

2021 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

FRASER VALLEY REGIONAL 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 text boxes will expand as you type, so if needed, you can provide more detail. Click on a linked title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

- ☐ [1. INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE](#)
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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 (250-500 words).

Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL), with 25 libraries and a central administrative centre, serves over 750,000 residents spread over 13,000 square kilometers that are governed by 15 municipalities and regional districts. In each of our communities, the local library is a trusted partner and is recognized as a vital community destination and resource for literacy, recreation, and informed decision making.

The communities and local governments we serve grapple with the same long list of huge challenges that impact our province and our nation: globalization, socio-economic change, sustainability, big data and smart technology, lifelong learning, aging demographics, and financing the future.

Spread across our region are people groups that are reflective of past and continued immigration to British Columbia, as well as industries that are both new and old – agriculture, forestry, and fishing to tourism, entertainment, and technology. The communities are dense and urban, as well as scattered and rural. Neighbourhoods are posh and upscale as well as humble and neglected. Roads are occupied by pedestrians and cyclists, mini-cars and buses, SUVs and pick-up trucks, delivery vehicles and semi-trailers. A snapshot of Fraser Valley Regional Library is a picture of the splendor and complexity of British Columbia society today.

2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Please any new or major ongoing projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, copy and paste the blank table. Use one table per project/program.

Project/Program Name

Bats for the People; People for the Bats

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program (250-500 words).



Read. Learn. Play. | www.fvrl.ca



In 2021 FVRL launched lending Bat Packs – but we didn't do it alone, and there were many unexpected returns for both the bats, and us!

The Bat Pack lending initiative arose through partnership with Community Bat Programs of BC and partial grant funding from the Government of British Columbia. With these supports FVRL launched 200 Bat Packs for lending to Fraser Valley citizens – each including:

- A Bat Echo Meter Touch 2 by Wildlife Acoustics,
- A custom-designed Quick-Start Guide,
- A full-colour illustrated copy of *Bat Citizens: Defending the Ninjas of the Night* by Rob Laidlaw, and
- A printed copy of the BC Bat-Friendly Communities Guide.



The Bat Echo Meter hears supersonic bat calls in your environment, plays them back in wavelengths humans can actually hear, and identifies the species of bat you recorded – including endangered bats!

We prepared original catalogue records and significant support documentation to support staff circulating the kits.

In addition to the lending sets, we also provided programming kits for staff. We prepared a full Bat Pack for each FVRL library and our mobile Library Live & On Tour (LiLi) coordinator. We also prepared 6 kits for group programming, shared among all our libraries. Together these sets are used by staff for library programs, displays, passive programming, outreach and community events.

We provided Bats 101 training for our staff, hosted by the Regional Coordinator for the Community Bat Programs of BC – and recorded the session for future on demand training needs. In this training library staff learned about local bats, bat activity, how to observe bats in nature, and tools that can help with bat watching. Staff gained insights and confidence to support speaking with customers about our Bat Pack lending initiative.

Finally, we launched a suite of promotional materials to accompany the Bat Pack launch. This includes a [Bat Pack webpage](#), in-library digital display sliders, social media promotion, media releases, posters etc – and a library-made promotional video celebrating the [Bat Packs at FVRL](#). We hosted an online bat detector giveaway contest – two lucky customers now have a bat detector of their very own! Lastly for promotion, we hosted two speakers for public presentations about bats:

- Merlin Tuttle on May 8th, and
- Kenneth Oppel on May 18th and 19th.



The importance of bats is often overlooked. These creatures are very important wildlife and face many threats. Bats directly contribute to pest management and agricultural yields – particularly important for economic success in the Fraser Valley. To protect bats, citizens must be informed and engaged to change behaviours and support municipal bat-protection efforts. Through our Bat Pack lending initiative we have not only busted bat myths for many staff and customers, but we’ve also inspired new willingness to take action on behalf of bats, put two municipalities on the path to becoming official Bat-Friendly Communities, and brought people together around an unlikely cause: bats.

How does this project/program support the library’s strategic goals and/or community (250-500 words)?

While on the surface lending Bat Packs seems like a stretch for traditional libraries, we’ve found them to be a perfect fit for our strategic goals:

Being nocturnal, bats are generally invisible. Bat detectors reveal bats in your environment – a rare experience! Experiences such as these look like simple play, but can inspire citizens to explore, study and work in subject areas they might not otherwise have considered. They can set people on whole new life paths! Further, inspired and educated citizens can encourage strong economic, creative and social growth in our communities at large.

The Bat Pack lending initiative easily satisfies our strategic goal to identify and explore non-traditional library collections and experiences. But beyond this obvious contribution, we’ve found the Bat Pack project also supports a broad swath of other FVRL strategic directions, as well as our Vision, Mission and Values.

Customers of all ages can benefit from hearing local bats and reading the kit materials – supporting lifelong learning, literacy and discovering new technologies. Being somewhat pricy and uncommon, lending bat detectors reduces access barriers for everyone. Our training and documentation work demonstrates respect for our staff, who have been responsive, continually growing their expertise and confidence to meet evolving customer needs.

We could not have launched this initiative on our own, so we also see this project is a shining example of harnessing collaboration and partnerships to maximize our potential to serve our communities. Further, having seen significant media uptake and positive feedback direct from customers, we believe the Bat Packs also raise our profile in the Fraser Valley as well as the library industry. Further, we've inspired other BC libraries such as the Kootenay Library Federation (launching in March) to lend Bat Packs, and are supporting other organizations (such as Thomson Rivers University) along this path as well.

So there – generally – is how the FVRL Bat Packs are fulfilling FVRL's Vision of improving the quality of life for our communities through knowledge, ideas, and experiences!

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please list as many goals as needed (250-500 words per goal)?

Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)

Have you ever seen a bat detector? Have you ever used one? Until this project came along, we hadn't either! They're about \$200 a piece and generally must be ordered cross border from the US manufacturer. They're also pretty high tech - making them attractive to the digitally-experienced – but also very simple to use, making them a good gateway device for the tech-inexperienced. We've prepared kits for both iOS and Android versions of the device. Further, bat detectors provide access to an experience humans literally cannot have without the device: hearing bats in your environment.

