



# Provincial Library Grants Report 2019

Rossland Public Library

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## INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1939, just after the declaration of war, the Rossland Public Library was a demonstration of hope. Currently, the library serves a population of 3,729, according to the 2016 census. 13% of our population speak French and there is both a French language elementary school and a late French immersion programme in the public school. 19% of our population is under 15 and roughly the same amount are retired.

According to the 2016 census, the median income is approximately \$7,000 more than the province as a whole. 10% of Rosslanders identified themselves as self-employed in 2016, but many residents work at Teck Resources in Trail or are professionals working in Rossland and local communities (Trail, Castlegar & Nelson). There is winter work at Red Mountain Resort and there are also a few people who telecommute or make Rossland their base while working in jobs that involve a lot of travel.

Many people make the library part of their daily errands – grocery store, post office, library. The library is also the only building on the main street with a front lawn and often the site for many a picnic.

### Strategic Plan

2019 was the first year of our three-year strategic plan. Our goals are:

1. to inspire the curious
2. maintain organizational strength
3. provide inspiring and useful technology
4. continue sharing resources and collaborating with partners
5. create and maintain welcoming spaces

Our Children's Gardening Club supports both the first and last goals, getting children growing and creating a beautiful garden. To meet the technology needs of our community, we have updated our public multi-purpose printer allowing people to print from their personal devices as well as hiring a Youth Technology Clerk to help patrons troubleshoot their devices and provide inspirational robot learning sessions for children. New staff were hired to improve our organizational strength, as does the ongoing review of our policies.

## Discussion and Examples

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### IMPROVING ACCESS

2019 was the Library's first year in its renovated space. The new layout has made access to our onsite collections easier and there are more spaces for people to sit and read or work.

The staff spend more time with patrons, teaching them how to access materials online and through the inter-library loan service.

Our inter-library loan service continues to grow and with the retirement in early 2019 of the staff person who had been responsible for more than 25 years, changes came to that department. This department is also responsible for our print disabled services, both NNELS and CELA, and do outreach and information services.

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### DEVELOPING SKILLS

As technology makes ever increasing in-roads into people's lives, the library is striving to provide information to help them cope. In 2019 we created the position of Youth Technology Clerk, giving a student real work experience while providing our community with help with their devices. They have helped patrons with e-reader issues, walked them through the steps to regaining access to accounts and answered the question "where did that go when I saved it?" innumerable times.

The Youth Technology Clerk also runs our Robots! programme for children. Using Sphero, Dash and Makey Makey, they teach coding basics while having fun.

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### COLLABORATING ON SHARED GOALS

The Library continues to work with local organizations including the Rossland Sustainability Commission, Rossland REAL Foods, the Rossland Museum & Discovery Centre, the Rossland Heritage Commission, the Rossland Mountain Market and the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, especially with their Strong Start programme.

Rossland REAL Foods and the Rossland Heritage Commission house collections with us, the latter a collection of books related to their work and the former a collection of food preservation tools. Both of these collections are added to occasionally including a second food dehydrator in 2019.

The Rossland Sustainability Commission continues to use us as a hub for their popular Energy Crawl, Electric Vehicle Show and Chicken Crawl. We collaborate on programming with the Rossland Museum & Discovery Centre, provide children's crafts and games at the Rossland Mountain Market and our children's librarian is a regular at Strong Start.

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### ENHANCING GOVERNANCE

The library board has committed to reviewing one or more policies at each board meeting to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the community. With one of our board co-chairs completing her eight years on the board, thereby dwindling the board number to six, and concerted effort in recruitment will take place early in 2020. The orientation procedure will be reviewed.

## Summary

2019 was not without its challenges. The newly renovated space reopened just before the end of the year in 2018 and both staff and patrons took some time to orient to the new space. The director was dealing with several personal issues, indeed she took stress leave at the end of the year, and a few of the board members were dealing with post-renovation fatigue.

Visitor numbers quickly bounced back after our closure for three months and inter-library loans continue to increase with the number of parcels up 62% since 2012, when we first started offering patron initiated requests. Once again, we are victims of our own success.

Over the past ten years, our visitor numbers have doubled to almost 50,000, our circulation has increased by 40% and, as noted above, inter-library loans have gone up by 62%. In that time our provincial funding has not increased. Indeed, we now spend twice the total provincial monies on inter-library loans. The Province continues to lean on us to provide learning opportunities, technology and assistance with its use alongside our traditional library services while failing to to give us the funds to do so. Libraries in general have been very good at doing more with less but in Rossland we have reached our limit. In short, without additional funding, we will be forced to cut services as our fixed costs rise.