

HAZELTON • HOUSTON • KITIMAT • PRINCE RUPERT • SMITHERS • STEWART • TERRACE • NWCC

north west library federation

2021 Provincial Operating Grant Report Report Prepared by Federation Director Kaitlyn Vecchio

INTRODUCTION

NWLF AND OUR REGION

Northwestern British Columbia encompasses the North Coast, Kitimat-Stikine, and Bulkley-Nechako regions. We acknowledge that these regions exist on the traditional territory of Indigenous Peoples, including the Haida, Haisla, Gitksan, Nisga'a, Tsimshian, and Witsuwit'en Nations.

The Northwest Library Federation (NWLF) is comprised of seven public libraries, located in Houston, Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace, Kitimat, Prince Rupert, and Stewart. These libraries have service populations ranging from 400 to 20,300 people. As a result, NWLF member libraries have widely varying levels of capacity to deliver programs and services on their own.

NWLF addresses this disparity with a vision of equitable access to enriching library experiences across the region. Our mission, in service of this vision, is to facilitate the cooperation needed to deliver optimal library service equitably throughout the region.

Coast Mountain College (CMTN) is an Associate Member of the NWLF and has non-voting status in the organization. While CMTN was an integral partner in the early years of NWLF, lately we have struggled to find common ground and resources for shared projects. We have begun to explore a renewal of this relationship and although the pandemic has slowed this down, we hope to see more progress in 2022.

In August, we said goodbye to our Director, Anna Babluck, and welcomed our new Director, Kaitlyn Vecchio on board. Despite COVID-19 continuing to affect our libraires, we managed to continue to push through and strategically serve our member libraries. A strong focus on sharing service delivery, providing access to professional learning opportunities, and continued service expansion was focused on – all while ensuring all activities were in line with the goals in our strategic plan, which will be elaborated on throughout this report.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

2021 is the second year of carrying out our Strategic Plan and luckily, our goals were broad enough that we could continue to take action to meet them despite restrictions caused by COVID-19. We continued to adapt to a virtual-only world and succeeded to meet our goals through aligning the services we offered to our priorities in our strategic plan.



HAZELTON • HOUSTON • KITIMAT • PRINCE RUPERT • SMITHERS • STEWART • TERRACE • NWCC

north west library federation

Our 2020-2022 goals are:

- To make an impact and fill a need in our communities
- To feel a sense of accomplishment
- Build a strong, creative Federation full of dynamic ideas
- Focus on initiatives related to climate change, truth & reconciliation, and social inclusion
- More inter-federation sharing and collaboration
- Build on intra-federation resource sharing, when it makes sense
- Orient member library boards about the role of the NWLF

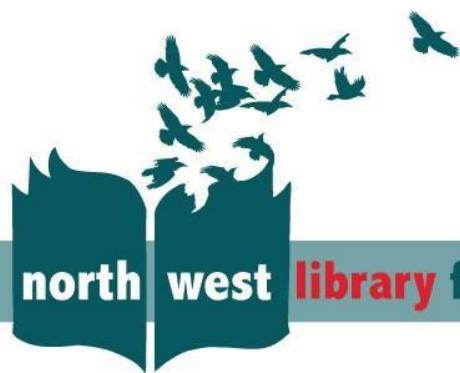
We plan to meet these goals through actioning the following four priorities. For a full account of the actions being taken to meet each of these priorities, please view our [2020-2022 Strategic Plan](#) on our website: nwlf.ca.

Priority 1: Improving Access: Provide relevant, quality programming and resources to residents of the communities that member libraries serve.

Priority 2: Building Capacity: Provide ongoing opportunities for staff and board trustee training and professional development.

Priority 3: Collaboration: Create a support system of member libraries and foster a spirit of collaboration and interconnectedness.

Priority 4: Enhancing Governance: Keep fiscal management of the NWLF transparent and remain accountable to stakeholders.



HAZELTON • HOUSTON • KITIMAT • PRINCE RUPERT • SMITHERS • STEWART • TERRACE • NWCC

north west library federation

PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, AND SERVICES IN 2021

The NWLF has continued to provide our **core services** to our member libraries throughout 2021.

