

## 2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

### LIBRARY NAME

Fort St. John 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).**

**Fort St. John Public Library (FSJPL)** is a medium-sized library located in downtown Fort St. John. It is a vibrant and busy community hub serving a population of approximately 35,000. We are housed in the North Peace Cultural Centre (NPCC). The NPCC includes a theatre, art gallery and a variety of arts program rooms. Fort St. John is a unique northern community that attracts young families and continues to have one of the highest birthrates per capita in Canada.

The FSJPL is governed by the Fort St John Public Library Association (FSJPLA), as identified in Part 4 of the **Library Act**, and relies on grants, fundraising and donations. The FSJPLA receive grants from the City of Fort St John, Areas B and C of the Peace River Regional District, the Province of British Columbia, and other public and private sources. Although greatly appreciated, this funding does not meet the needs of the library.

In 2021, we continued to face challenges relating to Covid-19 and its resulting restrictions. We also faced a high staff turnover rate. Our Association continues to face challenges relating to our location within a rented facility, which (as outlined in the 2020 report) can only provide approximately one-third of the square footage needed for our population. In June 2021, the City of FSJ announced plans to take over management of the NPCC from the North Peace Cultural Society Board. This has resulted in a lengthy and emotional community debate. A mediation process has been imposed on the North Peace Cultural Society Board and the City of Fort St. John. This process is ongoing as of March 2022. In 2021, with the end of the discussion regarding the creation of a Municipal Library between the City of Fort St John and the FSJPLA, we shifted focus. We focused on better utilization of our space by developing stronger community partnerships in which to provide additional program spaces and marketing of the library. This shift in focus allowed for better use of the resources we currently have to provide effective and useful service to the community, while continuing to advocate for more funding and resources.

Despite the challenges listed above, we have continued serving our community with quality programming, professional staff, and a carefully managed collection, which has allowed us to meet the diverse needs of 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.

<b>Project/Program Name</b>	
CLICK ( <i>Creating Literacy in Computer Knowledge</i> )	
<b>Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.</b>	
The Fort St. John Public Library's free computer literacy program helps community members with basic computer skills such as accessing government forms, searching for employment, connecting with friends and family online, and navigating our increasingly digital world. CLICK stands for <i>Creating Literacy in Computer Knowledge</i> . This program was created to meet B.C.'s strategic goals for library service which recognizes that not all British Columbians have equitable access to technology. In 2021, CLICK was generously supported through the Peace River Regional District and the BC Provincial Gaming Grant.	
<b>How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?</b>	
FSJPL places high importance on accessibility and being a hub for learning in Fort St. John. CLICK supports this strategic goal, and our community, by providing essential technology training and support to all community members regardless of economic or social background.	
<b>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>	
1. <b>Improving Access</b> for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	CLICK offers free computer training and assistance to those who otherwise cannot afford it or have limited knowledge of how to use technology. Given the importance of knowing how to use computers both for work and daily life, developing these skills is essential.
2. <b>Building Capacity</b> for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	Our CLICK instructor is continually learning and experiencing new things while using many different programs, operating systems, devices, and pieces of equipment. In becoming more proficient in the technologies that our patrons use, our CLICK instructor is then able to teach our staff about these technologies and they are better able to serve our patrons as well.
3. <b>Advancing Citizen Engagement</b> (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Many CLICK sessions centre around using the Microsoft Office Suite/Google Docs, as well as web browsing for job hunting, benefits access, and other government services.

4. <b>Enhancing Governance</b> of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	The CLICK training program is a significant example of service delivery to library patrons. This understanding is not lost on members of the library board. It provides strong evidence that these types of programs/services are needed in our community. As a result, our strategic plan incorporates this service goal. The FSJPL board recognizes that services and accessibility need to improve and grow to reach any community member seeking them.
<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>	
The CLICK program re-started in June 2021 after our previous funding ended in late 2020. These duties were taken up by a staff member as a part-time instructor, and they continued to operate out of our new Connectivity Centre. The CLICK program fills an essential, mandated need for free computer training. Many of our community members do not have basic computer literacy skills or access to technology and the internet. Together the CLICK program and our newly expanded Technology Lending Library are housed in our new Connectivity Centre which provides a safe and private space for individualized learning.	
<b>Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?</b>	
CLICK involves a funding partnership with the PRRD and the Province of BC.	

<b>Project/Program Name</b>
3D Printing & Related New Technology Development
<b>Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.</b>
<p>The Summer Reading Club 2021 saw an unprecedented level of funding for projects. We used this funding to purchase several pieces of equipment and technology to supplement SRC programming and regular programming. The goal of these purchases was to allow more options for passive and on-going technology programming.</p> <p>The major purchases included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Makerbot 3D Printer + Supplies</li> <li>• A Cricut Cutting Machine + Supplies</li> <li>• A Nintendo Switch + Controllers + Game Collection</li> <li>• Additional Make N' Take technology kits.</li> </ul> <p>Following this, in Mid-2021, we received a generous donation from one of our local Rotary Clubs to purchase five additional Windows laptops for programming.</p>
<b>How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community?</b>
FSJPL is a community pillar, and programming (particularly STEAM training) is becoming increasingly wanted and important. FSJPL has built an impressive technology collection which includes lendable iPads, programmable robots and public computers. Being more agile and expansive with our technology allows for more diverse programs. For example, with our Nintendo Switch, more passive and group-based tournaments are possible. The 3D printer enables makerspace type programs as well as a small income service. These technologies demonstrate we are continually seeking to improve and build our services to community members.
<b>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>

