

## 2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

### LIBRARY NAME

Cranbrook 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](#)
- ☐ [2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS](#)
- ☐ [3. KEY CHALLENGES](#)
- ☐ [4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL](#)

### 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).**

Cranbrook is the largest community in the Kootenays, with a population of approximately 21,000 in the city and 6,000 in the surrounding Regional District of East Kootenay Area C. It serves as the commercial, educational, health care, service and transportation hub in the southeast corner of BC. The region experienced a 3.7% population growth between 2016 and 2021.

Although it is beginning to shift, there remains little ethnic or linguistic diversity in the region. Most residents are of European or Canadian ancestry and speak English. Immigrants account for 1.8% of the population, and largely come from the US and Europe. The Ktunaxa Nation's ʔaq'am community, located north of Cranbrook, represents 3.4% of the local population. Most people moving to the community come from elsewhere in Canada, particularly Alberta. Overall education levels are lower than the provincial average; high school completion rates hover at 6.1% below the provincial average, while the number of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher is 14% lower than the provincial average.

There was a significant increase in construction starts, housing and commercial, in 2021 and this trend looks to continue in 2022. This indicates that the community is growing at a faster rate than projected in 2018. Housing remains more affordable than in surrounding communities, but the assessed value is increasing as a result of a surge in demand over the past year.

People living here enjoy the outdoor lifestyle. The Cranbrook Community Forest offers over a 100 km of hiking and mountain bike trails on the eastern edge of the City. Ski hills, hot springs, lakes, rivers, mountains, and extensive backcountry access are all within the range of a short drive.

The Cranbrook Public Library has served Cranbrook and the surrounding area since 4 July 1925. Its facility, open 7 days a week, provides users with access to nearly 70,000 physical items, an array of digital resources accessible on public workstations and through free wireless access on mobile devices in the Library, and with places to study, read and meet with others. Hundreds of programs for different ages and interests draw thousands of participants each year.

## 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
Idea Lab
Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
<p>Funded primarily by a community technology grant from the Columbia Basin Trust, the Idea Lab will give people access to technological equipment so they can develop their digital literacy and technical skills, and create and share their ideas with others. It consists of 5 areas:</p> <p><b>Digitization Station</b></p> <p>From scanning negatives to digitizing reel-to-reel films, this station will allow people to preserve and share their memories by converting their documents, photographs and videos into digital formats.</p> <p><b>Creation Station</b></p> <p>The 3D printer and digital canvas will give people the ability to turn their ideas into real objects they can share with others.</p> <p><b>Recording Studio</b></p> <p>A sound booth with a digital microphone, mixer board, and a workstation with audio editing software will make it possible for people to tell and share their stories and ideas.</p> <p><b>Mini Film Studio</b></p> <p>People will use a handheld camera to learn filming techniques. They will then use the video editing workstation to produce a finished video. Community groups, such as the theatre and arts council, will be able to borrow the camera to use for their own workshops.</p> <p><b>Skills Development Mobile Lab</b></p> <p>Library staff will use the lab's equipment and digital resources to provide people the opportunity to learn technological literacy skills, both in-house and out in our communities.</p> <p><b>Program Plan</b></p> <p>A key component of the Idea Lab is the programs that will be conducted by staff, and experts from the community at times, to teach individuals how to use the various pieces of Idea Lab equipment and software.</p> <p>This component of the project is partially funded with the BC Literacy Equity grant.</p>



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

This project specifically addresses the Library's strategic goal to help people 'seek out innovative approaches for people to access information, learn, and share their ideas with the world.'

The specific objectives it addresses are:

- Create an Idea Lab filled with technological tools, supported by knowledgeable staff and resources, so people can develop and share content.
- Offer regular workshops on a range of topics that enable people to develop their technological literacy skills.

This project address a gap within the community relating to public access to technological tools. The College of the Rockies offers new media courses and provides the equipment and software students need to produce content in a range of formats. There are also businesses that have equipment, like 3-D printers, that people can access for a fee. However, there are no places that offer a broad range of equipment for general public use. The Idea Lab takes a step towards filling this gap.