These include:

- Books for Babies
- Book Club Sets
- Preferred pricing on library supplies
- Training and database subsidies
- LDAG roundtables that facilitate information sharing among libraries
- NWLF newsletter including a professional development opportunities roundup

These services remain valuable to our libraries and meet many of the priorities outlined by the Public Libraries Branch as well as our Strategic Plan.

New Project: In addition to these core services, the NWLF subscribed to First Books Canada, and fully funded 1500 Mo Willems books. Terrace Public Library took the lead on sorting, repackaging, and distributing them to each member library.

Continuing the Virtual Shift

Priorities Met from the Public Libraries Branch:

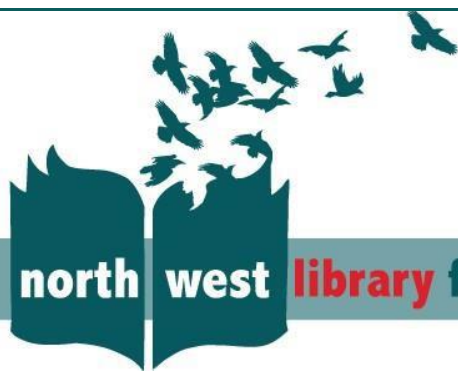
- Improved regional and local shared services delivery
- Improved access to professional learning opportunities for the library community
- Service expansion beyond community borders
- Support for B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service
 - Improving access for British Columbians
 - Building capacity

Priorities and Goals Met from Our Strategic Plan:

- Priority 1: Improving Access
- Priority 2: Building Capacity
- Priority 3: Collaboration
- Priority 4: Enhancing Governance

VIDEOCONFERENCING

The Zoom subscription the Federation purchased has proven to be invaluable. Having the ability to meet virtually has enabled the LDAG and the Board Meetings to be beyond efficient and more personal, allowing interpersonal connections to grow. The shift to a virtual reality has enabled library staff to become more comfortable with eLearning opportunities, which has enabled the Federation to offer even more accessible professional development opportunities.



north west library federation

VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Improved regional and local shared services delivery
- Improved access to professional learning opportunities for the library community
- Support for B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service
 - Building capacity

Priorities and Goals Met from Our Strategic Plan:

- Priority 2: Building Capacity
- Priority 3: Collaboration

Online training has come to be the norm for 2021, and the NWLF offered some wonderful online professional development learning opportunities for the libraries in the Northwest.

Homeless Training Institute

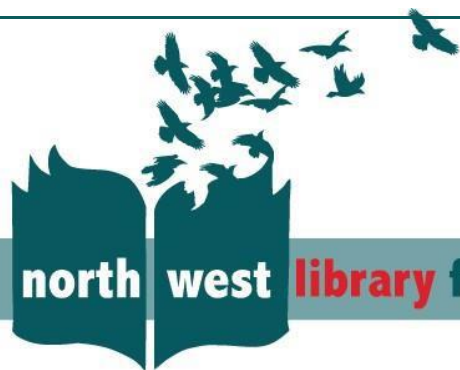
A one-year subscription to the Homeless Training Institute was purchased for all seven libraries. This training focuses on online de-escalation training for staff who interact with individuals experiencing homelessness.

Number of Participants	Key Program Outcomes
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 36 Core Training Modules were completed.• Provided staff with a stronger confidence to handle patrons with guidance.• Provided strategies on how to handle difficult situations correctly with homeless patrons.• Highlighted how to have a better understanding of people experiencing homelessness, poverty, mental illness, and substance abuse.• Provided examples of how to assist coworkers when struggling with challenging patrons.

STAFF FEEDBACK

Staff really enjoyed learning about a trauma informed approach and have found that this has really helped them understand why some of our patrons/community members act the way they do and how to better interact with them.

