



Prince Rupert Library 2020 Provincial Grants Report March 8, 2021

Introduction

This report is being written while the Northwest local health area (LHA), specifically Prince Rupert, is experiencing the highest per capita COVID-19 infection rate in British Columbia¹. This is our most stressful time since the year of COVID-19 restrictions began around March 7 (or March 17 for our Library) 2020. There will be a specific COVID-19 section as well as mentions of it as I address the specific statistics throughout the report.

The Prince Rupert Library is grateful for the financial support it receives from the Province of British Columbia. These grants of \$85,000 represent almost 10% of our revenue and allow us to strengthen our collections and services, increase our outreach capacities and improve our relations with community partners. Much of the material in this report has been reported before because we are doing similar activities to previous years as the needs are still present. The section specifically about COVID-19's impact on our Library will be significantly new and different.

The Public Library is an important community hub for the residents of Prince Rupert and surrounding area. People of all ages gather here to access information for varied purposes such as pursuing employment, continuing education, and recreation. Public internet access (work stations and Wi-Fi), printing and fax services, children's programming, author readings and our public meeting area are all well-used.

We have a wide array of families living in our community from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. We have many First Nations families in our community: 38% identify as Aboriginal, and 47% of children aged 14 and under also identify as Aboriginal. (Statistics Canada). We have several Asian and south Asian communities that continue to grow with the arrival of new immigrant families. These patrons are among the many that will benefit from literacy-based programming for their children, and our specialized ESL collection. We are looking forward to sharing the wealth of the First Nations' culture with those that are new to our community, as well as those that have lived here for many years. We have a considerable population who have economic barriers and often have no other access than the Library to information and skills development. As other government agencies close their public offices, the library increasingly provides the necessary online access for purchasing commercial fishing licences, pension applications and even the BC COVID recovery benefit.

We have been using statistics from Dr. Clyde Hertzman's Human Early Learning Partnership at UBC (2014-2016) which show us that 27% of the Kindergarten students in our community during those years were considered 'vulnerable' in their 'Communications Skills and General Knowledge,' twice the provincial rate and the worst in the province. It also shows us that 27% of the students were vulnerable in their 'Language and Cognitive Development,' which is three times the provincial rate according to <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca>. Overall, 51% of the students, who are now in Grades One and

1. <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/03/04/northwest-bc-remains-covid-19-hot-spot.html>

Two, were diagnosed as 'vulnerable' in at least one of the five scales of measurement. Prince Rupert was designated as having the second highest rate of 'vulnerable' kindergarten students in the province of B.C. We have not found any newer statistics since that time.

In 2018 the Prince Rupert Library Board established four Board Committees: Strategic Planning Cmte., Grant/ Fundraising Cmte., City Relationship Cmte., and Library Director/Board Review Cmte., but most of the various committees' work has been done in 2019. Presently we use our mission statement to guide us, our services and our collections and it will be incorporated into our strategic plan. We were not able to get much further on our Strategic Plan in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19.

Prince Rupert Public Library Mission Statement

- **Assemble, preserve and administer**, in organized collections, books and related educational and recreational material, in order to promote, through guidance and stimulation in the communication of ideas, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives.
- **Serve** the community as a centre of reliable information
- **Support** the educational, civic, and cultural activities of community groups
- **Provide** opportunity and enrichment for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves continuously.
- **Seek** continually to identify community needs, to provide programs of service and access to meet such needs, and to cooperate with other organizations, agencies and institutions which can provide programs and services to meet community needs

Provincial Priorities

Fostering Connected Communities

Library Goals that support this priority

- **Provide** opportunity and enrichment for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves continuously.
- **Seek** continually to identify community needs, to provide programs of service and access to meet such needs, and to cooperate with other organizations, agencies and institutions which can provide programs and services to meet community needs.

Programs and/or services that align with this priority

- This is an important priority for us. We have a significant population of people in poverty who have no other affordable access to information or entertainment than the Library. Our goal of seeking to provide opportunities for **all** people to educate themselves continuously supports this provincial priority. The following items, services and programs are funded in whole or in part by the Provincial grant we receive.
- Our Useful stations (also known as our public internet computer stations) provided our residents over 2,400 sessions in 2020 and allowed users of our free Wi-Fi approx. 39,000 sessions inside/outside our Library. Both figures are a significant reduction from 2019.
- Our 2020 total of adult programs (participants 415) has decreased (>50%) over 2019 (1422) .

These community-group meetings were increasing in number and in comparison to other library activities until March 2020.