1. <b>Improving Access</b> for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)	These new services provide access to new technologies that have not previously been offered by FSJPL.
2. <b>Building Capacity</b> for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	Having this new technology, and their related programs/services, has required staff to train to use it and market it.
3. <b>Advancing Citizen Engagement</b> (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	The addition of a 3D Printer has excited many FSJPL patrons. Many members our community would not normally have access to this technology. This printer provides firsthand experience to people wanting to know how it works and its multiple applications. This will eventually include learning how to design/modify their own prints.
4. <b>Enhancing Governance</b> of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	This technology development project directly advances the priorities set out in our 2019-2021 strategic plan to purchase new equipment and tech to support STEAM learning going forward.
<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>	
These new pieces of equipment have allowed FSJPL to start new services, such as a 3D Printing Service that otherwise could not exist. This technology again fills an essential need for technology and STEAM programming that our patrons are greatly interested in. In terms of short-term outcomes, this technology allows us to add new services.	
<b>Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)?</b>	
FSJPL had several partners that supported the SRC with funding, including: the North Peace Savings and Credit Union, FSJ CO-OP, and local companies such as Northern Metalic, Pembina, and Enbridge.	

<b>Project/Program Name</b>
Homebound Outreach & Community Stakeholder Engagement
<b>Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program.</b>

- **Library Outreach Services**

- **Local Stakeholder Engagement**

Due to the continued limitations of Covid-19, our ability to program outside of our Summer Reading Club, and specialized in-person programs with our city recreation department, our outreach to the community was less than previous years. Despite this, we made sure to communicate and participate with our community partners as much as possible. Our long-running Homebound Services program has continued through the efforts of our Access Services Coordinator.

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

Community engagement is an important aspect of FSJPL's services. Being out in the community is important because it keeps us at the forefront of our user's minds. We try to participate in as many community events (in-person or virtual) as possible during the year, advertise on local media (radio/newspapers/websites), and have regular contact with our local partners. We believe that FSJPL is a community cornerstone, and we will continue to ensure it is.

**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)	Our outreach service is important because it gives patrons access to books and other materials outside of regular library service or space. A large segment of our patron base is rural, particularly from Areas B and C of the PRRD. General stakeholders' engagement (such as contact/updates to our funders, partners, and fellow NELF Libraries) increases awareness of what FSJPL is doing and how we are growing.
2. <b>Building Capacity</b> for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)	Efforts have been made to engage with community partners to ensure lending collection items and equipment match with patron needs or wants. We have made efforts to regularly connect with our Indigenous communities and the local school district. Homebound Services is another example, requiring focused communication to seniors and isolated patrons. We continue to build a wider awareness that we serve rural as well as in-city users. Staff are continuing to develop marketing techniques using local and social media.
3. <b>Advancing Citizen Engagement</b> (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)	Fundamentally, Homebound Services help patrons who normally would not be able to access our services otherwise. This fits squarely with our accessibility mandate. General communications with community partners in 2021 showed increased interest from partner organizations and prominent community members.
4. <b>Enhancing Governance</b> of the library system (e.g., board/trustee training, developing best practices, strategic planning)	Increasing accessibility of services was (and remains) a major priority for the FSJPLA Board. It has been a major component/goal of all recent strategic plans, as well as the current 2022-2025 plan. Homebound Services has consistently been raised as the benchmark program we offer to assist members of the community.

**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 have been to maintain library services, even in the face of Covid-19 closures and restrictions, as well as the changes to operations that come after Covid-19. Medium-term outcomes have been to keep the library relevant, as well as justify the existing programs, and proving the need for increasing it. Long-term outcomes have been to find ways to keep these services running.

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

Outreach partnerships with SONS (Save Our Northern Seniors), and Better at Home.

### 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.

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>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).</b>
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	Staff rose to the challenge by effectively undertaking the necessary precautions in cleaning and other mandated health-related measures. Staff mental health and stress levels caused by the challenges caused by Covid-19 and patron responses to it, was a challenge. Efforts were made to reduce this stress and support staff.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	The North Peace was spared the major forest fires, floods and extreme weather that impacted communities in other areas of the province.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	FSJPL ran consistent deficits prior to 2021. Major financial pressures are coming from items relating to increased operational costs and the cost of rent, which accounts for a significant percentage (10 %) our annual budget. Fundraising continues to be a major priority for the FSJPLA Board, and the Friends of FSJPL Group. There have been significant limitations on fundraising efforts due to Covid-19 restrictions. Considerable effort has been made to look for additional funding sources.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	FSJPL saw some turnover in 2021, particularly with a new Director, Accounts Admin, Program Coordinator, and circulation staff. Overall, Staff morale is good.

Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	Medical and Mental Health Services in Northern BC continue to have staffing issues. There is a challenge in recruiting and retaining health care professionals.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	Connectivity and WiFi has been excellent. We received a technology grant from the BC Co-Operative to update the number of access points and strength of our network in late 2021.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	The North Peace Cultural Centre is normally well maintained but has not received any major upgrades since its original construction in 1992. This has resulted in issues relating to our ceiling lighting and heating/AC systems.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	FSJPL is in downtown Fort St. John. Access for patrons is good. We are close to public bus stops, and major roads in FSJ. A significant limitation is being housed in a shared building. We do not have control over our exterior doors, so we are closed when NPCC is closed.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	FSJPL is located close to the FSJ Salvation Army, Northern Centre of Hope . As a result, we serve many underprivileged or those experiencing homelessness. As a result of our location, we continue to have members of the public, with drug additions, alcoholism, and mental health issues entering the library. A major goal continues to be providing appropriate training for staff. Mental Health services are limited in Northern BC, so getting appropriate training has been difficult.
Other (please specify)	N/A

#### 4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

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

Library Director Signature: Matthew Rankin

Date: March 16<sup>th</sup> 2022

Board Chair Signature: RVB

Date: March 16/22

