2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Pemberton and District 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

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

The Pemberton & District Public Library is located within the Community Centre in the Village of Pemberton. It serves a total population of approximately 6,000, covering the Village of Pemberton and the Squamish Lillooet Regional District Area C, with a service area in excess of 5,600 square kilometers. It's location within a shared recreational facility in the village and the range of services offered strengthen its position as the hub of the community.

Pemberton and District is largely a young and growing population but with a sizeable seniors community too. It is home to long-time residents with agricultural roots, young families new to the area, part-time residents and the growing Lil'wat and N'Quatqua First Nations. Agriculture, forestry, service-based industries, and recreation tourism are the principal industries in the area. Its proximity to Whistler make it attractive to both tourists and those who wish to settle in the area.

Limited public transport options between Pemberton and the surrounding communities can make accessing Library services difficult for some and we must seek out outreach opportunities to strengthen our connection with the outlying areas.

Unemployment, low income, lack of affordable housing, and high cost of living, are challenges that continue to be faced within the community, making the Library and its services an important resource for many. These issues have been exacerbated over the past year, highlighted by the 2021 census, which shows a 32.4% increase in the population of the Village of Pemberton – up 3,407 from 2,574 in 2016. SLRD Area C also experienced a population increase of 20.3% (2,000 from 1,663) while Mount Currie saw a 3.3% decline from 1,285 to 1,242. Property prices have increased exponentially over the past year, making living in the community no longer feasible for some and as the population continues to grow, this has not been reflected in corresponding increases to services and resources for the community.

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
Virtual Programming Partnerships

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
With Covid-19 Health and Safety restrictions we, like many other libraries, transitioned to offering many of our library programs virtually. Core programs such as storytimes and book club were offered initially, but with such limited success we doubted the appetite for online programming in the community. However, after some trial and error we were able harness the benefits of online programming and form some key partnerships to offer new programs and learning opportunities we would likely not have been able to accomplish on our own, or in-person. We partnered on a number of occasions with our neighbouring Sea to Sky libraries in Whistler and Squamish to co-host a selection of programming such as the *Quest Lecture Series*, *Sea to Sky Bookclub* (*21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*), and *Powder Picking in a Changing Climate with meterologist David Jones.* We further embraced ongoing partnership opportunities with the Whistler Pemberton Literacy Partnership to offer programs such as a Visionboarding workshop, a Covid Storytelling workshop, a presentation of the Lil'wat Nation book *Gifts of the land* with Heather Joseph, and a Wills & Estate Planning workshop. Perhaps of greatest success were our series of local nature/ environmental talks in partnership with Stewardship Pemberton – with topics including *Trailbuilding Perspectives, Beginner's Guide to Flood Risk, and Mt Meager Slide Debris Management, a*ll of these talks had active participants in excess of what we could have hosted in-person and the recordings have been viewed multiple times. We used online platform Zoom to host the events and the Sea to Sky Library partnership programs were also streamed on Facebook live. When practical, sessions were recorded and made available for viewing after the event. This further enhanced accessibility to programs that previously would have happened in-person and patrons may have missed out on if the date and time was not convenient for them. These partnerships greatly increased our capacity to offer a variety of programs of interest to our community and provide a means of connection during public health restrictions.

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

These programming partnerships align directly with our strategic area of *Inspire Minds Through Learning and Literacy* by providing access to learning opportunities, particularly at a time when in-person programming was not always possible. We engaged community expertise to expand and diversify programming and embraced creative approaches to offering learning opportunities to the community.

These programs also support the strategic area of *Create Welcoming Spaces* as we increased collaborated to diversify programming and reduce barriers to accessing library services during public health restrictions. Given the success of many of the virtual programs it has also highlighted the need to recognise the changing ways in which patrons will choose to interact with the Library moving forward.

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)	By partnering with neighbouring libraries and local organisations, we were able to expand the number and range of programs we offered to the community. By offering the programs online, geographical restrictions were no longer in place that previously could have prevented patrons from attending a program in a neighbouring community. Recordings were made available after the program, further improving access to learning opportunities with the option to view at a time convenient to them. Many of the events had attendance exceeding the maximum capacity we could have had in-person so we were able to offer the programs to more people.
2. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	Offering programs online built staff capacity as they learned how to navigate new software/ technology to run the programs and also to support patrons in accessing the programs. Having previously discussed the possibility of hybrid programming due to the geographical spread of our service area, having to embrace this technology and learn new skills has opened the door to further explore this as a viable option for future programs, even once all public health orders are lifted.
3. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	As an example, the partnership with Stewardship Pemberton successfully engaged with community members to raise awareness of local environmental issues, particularly regarding natural hazards which was very relevant with the wildfires and flooding in 2021. This in turn supports local government as citizens are better informed about the risks and preventative measures that can be taken.