Many libraries offer specialized services such as lending non-traditional items through their largest central location only. FVRL has no 'central library'. This can be a logistical challenge – we must implement new initiatives at a grand scale, providing access to approximately 800,000 citizens through 25 locations and a mobile unit. We deliver Bat Packs upon request throughout our daily drivers' delivery route in urban and rural areas, from Tsawwassen to Boston Bar, including north of the Fraser from Pitt Meadows to Agassiz.

Fully 94% of the customers who completed our Bat Pack survey said this was the first time they had ever used a bat detector.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for information on short, medium, and long-term outcomes (500-1000 words).

Usually we conduct our full evaluation at one year, however, it has not yet been a full year since we launched the FVRL Bat Packs. What follows is preliminary data and analysis about whether the Bat Packs are meeting our intended outcomes so far. We collect data in the form of statistics, customer surveys, interviews, media analysis and qualitative customer feedback. Our customer survey has 61 responses so far. Here's how the Bat Packs are performing:

Increase customers' access to tools for personal growth and learning.

Customer survey data reveals that because of our FVRL Bat Pack initiative:

- 93% said they tried a bat detector for the first time.
- 93% said they learned something new about bats.
- 82% said they had fun!
- 78% said they learned something new about bat habitats.
- 78% said they learned something new about how to protect bats.

Typical comments from the survey include:

"We had a lot of fun with it and it was easy to use. It's wonderful that we can borrow these sorts of things from the library that we couldn't buy for ourselves and have unique experiences and learn new things together."

"I thoroughly enjoyed the bat pack eco meter and books and spent evenings out. Located the little brown bat ... even showed people walking by. So much learning, thank you."

"We first used the bat detector in our house and my Mom was not happy to find that we have two bats living in our attic!"

"I love this bat pack back pack!"

"Thank you for making people more aware of the importance of protecting bats and their habitats."

Customer borrowing and hold statistics revealed that in the first month, customers had already checked out all 200 kits, and 180 more had placed hold requests! We found Android kits circulate especially well.

Lastly, we enjoyed sharing our bat presentations with several classes in Valley schools. Our presenters spoke to 'packed' virtual rooms with well over 300 participants.

This early data suggests the FVRL Bat Packs are increasing our customers' access to tools for personal growth and learning. Customers are attending bat programs. They're borrowing the kits, even willing to wait for them. They have fun with the kits, overwhelmingly experiencing bat detectors for the first time. Further, customers say they are learning new things because of the kits.

Increase customers' sense of social connection / Decrease customers' social isolation.

Customer survey data reveals that because of our FVRL Bat Pack initiative:

- 86% said they will talk to their friends or family about bats.
- 36% said they spent more quality time with family or friends.
- 36% said they spent more time in nature.

Customer comments above suggest families and friends spend time together discovering and working with the tools in the Bat Packs. They also suggest the bat detectors are good conversation starters for connecting with others. Our library bat programs also offered social opportunity.

Together we believe this data indicates the Bat Packs are inspiring conversations within families and between individuals in the community and bringing people together in unexpected ways. This suggests the Bat Packs are making a contribution toward increasing customers' sense of social connection.

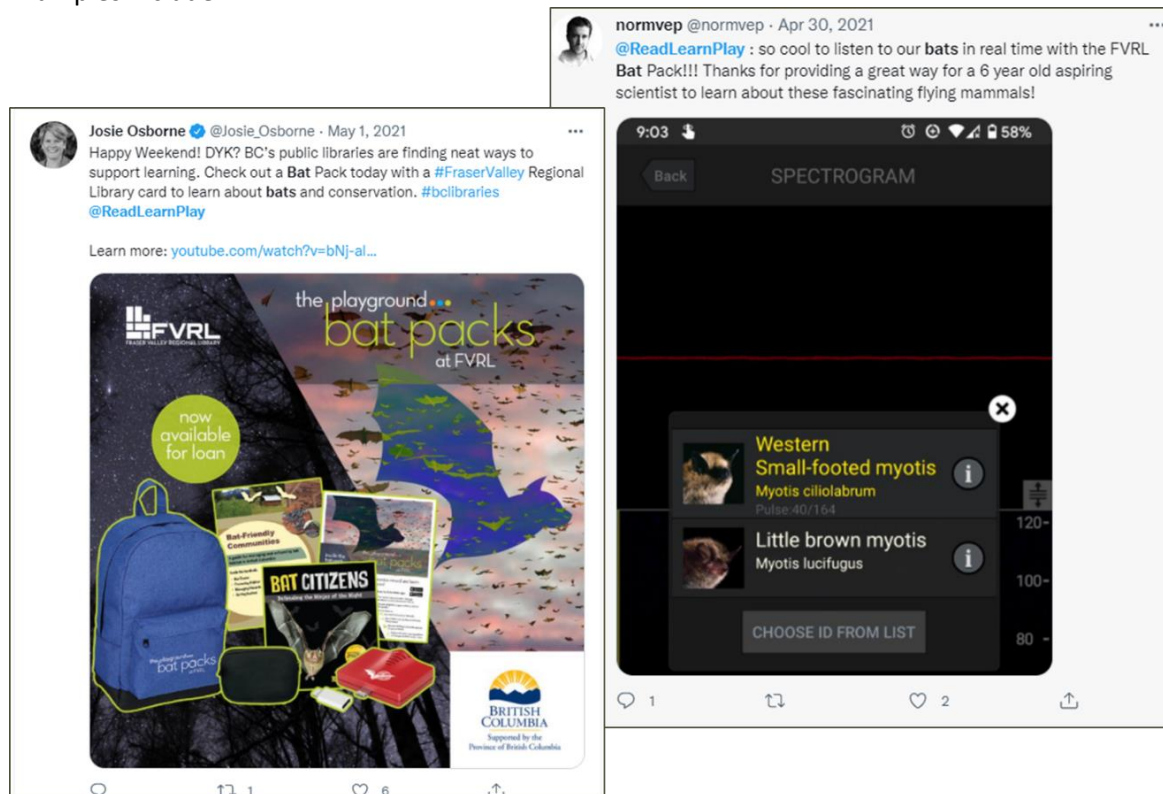
Increase customers' awareness of FVRL collections and/or services.

Customer survey data reveals that because of our FVRL Bat Pack initiative:

- 80% discovered FVRL is doing new and interesting things.
- 71% said they would recommend FVRL to friends or family.
- 59% said they would borrow more materials from FVRL libraries.
- 45% said they learned something new about FVRL library services.
- 5% said they became a new library member!

