2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Fort Nelson Public Library

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

Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year (up to 500 words).

The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (NRRM) was incorporated on February 6, 2009. The NRRM encompasses about 10% of British Columbia's landmass and is situated in the province's northeast corner. The first regional municipality in British Columbia, the NRRM includes the communities of Fort Nelson, Fort Nelson First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, Toad River, Testa River, and several smaller communities. The town of Fort Nelson is the largest community within the NRRM and the primary service sector for the northeast region. Fort Nelson has always been a diverse and welcoming community with a beautiful landscape.

The Northern Rockies region's economic base is built on natural gas, oil, forestry, tourism, trapping, and agriculture. Since the 2016 census, our community has seen a significant downward trend in population and employment. The Statistics Canada 2021 census has reported that our population has seen a decrease of 18.8%. Our unemployment rate is 8.9%, primarily attributed to the dramatic decline in our oil, gas, and forestry sectors.

Our forestry industry, an essential economic pillar in our community, has been inactive since 2008, primarily due to the closure of both of our forestry mills and the continued inactivity of its major tenure holder. Many companies from our oil and gas sector have shut down their local productions and closed their doors, leaving many community members unemployed. This has resulted in the separation of many families as they seek employment elsewhere or, in many cases relocating entirely.

Tourism has always been a bright spot in our community, attracting upwards of 300,000 tourists per year. Our Annual Northern Lights Festival, which first began in 2019, welcomed hundreds of international visitors to our community to celebrate our Northern British Columbian lifestyle. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic caused the event to be postponed for a hopeful near future.

Our community has continued to be resilient through these challenging times. As reported in the NRRM Labour Market Data & Demands 2021 Report, some bright highlights for the future of our community's economics include forecasts of 'several projects that are likely to become the largest and

most significant employers in the NRRM.' One of these projects is the CryoPeak LNG Solutions (CryoPeak, 2021), which has almost finished its project for the first micro-LNG plant in our region.

Also listed in the 2022 report is the Peak Renewables Wood Pellet production facility. Peak Renewables has almost finalized their project for the largest pellet plant in Canada, located in the Fort Nelson townsite. Logging has already been underway, bringing an end to our unutilized forest tenure and promising up to 300 direct jobs in our community. "Our state-of-the-art plant and wood pellet harvesting activities will provide 300 direct jobs and an additional 150 secondary jobs for the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality." (Peak Renewables, 2021) After years of dormant forest industry, our community is genuinely excited about this opportunity, which is projected to be one of the largest and most significant employers in the NRRM in the coming years and will be an instrumental part of the efforts revitalizing our local economy. A critical risk for this project's completion includes securing adequate commercial rail access, acquiring adequate port access, and regulatory constraints regarding the boreal and subsequent Northern Mountain Caribou recovery plans.

Our innovative First Nations communities are always hard at work, working to diversify our economy. They are currently researching a geothermal project known as the 'Tu Deh-Kah Geothermal,' which translates to 'water stream Geothermal,' which could provide potential heat and power for the FNFN community and lead to possible agricultural production ventures. (Richter, 2021) If this project moves forward, it will be one of Canada's first geothermal electricity facilities. (Cruickshank, 2021) It would also be the first project of its kind in British Columbia.

The Fort Nelson Public Library (FNPL) serves the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, encompassing the Fort Nelson First Nation, the Prophet River First Nation, and a growing number of visitors each year. FNPL operates under the mandate of being responsive to the residents and visitors of NRRM by providing access to resources, community-oriented programs, and services in a welcoming and safe environment. FNPL is an active member and a strong supporter of our community and continues to offer programs and build community partnerships that can help support and meet our community's diverse needs during these times of uncertainty. The FNPL's 2019 - 2022 strategic plan focuses on four key areas: Programs and Services, Facility, Technology, and Sustainability.

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
Public Computer Relocation Project
Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.

