2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Grand Forks & District 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 Grand Forks & District Public Library is located in the heart of the Kootenay Boundary region. Serving the communities of the City of Grand Forks, Christina Lake (Area C), and rural Grand Forks (Area D), our library is an important community hub for a population of approximately 9000 people. Our population is a bit older than in other British Columbia communities, with many choosing Grand Forks and the surrounding area as a place to retire. Although it can be a quiet place during the winter, warmer months find our area bustling with tourists coming to enjoy the unparalleled beauty of the sunshine and our stunning lakes, rivers, and mountains. Industry in our area includes logging, agriculture, and some manufacturing. There is something for everyone in Grand Forks and the surrounding area, and at the Grand Forks & District Public Library we strive to provide excellent service to all demographics of our community.

2021 looked much like the second half of 2020. We saw an increase in daily visits and circulation, though it was still significantly lower than it was in 2019. With the exception of an outdoor version of our Kids' Summer Reading Club, we continued to do programming online only. Due to staffing and funding issues, we were only able to offer limited program opportunities, but thanks to a Kootenay Library Federation shared programming initiative, we were able to provide several virtual programs which would not have been possible otherwise.

The Board adopted new Strategic Goals in 2021. They optimistically anticipated the pandemic ending last year, so we have stayed in the "Recover: offer library services safely during the pandemic." Phase for longer than we initially planned. Still, we managed to stay open and continue to offer almost all usual services throughout the 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
Kids' Summer Reading Club (SRC)

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
Our most popular annual program, the BC Kids' Summer Reading Club, was also our very first in-person programming since February 2020. 32 children participated in the in-person version, which ran for 8 weeks through July and August, all held outdoors. There were four groups of eight children, separated by age group, and they each attended once a week through the summer.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
The SRC in a major program that children across the province can join in different ways. This program is a longstanding tradition here, and we have had several kids participate year after year before being hired in their teens to help run the program that they grew up with. As our main goal in 2021 was to continue offering library services as normally as possible, it was wonderful to be able to provide this program safely in person.

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 program provides a much-needed support for children to improve or maintain their reading skills and avoid the summer slump that elementary aged children often experience.
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)	
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: Children were able to participate in in-person library programming, giving them the first opportunity to do so in over a year.

Intermediate: Caregivers reported increased reading ability and confidence in children who participated in the program.

Long-term: Children and caregivers are more aware of the services provided by the library, and will continue to use this and other public libraries.

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

Gallery 2 - Grand Forks Art Gallery provided us their courtyard as a safe outdoor space to hold the program - it would not have been possible without this. We also co-purchased an event tent with Gallery 2 which they also used for their children's summer programming.

The City of Grand Forks and Community Futures Boundary both provided some funding for the program.

The BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch worked with us to provide two different Story Walk special programs as part of the SRC as well.

Project/Program Name
Exterior Signage Upgrade

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
In 2020, the library adopted new branding. Through the first half of 2021, we replaced our exterior signs to be more exciting and to attract more visitors. We also installed a new bike rack consistent with the updated branding.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
Our previous exterior signs were outdated and in need of repair. Replacing the signage and adding vinyl to the building's exterior make the library appear more modern and dynamic. On each side of the building, there are now very large strategically placed signs that say simply "LIBRARY". These signs help members of the public identify the library building from distances of up to 200 metres away. The City of Grand Forks is pursuing a new tourism campaign surrounded around outdoor activities, namely biking. One part of this campaign is to encourage interesting and unique bike racks throughout the city, and so City Council was very excited about the prospect of our new design, as was the public when it was eventually installed.

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.	
5. **Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	
6. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	

7. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Improving the exterior appearance of the library helps us to encourage new people to visit us for the first time, or for the first time in awhile. Participating in the local creative bike rack project makes the library a fun and exciting place to visit for locals and visitors from out of town.
8. **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: improving the exterior signage and decor makes the library more appealing to visit.

Intermediate: people continue to visit the library to see what is coming up next as they discover that there is always something new or interesting.

Long-term: public opinion of the library continues to see us as an innovative centre for recreation and lifelong learning.

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

Discover Grand Forks provided a grant to cover a portion of the bike rack construction.

Project/Program Name
Idea Lab Construction

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
Using funds from the 2020 Digital Initiatives Grant and donations from other partners, we built a new low-occupancy room which can be used for meetings, tutoring, quiet study, group projects, and more. We opened the room to the public at the beginning of 2021. It has modular tables and seating for up to four people and a digital whiteboard that anybody may use, and glass sliding doors for noise reduction and privacy.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
There is very little space available for small groups to meet in our area, and even less where they can do it for free. The room was booked for use over 80 times in 2021, and is used on a drop-in basis every single day. Users range from distance students taking exams, to school groups studying, to local non-profit board committees meeting and working together. At the time of writing, two elementary school students are working with a tutor on grammar using the digital whiteboard.