4. **Enhancing Governance** of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	

By expanding out virtual programming offerings through partnerships, we were seeking to achieve the following outcomes:

1. To increase collaboration with other organisations to diversify program offerings
2. To reduce barriers to accessing learning opportunities during a pandemic due to public health restrictions preventing in-person gathering
3. To reduce barriers to accessing learning opportunities due to geographical distance from the public library
4. To reduce barriers to accessing learning opportunities by supporting different means of accessing that information at a time that works best for the patron
5. To increase patron digital literacy skills by providing technology support in accessing online programming
6. To increase staff digital literacy skills and embrace new ways of delivering library programs and service
7. To increase community connection and knowledge sharing during the pandemic

While some programs were undoubtedly more successful than others, they all achieved the desired outcomes in various ways.

We offered more programming in 2021 than in 2020 largely thanks to these partnerships, and were able to offer a wider selection of learning opportunities than we could have achieved alone with a limited budget. Many of the events recorded attendance higher than what we could have facilitated in-person, particularly with occupancy restrictions at events.

Patron feedback expressed gratitude at still being able to access programs from their own home and to have the choice to either attend live, or by watching a recording later at a time convenient to them. This has reduced barriers for patrons who either couldn't have travelled to the Library (either due to distance/ transport limitations/ poor weather) or had other commitments that would have prevented them attending. Interestingly, recent offerings of hybrid programming have seen higher registration for the online participation than in-person. While this still may be a result of public health orders and comfort levels within the community, it is an interesting trend to observe as the focus has so often been on the return to in-person programming.

We recognised that by moving programs online, that in itself would present as a barrier either due to lack of interest in online programs, lack of technology to access the program, or lack of knowledge in how to access the program. We removed as many barriers as possible from this process for patrons by offering phone support and step-by-step instructions when required. We would perform the registrations for patrons, when that in itself was a barrier, and provided in-library to help patrons

become familiar with Zoom or to access the recordings. While we recognise it will still have deterred some, particularly as "Zoom Fatigue" set in, we had several patrons express their gratitude for the support in accessing programs of interest to them.

All of this was also a learning curve for the staff delivering the programs, requiring them to learn how to effectively run a program on Zoom and Facebook live, how to make and edit recordings and to upload them online. Moving forward, continued investment in staff digital literacy skills will be required as we adapt and expand program offerings to meet the needs of the community.

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

Throughout the year we partnered with the following organisations:
Whistler Public Library, Squamish Public Library, Stewardship Pemberton, Whistler Pemberton Literacy Partnership

With the Whistler and Squamish libraries, the partnership involved shared responsibility for the hosting, promotion and funding of the programs.

With Stewardship Pemberton, they delivered the program while we hosted and promoted it.

With the Whistler Pemberton Literacy Partnership, they funded any speaker fees and we hosted and promoted the program.

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.

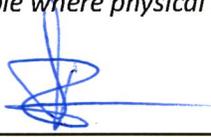| Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2021. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	Being located in a shared facility has presented challenges to library access over the course of the pandemic. Located inside the Pemberton & District Community Centre, with no external access to the Library, we had to operate within the building's restrictions and operating hours. Access to the Library was restricted to one side of the building which is less accessible, and the Community Centre access point was often locked, leading patrons to also assume we were closed. The differing protocols regarding vaccine passports for recreational facilities vs libraries has also caused confusion and frustration for patrons. Resistance to,