During the pandemic, to keep within social distancing measures, the library determined that our public computers area was inadequate to meet social distancing measures. Also recognized was a lack of privacy for our users. With no division between each computer station, there was an opportunity for screens to be easily visible to the person next to them, creating a barrier for our patrons wanting to keep their privacy and their screens free from scrutiny. Considering these challenges, FNPL's Board of Trustees and Staff made the decision to relocate our public computer area along the wall beside our entryway. This project was completed in April of 2021 and has enabled full use of our public computers.

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

Our 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan framework focuses on four priority areas, Facility, Programs and Services, Technology and Sustainability. Before the changes to our computer area, as ordered by the provincial health officer, social distancing guidelines left us with only two of our four public computers available to our community due to spacing constraints. Relocating our computer area to our entryway, where more space was available, accommodated all four of our public computers while still adhering to the social distancing guidelines. To ensure our community public computer users' privacy and confidentiality needs were met when accessing their private documents, we had created a custom desk built that included panelled stations to act as a barrier and provide our patrons with privacy.

As laid out in our strategic plan, two of our priority goals are technology and facility and this project supported both goals. We are meeting the needs of our community by assuring that we enable full access to the public computers that we have available and ensuring that they meet privacy needs. We are also supporting our facility goal by making these changes to ensure that we use our space efficiently and accommodate the community-identified needs.

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)	This project supports B.C.'s Strategic Goals for library services by increasing our public computers' availability and accessibility to online services for our patrons. Relocating, and changing the layout of our computer area, increased our available public computer capacity by 50%. We have also increased the ability for patrons to access their online informational needs and increased the public computer access where patrons are able to take advantage of our printing services offered here in the library.
2.	**Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	
3.	**Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	With the addition of privacy panels to our computer desks, we have addressed the privacy issue, a possible barrier for patrons wishing to access private information on our computers. We have enabled patrons to access government services or other services without the fear of prying eyes.
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.		

Immediate outcomes:
- Provide immediate access to all four computers while still in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

Intermediate outcomes:
- Allows members of our community to have full access to the online databases that we offer active cardholders.
- Increased ability for patrons to access our public computers and utilize printing services.
- Provides privacy for patrons to conduct their business, particularly when accessing their private banking, government, and other confidential documents. As more and more government and other important processes become online-only, this is a lifeline to many individuals who are unable to access the internet through alternate means.

Ultimate outcomes:
- Relocating our computers will provide an opportunity to increase our collection space in the long term. The new layout allows for extended shelving space where the old desk was previously located – increasing capacity for our adult fiction collection and other collections as needed.
- Meet privacy needs of our public computer users.
- Meet strategic goals for facility and technology, by ensuring our space is used efficiently and meets identified privacy needs.

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

N/A

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

Project/Program Name
Seed Library & Sustainability
Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.

Our Seed Library program contributes to our community's well-being and quality of life. Gardening has numerous positive impacts on both an individual's physical and mental health. With restrictions in place, staff worked at adapting the service delivery of this program and made it more efficient for our patrons. They accomplished this by taking the time to pre-pack the seeds into single-use packages and creating order forms for community members to choose the seeds that they need. Community members then would submit their orders, and then staff would fill the orders and make them available for pick up to make the program efficient and to encourage short visits. This eliminated many safety risks and streamlined this service.

FNPL has taken steps to divert our compostable waste and cardboard/paper products to be more sustainable within our community. We have signed on for compostable waste pick-up services through Collectively Sustainable, a local independent waste management business and also placed recycling containers for paper and compostable waste throughout the library in this effort. All of our waste is now being sent to the Northern Rockies Vermicompost Ltd, where it will be used to 'feed the worm farm'—helping reduce our community's carbon footprint and generate worm castings from the organic materials into a valuable soil amendment called vermicompost.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
This on-going program supports the 'Sustainability' and 'Programs and Services' goals laid out in our strategic plan by inspiring and supporting local food sustainability efforts, increasing individual and community knowledge on successful gardening and vermicompost practices in our region, removing financial barriers associated with gardening, and encourage physical literacy.

