

## 2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

### LIBRARY NAME

New Westminster 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).**

New Westminster Public Library is a 2-branch Municipal Library. The main branch is in the busy Uptown commercial district, and the smaller Queensborough Branch is located in the Queensborough Community Centre, within close proximity to an elementary and a middle school. The library also has book return kiosks at City Hall, and at a busy Community Centre. The library has an average of 55 permanent and auxiliary staff, and unionized staff are members of CUPE 387. New Westminster is a community of approximately 82,000 residents, and is located in the heart of Metro Vancouver. A hub for commercial traffic, with easy access to major bridges and highways, New Westminster is a rapidly growing community. Multi-unit developments in the downtown area, and sustained development in the Queensborough neighbourhood have increased density, and added to the diversity of our already multi-cultural community. New Westminster has a thriving arts community, excellent shopping and entertainment, well-regarded public and private schools, and large campuses of Douglas College and the Justice Institute of British Columbia. New Westminster is also home to Royal Columbian Hospital, one of the province's most important critical care centers, and the City's largest employer. Royal Columbian is also in the midst of significant expansion that will see significant growth of services, research and teaching facilities built over the next decade.

Significant challenges in 2021 included the rise in people experiencing homelessness in both the downtown city core, and in the uptown area around the library. Like many communities, we continue to evolve library services, community partnerships, and staff training to help us better assist people experiencing homelessness as well as those effected by the opioid crises, extreme weather events, and the evolving nature of the pandemic.

### 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.

<b>Project/Program Name</b>	
<b>Indigenous Film Series</b>	
<b>Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.</b>	
<p>The New Westminster Public Library partnered with the New Westminster Museum and Archives to bring a four-part Indigenous Film series. The goal was to centre the voices and experience of Indigenous lives, as told through the richness of Indigenous writing and film. Through discussions related to each film, participants had the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue, learning, and inclusive relationship-building with all members of the community. Participants viewed selected films ahead of time and then joined an online discussion hosted by the library, but lead by members of our local Indigenous community.</p>	
<b>How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?</b>	
<p>This program supports several of NWPL's <a href="#">strategic goals</a>, such as:</p> <p><b>Goal 1: CREATE INVITING AND SAFE SPACES WHERE EVERYONE IS WELCOME</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pivoting the program to be held virtually during the height of the pandemic to ensure public health and safety needs are met</li> <li>- Ensuring that land acknowledgements and code of conduct/cultural sensitivity expectations were shared with everyone at the start of each session in order to nurture a respectful environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Goal 2: DELIVER A DIVERSE RANGE OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports collaboration with Indigenous knowledge keepers throughout BC</li> </ul> <p><b>Goal 3: CONNECT THE COMMUNITY TO A WORLD OF IMAGINATION, DISCOVERY AND LITERACY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Program developed to centre Indigenous voices, offering a chance to learn through a perspective that is often overlooked</li> </ul> <p><b>Goal 4: ADVANCE AND ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN OUR ORGANIZATION AND IN OUR COMMUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports the library's commitment to Reconciliation</li> </ul> <p><b>Goal 6: SUPPORT AND NURTURE CIVIC AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held in partnership with the New Westminster Museum and Archives</li> <li>- Encourages outreach and relationship-building efforts between the library and local Indigenous peoples.</li> </ul>	
<b>How does this project/program support the <a href="#">B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service</a>? Please provide information for as many goals as applicable.</b>	
<p>1. <b>Improving Access for British Columbians</b> (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)</p>	<p>Films chosen for discussion were all available to stream for free on-line. Program sessions were hosted virtually, allowing participants to attend from the comfort of their homes (or any other location with internet access). A broader roster of discussion facilitators could be asked to participate, as the barrier of travel was not an issue.</p>

<p>2. <b>Building Capacity</b> for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)</p>	<p>Allows for staff to engage in relationship-building with members of the local Indigenous community. This program is also a key component towards developing an intentional framework for engaging in the Reconciliation process (in support of NWPL's Strategic Goal #4).</p>
<p>3. <b>Advancing Citizen Engagement</b> (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)</p>	<p>This program brings the local community together to foster knowledge-sharing, collaboration and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in a safe and supportive environment.</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	

This program was developed with the following key objectives in mind:

1. Foster community connection to and awareness of Indigenous ways of knowing, perspectives and culture.
2. Ground this learning and relationship building in the community context.
3. Expect that the program vision and objective will involve ongoing feedback and necessary growth.
4. Provide an accessible, safe, and engaging learning environment for all involved.