	and frustration with, public health restrictions has also been challenging for staff to manage at times. We worked to address this through clear branded signage for the Library in an effort to make it more clear that the two businesses operate independently of one another and what the Library protocols and access points are. It was also clearly posted on our website. To better support staff, we have focused on supporting training on resiliency, stress management, and conflict resolution and used annual funding to subscribe to the Ryan Dowd Homeless Library training which has featured many Covid-19 specific webinars.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	Like many other communities we faced challenges (both directly and indirectly) with the extreme heat, wildfires, flooding, and landslides. During the heatwaves the Library was used by many as a cooling area but highlighted the need for something more established in the community. Several evacuation alerts and orders were issued due to high flood risk in the community and the talks we hosted with Stewardship Pemberton were intended to help community members become better informed about natural disaster risks specific to our community and how to be prepared. The various challenges presented over the year, and how other libraries in the province were impacted also highlighted the need for the Library to review its emergency response documentation, which is currently in progress.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Locally, the financial pressure has become more evident in the past year with the significant increase in cost of living in the area and has ultimately impacted upon staffing levels (see below). Ensuring adequate annual increases to core revenue streams is a priority if we are to maintain, let alone enhance, current service offerings.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	The library struggled with recruitment and retention through 2019 to mid-2021. A combination of long-term staff relocating, and challenges attracting new staff to an area where the cost of living and lack of affordable housing is a barrier, has had a significant impact on maintaining sufficient staffing levels. With staff turnover higher than ever seen in recent years, training and onboarding has put significant pressure on an already small team and has undoubtedly impacted service delivery and staff morale. With staffing levels now at an appropriate level, the focus is on building a strong, skilled, and resilient team through a revised staff training program, further investing in personal and professional development, and fostering an environment supportive of physical and mental wellbeing.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	The Pemberton branch of Scotiabank closed in July 2021 leaving the community without a physical branch of a bank in town. BlueShore Financial (a credit union) is now the only financial institution in town. This has caused significant issues for those that used Scotiabank as their banking institution (including the Library) requiring a minimum 56km round trip to perform in-person banking. This closest branch is also not easily accessible by public transit. A full-service ATM was installed in the village but is regularly out of service, and ultimately, for the Library in particular, we were

	still required to make the trip to a branch to perform cash deposits (not without cost to the Library in terms of time and fuel for the staff involved). To mitigate the impact on patrons somewhat, we received funding from Scotiabank to purchase laptops for the community to access online banking facilities, with staff available to provide technology support if required. In terms of the Library, banking is transitioning to BlueShore Financial due to it's proximity and ease of access. This again has not been without impact to the Library in terms of staff time managing the transition.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	While access to high-speed internet in the Village boundary has improved significantly in recent years, the more remote, isolated communities still experience significant challenges with poor or no cell service and lack of connectivity/ low bandwidth. Even within the well serviced areas, the cost alone of internet services remains a barrier. To better support those that rely on the Library for internet connection, we leave our WiFi on 24/7 so they are not restricted to library hours for access. We have also been collaborating with the Literacy Outreach Co-ordinator for the Lower Stl'atl'imx communities to find solutions to better support patrons in more remote locations and to explore opportunities for outreach visits when public health restrictions and weather conditions permit.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	We are tenants located in a relatively new building (est. 2008) and renovated the main library space in 2018/19. However, with a rapidly growing community there will likely be future need for expansion. Covid-19 restrictions meant the use of the physical library space was dramatically reduced but when visits return to pre-pandemic levels, the need for future expansion will need to be considered and explored if we are to continue to adequately support the needs of our growing community.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	Lack of public transit remains an issue for the surrounding communities and presents real challenges for accessing library services. The Library serves a large geographical area but only a small percentage of that area is served by local transit. At the time of writing, local public transit has been on strike since January 29, 2022 and there has been no local service within Pemberton or along the Sea-To-Sky. We introduced online library card registration so that patrons could access digital resources without having to visit the physical library building. We also used grant funding to increase the budget for eBook purchasing to better meet growing demand. Outreach visits to geographically isolated locations remain a priority but staffing levels, and Covid-19 restrictions have presented challenges in accomplishing this.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	Providing service to vulnerable communities during the pandemic has been challenging, particularly when there was restricted use of the physical space. With restrictions on accessing the space and how the space was used, we were not seeing the same volume of patrons that we would have prior to the pandemic so it has been more challenging to identify what needs there may be in the community in order to better provide support. We have attempted to mitigate this by connecting with local organisations that support these communities and now offer weekly drop-in services at the Library in partnership with Howe Sound Womens Centre, Sea to Sky

	Community Services, and Work BC. This has also raised staff awareness of critical services available in the community so we are better placed to signpost these services when needed.
Other (please specify)	

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____   Date: 3/17/2022

Board Chair Signature: _Carmen Peaine_____   Date: 03/17/2022