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)	
2. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	
3. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	This program supports the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service in many ways. It helps remove barriers for individuals experiencing food insecurity by providing them with information and resources to grow fresh produce and be more sustainable. It creates an opportunity for social connections for our community members to share their experiences, tips, and tricks for successful planting in our region and resource sharing. We have seen quite a few new gardeners getting together and forming seed exchange groups in our community. We also support the strategic goals by providing opportunities and free resources for our members to learn more about successful gardening here in our community.
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.

Immediate outcomes:
- Grocery prices have continued to increase rapidly here in our community, creating more and more financial barriers to accessing healthy, fresh produce. We provide seeds to our community members to grow fresh produce. By providing our community with these resources, we are addressing food security and helping our community to be more sustainable.

Intermediate outcomes:
- As more and more community members start to participate in this program, we hope that more members will donate their seeds back to the library to keep this program going far into the future. With more and more donations, we will be able to expand our abilities to keep providing seeds and resources and are also promoting a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.

Long Term:
- In the larger community context, the food sustainability piece of this project intends to address growing social and economic needs in the community of Fort Nelson.
- Reduce carbon footprint.

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

Project/Program Name

Loanable S.T.E.A.M. Technology Kits

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.

In 2020, the Ministry of Education provided FNPL one-time funding to invest in technological upgrades, electronic collections, online programs, and other digital initiatives. Using a portion of these funds in 2021, staff created five lendable S.T.E.A.M. focused kits, including birdwatching, telescope, microscope, OSMO coding, and a human anatomy kit. These kits have been a big hit in our community and are constantly being loaned out.
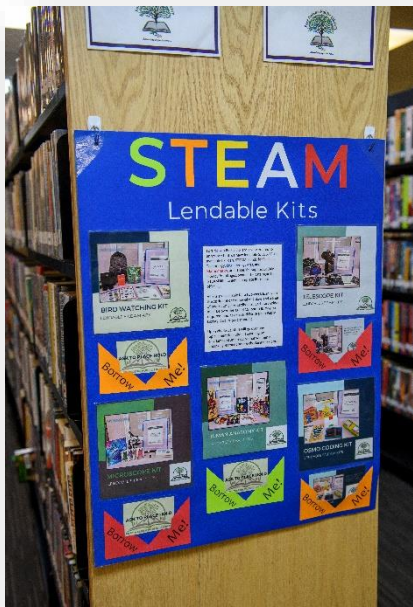
How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
This project has supported the Technology goal as laid out in our strategic plan 2019 – 2022; by offering loanable technology to our active cardholders, we are providing the opportunity to learn about and engage with new technologies and are fostering a love of learning. These technology bins help remove financial barriers to new technology by providing equal opportunities for our community to have free access to these technologies. Before this funding, FNPL did not have any kits available for loan. As we move forward, we will analyze each kit's successes and listen to feedback from our lenders to plan and build other kits to add to our growing S.T.E.A.M. Technology Kit collection.

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)	

2. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)		
3. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	This program helps to provide equal access to S.T.E.A.M. focused learning opportunities for our community's youth and families and provide opportunities for future programs that are S.T.E.A.M. focused. These kits help bridge the gap for families with a financial barrier who may not otherwise access these technology resources. They create equal opportunities for our community to learn and have fun with the kits in the comfort of their homes and help to foster a love of learning.	
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.

Immediate outcomes:
- Provide access to loanable technology kits.
- Provide learning opportunities and resources for at-home learners in our community.

Intermediate outcomes:
- Helps to reduce financial barriers for accessing new and current technologies.
- Patrons being able to utilize these kits at the comfort of their own home and continue to be fostering a love of learning new technologies.

Ultimate outcomes:
- Build a collection of loanable technology collections and continue to be a vital resource to our community.