This training has made staff more conscious about building positive relationships before you need them. Staff really enjoyed that the training was based off empathy and respect and have found that a lot of the training that we have taken since has built on what they have learned during this course



HAZELTON · HOUSTON · KITIMAT · PRINCE RUPERT · SMITHERS · STEWART · TERRACE · NWCC

north west library federation

ARETE Training: Workplace Conflict Specialist

Course Offered: Workplace Violence Prevention & De-escalation

The federation also purchased this training opportunity for all member libraries, after conversations at a LDAG roundtable helped the federation and its member libraries to identify a strong need for this training. This training is through a Canadian firm that facilitates customized online safety, de-escalation, and violence prevention training.

Number of Participants	Program Outcomes
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know how to utilize ARETE Threat Level Assessment.• Safe and effective choices in response to escalating situations.• De-escalate and defuse angry people.• Safely disengage and provide co-worker assistance.• Demonstrate workplace safety strategies and best practices.• Reduce employee stress and decreased incidents.• Enhanced employee confidence.

STAFF FEEDBACK

I feel more comfortable dealing with upset customers. And I liked that there was an emphasis on empathy and respect.

I appreciated that it was balanced nicely with the information we had received from the homelessness training.

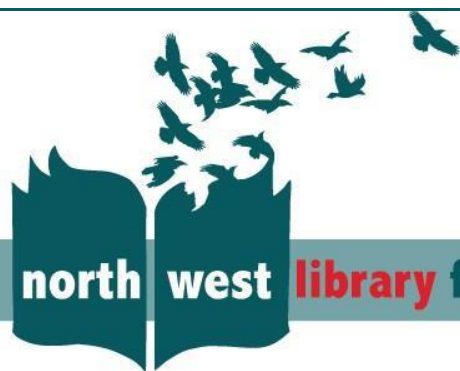
LawMatters: Courthouse Libraries BC – Introduction to Legal Research

Offered: Free Workshops & Virtual Gathering for community library staff and other front-line workers.

Number of Participants	Program Outcomes
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become familiar with Courthouse Libraries BC & what they do.• Become familiar with Government vs. court forms.• Locating & trouble shooting Clicklaw resources.• Know how to locate the various court sites and CLBC resources available to the public.

STAFF FEEDBACK

I now have more of an understanding on how to navigate the Courthouse Libraries BC website, the services that are on there to help people, and feel more confident helping a patron if requested.



HAZELTON • HOUSTON • KITIMAT • PRINCE RUPERT • SMITHERS • STEWART • TERRACE • NWCC

north west library federation

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – FEDERATION COLLABORATIONS

Priorities Met from the Public Libraries Branch:

- Improved regional and local shared services delivery
- Service expansion beyond community borders
- Support for B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service
 - Building capacity

Priorities and Goals Met from Our Strategic Plan:

- Priority 1: Improving Access
- Priority 2: Building Capacity
- Priority 3: Collaboration
- Priority 4: Enhancing Governance

2021 really proved to be a strong year for collaboration. The NWLF and the other provincial library federations met virtually monthly and worked in conjunction to offer all our member libraries value professional development opportunities.

Funded by the Public Libraries Branch, **Safe Harbour** and the **Steps to Reconciliation Indigenous eTraining** have been very well received by all member libraries, with high registration the federations are able justify the value and the need of such diversity training.

With Safe Harbour wrapped up – libraries who have completed the training are now able to display the Safe Harbour Sticker in a visible location in their library.

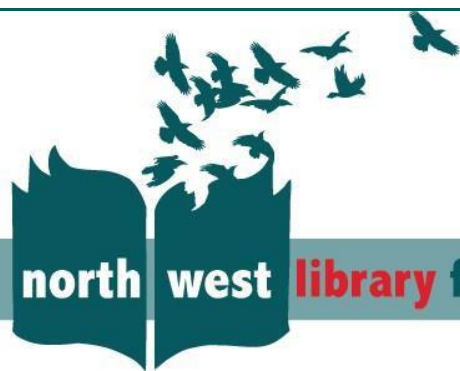
Safe Harbour – Cultural Safety: Diversity and Inclusion

This course focused on practicing cultural safety through ensuring that people become respectful of other's cultural beliefs and acknowledge that their own cultural beliefs and attitudes have the potential, consciously or unconsciously, to influence the power balance between those they interact with.