Accolades to FVRL for the Bat Pack lending initiative are common in the customer comments. They also often suggest other items we might lend in our FVRL Playground, or ask about other services we offer.

Furthermore, we find our customers are acknowledging our work publicly, engaging with us on social media. Examples include:



This data suggests the Bat Packs are drawing new citizens to the library for the bat detector access opportunity. It also suggests our customers learn about more FVRL services because of the kits, are engaged with FVRL generally, and feel positive enough about their library experience to promote us in their social circles. Altogether we believe these indicators support our intended outcomes of increasing customers' awareness of FVRL collections and services.

Increased awareness of the value of biodiversity and environmental stewardship.

As of 2021, the City of Delta is now an official Bat-Friendly Community. We also have a second municipality in our service area that is in the process of achieving this designation.

Customer survey data reveals that because of our FVRL Bat Pack initiative:

- 71% said they will protect bat habitat on their property and in the community.
- 44% said they will encourage their community to become a Bat-Friendly Community.
- 22% said they will join the Citizen Science program "BC Annual Bat Count" at bcbats.ca

While we understand that saying you'll do something doesn't necessarily predict future behaviour, we believe willingness to say they will take these steps to protect bat habitat in their communities is a very good indicator of their awareness, understanding and empathy for local bats.

As we know from the many bat myths and fear generally associated with bat-kind, developing this empathy is the very first step towards protecting bats. In this way, we believe this preliminary data offers strong evidence towards saying our Bat Packs have increased awareness of the value of biodiversity and environmental stewardship in the Fraser Valley.

Strengthened community partnerships.

This project became an opportunity to connect and discover the Community Bat Programs of BC. We had the opportunity to work with them on an ongoing basis, and this relationship continues. Recently our partners at the BC Bat Action Team invited us to present to bat-enthusiasts across the province and beyond, about our FVRL Bat Pack lending initiative.

Through conversations with this organization we have developed trust, and the expertise of each organization has had the opportunity to shine. Interviews reveal both organizations are pleased with the progress and respect shared between us, and we look forward to continued work as people for bats.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)? (Maximum 100 words.)

We delivered this project with the support of two groups:

1. Community Bat Programs of BC
 - a. Provincial Coordinator Mandy Kellner supported us by introducing us to relevant bat experts and resources, inviting us to the annual BC Bat Conference, and responding to our general inquiries.
 - b. Permitted us to adapt and print physical copies of the BC Bat Friendly Communities Guide for the kits.
 - c. Supported us in drafting our Bat Pack kit customer survey and Quick-Start Guide.
 - d. The BC Bat Action Team (B.A.T.) members supported our initiative with bat information, proofreading, etc. especially by bat biologist Orville Dyer.
 - e. Invited us to present our Bat Pack project and preliminary evaluation results to the BC B.A.T.
 - f. The Regional Coordinator Danielle Dagenais delivered training for our staff.
2. Province of British Columbia
 - a. Partial financial support through a provincial grant.

Project/Program Name

Launching Beanstack for Summer Reading Club Program

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program (250-500 words).

The Summer Reading Club (SRC) is an annual reading and literacy program at Fraser Valley Regional Library. In 2021 we continued to host SRC for all ages, developing special reading records for preschoolers, kids, teens and adults. SRC traditionally involves recording daily reading on paper records, attending events by various performers and entering various draws and contests to win prizes. Traditionally all these activities happen in person – but not any more. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic we have pivoted SRC to an online format and carved out paths for customers to easily and efficiently access the various prongs of the program from home.

Enter Beanstack. Beanstack is an online reading tracker where people can log their reading, write reviews and earn badges. It has both a browser and an app and is accessible from phones, laptops or desktops. Beanstack allows you to create reading challenges that can last for a predetermined amount of time, it has a contest entry system and it has family accounts so that an entire household can have a single hub for all of their entries.

Recently the Beanstack company established servers in Canada, making the platform the only full service reading tracker platform available to BC public libraries. We are one of the first Canadian libraries to purchase a Beanstack license for our library system and use it to host the Summer Reading Club for our customers. For ease of transition during our first year of implementation, we began by configuring the software to approximate the traditional FVRL SRC experience, but entirely online. But we didn't stop there - we also incorporated SRC features just not possible with paper reading records! There are features to benefit both customers and staff.

We set up all our prize draws through Beanstack so that it synergized with the reading log function. Participants were able to earn more entries based on the amount of reading that they logged. If they were watching our online Zoom SRC presenters for the summer they were also able to earn more entries by entering special codes that were revealed at the end of the sessions that they could enter into Beanstack.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community (250-500 words)?

Our Beanstack project fits directly within our stated values. It's removing barriers for our community as it allows our customers to sign up and participate in our SRC program even for people who can't come into the library for various health and ability reasons—regardless of the pandemic. We set the program up so that people who didn't have internet access at home but *could* come into the library could have staff sign them up and log their reading for them right in branch.

Beanstack also ties directly into our value of innovation. It was a risk, yes, but it was a creative solution to a tricky situation that paid off in both its reach and reception. We've taken a problem (the pandemic) and used it to create opportunities to adapt and improve our services in ways that will extend past its conclusion. It also strongly ties into our theme of inspiration. Beanstack was FVRL exploring a non-traditional library experience. Beanstack is a unique technology that we have given our customers access to. It's changing the way people look at recording their reading and participating in SRC and synergizing the various different elements of the event into one centralized hub. We're supporting people as they engage in this new way of

learning and sharing their own creative endeavors: Beanstack encourages customers to write their own reviews of material and share them with other users.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please list as many goals as needed (250-500 words per goal)?

Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)

Our Beanstack program has improved access for our customers by offering opportunities for both in person or at home registration and participation in our Summer Reading Club event. Customers who live in more remote and outlying areas no longer have to journey to the library. As well as customers with mobility or transportation issues can access our full lineup of SRC events, contests and tracking all from the safety and comfort of their own homes. In the fluctuating and unstable days of this pandemic not having to be present in person has been a relief for our immunocompromised, elderly and otherwise COVID-anxious customers while still bringing them delight through their participation in this program.