- A vital part of our Library is our **Sitka Evergreen ILS**. This allows us to provide our core services of circulation, cataloguing and item discovery.
- Our Interlibrary Loan program, (AKA Interlibrary Connect) had seen significant growth in lending requests to our library while our borrowing from other libraries has stayed level over the past 4 years. But during 2020 we saw a significant decrease in lending (↓40%) and borrowing (↓46%) due to COVID-19 restrictions in conjunction with CBC Radio.

Partnerships that support this priority

- Our relationship with North Coast Literacy Network (NCLN) keeps us connected to various grassroots local organizations and what is happening now. We did have several virtual meetings with our NCLN partners in 2020, but all of public events were cancelled in 2020.

Outcomes that were identified

- In 2016 the NWLF agreed to increase the emphasis on the shared First Nations priorities all of our libraries have and there were two immediate outcomes: one of our staff-members worked with our Federation coordinator to build a shared First Nations Resource list for all of the NWLF libraries to use. We continued on until March 2020. Our last public event celebrating First Nations authors was on March 5, 2020 when we had one of our largest audience turnouts (over 100 people) for Eden Robinson.

Building Capacity

Library goals that support this priority

- **Support** the educational, civic, and cultural activities of community groups
- **Provide** opportunity and enrichment for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves continuously.

Programs and/or services that align with this priority

- Part of the Provincial Grant was used for staffing and for supplies. We have 2 regular pre-school programs – **Tales for Twos** and **Story Hour**, wherein children are introduced to books, reading and the Library.
- We attempted a virtual **Summer Reading Club** for the community through support from Literacy and Libraries as well as a federal grant from Young Canada Works, through Heritage Canada. However, the program was cut short when we lost our Summer Reading Coordinator to illness and it was too difficult to hire another Coordinator due to COVID.
- We also support the **Books for Babies** program by assembling Book/CD/brochures Packages then distributing them to the Prince Rupert Health Unit. This project was funded by our revenues (as grants from Successby6 were no longer available).
- NWLF (North West Library Federation) programs: We continued meeting, virtually, with our fellow NWLF members in 2020 after March 17 but we did not have gatherings. In the spring, we worked with our Federation and used the Federation Zoom account to host a presentation by Michelle Good, author of Five Little Indians. The Federation's Zoom account proved so useful to us that we obtained our own Zoom account.
- We first saw an increase in invigilation requests from the public in 2017, 2018 and 2019. We

believe that this is a result of two things: one is that our library provides a good environment, low fees and good service while the second is that there are not many other organizations doing this in Prince Rupert and those that are doing it are considerably more expensive. We had a good start to 2020, we had close to 20 by the end of February, and then only 5 more throughout the remainder of the year due to our COVID-19 restrictions.

Partnerships that support this priority

- the **Books for Babies** program works with the Prince Rupert Health Unit which helps by distributing the items during child inoculations.
- We did not hold any as we did in previous years programs for preschoolers outside of our Library, for example, at the **Friendship House** (an inclusive organization that exists to provide programs and services to the community at large; doing this with an emphasis on the needs of the First Nations People in the areas of education, culture, health and recreation) due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Sustaining our Success

We, the Library Board, Director and staff started working on a multi-year strategic plan in late 2018. We are also looking at our relationship with the City of Prince Rupert and asking what works best for the Library and the City. The Board has also started a Grant/Fundraising committee and Library Director/Board Review committee. We continued this work in 2019 and tried to continue this in 2020, but could not. We will hopefully move forward in 2021.

Library Goals that support this priority

- **Seek** continually to identify community needs, to provide programs of service and access to meet such needs.

Programs and/or services that align with this priority

- Our Grant/Fundraising cmte. will explore what local, regional and national opportunities exist to enhance library services and service plan development. As well we will be reviewing present library services, fees and fines to see if they are still adequate. This committee will investigate private and public sector funding opportunities, presenting unique collections-supported fundraising opportunities for patrons and maintaining grant writing activity. In 2019 we started using the software service Grant Advance towards the completion of our online newspaper repository "Turning the Pages". We received no funding from any of the possible sources as of the end of 2020 and ended our subscription to Grant Advance in October of 2020. We may try this again in the future but will probably try something different first.

Partnerships that support this priority

- The scope of the Strategic Planning Cmte. includes increasing our promotional efforts to educate non-library users. We, through the City Relationship Cmte., will be working directly with City staff and Council towards a better joint understanding and shared goals; the Board started looking into what is best for the library, ensuring adherence to the Library Act while maintaining good relations with the City of Prince Rupert. Not much further happened with this process in 2020 due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Outcomes that were identified

- 2019 saw two new policy creations to sustain our success: a new invigilation policy and a revised Multipurpose Room (MP room) fee schedule. This schedule was necessary to address the increasing demand of room rentals. The committee work continues into 2020 and the major foci are the multi-year Strategic Plan and our 'Relationship with City' plan.