Number of Participants	Program Outcomes
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To build awareness of diversity• To frame diversity as an asset and something that is of value to a workplace and community.• Highlight the concepts of stereotype, bias, discrimination and prejudice.

STAFF FEEDBACK

Our library will focus more attention on collecting and displaying materials about religious celebrating outside the Judeo-Christian sphere.



HAZELTON • HOUSTON • KITIMAT • PRINCE RUPERT • SMITHERS • STEWART • TERRACE • NWCC

north west library federation

Steps to Reconciliation

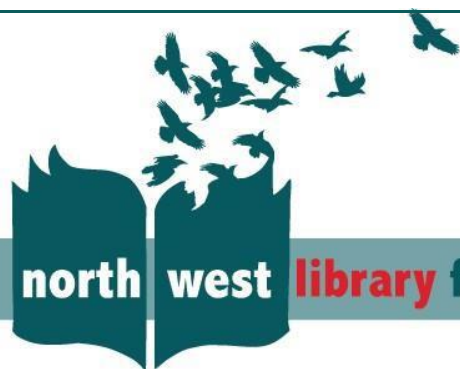
This Indigenous training is to continue through 2022. However, to date there are 25 library staff members who have already registered for this training. The feedback is all very positive.

Number of Participants	Program Outcomes
25 (2021 numbers) – Registration to continue through 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how history impacts Indigenous Peoples.• Understand how current Indigenous issues impact Indigenous communities.• Understand Indigenous self-governance.• Understand the cross-cultural perspectives of the same issue.• Become familiar with terminology and know what terms to use in different situations.

STAFF FEEDBACK

I thought the Indigenous Awareness Training was excellent and would like to do more if it's available. The material was well presented and covered the basics (often very distressing) that we all should know. This kind of training is a real contribution to reconciliation; it helps us to better understand each other.

I think this training is best for those who haven't had much Indigenous History/Relationstraining, as or yet. I enjoyed the self-paced nature of the training and the multimedia format helped with engagement.



HAZELTON • HOUSTON • KITIMAT • PRINCE RUPERT • SMITHERS • STEWART • TERRACE • NWCC

north west library federation

Provincial Collaboration

Priorities Met from the Public Libraries Branch:

- Improved regional and local shared services delivery
- Service expansion beyond community borders
- Support for B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service
 - Building capacity

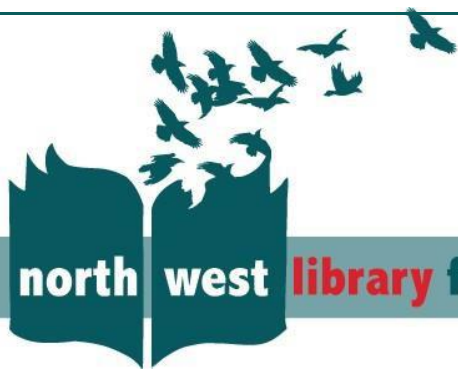
Priorities and Goals Met from Our Strategic Plan:

- Priority 1: Improving Access
- Priority 2: Building Capacity
- Priority 3: Collaboration
- Priority 4: Enhancing Governance

INDIGENIZING THE CATALOGUE

In October 2020, we began undertaking a long-term project to Indigenize our catalogues and collections. The intent of this project is to further reconciliation and increase access to Indigenous materials by updating our cataloguing and classification practices to include Indigenous names as identified by Indigenous Peoples. We continued this project in 2021 and here is where we are to date.