We are also aware that not everyone has the access to internet at home, and some people don't have the necessary computer skills to use Beanstack on their own. We knew this, and planned accordingly arming our staff with the skills and resources they needed to help register customers in person and either show them how to participate from home or helping them participate from right inside the library. We also still offered the print version of the program as a supplement for those adverse to the digital format or people who wanted to do both.

Computer time is in high-demand for our customers and some of our larger libraries were able to set up internet stations that were reserved just for customers wanting to register, log-hours or otherwise participate in Beanstack events. These stations were located near staff work areas so that they could quickly offer assistance and guided when needed.

Access is about options and taking *all* of our customers needs into consideration and the Beanstack service is a big step forward in making sure our Summer Reading Club can be enjoyed by everyone.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for information on short, medium, and long-term outcomes (500-1000 words).

The Customer Experience Department put a significant amount of time, energy and dollar investment into the research, acquisition and implementation of an online service that would make hosting all of the various moving parts of our Summer Reading Club online a possibility. Signing a three year contract with Beanstack meant that we were making this investment in the future of our summer program not just for 2021 but for the years to come as well. It was a risk that is already paying off — as we see opportunities to use Beanstack not only in the summer but year round, and its ability to offer access and harness innovation even once the urgency of the pandemic has passed.

It's been proven that not reading over the summer sets kids back when they return to school in the fall. The Summer Reading Club is designed to help offset that loss. Beanstack has helped to incentivize reading to kids

and families in a time where it might be easy for it to fall off the map. It's made literacy and reading fun and exciting in a new way and encouraged kids to read every day. This has helped support literacy levels in our communities among students—while adding a new digital literacy element to SRC that didn't exist before.

To gather data for our evaluation, we hosted two customer surveys, one staff survey, and tracked multiple statistics. There were several short term, mid-term and longer term outcomes anticipated for the project.

First, we were able to deliver the Summer Reading Club program in an online space. Did our customers participate? Yes! People were able to register for the program, log their reading, enter draws and contests and watch our programs all from their own home without ever having to come into the library. Customers were also able to share reviews of titles that they have read and connect with other readers in their area, offering a form of connection and community in a very difficult time—something so important to mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Of those surveyed, 75% said they used Beanstack to join SRC this year. We had 8,000 readers sign up, logging over 47,000 minutes and earning over 30,000 of the badges that Beanstack awards for completing challenges. Survey comments indicate the majority of our customers who tried Beanstack really liked it! We understand some customers prefer print tracking so it's clear that a hybrid model of both will work well for people moving forward. These are amazing numbers for our first summer trying out this service, demonstrating we're accomplishing our intended outcome of increasing online SRC participation. We're excited to see this grow in years to come.

Second, Beanstack has enhanced staff efficiency hosting SRC at FVRL. Beanstack was great for staff engagement and reducing stress. The Summer Reading Club normally has a rigorous registration process and involves a lot of record keeping and statistics for staff. By moving all of the registration numbers online where they are easily collected and aggregated at our Administrative Centre- we have taken a huge load off of our already burdened staff. They can spend that time focusing on other projects and tasks.

At the same time we've dramatically increased our capacity to serve SRC to all the 800,000+ citizens in our service area. Further, our Beanstack implementation has also increased the reach of our program and brought in people who have never registered before into the fold. 20% of the customers surveyed said that this was their first summer participating in the SRC. Customers and families who have felt they just don't have the time to participate in SRC in person can now quickly and efficiently track and participate with their entire family in only a few minutes a week.

A midterm outcome of the Beanstack program is that it has offered us another way to engage with customers year-round, not just during the summer and not just during the pandemic. We've already begun setting up monthly challenges on the website and have found that customers have continued to use it to write reviews and earn badges. By reaching new customers and families with SRC we are creating continuing library users. In all these ways our Beanstack implementation is demonstrating strong progress towards increasing access to reading and literacy skills in our communities.

Next, using Beanstack to shift SRC online has raised FVRL's profile in the community. It's shown our communities that we are innovators in the digital field and encouraged them to check out some of the many other digital services we offer including e-books, databases and our wide spread of pre-recorded and live online programs.

Beanstack's long-term outcomes are also numerous. It has created a trust in our communities and among our customers that we will be able to adapt and grow with any challenges that come our way. If we were able to

pivot our SRC program online—something that seemed impossible several years ago—there is no challenge we won't rise to. It's shown that FVRL is always looking for new technologies and ideas. By keeping our customers reading and engaged over the summer (and through the rest of the year) we've set them up with the building blocks they need to succeed in school, at work and at home. We've helped them develop their reading and literacy skills in a fun and enriching way that will impact all areas of their life (and all this through a reading tracker.)

We've also shown our staff, and the library community in general that FVRL are innovators. We have a reputation as people you can count on to look forward and take big swings to improve access, open the minds and enable the dreams of our community. People will look to us when change is happening because we have paved the way with ideas like Beanstack. When the next big shift comes to SRC we can approach it with a clear eyes and a full heart because it's a challenge we've stared down before and we're ready for the next one.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)? (Maximum 100 words.)

Project/Program Name

Relationship Building with Indigenous Communities

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program (250-500 words).

FVRL's Library Live and On Tour (LiLi) service and the Community Development Specialist (CDS) engaged with several Indigenous communities to provide early literacy materials, programming and outreach services to their communities. This engagement resulted in regular communication, a learning journey of reconciliation, and ultimately, building relationships with the Indigenous communities while improving access to library services.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community (250-500 words)?

Building relationships with Indigenous communities supports FVRL's Strategic Plan through creating partnerships, raising awareness of library services, as well as being a Welcoming Place.

Engaging with neighboring Indigenous communities provides opportunity to build partnerships, which are integral to creating meaningful connections and support reconciliation. Partnerships have the potential to include all individuals, regardless of age, in the community. FVRL collaborated with Frontier College to deliver literacy packages, as well as partnered with various Indigenous communities to bring literacy and library services into the communities.

Consistent engagement with Indigenous communities also raises awareness of library services and the FVRL experience, demonstrating Know Us. Love. Us. The CDS connected with members of Indigenous communities to bring literacy and library services into the often-rural communities where access to library spaces can be difficult. Methods of connection included communication about library services through distribution of pamphlets, posters, and newsletters. In-person outreach visits allowed the CDS to connect with community members, have meaningful conversations and demonstrate FVRL's friendly and personalized experience.

