

2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Creston Valley 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](#)
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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).

Creston Valley Public Library serves a population of just over 13,000 people within the Town of Creston and Regional District of Central Kootenay Areas A, B, and C. A few defining characteristics:

- Creston Valley Public Library operates on the unceded homelands of the Yaqan Nukiy people of the Ktunaxa Nation
- Approximately 92% of the population identifies as Caucasian, 6% as Indigenous, and less than 2% as other visible minorities
- Creston has an older population, with a median age of 57.6, compared to the provincial median of 43
- The median total income of households in 2017 was \$46,421, compared to the provincial median of \$84,850.

The biggest challenge facing Creston Valley Public Library is the continued increase of operational costs without a similar increase in provincial funding. The Regional District of Central Kootenay continues to increase our annual operating grant as per the relevant CPI (Consumer Price Index) despite collecting lower-than-average tax rates. However, the provincial grants have remained relatively the same over the past 10 years.

Last year's technology grant provided a much needed boost to our digital infrastructure and collections. However, without annual, reliable increases in operating funds, we cannot pay our staff the wages required to improve and expand our services. We also face an impossible task when it comes to hiring new talent or succession planning. In addition, no outside grants are available to provide much needed structural upgrades to our facility. It is also a significant challenge to advocate for the importance of public libraries in our community when the province is continually signaling the opposite by decreasing our funding.

Nevertheless, our outcomes are comparable to larger and much better funded libraries, thanks in part to talented, long-term staff, a volunteer workforce, and the tremendous goodwill of our patrons.

This year our library's services continued to be heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We:

- Hosted 29, 624 in-person visits
- Provided service during 1,700 open hours
- Circulated 94, 416 items, both digital and physical
- Registered 381 new patrons
- Facilitated programs for 1240 in-person participants and online participants
- Provided access to 1247 public internet sessions through our computer workstations

We spent the year developing a new Strategic Framework for 2022 and beyond. The framework achieved Board approval and was launched in early 2022. We look forward, now, to doing the daily work together to support our 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
Developing new Strategic Framework 2022 and beyond
Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.
<p>We knew developing a new strategic framework during COVID would be a challenge. So we decided instead of insufficient community consultation, we would take a deep dive with internal development and expertise. The result is a robust framework developed with the following input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Planning Committee – comprised of volunteers, staff, and board members – tackled the big ideas, an environmental scan, identified the key forces of change, and came up with a solid base for further planning through several in-person and online discussions• Outside Consultant – Laura Francis, OneDay Community Planning – worked pro-bono with the Library Director to provide in-depth personal planning through one-to-one sessions. Developed strategic plan template.• Library Board Chair – Joan Hedstrom – worked with Library Director to draft strategic framework using data and stories collected throughout the planning process• January 2022 – Board votes to approve and implement Strategic Framework
How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?

You can find the full Strategic Framework here: <https://crestonlibrary.com/about-us/library-information/strategic-plan/>

The Framework outlines the areas we will focus on to support our community. We are currently working on developing concrete goals to tackle and implement these broader initiatives for the next year.

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.

<p>1. Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)</p>	<p>The COVID pandemic has polarized our community (as elsewhere) and part of that is a result of poor digital literacy when it comes to information consumption. Our new Strategic Framework is focused on Access & Learning and tackling our community's digital divide. We have devices, software, and staff expertise. However, without increased operational funding from the Province, we cannot hire enough staff to keep up with the demand. We will continue to fall short if our Provincial Funding doesn't increase.</p>
<p>2. Building Capacity for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)</p>	<p>Most of the training support for our staff, Library Director, and Board in 2021 came from the Kootenay Library Federation, the Association of BC Public Library Directors, and the British Columbia Library Trustees Association. We will continue to look to these Library Partners for support. Our Framework also prioritizes a strong organization as one of its pillars, highlighting providing support to our team to further support our community.</p>
<p>3. Advancing Citizen Engagement (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)</p>	<p>Our Strategic Framework prioritizes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning library service to act on the calls to action as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Report • Creating an environment where the community can share ideas and resources • Identifying and removing barriers to service • Dismantling racism in our own organization and promoting anti-racism in our community <p>In 2021 we pivoted and adapted our service to incorporate a variety of new Public Health Orders without reducing our operating hours. We assisted patrons with registering ArriveCAN and proof of vaccination documents. Our local ServiceBC and US Border Crossing Station both regularly directed community members to our library for assistance.</p>

<p>4. Enhancing Governance of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)</p>	<p>Our Board adapted well to online meetings this year. Our new Strategic Framework prioritizes preparing for robust succession planning and governance training for the next year. I also applaud our library board for prioritizing staff mental health by closing our doors to public service for a full week in November 2021 while maintaining regular wages so our staff didn't have to worry about the bills while they had some much-needed rest.</p> <p>In addition, our Board Chair, Joan Hedstrom, has moved our Board files online and created organized orientation packages for new trustees. Her calm, empathetic leadership and support has been invaluable in guiding our library through this difficult time.</p>
<p>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.</p>	

We will be in a better position to assess the outcomes once we've decided on the concrete initiatives that we will be prioritizing in 2022. Our goal for 2021 was to do the work to get the Strategic Framework ready and in place. At the same time we adapted our services to several changing public health orders without reducing our operating hours.