The expected outcomes from these objectives include:

**Short- Term Outcomes:**

- Increase awareness within our community of contemporary Indigenous issues and how this has been shaped through our colonial history
- Provide a platform to hold space for the individual learning process, for both moderators and participants
- Develop a consistent method of evaluation to keep on-track of delivering program objectives

**Medium-Term Outcomes:**

- Refine approach to better allow Indigenous moderators to guide content, method, and medium for future programs
- Develop a framework that considers feedback from both moderators and participants to meet ongoing Indigenous programming needs

**Long-Term Outcomes:**

- Develop strong reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous knowledge keepers
- Provide robust programming offerings from an Indigenous-led perspective
- Increase public engagement and interest in attending future Indigenous-centred programs
- be recognized as a safe and respectful learning environment for both moderators and community participants to engage in.

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

Yes, this program series was held in partnership with the New Westminster Museum and Archives. They assisted with outreach, promotion and hosting duties, as well as provided half of the funding to cover honorariums.

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

Project/Program Name
<b>Reconnecting through Story</b>
<b>Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.</b>
This program series aimed to reconnect with families, and support our recovery from the pandemic by providing outreach to diverse populations. Two pilot projects designed to extend the library's reach in the community included a series of story times that travelled to different parks and public spaces throughout the city. The second series, Drag Queen Storytimes, was a first for this library, and included a live event in a city park and virtual, real-time program.
<b>How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?</b>

**Goal 1: CREATE INVITING AND SAFE SPACES WHERE EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

Reconnecting through Story included culturally diverse programs, and were in locations that were more accessible, helping us create safe and welcoming spaces to access library services

**Goal 2: DELIVER A DIVERSE RANGE OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY**

The Drag Queen story times have inspired a new series of programs for 2022 that will engage more members of the community.

**Goal 6: SUPPORT AND NURTURE CIVIC AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

The library partnered with the New West Pride Society

**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.**

4. Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	Offering story times in different venues, including virtually, improves access to library services.
---	---

**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.**

**Short Term Outcomes:**

- Increased community participation in library programs
- Increased staff understanding of community neighborhoods

**Intermediate Outcomes:**

- Increased collaboration with Community Organizations
- Increased awareness of library services

**Long Term Outcomes:**

- Library programs reflect the diversity in the community

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

The library partnered with the New West Pride Society who helped us find a performer.

**Project/Program Name**

**Reading Link Challenge Moves Online**

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

The Reading Link Challenge is a regional program that encourages children in Grades 4 and 5 to get excited about reading. Students read six novels preselected by library staff across the Lower Mainland, then form teams to compete in a trivia challenge about the books beginning at the school level. The top teams advance to compete at the school district level, and finally at the regional level's "Grand Challenge".

The pandemic posed a major threat to this program. But library staff worked with local schools to create and coordinate a robust plan to move the entire program online. Library staff provided training for teachers on accessing digital resources and navigating through some of the challenges of working within a virtual environment.

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

**Goal 2: DELIVER A DIVERSE RANGE OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY & Goal 3: CONNECT THE COMMUNITY TO A WORLD OF IMAGINATION, DISCOVERY AND LITERACY**

Moving the Reading Link Challenge online allowed students the opportunity to continue to participate in an exciting and educational program despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges. The move also rekindled an interest in library e-books amongst teachers, who found that students were not always able to make it in to the library. Library staff were able to support this by teaching select district staff how to access e-books, which could then be passed on to their colleagues.

