

2020 Provincial Library Grants Report

Vanderhoof Public Library

Introduction:

Vanderhoof is the geographical centre of BC and has a population of roughly 4,500 residents within town limits. Nearby rural communities without services means that Vanderhoof supports nearly 10,000 people.

The industries that shape our area are mainly forestry and farming. Both industries have been suffering lately, forestry due largely to bug kill, and farming has had several tough years due to weather conditions.

This year our greatest challenge was dealing with COVID while still doing our best to offer services to the community in a safe, effective way.

The library is putting more focus on creating broader connections within our community, improving communication with our financial and community stakeholders, providing training for all new board members, as well as building and maintaining partnerships.

The Vanderhoof Public Library continues to strive towards creating an accessible, safe, and welcoming space, both physical and emotional, for all backgrounds, ages, and interests.

The Library is an important hub for the residents of Vanderhoof and surrounding areas. People of all ages come to gather information, use the public internet, access printing services, recreation and so much more.

We continue to be committed to offering meaningful services to everyone in our community despite the challenging circumstances.

Provincial Priorities

Priority 1 – Improving Access for British Columbians

For us in 2020, improving access means linking people to resources, ideas and programs that they need to be successful.

The following are a few ways in which we have done this:

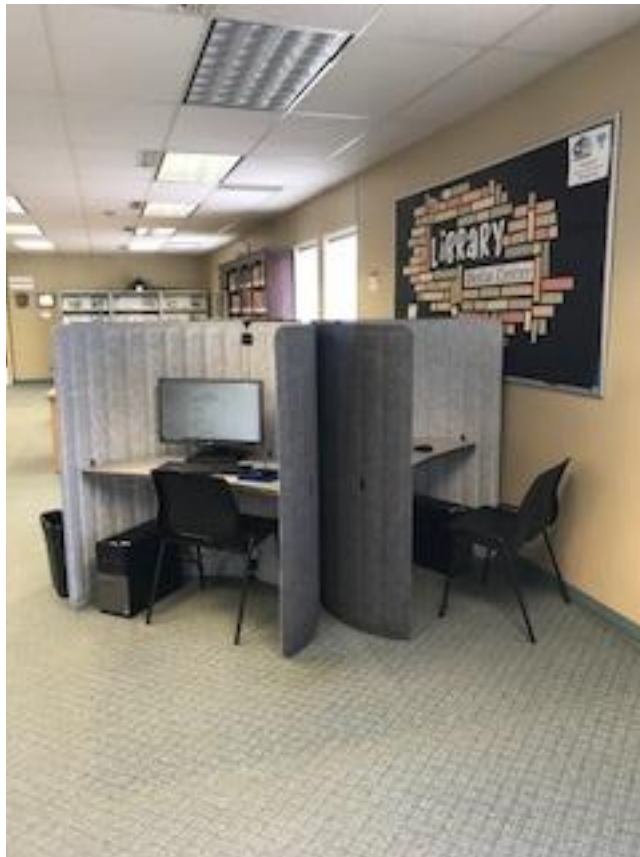
1. Continuing to provide high speed internet access and comfortable, private spaces in which to work.
2. Finding new ways to reach those that feel they do not have easy access to the library. We have been making our in-home library services a focus during this pandemic. This has allowed households to continue to access material even while staying home whether by choice or by requirement. Feedback on this has been very positive and throughout the year, more and more patrons have made use of this service.
3. Having staff trained to help with our online resources such as Gale Courses, OverDrive and RB Digital. This help is being accessed daily and has opened a new way of learning and reading for many of our patrons.
Our staff also is very knowledgeable when it come to tech help that any individual may need.

These services have also met with our priority of meeting the continually changing with the growing needs of the community.

Priority 2- Building Capacity

In 2020 the library was able to collaborate with a local counsellor and create a mental health group that meets in the library once a week. This gathering has met all the health regulations put in place during the Pandemic. All attending the group are finding this time together extremely valuable. Most of the individuals have since gotten library memberships and are enjoying the perks of library visits. One of the members has expressed on several occasions how happy she is to have discovered the library for her and her son. It is a place she can bring him where she feels safe and can relax and let her son enjoy choosing books for himself.

This year many changes were required in the building to be able to open our doors to the public. Things like public access computer stations became a challenge due to strict restrictions. We were able to purchase 4 individual computer stations that are completely private, and self contained, making it possible for us to continue to offer this very high demanded service. It has been a very appreciated addition as it offers privacy and safety.



Priority 3 – Enhancing Citizen Engagement

Having to shift to online programming this year was a learning curve for each of us. It has also been somewhat challenging to get the public excited about this new way of outreach.

Our Library had a pen pal program run through the year and it was fun to see local children develop a relationship with students of the same age in a Japan school. Videos have also been sent back and forth and this has created a real connection and interest in other cultures.

Online book clubs have worked well as some people would otherwise be unable to attend an in-house group.

In the beginning of the year, we were able to collaborate with another health organization and start an Alzheimer caregiver support group. We have many people in the community dealing with this in their own families and finding and talking with others that understand the struggle is a real help to them. One woman said it was the one thing helping her make it through the weeks.

Priority 4 – Enhancing Governance

This year library Trustee training was offered online. This made it easier for our new board members to access the training at times that better suited their schedule. All new members find this very valuable for understanding the role and responsibility of the board.