CRESTON VALLEY

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Empowering access to a world of ideas

2022 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK MISSION

Our library is a welcoming space for the creation and sharing of information, ideas, and culture.



ACCESS & LEARNING

The Library is a welcoming space for all, supporting life-long learning in our community.



PATRON-CENTERED SERVICES

The Library works in relationship with our community and its members to further the public good.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Library values the humanity of each of our patrons and the community as a whole.



A STRONG ORGANIZATION

The Library empowers management, staff, and volunteers to support the community.

2022 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

ACCESS & LEARNING

The Library is a welcoming space for all, supporting life-long learning in our community.

We will:

- Support all types of literacy
- Support and promote digital literacy to address the digital divide
- Provide platforms and opportunities for life-long learning
- Invest in high-quality and trustworthy collections from a broad range of perspectives
- Provide equitable access to services that enable our patrons to better participate in our community
- Inspire and support the creative endeavours of our community

PATRON-CENTERED SERVICES

The Library works in relationship with our community and its members to further the public good.

We will:

- Meet people where they are
- Develop relationships with our stakeholders, community partners, and community members to better inform and direct our services
- Create an environment where the community can share ideas and resources
- Respond to community needs

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Library values the humanity of each of our patrons and the community as a whole.

We will:

- Listen to and learn from members of our community who are experiencing the effects of bigotry and racism
- Identify and remove barriers to service
- Treat all members with dignity and respect
- Support reconciliation by acting on the calls to action as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation report
- Dismantle racism within our own organization and promote anti-racism in our community

A STRONG ORGANIZATION

The Library empowers management, staff, and volunteers to support the community.

We will:

- Work with stakeholders to ensure our financial sustainability
- Create an environment that values volunteers
- Support our staff with the training they need to meet community needs
- Actively participate in professional organizations that support management and staff
- Pursue and promote operational methods that demonstrate environmental stewardship
- Invest in succession planning and governance training for the board

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

We will prioritize partnerships in implementing our future initiatives as outlined in the strategic framework.

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>Our total COVID expenses up to the end of 2021 were as follows: 2020: \$6140 <u>2021: \$1681</u> Total: \$7821</p> <p>These funds were used to adapt our public space to accommodate public health measures to keep our staff, volunteers, and patrons safe while still making core library services available. In that same time, our provincial funding increased by the following: 2020: \$8179 2021: \$0</p> <p>Although we received a noticeable increase in funding in 2020, none of those funds were allowed to be used for COVID expenses as they were exclusively earmarked for technology-related initiatives. Therefore, we funded our adaptation to COVID operations entirely through local government funding. In addition, no COVID relief funding (either from a federal or provincial level) was made available for Public Libraries.</p>
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	<p>The library served as a cooling centre (with cold iced-tea and water available at a drink station) during the heat dome of 2021. Our community experienced almost non-stop dense smoke throughout July and August. The library provided space for residents to breath easier and cool off (through masks).</p>

Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Our library's collective agreement provides staff with 2% wage increases each year. However, our local government could only afford a 1.5% in operating budget grants for 2021. At this rate, we are approaching a crisis in maintaining sustainable payroll coverage for 2022.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	We lost all our part-time programming staff during COVID. One of our most senior staff also retired in 2021. Although our staffing contingent has shrunk and our programming ability was limited, we have successfully maintained all our regular operating hours. We have an excellent team of staff and volunteers and our Board is very supportive of our overall health and well-being.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	There has essentially been no teen programming available at our library since March 2020. We were able to run an in-person Summer Reading Club program for 7 ½ weeks until rising COVID cases in our community and thick fire smoke resulted in cancelled programming for the final weeks of August 2021.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	Because our proximity to the Town of Creston, we have excellent internet service. We added 2 wifi hubs to the outside of the building to assist patrons 24/7.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	The Regional District provided the library with a comprehensive assessment of our facility (which they own) in a 150 page report. We are in-between our lease agreements but they have signaled greater support in maintaining our facility and infrastructure. Our first priority will be installing proper fire alarm and detection equipment as we currently don't have any.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	Our library facility isn't too far from our main downtown strip. We are located down the street from our high school and a couple of blocks from our RCMP detachment. Our local bus service has a stop directly in front of our building.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	Creston doesn't have any local services for people experiencing homelessness. We had a regular patron this winter that used our library as a warm place to be during the day but when temperatures really plummeted they had to move on to another community to access services.
Other (please specify)	Public Libraries need better wages for staff (who have encountered a great deal of abuse during 2020 and 2021 while trying to enforce Provincial Public Health measures) and more staffing positions to properly support our community's information, social, and learning needs. If you are interested in more of our programs and services, please refer to our Provincial Grants Reports from 2002 – 2020. For this report I've chosen to focus on how the Province can contribute to maintaining and improving our service. Thank you.

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____

Date: 11/03/22

Board Chair Signature: _____

Date: March 11, 2022

Joan Hedstrom