- Two Langara practicum students continued to work on the project during the spring of 2021.
- We have created a Google Earth map showing the service areas of our libraries, overlaid with traditional territories, treaties and language groups from <https://native-land.ca/>. It is being used as a reference to make sure we consult every local Nation without overlap.
- A discussion for best practices for local consultation took place for library directors in early 2021.
- Research on decolonizing the catalogue has been compiled, reviewed, and annotated and resource lists have been created and added. Work on instructions and best practices, as well as organization of information, is ongoing.
- Brian Butler has started on the creation of a searchable database for subject headings, but we need to improve our dataset before continuing.
- Former Director Anna Babluck, along side other members on the project presented the first steps of the Indigenization project at BCLA in May 2021.
- We have two other Langara students lined up who will research (re)classification of Indigenous materials and write up the options available to libraries, along with the pros and cons of each proposed method of reorganization.



ENHANCING GOVERNANCE

Stronger partnerships with the provincial federations and the British Columbia Library Trustee Association (BCLTA) continue to be built.

The BCLTA offered governance training for the NWLF board in spring 2021. This training workshop was titled "The Effective Board and Role Clarity". This workshop focused on:

- What is the role of the trustee?
- How to create an effective board.
- The difference between a Federation Board vs. a Public Library Board.
- The importance of a trustees role.

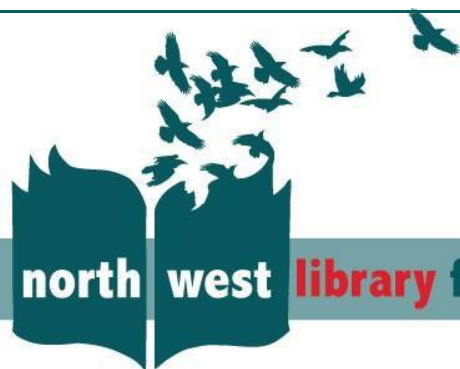
We are working with the BCLTA to conduct another informative governance training session for our board in conjunction with the other provincial federation boards this spring of 2022.

COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Since the beginning of COVID -19, the Federation has focused on increasing communication between our libraries, so they feel supported and connected while making difficult decisions about service and program changes.

2021 came with continued Provincial mask mandates. We continued to hold discussions during our LDAG meetings that specifically focused on COVID-19 issues, and the challenges and adjustments all libraries were facing. These open discussions enabled directors to feel supported and heard and gained new insight on how other libraries in the Federation were managing the operational shifts the pandemic was administering.

Despite the challenges that COVID-19 has brought, we should try and highlight the positives as well. This pandemic has allowed staff to really show how adaptable they can be and continue to provide their patrons with the utmost quality when it comes to offering programs and services. The online programming that come from this pandemic is an example of how well libraries can adapt when needed. The NWLF libraries are continuing to offer high quality online programming to their patrons and the Federation will continue to offer online professional development and program support to all our member libraries. This pandemic has made me proud to work in an industry that has proven to be able to pivot their programs and services and show how they are able to thrive rather than survive.



HAZELTON • HOUSTON • KITIMAT • PRINCE RUPERT • SMITHERS • STEWART • TERRACE • NWCC

north west library federation

WHAT'S NEXT IN 2022

The Federation will be hosting their biennial conference in September 2022. This conference will be located at the Prince Rupert Public Library. All conference details will come out in early Summer of 2022.

Cognitive Care kits have started to be distributed to member libraries. These kits are created by the Quality Improvement Advisor with Northern Health. The kits are to help support the skills and abilities of people living with dementia. The collection on unique dementia friendly kits contains an assortment of prepared activities, games, and workbooks that encourage social engagement and success with daily activities. The kits are geared to those who have (or care for someone with) cognitive impairment from a disease such as Alzheimer's, dementia, Parkinson's, or Huntington's. Kitimat, Terrace, and Prince Rupert have started implementing these kits into their circulating collection. The remaining member libraries will be receiving their kits spring/summer of 2022 after a virtual introduction to them in March 2022.

The Federation will continue to support its member libraries through hosting online staff roundtables, providing online professional development opportunities, and building partnership with other provincial federations, the British Columbia Library Trustee Association and the Association of BC Public Library Directors.

We will continue to focus on skill development and training with a strong focus on building and maintaining relationships with Indigenous communities.

We look forward to continuing to facilitate the cooperation needed to deliver optimal library services equitably throughout the region.