Working Together

Library Goals that support this priority

- **Seek** continually to identify community needs, to provide programs of service and access to meet such needs, and to cooperate with other organizations, agencies and institutions which can provide programs and services to meet community needs

Programs and/or services that align with this priority

- We were not able to meet with other organizations other than virtually in 2020. Outreach was very minimal.

Partnerships that support this priority

- We partnered with our Literacy partners **Decoda** and the **North Coast Literacy Network** in our annual Literacy Fair at our local mall in February 2020. We had hundreds of our residents come by our table and learn that we had much more than books and this was our last public outreach event in 2020.

Technology Grant Final Report

On April 2, 2020 the Prince Rupert Library received \$14,040 from the BC government. We appreciate this and we are close to completion with this project.

We have built our **North Coast Digital Reference Repository**. We have been digitizing materials relating to research resulting from past patron reference questions, especially materials of local and regional importance, in order to provide previously hard-to-find information to our patrons. We will make this material easily browseable, searchable and accessible from within the library for our staff. Our solution is based on the open-source digital asset management platform Islandora, which leverages Fedora as the underlying repository and presents a Drupal website that will be accessed in-house. We hope to make quality material more useful and available than it is now.

To do this we have to purchase hardware, install and configure software and allocate labour efficiently. Nothing exists in a vacuum and so our hardware and software do more than one thing. Part of our hardware/software acquisition will also serve other necessary purposes as well. We are also considering expanding our computing and storage capacity with a new platform from which to run a variety of virtual servers with generous, redundant storage (in case of disk failures) and providing for efficient replication (in case of mishaps or catastrophe). This new platform would host the reference repository as well as our public website and public newspaper archives, in addition to other in-house services (such as e-mail, file-sharing, wiki lists, etc.).

We have ingested about 50% of all of our materials into the repository and it is fully functional now. We have waited to purchase the necessary hardware until now as we were waiting to hear about the results of our digitization grant application to the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre. And we heard that we were successful during the last week of February. So now our intention is to spend approximately \$8500 on server hardware to create a new multi-CPU, memory-plentiful platform from which to run a variety of virtual servers on generous, redundant solid-state storage in order to guard against disk failures and to provide fast serving of repository items and associated derivatives. Virtualization of servers has many benefits: it not only allows distinct servers to share hardware

resources while maintaining logical separation of concerns, but also provides for efficient snap-shooting and replication. This new platform would host the North Coast Reference Repository as well as our public website and *Turning the Pages* public newspaper archives, in addition to other in-house services (such as e-mail, file-sharing, wiki lists, etc.).

COVID-19 impact on the Library

On March 17 we closed our doors to the public. We listened to our fellow librarians and Library Boards from across the province as well as to the Public Health Officer, Ministry of Health and WorkSafeBC. We had staff work from home and improved our Library communications, through setting up staff computers at home, installing open-source chat software so all staff could digitally communicate easily. We set up a Re-Opening working group consisting of management, union members and our Health and Safety representative. After building a COVID-19 safety plan, we executed it and made our building safer for staff. We trained all staff in cleaning and safety measures (including our custodian). The Board came up with policy to answer some unknowns (eg. Positive COVID-19 test results policy). As well we began having a greeter position at our front door, which pleased some patrons and irritated others. This was not an efficient use of staff, but did make some staff less anxious. We kept our phone lines open and:

- waived all overdue fines for the duration of our closure.
- provided reference service by phone or email
- we offered home delivery to those who were house-bound
- provided telephone assistance to patrons who needed help with the provincial e-book platform.

On June 15, we started public services again, but differently.

- We provided curbside pickup for borrowed items. We continued this way until August 25, 2020.
- We set up appointments for new patron registration and started doing this in a new, distanced and safer manner.
- We started using the Zoom service to bring together our Friends of the Library Book Club together and have continued to do this to this day. It is appreciated.

On Aug 26, 2020 we expanded our public services to allow:

- access to 4 public computers (30 minute time limit);
- student invigilation,
- printing patron documents which came to the Library digitally,
- access to public phone and access to public washrooms.

On September 14 we expanded these services to allow patrons to browse the stacks. This was a very welcome day and we heard many positive comments about this. We maintained this level of openness for the remainder of 2020.