**Goal 6: SUPPORT AND NURTURE CIVIC AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

The Reading Link Challenge is a program that depends on a close partnership with our local school district staff. Library staff make regular contact with teacher-librarians and teachers throughout the school year to support the promotion, planning, and delivery of the program; moving the program online required an additional level of joint planning and support. This regular contact not only resulted in a successful RLC program, but it strengthened the library's connection to, and visibility in, our local schools.

**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.**

<b>2. Building Capacity for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)</b>	This project introduced new software to select children's library staff (Google Forms & Spreadsheets), and strengthened capacity in using other technologies such as Microsoft Teams.
<b>3. Advancing Citizen Engagement (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)</b>	Moving the Reading Link Challenge online strengthened our previously existing partnerships and connections with SD40, and provided opportunities for the library to share specialized knowledge (e-library access) with district staff.



**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.**

**Short Term Outcomes:**

- Increased participation and excitement amongst school-aged children for reading and the Reading Link challenge
- Increased knowledge among teachers about library ebooks and how to access digital library collections
- Increased awareness among teachers of assistance available from library staff
- Increased awareness among students of children's authors and books

**Medium-Term Outcomes:**

- Students more likely to see the library and library educational activities as fun and enjoyable
- More children are excited about reading
- Students read more

**Long Term Outcomes:**

- New Westminster students develop greater literacy skills and as a result do better in school
- New Westminster students develop a life-long interest in reading and learning

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

The Reading Link Challenge is a partnership between the public library and local school district. School district staff help to deliver the Challenge in their schools, with planning support and guidance from library staff.

### 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>NWPL adjusted many services and implemented new procedures to help contain the spread of COVID19. The library:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailored many programs to an online format, but with moderate success. Families with preschoolers were difficult to engage in this new format, especially the longer the pandemic continued. One attempt to mitigate the effects of this was to move story times outside in local parks.</li> <li>• Provided staff and visitors with disposable masks and implemented a mandatory mask policy.</li> <li>• Maintained a rigorous cleaning schedule</li> <li>• Implemented some work from home opportunities for staff when feasible</li> </ul>
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborated with other city facilities to provide heat relief strategies for residents and a cooling centre during heat waves and the heat dome with extended library hours</li> <li>• Ongoing participation on City of New Westminster Emergency preparedness and planning team</li> </ul>
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fines and fees are usually a source of income. The lower circulation of materials and a flexible approach during the pandemic have decreased the income dramatically.</li> </ul>
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapting to the evolving realities of the pandemic created uncertainty and varying degrees of anxiety and stress for everyone, staff and visitors alike. Those staff who worked directly with the public had an additional layer of stress navigating the different waves and appropriate responses required.</li> <li>• The affect of the pandemic, extreme weather events, and the opioid crises on more vulnerable populations became another reality for library staff, sometimes in their personal lives, and increasingly part of working life. Like the pandemic itself, these all add to the overall mental health and wellness of staff, and the people we serve.</li> <li>• Staff training has pivoted to include more training and awareness on homelessness, drug use and overdose risk, isolation, combatting heat exhaustion, and mental health wellness and awareness.</li> <li>• Supervising staff in this new reality, while also navigating mental health wellness and generalized anxiety also needs to be incorporated into management training</li> </ul>
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the pandemic evolved, some business and services were not able to continue operating. A local family service agency, for example, lost their facility space when restrictions prevented them from offering their programs and services as they relied on in-person contact to do so. This displaced service to a number of mostly newcomer families who relied on the agency for support.</li> </ul>



Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A major leak required building envelope repair and financing from the City of New Westminster, this made the outdoor section of the library unavailable for several months</li> </ul>
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Westminster has experienced a dramatic increase of people experiencing homelessness, and an increase of cases related to the opioid pandemic. The library, being a public space, has absorbed many of these residents, both inside and on library grounds.</li> </ul>
Other (please specify)	

#### 4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

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

Library Director Signature: George Anderson

Date: April 22, 2022

Board Chair Signature: K. Anderson

Date: April 22/22