Building relationships with Indigenous communities demonstrates that FVRL is a welcoming place for everyone in the community. FVRL is a place where all individuals can participate in a fun, friendly environment that offers knowledge, creativity and experiences that transform lives. The CDS provided outreach services, which brought the library into the community and encouraged their familiarity with library services. Community members had the opportunity to participate in the FVRL experience by creating their first library card, trying the FVRL Playground items, as well as learning about digital resources. Their familiarity with library programs and services can assist in welcoming them into the physical and digital library space.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please list as many goals as needed (250-500 words per goal)?

Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)

FVRL partnered with Frontier College, a literacy organization, to deliver literacy packages and library resources to Indigenous communities in the Fraser Valley. This partnership provided opportunity to connect with Indigenous communities and provided foundation for further engagement.

LiLi visited five Indigenous communities, Seabird Island, Yale, Boothroyd, Spuzzum and Scowltz First Nations to provide early literacy materials & programs to their members. On regular visits to Seabird Island First Nation,

	<p>the CDS visited the Early Childhood Center to provide Babytime and Storytimes to over 40 children. The CDS also provided regular Storytime visits to the Yale First Nation's daycare, a partnership between the First Nation, the local literacy society and a local church. At the Boothroyd First Nation, the CDS visited the Headstart program where the group engaged with books, fingerplays, and songs to encourage early literacy skills. Programs such as FVRL's 1000 Stories Before Kindergarten and the Summer Reading Club were also offered.</p> <p>LiLi's relationships with Indigenous communities included consistent communication about library services as well as learning about the local communities. Invitations to attend community events stemmed from these conversations. LiLi was invited to several events in Indigenous communities, including, Cheam Days at the Cheam First Nation, Suicide Prevention Day at the Sto:lo First Nation, as well as the Open House at Spuzzum First Nation. At each event, LiLi and the CDS set up an information booth providing access to library resources, library card creation, and provided opportunity to ask questions. Outreach at events in the community provide opportunity to highlight library services that are accessible outside the library building. Digital content resources, such as Libby (ebooks/audiobooks) assist as a bridge between the customer and the library, especially in rural spaces where access to library locations can be difficult.</p>
<p>Advancing Citizen Engagement (e.g., helping people access government services/resources, fostering community knowledge-sharing, and supporting reconciliation)</p>	<p>FVRL is beginning a journey of learning more about its' Indigenous neighbors and how to set a foundation for future partnerships and collaboration. These interactions help inform FVRL about cultural differences and historical background information as well as a deeper understanding of each communities' governance. These understandings have been incorporated into our new Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement.</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 information on short, medium, and long-term outcomes (500-1000 words).</p>	
<p>Short</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to library resources • Increased access to early literacy programs including the Summer Reading Club, which are invaluable to lifelong learning. • Service delivery to rural communities where access to similar services may be difficult or non-existent. • LiLi provided early literacy programming in five communities to over 200+ children outside of the physical library space. • LiLi's relationships with certain Indigenous communities have also provided insight into FVRL's internal services, such as it's Indigenous Territory Acknowledgment procedure. • Provided learning resources to engage with during the Covid-19 barrier <p>Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased partnership and collaboration with Indigenous communities in the FVRL region • Promotion of library services and ongoing events may lead to awareness and use of libraries in everyday life 	

Long

- Increased youth awareness and familiarity with library staff, literacy and resources
- Growing a love of learning and literacy
- Cultivates opportunities for intergenerational learning and interaction which may lead to knowledge and cultural sharing.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)? (Maximum 100 words.)

FVRL partnered with Frontier College, a non-profit literacy organization. Frontier College provided 336 literacy packages which FVRL supplemented with additional programming and service material.

FVRL partnered with Indigenous members and communities to provide program delivery and outreach. Seabird Island, Boothroyd, Yale, Spuzzum, Cheam First Nations and the Sto:lo Nation invited Lili into their communities to provide service delivery and engage with their members.

Project/Program Name

Technology Capability Overhaul

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program (250-500 words).

During these pandemic years, virtual library opportunities and expectations rose dramatically. FVRL carefully reviewed new staff needs - and responded! This investment resulted in revolutionary capability and capacity progress in a short period of time.

While FVRL kept pace with modern library service expectations, in retrospect our processes presented barriers to access – for both customers *and* staff. We offered:

- In person membership registration only (except of course for those eligible for Library For You outreach service).
- In person programs for customers only. Can't attend in person? You miss the program.
- Paper Summer Reading Club and 1000 Stories Before Kindergarten early literacy programs.
- In person system meetings only, at central or rotating locations. (Limited audio-only conference calling option available.)
- Asynchronous collaboration. Staff primarily used email to communicate and share files – an asynchronous approach with complicated file storage and retrieval issues.

Clearly none of these states is acceptable now. To protect their health and the health of their loved ones, some of our customers are rightfully hesitant to unnecessarily visit brick and mortar institutions – including the library. Staff needed ways to offer all our services and programs remotely, in an effective and engaging format. To enhance particular staff capabilities and build general capacity, we introduced various new technology solutions at FVRL. These include:

- New laptops – with faster processing, better quality camera/audio.
- Media monitors – with built-in camera/microphones.
- Peripheral equipment - microphones, ring lights, earphones, etc.
- New communication software platforms - Webex, Zoom, Slack, launched new phase of Staff Site on Confluence.
- Computer reconfiguration – the right computer with the right capabilities in the right place for the right staff at the right time!
- Increased bandwidth (for staff *and* customers).
- Online customer membership registration.
- Online reading tracker app – Beanstack.

This investment has been transformational.

We now have the tools we need to engage with our customers online – in whatever way suits them best. This includes on demand and live virtual Storytimes and Babytimes, as well as presenters and other programs for all ages. Our staff have access to quality video/audio equipment and feel confident on camera – plus we're editing our videos for branding and fun effects. Our two core early literacy programs are now available for online participation - Summer Reading Club using Beanstack (their Canadian servers are new - and FVRL was one of the first libraries in BC to offer it); and our 1000 Stories Before Kindergarten program now includes printable tracker sheets and a monthly email newsletter. We've seen tremendous online engagement to social media and online literacy contests. And of course, new customers can now register through our website to access digital and print resources right away. Further, we're discovering the impacts of these changes –

enhancing accessibility permanently for all the busy individuals and families we serve in a vast geographic region.