- On October 13, we announced to the public that we were eliminating all overdue fines on all children's materials. We believe that this will bring back patrons who owed considerable fines.

Nevertheless, operating a Library under these restrictions was onerous. Everything took longer and simple things became more difficult. It was especially difficult as there was very, very few COVID-19 infections in Prince Rupert during the entire year of 2020, which made abiding by the restrictions even more difficult.

2020 was a busy year and we did our best to make good use of the provincial grant we gratefully received. This money allowed us to better serve our patrons. Our collections, infrastructure service (i.e. ILS, Public Access computing network and support) and staffing have been well-supported by these grants and this is especially appreciated in the difficult year of 2020.

Thank you on behalf of the staff and trustees of the Prince Rupert Public Library.

Joe Zelwietro

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph P. Zelwietro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chief Librarian
Prince Rupert Library

Project to be funded by this grant

We are building our North Coast Digital Reference Repository. We have embarked on a project to digitize materials relating to research resulting from past patron reference questions, especially materials of local and regional importance, in order to provide previously hard-to-find information to our patrons. We will make this material easily browseable, searchable and accessible from within the library. Our solution is based on the open-source digital asset management platform Islandora, which leverages Fedora as the underlying repository and presents a Drupal website that will be accessed in-house. We hope to make quality material more useful and available than it is now.

To do this we have to purchase hardware, install and configure software and allocate labour efficiently. Nothing exists in a vacuum and so our hardware and software do more than one thing. Part of our hardware/software acquisition will also serve other necessary purposes as well. We are also considering expanding our computing and storage capacity with a new platform from which to run a variety of virtual servers with generous, redundant storage (in case of disk failures) and providing for efficient replication (in case of mishaps or catastrophe). This new platform would host the reference repository as well as our public website and public newspaper archives, in addition to other in-house services (such as e-mail, file-sharing, wiki lists, etc..).

We may hire a student to assist with the scanning and ingestion work as we are presently investigating whether it is more effective/efficient to hire a student or use our present staff. The Library will also be adding funds to this project from our own budget as well. At this point we have not asked any third party for additional funds as we have not yet completed total project cost.

Rationale

We also considered several other projects, through asking patrons and staff what the public demand was. We considered development of a local weather station and hands-on public maker classes but there was not significant public interest at this time. The North Coast Digital Reference Repository not only addresses a specific need in organizing our reference paraphernalia in a better way, but will also aid in answering future reference questions, and also serve as a digital supplement to our existing North West History Collection, which is used and valued by many of our patrons.

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: PRINCE RUPERT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$14,040

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Other, please specify									
North Coast Digital Reference Repository	A digital repository will be available to provide searching of and access to material relating to past reference questions.	Increase use of these materials by making them more readily accessible. Potential for faster responses to future reference questions.	Improved access to knowledge supports the provincial strategic priority to advance citizen engagement.	Build a searchable digital repository consisting of the necessary materials using Islandora.	This sort of project is more suitable for single-site implementation owing to copyright issues. As well, the Libraries in our Federation have varying levels of technical capacity and we'd prefer to share with them once we have a completed project.	The repository has been running since August 2020, with sample materials of various types ingested since. We are now in the process of organizing materials scanning (where necessary) and ingestion <i>en masse</i> . We aim to complete the project by March 2021.	\$14,000 Total \$10,000 from Technology grant	Library funds will also be used to support this project. Up to \$4,000	
Other, please specify									
Storage and computing to support growing digital assets and repositories	Our servers will be consolidated and virtualized to provide for separation of concerns, ease of resource sharing and future expansion headroom.	Decreased hardware footprint and complexity, increased computational performance (with a modern multicore CPU) and storage capacity (with a large centralized array of disks) and resiliency (including redundancy in the disks themselves and a system of on- and off-site backups).	Improved digital infrastructure to deliver and promote our services supports the provincial strategic priority to build capacity. Improved access to historic newspapers supports the provincial strategic priority to advance citizen engagement.	Build a hypervisor with sufficient computational and storage resources to support our operations and long-term storage needs, including redundancy and on- and off-site backups.	Off-site backup can be in collaboration with another institution (we are talking to our local Archives) such that we would hold their backup hardware and they would hold ours.	Research into specific purchases and choice of OS is ongoing. Options with pricing will be considered in October 2020. An initial deployment with smaller servers should be completed by March 2021, with migrations of larger servers to come later if storage capacity is limited at first.	\$8,100 Total \$4,040 from Technology grant	Library funds will also be used to support this project. Up to \$4,100	