### 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. <b>Improving Access</b> for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	Part of the Skills Development Mobile Lab included providing public access to Gale Courses for three years from 2020 through to the end of 2023. This digital resource gives people access to instructor-led courses to learn new skills.
2. <b>Building Capacity</b> for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	The two staff members leading the roll-out of the Idea Lab received training on all the equipment and software. They will in turn train other staff on the basics of each station so that all public service staff can provide basic troubleshooting assistance once the Lab opens to the public.
3. <b>Advancing Citizen Engagement</b> (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Through access to the technological tools available in the Idea Lab, people will develop skills and knowledge to help them create and share material. This could include recording stories of elders, producing a podcast or short film, creating art on the digital canvas, digitizing historical documents and pictures, or designing and printing a 3D item. What they create they can share within the community and online.
4. <b>Enhancing Governance</b> of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	This project indirectly supports enhancing governance because it stems directly from an objective in the Library's current 5-year strategic plan. This automatically triggers regular reporting requirements which in turn makes it possible for the Board to fulfil its governance duties.

**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.**

**Outputs**

- All furnishings, equipment and software for the Idea Lab are now in the Library and configured. This includes a sound recording booth, digitization equipment, video and audio editing workstations, a 3D printer, professional video camera with lighting kit, microphones and a green screen, and tablet computers and presentation equipment to take into the community.

**Immediate Outcome**

- People will have access to technological resources they otherwise cannot find in the community. They will be able to use it for personal projects, to develop technical skills and knowledge, and to create and share material with others in the community and online.

**Intermediate Outcome**

- The Idea Lab may foster entrepreneurship in the region by giving people the ability to gain practical experience using professional quality technological equipment that would require a significant investment of time and capital to acquire personally. They can develop skills and knowledge to aid them in coming to a decision on whether they want to invest in this type of equipment to develop their business.

**Long Term Outcome**

- The Idea Lab helps support the provincial strategic goal of improving access for British Columbians to technological resources.

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

This project did not involve direct partnerships in the first stage of the project. In the next phase, Idea Lab launch and programming, the Library will seek to partner with people in the community who have expertise with specific pieces of equipment to provide training first to staff and then at introductory workshops for the public.



### 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)	<p>COVID-19 continued to have a significant impact on every aspect of operations. However, as the provincial response evolved, the Library adapted to offer as close to normal levels of services and programs as possible under pandemic-imposed constraints. For example, the Library was able to resume full hours of operation at the start of October 2021.</p> <p><b>Key Pandemic Related Strains</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purchase of PPEs and additional cleaning supplies placed an increased burden on the budget for a second year and was not alleviated by any relief funding such as was made available to other sectors.</li> <li>• When provincial and federal governments introduced measures including online vaccination appointment booking, proof of vaccination cards and the ArriveCAN app, employees provided assistance to members of the public came to the Library for assistance. Our Library offered free printing of these documents to support these initiatives.</li> <li>• Dealing with belligerent patrons who did not wish to wear a mask (with no provision of medical exemption) while in the Library was a constant source of stress to employees. However, patrons were always treated respectfully.</li> </ul> <p>The Library did not use funds from the annual library or technology grants to cover the additional costs incurred as part of its pandemic response strategy as they were fully allocated to mission-critical functions such as collection material acquisition and IT infrastructure support so that patrons would have access to the resources they needed.</p>
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	<p>The Library extended its hours for a week at the end of June to serve as a cooling centre during the heat dome event when temperatures rose to 42 degrees in Cranbrook. The local EOC has also designated the Library as an official clean air site during times of smoky skies. The Library increased the amount of seating, while still maintaining 2 m distance between chairs, during the summer to accommodate the increased demand from people wanting to spend longer periods of time in the Library. The Library put out disposable cups for people to use to get a drink to stay hydrated from the bottle filling station.</p> <p>People appreciated having a cool space to escape to, thrilled at the amount of seating the Library made available. The sound of cups getting filled from the bottle</p>