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.	
9. **Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	Simply providing a free space where people can meet or work that has all the necessary amenities and auditory privacy has made a huge impact for students and nonprofits in our area.
10. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	Library staff and the Library Director have used the Idea Lab several times to participate in virtual meetings which would have been difficult and distracting to do in shared workspaces.

11. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Especially in light of COVID-19 restrictions in other public spaces like cafes, and a hesitancy to meet in someone else's home, having the Idea Lab available for free has allowed non-profit societies to meet with one another and with local government members throughout the year.
12. **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: people in the community have access to a space to meet and work for free.

Intermediate: as knowledge of the Idea Lab has spread, more groups and individuals use it for diverse activities.

Long-term: there will be a consistent space available to support lifelong learning, the local economy, and the recreational pursuits of groups and individuals in our community.

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

In addition to funding from the Digital Initiatives Grant, the library received grants from the Y P Heung Foundation and the Grand Forks Credit Union to support this project.

Project/Program Name
Network Infrastructure Improvement

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
We repaired and upgraded the library's physical internet network cabling and server organization.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?
The library's internet infrastructure was haphazardly built and upgraded throughout the years, leaving us with a confusing array of cables which disappeared into floors and ceilings and were often not actually connected to the internet hardware, and a server setup which had outgrown its initial installation. Upgrading and repairing this hardware has improved internet connectivity throughout the building, and eliminated frequent issues with our server function.

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.	
13. **Improving Access** for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	There is now hardwired internet access available to the public if required.
14. **Building Capacity** for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	Library staff workstations had faster and more reliable access to internet, and it is now easier to move workstations around the building as needed to maintain social distancing and other changing needs.

15. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	
16. **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: there is better access to the internet at the library and server problems are reduced.

Intermediate: troubleshooting problems with the internet and any server issues with may arise will be simpler with fewer problems to consider.

Long-term: we will have more flexibility in how staff occupy the office space in the library. We will also have increased capacity to improve our internet speed or utility with a better understanding of the network construction.

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

Funding for this project was provided entirely by the BC Libraries Cooperative via the Digital Initiatives Grant.

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)	We converted our public meeting/programming room to offices in 2020 for social distancing, and this continued through 2021. This meant that we were unable to provide our large meeting room to community groups, which was a major issue throughout the pandemic. We did not have adequate space indoors to offer in-person programming, so we have not offered any throughout the year. There was significant staff absenteeism while staff members experiencing COVID-like symptoms awaited test results or for their symptoms to completely resolve.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	During the heat dome period at the beginning of summer 2021, there was no cooling centre in our entire community. The library provided the only space with air conditioning, water, and seating for people needing relief from temperatures that soared above 47 degrees in the shade. Due to funding and staffing ability, we were unable to increase our hours into the early evening or on Canada Day, so we were unable to provide this service throughout the entire heat dome. A wildfire in the Okanagan affected Shaw internet service throughout the city. The library did not have internet access for nearly two weeks. This meant that we could not access our catalogue or provide computers to the public during that time. We used an offline module to check items out to patrons, and connected to the internet at once a day at Gallery 2 (their provider is Telus and it was not affected by the outage) to upload the data.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	We did not receive our full funding request in 2021, and so we laid off one part time position and reduced open hours by three hours per week. We expect this loss of time to continue in the foreseeable future.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	Mental and physical health and wellness for library staff, the Library Director, and board members have all been challenging throughout the pandemic. Many sick time banks were completely depleted through the year in staff who generally had a significant amount pre-pandemic. Some staff took health-related leaves of absence, which is not typical at our library.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	

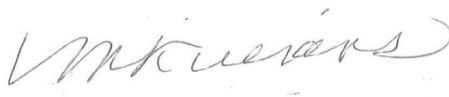|	
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	Our building is in need of renovations including new flooring, front doors, and main service desk. We are responsible for the total cost of the flooring and will likely be required to pay most of the cost for the front doors. We do not have any kind of capital spending allowance with local government, so all funds for these must be raised internally.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	We do not have adequate funding to be open every day, so there are two days each week that there is no library access.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	Like many rural communities, Grand Forks does not have good access to any social services. In combination with the ongoing mental health and opioid crises, this means that our library often acts as a day shelter for people going through very difficult times. It can be difficult for staff to deal with challenging behaviours while maintaining the library as a welcoming and safe place for all community members.
Other (please specify)	

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: Date: 21 March 2022

Board Chair Signature: Date: 21 March 2022