But public programs and services aren't the only benefits we've seen. We've changed the way we do meetings and development forever. We're leveraging productivity and saving substantial time, money and effort (as well as travel impact on the environment). As a virtuous bonus, we're able to redirect these resource savings to further customer service enhancements.

In this way, we've achieved a tremendous and effective technology capability overhaul in a short period of time, and seen the very beginnings of what we anticipate will be continued dramatic benefits for the coming years. We're looking forward to sharing the benefits with our customers!

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community (250-500 words)?

Our new technology capabilities have leveraged our ability to Open Minds and Enable Dreams. First, they clearly represent FVRL's commitment to respect our staff. They also represent great progress towards satisfying our strategic goals to "Evaluate and improve internal communications" and "Promote an environment that supports staff in doing their best work". Staff can now connect and collaborate more easily and efficiently. In return, we're seeing staff demonstrate keen responsiveness and a desire to continuously improve - engaging and extending all our work. The results reveal this investment is playing out for the enjoyment, lifelong learning, literacy and vibrant health of our communities.

We're also seeing strategic benefits of technology enhancements directly to customers. In 2018 we identified "Create a digital library card" as a goal under our Welcoming Place strategic direction; now we've achieved it. Online registration and new communication platforms are removing technology barriers, allowing easier access for digital customers. Similarly, our newly increased bandwidth better serves customers on the less fortunate side of the digital divide.

Harnessing these technologies has reinforced our strategic commitment to innovation, giving us freedom to grow and develop even more creative solutions to the challenges of this new world.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please list as many goals as needed (250-500 words per goal)?

Building Capacity for library staff and directors (e.g., training and professional development)

Our recent technology capability overhaul has multiplied staff capacity. Geographically FVRL is the largest library system in the province – and this represents serious challenges to collaboration among our staff. While FVRL has a strong history of robust professional development and system-wide project team opportunities, there are costs to attend these sessions in person. Staff pay with travel time, the library pays for mileage, and the customers pay with opportunity cost. The result is limits to the amount and regularity of collaboration we could support.

This collaboration overhead was a known issue, however the investment to achieve virtual collaboration remained unachieved prior to recent events. The physical closure of our libraries – and ongoing customer hesitancy upon reopening – demanded we identify and implement new technologies for collaboration.

Online meeting and programming software and hardware has changed all this. Staff save time formerly spent in vehicles, and can redirect that time to serving customers in other ways – or developing entirely new ways of serving. Funds once spent on mileage and car insurance reimbursement are perhaps countered by the costs for the technology upgrade, but represent efficiencies nonetheless. Now we're enjoying the benefits of redirecting newly released funds, time and energy formerly spent on physical meeting logistics. In this way we are perhaps not Building Capacity so much as Revealing Capacities formerly hidden.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for information on short, medium, and long-term outcomes (500-1000 words).

Increased access to library services and programs

FVRL's IT department identified, prepared and distributed a LOT of new technology this year. They input IT staff time and expertise, invested significant dollar amounts, utilized Administrative Centre space and functions to prepare physical devices and virtual resources such as memory/bandwidth to push out new software. In addition, we invested significant time and expertise to instruct and prepare documentation to support staff in using the new technology with maximum effect. Similarly staff invested time and energy to learn the new tools.

As a result of these investments, staff had new laptops, monitors, cameras, microphones, lights, reconfigured computer spaces, meeting software, bandwidth to work with. Customers had new online registration and reading tracker software available.

Because of these investments, staff are now able to connect and collaborate throughout our system much more easily, more often, and in new ways. We're less constrained by mileage budgets and desk coverage, and have more time and energy to devote to serving our customers. Customers for their part are much more easily able to access online FVRL resources and programming, as well as WiFi and other computing capacity in the library.

Over time we're seeing more customers access our online resources more often, and reduced customer complaints about download speed. We're seeing staff gain comfort and skill using new technological devices, as well as developing expertise in hosting effecting Zoom meetings and public programs. Broadly these developments are contributing to our long-term goal of increasing access to library programs and services.

Increased staff engagement

As a result of all this IT investment and outputs, we're also seeing a blossoming of staff engagement and participation in library as a staff community. Our new staff site is a transparent wiki space of current happenings. Staff who once upon a time kept their heads down are now aware of and contributing to development throughout the system. Some who previously were unaware, uninterested or unable to participate are now embedded in project teams working to further enhance program and service delivery throughout the system. Others are participating by following other staff and project teams on the staff site, contributing asynchronously through comments and blog posts. This increase in participation is reflective of significant progress towards our strategic goal of increased staff engagement.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)? (Maximum 100 words.)

Project/Program Name

Brightening Your Day with Sunshine Lamp Lending

Provide a brief description of the activities involved in this project/program (250-500 words).



FVRL launched a lending initiative of 150 light therapy lamps in Winter 2021. Therapy lamps simulate sunlight for indoor use. We call our lending lights Sunshine Lamps.

While many experience the winter blues, our customers may be particularly susceptible. As Canadians in the northern hemisphere, and as Fraser Valley residents of the dreary Pacific Northwest rainforest, it's difficult to receive sufficient sunlight in winter. Recent winters have also been harder than usual. Pandemic lock-downs are causing more people to stay indoors, resulting in even less exposure to natural light, and more mental health concerns for our community.

Lack of sunlight is believed to have many impacts on the human body, and may even contribute to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Those with SAD symptoms should consult a professional, however light therapy can be helpful for those experiencing the winter blues. Sunshine lamps can help support mental health in our communities.

In addition to supporting mental health, our lending initiative expanded access to this resource in our communities. Therapy lamps cost more than many can risk spending on a whim. For those who can afford to purchase, our lending initiative is providing customers the opportunity to try before they buy - boosting our local economy.

Our Sunshine Lamps are portable, have long lasting LED bulbs, and are simple to use. Further, they can open the conversation to science literacy, and the sharing of other self care resources available at the library! We hosted a sunshine lamp giveaway contest to promote the launch of the initiative. Lastly, we also had the opportunity to host a self-care presenter, further expanding positive customer impact.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals and/or community (250-500 words)?

Our Sunshine Lamp lending initiative well supports the current FVRL strategic plan.