	<p>filling station became an almost constant soundtrack. Some people even filled a cup to take with them as they headed back out into the heat.</p> <p>The Library provided information about the additional costs it incurred to the local Emergency Operations Centre for potential future reimbursement.</p>
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	<p>While local governments provided the Library with an inflationary increase of 2% for 2021, the decrease in revenue generated in-house due to the pandemic and the continued the stagnation of provincial funding amounts, combined with above-inflationary increases to fixed costs such as insurance premiums, software licenses, some employee benefits rates, and the provincial minimum wage, put continuous financial pressure on the Library.</p> <p>The Library managed to provide existing levels of service and programs. It does not have the capacity to invest in professional development for employees beyond what is offered for free, increase bandwidth capacity, expand digital media and physical collections, make more online reference and learning resources available, expand programs and services, or launch new initiatives that would serve the changing needs of our community.</p> <p>Most of the challenges that are discussed in this section of the report have a direct connection to the financial pressures burdening the Library.</p>
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	<p>The Library worked hard to maintain stable staffing levels in 2021. The Library undertook minimal recruitment as all core employees remained in their positions. Existing funding levels have required us to pull funding from other areas, particularly collections, to maintain the same overall staffing levels that the Library has had since 2009.</p> <p>It was a challenge for employees to manage their mental health and overall health due to the challenging conditions presented by the pandemic, as well as providing direct assistance to members of the public related to accessing online government services and using technological devices.</p> <p>Despite these challenges, staff worked closely together as a team to navigate the Library through another turbulent year with grace and humour, always with the goal to make patrons feel welcome and safe. And they were rewarded on an almost daily basis with patrons expressing their gratitude for the Library.</p> <p>One patron told a staff member that, in his estimation, the funding governments give libraries is one of the most important investments they make to improve people's lives. He said that for him the Library was like an island of calm in a chaotic sea, and knowing that he could come in to borrow books helped him survive the pandemic.</p>
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	<p>As a regional service hub, Cranbrook has not seen a decrease in services beyond the shortage of family physicians, which is a challenge it shares with many Interior communities. What has changed is people's ability to access in-person services. Governments and some employers are increasingly relying on online self-service platforms to interact with clients and provide services. The implicit expectation in this transition is that people have ready access to the internet and the digital literacy skills to use the online services.</p> <p>Public libraries are cited as a place where people can get internet access. But, the actual level of service required by many people is much greater than just giving</p>

	<p>them access to a connected computer. They often require assistance to find the correct resource and then help to complete the transaction. And often people have questions about the service that Library staff do not have the expertise to answer.</p> <p>But staff recognized that often what people wanted was someone to help and reassure them, to relieve them of some of their stress. Library staff recognized this need and willingly helped to the best of their ability to make these transactions as positive and stress-free as possible. But it did take a lot of time, stretching already thinly stretched staff even further.</p>
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	<p>The Library used the 2020 provincial technology infrastructure grant to upgrade its wireless network infrastructure and acquire a 4-year license for mobile printing. The challenge is that most IT and telecommunication costs are ongoing operational expenses rather than capital costs that can be funded through one-time grants.</p> <p>Being located at the edge of downtown, the Library theoretically has access to the higher bandwidth that is needed to adequately meet public demand as well as core operational requirements. However, this would require an increase in ongoing connectivity funding which is not feasible given the chronic financial pressure on all operational aspects.</p> <p>Increasing the bandwidth would have a dramatic and immediate positive impact on members of the public who rely on the Library's internet connection to stay in touch with family, apply for jobs and even do job interviews, access online services, and more.</p>
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	<p>The Library is working with the City to revitalize the outside entrances to the facility to make the approaches safer and more accessible. The flooring in the entrance and employee work areas is scheduled to be replaced in 2024.</p>
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	<p>Community access to the Library's location at the north end of Cranbrook's downtown is relatively good. The facility is fully accessible and there is a bus stop in close proximity. The amount of parking in the parking lot is limited as several other municipal and government offices are located in the same building.</p> <p>The challenge is that the Library has no presence in the outlying communities it serves in Electoral Area C of the Regional District of East Kootenay beyond providing access to its digital resources.</p>
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	<p>Most of the people from vulnerable communities who use the Library use it in a safe, respectful manner. However, instances of disruptive behaviour or health-related issues are not uncommon, with the ambulance and police having to be called in a number of times over the year to assist patrons in medical distress or behaving in a manner that threatened the safety of others in the</p> <p>Through a subscription provided by the Kootenay Library Federation, employees have access to the Niche Academy's Homelessness Training. It gave them the knowledge and skills on how to interact with people in a respectful manner and de-escalate tense situations to ensure the Library is a safe environment for everyone who is in it, the public and employees.</p>

Other (please specify)	<p>Time demands for administrative duties have increased dramatically over the past few years to deal with emerging provincial requirements – ensuring the Library remains in compliance with current PHO orders and the new provincial paid sick leave legislation, and rewriting the provincial grant report to meet new or changed reporting requirements. As such additional tasks all relate to time-sensitive legal requirements, either additional staff time must be created to deal with them or existing staff time must get cut from other operational areas to create time to deal effectively with these important administrative tasks.</p> <p>Due to financial constraints, the Library was not in a position to add more staff time. Rather, it reallocated staff time previously dedicated to activities such as collection maintenance, planning new programs and services, and applying for grants to fund new initiatives.</p>
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#### 4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

*Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.*

Library Director Signature:



Date: 16 March 2022

Board Chair Signature:



Date: 16 March 2022