Project/Program Name
Multiage In-person Programs
Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.

With the easing of the restrictions by the Provincial Health Authority, staff at FNPL were very happy to see the return of in-person programs this fall. We managed to continue with in-person programming even with the proof of vaccine requirement! A massive relief to staff who didn't want to revert to eliminating in-person programs, as they were thrilled to see the return of many of our patrons since the resuming of in-person programs. A mix of new and old programs was made available for pre-registration, with a set participation limit for each, dependent on activity.

Programs for toddlers include:
- Story times as requested
- LEGO Club
- 100 Books Before Kindergarten

Programs for ages 5 – 8 include:
- Mini scientists
- Mini Crafters
- LEGO Club
- Summer Reading Club

Programs for ages 9 – 12 include:
- Young Crafters
- Young Scientists
- Junior Cookbook Club
- LEGO Club
- Summer Reading Club

Programs for Teens include:
- Teen Night
- Teen Advisory Board
- D&D Club
- Summer Reading Challenge

Programs for Adults include:
- Adult Cookbook Club
- Adult Bad Art Night
- Seed Library
- History Club
- Summer Reading Challenges
- Bi-Annual Photography Contest

There were a few other fun seasonal programs that we did in 2021, some of which include:
- Letters to our Troops and to our Local Seniors
- Food for Fines
- Take home Easter Challenge

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

As outlined in our Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022, one of our priority areas is Programs & Services. Through programming, FNPL supports our community and our strategic goal by helping to build fundamental and hands-on skills; promoting and support literacy for all ages; promoting library services and fostering a love of the library through community engagement and participation; and building bridges for those with economic barriers by providing free access to opportunities and programs.

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)	Through programming, FNPL supports the strategic goals for library services by delivering user-centred programs to our community. Through programming, we are supporting the strategic goals by offering learning opportunities to help develop skills, such as: - Building on cognitive abilities, as children/youth listen to instructions and directions and then apply them. - Analytical expression – not only are we providing written and oral instructions but children/youth in attendance are

|		encouraged to break down the 'why' for a broad spectrum of topics. • Building on problem-solving skills • Promoting self-discovery by offering a wide variety of activities and concepts so our attendees can identify their personal likes and dislikes. • Social and community engagement • Fostering a willingness to learn new things. • Literacy skills (physical/digital/informational/etc.) • Building a foundation for the fundamental and hands-on grasp of scientific techniques, methods and practical applications.
2.	**Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	
3.	**Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Through programming, FNPL supports the strategic goals for library services by building on skills outlined within the strategic plan framework, including critical thinking, literacy, and reading. We engage with our community to promote the library services and build a 'love your library' mentality through our programs. We continue to work to ensure our library remains a vital part of our community by offering engaging, inclusive programs and filling the needs of our community.
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.		

Immediate outcomes:
- Provide our community with social spaces to meet other people and other families through programs and events held here in the library.
- Promote library services

Intermediate outcomes:
- Help build and develop community literacy in all areas
- Provide a safe, warm, welcoming space for our community to enjoy.
- Increase library engagement

Ultimate outcomes:
- Community engagement
- Promoting a 'love your library' community mindset
- Remove economic barriers
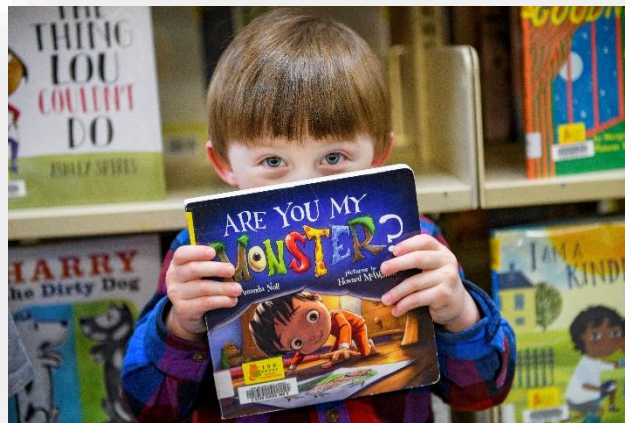
3. KEY CHALLENGES