Firstly, the initiative invests in the enjoyment, lifelong learning and vibrant health of our communities by contributing directly to new personal health experiences and access to health tools for our customers. It values open access to materials by removing the financial barriers associated with education, technology, culture, economics and physical disadvantage.

Through their inviting glow, Sunshine Lamps in the libraries present FVRL as a Welcoming Place, a friendly environment to inspire and transform lives. The initiative also demonstrates responsible risk taking, harnessing innovation and creative solutions to help support mental health during a stressful and challenging time in our customers' lives.

Through our self-care programming, the initiative provided further opportunities to improve quality of life and vibrant health through self care experiences and enhanced science literacy and awareness.

Lastly the Sunshine Lamp lending initiative easily fulfills FVRL's strategic goal to identify and explore non-traditional library collections and experiences. While we're not the first Canadian library to lend such tools, the implementation was especially timely and continues our reputation for providing a broad and dynamic range of services. By raising our profile in the industry and our communities, more citizens are aware of other services we offer, helping FVRL and public libraries in general gain broader, celebrated recognition.

In these ways our Sunshine Lamp lending initiative is helping to improve the quality of life for our communities through knowledge, ideas and experiences.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal\(s\) for public library service](#)? Please list as many goals as needed (250-500 words per goal)?

Improving Access for British Columbians (e.g., connectivity, digital collections, shared services)

FVRL's Playground lending of non-traditional materials has become a stalwart of the sharing economy in the Fraser Valley. Library sharing isn't just for books anymore!

As one of the latest additions to our Playground, Sunshine Lamps are typical in that they have a substantial price tag (approx \$100), preventing many customers from purchasing on their own. Some folks are more cautious and prefer to try a product before buying their own. This is particularly true with something like light therapy lamps, where it may take several weeks of consistent use for a person to assess its value in their lives.

One nice accessibility feature for these devices is that they're simple to use, analog devices. While providing access to high tech devices can help battle the digital divide (and we pursue this track as well), analog devices can be incorporated into many lives with ease. We don't recommend these devices for very young children, however the devices are generally very inclusive, and of potential interest to, a wide variety of people regardless of experience, residential or relationship status, life role, education, etc.

Lastly, FVRL's service area extends across a broad geographic region, and we're finding customers borrow the devices throughout our service area, all the way from Tsawwassen to Boston Bar and including the north of the Fraser River from Port Coquitlam to Agassiz. Our Library Live & On Tour mobile coordinator further extends our reach into Indigenous territories and deep rural areas. In this way, we're harnessing our physical reach to extend access to this tool throughout the Fraser Valley.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program? Please refer to the logic model in the appendix of the 2021 PLGR Guide for information on short, medium, and long-term outcomes (500-1000 words).

We collect data in the form of statistics, customer surveys, interviews, media analysis and qualitative customer feedback. Our customer survey has 106 responses after the first year of Sunshine Lamp lending. Here's how the Sunshine Lamps are performing so far:

Increase customers' access to tools for personal health and self care.

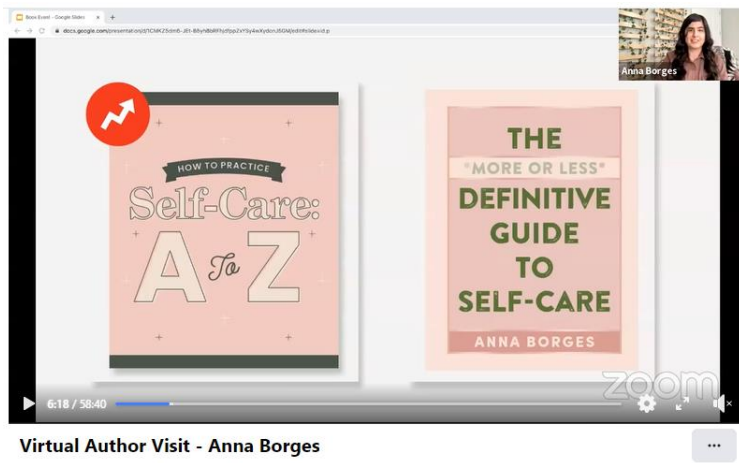
Customer survey data reveals that because of our FVRL Sunshine Lamp Lending initiative:

- 84% tried a light therapy lamp for the first time.

- 83% found this technology easy to use.
- 50% felt more calm, relaxed or energized.
- 42% learned something new about self-care.

Within two months of launch, all our 150 kits were checked out to local citizens, and 330 had placed hold requests to get in line for the returns. One year later, the bulk of our kits are still checked out, though borrowing does vary seasonally, as we would expect.

We also hosted an enjoyable speaker through a live virtual program: Anna Borges, author of *The More or Less Definitive Guide to Self-Care* for a discussion of her work and all things self-care! The session was recorded and is available for continued viewing, with over 200 attendees watching the program to date.



These statistics indicate our customers are accessing these tools and finding positive impacts in their lives for doing so. They also indicate our customers appear able to put the tools to good use without trouble, and they offer novel value in their lives. Lastly they indicate the Sunshine Lamp lending may be further inspiring our customers learn more about self-care, further expanding their access to tools for personal health.

Customers told us:

"Thank you for having sunshine lamps! - They are Great for cloudy winter days in BC!!!"

*"This is a great idea! Especially now with more people feeling alone and depressed.
Thank you for giving us the opportunity."*

"It is something I'd always wanted to try and I found it has made a possible difference for me."

Thank you for having great programs like this. I've now bought a verlux [sic] lamp for myself."

These comments further indicate our customers recognize a particular need to access tools like light therapy lamps among our service population – geographically, with respect to the pandemic, and for general mental and physical wellness. Lastly, they indicate we're further expanding access to these tools by inspiring customers to purchase Sunshine Lamps for personal use, extending our initiative's impact in a sustainable way.

In these ways we believe FVRL's Sunshine Lamp lending initiative is indeed increasing customers' access to tools for personal health and self care.

Increase customers' awareness of FVRL collections and/or services.

Customer survey data reveals that because of our FVRL Sunshine Lamp Lending initiative:

- 82% would recommend FVRL to friends and family.
- 67% discovered FVRL is doing new and interesting thing.
- 59% will borrow or access more self-care materials at the library.
- 41% learned something new about the library.
- 2% became a new library member.

