Soup & Buns” at our local senior’s residence. Thanks to a provincial Legal grant, we have purchased a traveling legal library to loan to local organizations and travel to nearby Dunster, BC or Dome Creek, BC.
4. **Build the capacity of staff, board and volunteers to meet the above goals;** In 2019, 180 volunteers worked 1184 hours for our library, making a huge difference to our programs, services, and staff. In 2019 one of our Board trustees developed a formal Volunteer program that has resulted in even more volunteers stepping forward. Our staff regularly attend the biannual Beyond Hope conferences in Prince George and BCLA conferences. Other educational opportunities are afforded us through online courses and webinars.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 1

Fostering equitable access to information and services

Our goals of being a conduit for community resources and a community hub for diverse ages and interests reflects this priority. In 2019 our focus on infrastructure worked to improve access to library services in several ways, including:

- By providing a fully accessible building we've seen community members access the library who did not previously use the library. Our new space is being used as a place to meet and greet and just relax. Several residents spend hours quietly reading and relaxing in our library space. We have been told that we have the best wheel chair access in town! Wheel chair patrons have definitely increased in our new space. Parents with strollers come regularly to meet up in our children's corner. Circulation of children's material has increased now that all materials are at an accessible height, and more easily discovered by its intended audience.
- Our proximity to Main Street also means more frequent access from our seniors living at the nearby BC Housing facility, and tourists coming off the highway on their way through town.
- ***We registered 96 new members in 2019, and now have 729 active patrons (44% of our population) for an increase of 11.5% over 2018.*** This number does not fully reflect our library's usage, however, as still others borrow on a family card, attend our programs, use our internet, or relax in our space. Not requiring a card to use the computers or join a program has meant that some of our more vulnerable community members may use our facilities for those purposes.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 2

Developing skills and knowledge

Our goal of being a community hub for diverse ages and interests reflects this priority. With more room we have more opportunities to learn simultaneously, and room to experiment with new tools (like a green screen or a piano). At the same time we can now sing songs at Mother Goose, study quietly in a corner, host the monthly bee-keepers' meeting, or be connecting online in the computer lab.

Our staff technical person and our Library Director shared their experience implementing a computer network on a budget at BCLA's spring conference in Surrey and again at Beyond Hope in Prince George with "Hypervisors and Geeks Unleashed". Our Library Director shared our experience moving to Main Street at the "New Library Directors' Boot Camp" that same weekend. Thanks to the North Central Library Federation, four trustees took part in an informative workshop on governance by Ken Haycock last fall. Within the month we'd implemented some of his suggestions. Our learning continues.

Our Fibre Arts group meet once a week at the library and share their knitting knowledge with beginners. A weekly music jam happens every Tuesday evening with musicians of all ages and skills participating. A volunteer organized a weekly ukulele jam with students aged 9 - 95 participating. There are endless skills to learn, and a deep pool of experts to draw from in our community. Artistic and technical skills are alive and well in our community!

LIBRARY PRIORITY 3

Collaborating on Shared Goals

Our goals of being a conduit for community resources and a community hub for diverse ages and interests again both reflect this priority. **In 2019, we worked with our partners to offer 399 programs or events, with 4330 people taking part.** We are honoured to work with many enthusiastic volunteers and dedicated community partners in diverse ways. Through our relationship with the RVCS, for example, in 2019 we served soup at the local Senior's residence, met first responders on Pro D Days, sang songs at Mother Goose, brought books to the first Men's Fair, snowshoed through the park for Sno-Fest, and offered tech tutoring for seniors in the fall.

Indeed, everything that we do in our small community, we do with others. Without sharing resources, expertise, and volunteer labour, we are too small to make things work. Working together ensures that our programs and services make sense for our community, and it expands our connections as we reach a broader audience. I am grateful for the invaluable collaboration that happens at the Federation level as well, in terms of important shared services, professional development, and cost-savings opportunities.

One example of a successful partnership took place in December. The Museum and Library invited young families to come craft and play games while we waited for Santa to arrive during the Festival of Lights. This was very well received, with about 50 children taking part in the crafts and games and 65 visiting with Santa. Thanks to RVCS for their help with the crafts, and the many partners that made for a fun start to the season. This year we encouraged residents to wear plaid for Plaid Friday, a shop local initiative that balances the Black Friday frenzy.

Community support was shown in 2018 when we moved to our new library premises. **We are the only library in BC, and probably beyond, that was moved to new premises totally by volunteers!**

LIBRARY PRIORITY 4

Enhancing governance

In the fall of 2018 our board began the strategic planning process, reviewing the information gathered during previous years of community consultation, seeking new input, and considering it from the vantage of our new space, with its new challenges and new opportunities. Early in 2019 board and staff worked together to develop our current strategic plan. We sought expert help from local consultants to coordinate our efforts.

In August Edel Toner-Rogala, manager of the North Central Library Federation, came to McBride to make a presentation to Board trustees on Library Federations, our NCLF, and “library land” in BC.

Four of our nine trustees attended a day-long workshop on library governance in Prince George. Ideas learned in this workshop were immediately applied in our monthly Board meetings.

SUMMARY

We are thrilled to be settling into our new library, working with our partners to meet the evolving needs of our community, and learning as we go. Our staff and board are stretching to meet new challenges. **During our Typical Week survey this October we saw a 16% increase of in-library use of materials, adult reference transactions increased by 24%, and in-person visits increased by 16% over 2018. These were further increases over significant increases in 2018.** We look forward to facing these challenges together with a team of staff and trustees who are caring, committed and passionate about both our library and our community, and who are supported by a strong network of regional and provincial partners that make a big impact in our small library.

Thank you to Libraries Branch and the Ministry of Education for your support of our community. Our annual grants are an integral part of providing both traditional and evolving library services, and our work – guided by your strategic direction – would not be possible without your support.