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)	Like most organizations within our community and other libraries throughout the province, Fort Nelson Public Library (FNPL) ushered into 2021 with continued adherence to the Provincial Health Orders restrictions and guidelines to reduce the spread of Covid-19. The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak has continued to impact our library and community significantly. Our statistics have shown a positive increase in numbers between 2020 and 2021. Although the numbers are nowhere near what they were before the Covid-19 pandemic, some areas have shown significant growth. Some of these areas include our digital resource circulation and our interlibrary loan services, which directly reflect the changing needs of our community as we live within this new reality. With the easing of the restrictions in the early fall, we were able to reintroduce many of our in-person programs with the addition of some extra safety protocols such as limiting capacity by having pre-registration with a set number of participants for each program. The proof of vaccination affected some of our programs, specifically our adult program numbers, as it did not allow unvaccinated adults to attend. This requirement was met with some disappointment and much lower numbers in attendance than we have shown in previous years. While numbers have been far reduced compared to prior years in our in-person programs this year, we have had continued regular attendance for all our in-person programs.
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)	
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	Fort Nelson has seen its fair share of vital services in our community disappear over the last few years. Our health services continue to be very restricted. Families expecting new additions are expected to leave town at least a month before their due date for deliveries because of a lack of staff and resources to care for them here in our community—the same thing for anyone requiring surgery. For emergencies, our closest hospital is Fort St. John, 381 Km away, a 4-hr. drive with 'good' weather conditions that are not always optimal in our winter conditions. A recent loss for our community is the ability to do lab testing locally. With a lack of qualified lab technologists, our lab specimens are now being sent to Fort St. John, resulting in longer turnaround times for results. Another service that our community has lost is our Greyhound services, a lifeline to individuals lacking alternate transportation methods or are experiencing financial barriers and increasing isolation in our remote community. The BC Bus has helped mitigate some of this issue. However, it only runs once per week, arriving one day and leaving the next. Our community does not have support for those living with cognitive decline; in response to this need, FNPL recently received three cognitive care kits from Northern Health to make resources accessible to our community. These kits are made possible thanks to the partnership between Northern Health and the Alzheimer Society of BC. These kits offer members of our community resources and activities to help support the skills and abilities of people living with dementia and other forms of cognitive impairment. Each kit contains up to ten unique, dementia-friendly activities such as games, workbooks, puzzles, and various prepared activities.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	Our internet is expensive when compared to most of British Columbia. While we generally have good speed in our community, our connections can be unreliable due to aging infrastructure, and the cost is and continues to be a significant barrier for many in our community. Many of our community members rely on our free internet services. They utilize the library's wireless internet and public access computers for various reasons, including performing career searches and applying for jobs,

	education needs such as distance study and writing exams, online correspondence, general research, and entertainment.
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 disappearance of our Greyhound services here in Fort Nelson, along with a single taxi service and the rising costs of gas prices, have continued to create barriers for our community members when accessing the library and lack alternate transportation methods. Our senior bus is only available for our community members dealing with mobility issues on select days, creating a barrier for any wishing to access the library. For a community whose winter season lasts for what seems like forever, this contributes to feelings of isolation in our community. FNPL tries to help with this issue by having open hours seven days a week to accommodate all different schedules and availability.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	The library has seen an increase in library users dealing with addiction and mental health issues. This year, a few incidents have led to the need to have our staff feeling and being prepared to respond during these types of situations. Staff focused on taking professional development training both in First Aid and Naloxone training to be responsive and help those who are more vulnerable until the first responder can arrive on the scene.
Other (please specify)	

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____   Date: _March 18, 2022_

Board Chair Signature: _Flora P. Clark_   Date: _March 18, 2022_