These statistics indicate Sunshine Lamp borrowing leads to a positive impression of FVRL, one that reaches out by word of mouth further into our service population. They also indicate the experience inspires customers to further explore self-care resources, borrowing more from the library, and learning about other services FVRL offers. Amazingly, these statistics also indicate that at least some Sunshine Lamp borrowers are drawn to public library membership by non-traditional lending initiatives like this!

"I am now more comfortable requesting self-care materials from the library. In particular, thank you for including self-help titles in the e-audiobook collection."

"That I recommended the lamp to a family member, and encouraged him and his wife, who are newcomers to the Fraser Valley, to get library cards!"

"Great device and so glad that FVRL has invested in them for us customers! Very forward thinking! Thanks."

These comments suggest the Sunshine Lamp lending initiative is helping to deepen customer engagement with FVRL services and collections. They further reinforce that the initiative helps promote awareness of the library in the community, and likely attracts new members. Lastly, they indicate our customers see FVRL as an innovative organization, raising our profile in the community.

In these ways, we believe adding Sunshine Lamps to our Playground of lending experiences also increased our customers' awareness of FVRL collections and services.

Did the project/program involve any partnerships? If so, what was the partner's role (e.g., funding, outreach, service delivery)? (Maximum 100 words.)

We're looking forward to exploring self-care program partnership opportunities in the future!

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 and provide a description of how the library addressed them. Leave any other listed topics blank if they did not significantly impact the library.

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. Including examples or stories (optional) may also illustrate how service changes helped address this challenge. Please specify if any provincial funding was used (e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other provincial grants, or local grants). (Maximum 500 words per topic.)
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	<p>COVID-19, though challenging, provided a unique opportunity to immerse ourselves in the customer online journey. Already a goal from our Strategic Plan, COVID-19 provided an opportunity to focus on exploring the customer journey. While we could not open our doors to the public in the initial onset of the pandemic, we introduced our very popular FVRL Express, providing customers with contactless holds pick up. This allowed FVRL to remain open throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>Given the challenges of in person programming under Public Health Order Restrictions, FVRL invested heavily in virtual programming, delivered through popular social networking sites using video conferencing software. The pre-recorded programs had almost 200,000 views, with each view generally representing more than one person. 804 live Zoom programs were attended by over 13,000 people.</p> <p>As a public library, we were not required to check Vaccine Cards. We were, however, able to assist many customers in getting copies of their Vaccine Card, printing over 2,000 cards, in support of Provincial health care services and Public Health requirements.</p>
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	<p>The closure of Highway One during the floods brought significant staffing disruption with it. FVRL is a very large organization, and our staff frequently travel to work at libraries in communities outside of the one in which they live. Staff were temporarily reassigned on either side of the Highway One closure to work at libraries closer to where they live, which allowed us to keep nearly all libraries open.</p> <p>FVRL's delivery trucks were also unable to reach the libraries in Chilliwack, Yarrow, District of Kent/Agassiz, Hope, Yale and Boston Bar, delaying the delivery of holds, new books and other materials until access was restored.</p> <p>Residents of the Sumas Flood Plain and other areas impacted by the floods were temporarily relocated to the Tradex Center in Abbotsford during the</p>

	<p>crisis. FVRL provided books and other materials to the facility to support the effort, and provide entertainment for the impacted families.</p> <p>When the town of Lytton burned down, many of the residents were relocated to Hope and Chilliwack, and made frequent use of the libraries there through the BC Provincial One Card system, borrowing materials and staying in touch with families and loved ones using the public computers.</p>
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	FVRL has been fortunate to receive approval for a 4% increase for materials in the last two years, however rising costs still outweigh increases.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health and wellness)	<p>As with many organizations, FVRL experienced a greater than usual number of staff retirements in 2021, due both to the pandemic and the changes in the Municipal Pension Plan. This in turn lead to additional recruitments, which were also challenging from a staff orientation perspective. New staff hired during the pandemic were trained using a modified version of onboarding, managed through virtual training where possible.</p> <p>Regular reminders were sent to staff about FVRL's Family Support and Employee Assistance Program (FSEAP), which saw over 50% more use in 2021, at a corresponding increase in cost. Managers attended an FSEAP workshop on managing remote employees, given the additional challenges connected with supervising employees working at home.</p>
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	<p>FVRL is seeing growing demand for social services that are increasingly hard to meet given reduced availability of these resources in the community. Increased mental health challenges in the community, exacerbated by addiction issues and homelessness, are appearing just as social services seem to be less available. There are inadequate supports in the community, and this leaves the public library with significant challenges. Our traditional role of connecting and referring people in need of these support services is being challenged. While some public libraries in Canada are trying to train their staff to meet these new challenges, or bring in professionals trained in these areas to meet the demand, this seems an ineffective approach given the global nature of this problem.</p>
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	There was increased demand for network bandwidth due to the pandemic. Almost all locations had an increase in bandwidth in 2021 to support significantly increased demand due to virtual programming and other high bandwidth activities that became more popular during the pandemic, floods and fires.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	As a municipal system, all but one facility is owned by the municipalities. Our Administrative Centre is the only building owned by FVRL. Resurfacing of the parking lot that was supposed to take place in 2021 was delayed to 2022 owing to pandemic related supply chain issues and contractor availability shortages.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	As noted previously, libraries services were regularly reimaged to support improved virtual programming, telephone and email references services, and FVRL Express in response to Public Health Order restrictions and environmental crises.

<p>Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)</p>	<p>The pandemic has posed additional challenges for vulnerable populations within the community. Extra layers of health and safety protocols have been a deterrent for some in the community, and have posed additional challenges for the immunocompromised and/or elderly. Services like FVRL Express have been successful in mitigating some of these challenges.</p> <p>FVRL took the opportunity to open many of our libraries earlier in 2021 when returning to regular hours mid way through the year. This has been well received by young families and senior citizens in particular, as it often met their scheduling needs more effectively.</p> <p>Many of our customers have limited access to technology, and therefore found it harder to access digital services such as Zoom programming. We needed to find other ways to connect with them. Fortunately, “Library Live and On Tour” was able to get out into the community and physically meet with some of the most vulnerable people at their point of need.</p>
<p>Other (please specify)</p>	

4. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature:



Date: March 18, 2022

Board Chair Signature:



Date: March 18, 2022