We continue to share all monthly library statistics to the board for their review.

One of our priorities in our current strategic plan is to improve communication with our stakeholders. Our main stakeholder is the District of Vanderhoof. Our hope is to be more transparent with what is happening and how the money they provide is being used to better the community on an ongoing basis.

Additional Reporting for 2020

Technology Grant – Final Report

- 1 We have replaced all old computer screens throughout the library. These new screens are much larger and allow for easier accessibility for all.
- 2 Our server was 17 years old and has desperately needed to be replaced. We were able to do that with the tech grant. This should give us many years of good use.
- 3 We have bought and installed a security program on all our public access computers to ensure safety for each user.
- 4 iPads for loan for the public is another dream come true through this grant. This has been something our patrons have been asking about for some time now. This is even good for those that do not have access to the internet at home as they can download material that they can take home to enjoy.
- 5 GoPro Bundles for loan are popular for all ages.
- 6 We have purchased different online games for the use of programming that have been enjoyed on a weekly basis by the children and youth in the community. Jack Box and Game Board Arena are favourites.

All these fantastic tech items have certainly increased our circulation and even our patronage. Despite COVID related restrictions, which have really left us feeling lost at times, our circulation numbers are higher than they have been for the past two years.

We wish to express our deep gratitude for this unexpected Technology Grant that has come at such a perfect time.

COVID – 19 and Public Libraries

The Vanderhoof Public Library's doors closed to the public on the 17th of March due to COVID 19. It was a very difficult decision but was what was needed. We made the immediate decision to offer curbside service the following day. This allowed patrons to still enjoy library material despite the closed doors. We offered book drop off for families and individuals that were choosing to stay home.

We took orders for specific items as well as offering to put together surprise bags. This was a much needed and appreciated service. One of the patrons told us that this was the only thing keeping her sane.

We were closed until mid June. We opened to regular hours once we had all the safety measures in place and had the approval of the board.

One of the big challenges at that time was finding a way to be able to offer public computer access in a safe manner. To do so, we purchased self contained workspaces that meet all the requirements.

Although we opened with our regular hours, we limit the amount of people in the building at one time and periodically throughout the day we wipe down all the high touchpoints and washrooms.

Summer Reading was offered in small, controlled groups outdoors. While it was harder to prepare for, it was highly anticipated, and each event quickly filled up.

We also tried creating take-home craft kits and found them to be very popular but very time consuming to put together. We did this on 3 different occasions throughout the year.

Our community has been very supportive of the library and made us feel very successful in our attempts at providing services that fit with the times.

Reaching our seniors continues to be a major challenge. We have had some sign up for drop off services but would like to get more seniors involved.

Summary

“To ask why we need libraries at all, when there is so much information available elsewhere, is about as sensible as asking if roadmaps are necessary now that there are so very many roads” Jon Bing

2020 has been a challenging, but good year. We are so thankful for the supportive community in which we work and live.

The library continues to be a place that fosters learning and skill-building. It is a place where all can develop literacy skills and feel connected. This is an important factor in contributing to the well being of the community.

Thank you to the Libraries Branch and the Ministry of Education for your support of our community. Our annual grants play a vital role in providing both traditional and evolving library services. Our library would not be what it is without this support.

From:

Vanderhoof Public Library reporting on the 2020 Library Technology Grant.

To:

BC Libraries Branch,

The Vanderhoof Public Library was absolutely thrilled to receive an unexpected technology grant of 11,869.00 early in the year. The grant was to be used to enhance digital service/programs, broadband connectivity, public computing, and online collections.

Due to Covid19, libraries across the country have been rising to the challenge of hosting more online programs in the communities we serve. This grant could not have come at a more opportune time and it is enabling us to purchase the needed items (Green Screen, camera and Jackbox) to grow our online programming.

We have not had much tech money throughout the years to be able to upgrade our in-house systems. We are now able to upgrade our 17+ year old server that had begun giving us problems and add a security system that restores the computer to its original settings each night, thus, improving connectivity and broadband.

We were able to purchase larger computer monitors and privacy screens for each public access computer and new monitors for staff.

We will be able to provide the community with devices to take home that can have data on them as needed. We have many areas in our community where internet is not possible but because cell phone service is more readily available, we can make available devices with LTE. This allows for more access to our community and increases digital literacy.

We have a loanable GoPro bundle that we also purchased for the public's use. This fun device encourages individuals to get active while recording the adventure.

Thank you so much for this fund that is changing the way we can serve our community!

Jennifer Barg
Vanderhoof Public Library
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2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: VANDERHOOF PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: 11,869.00

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Patron loanable devices iPads and tablets for public use	Loanable devices that will help bridge the connectivity gaps for people who rely on the Library for their computer and internet.	Increase public computing in the library by 40% and increase the type of devices by 33%.	These devices support the provincial strategic plan to improve access to all British Columbians.	Purchased iPads/tablets to become the first devices that patrons can take home.	This was a purchase for in-house use. No collaboration possible	Research and decide on best devices to suit the need (July-Sept) Order the devices in Oct. and have ready to use before the end of 2020	1655.00	The library will cover the cost to have cellular put on some devices so that they meet the connectivity mandate.	
Patron and staff hardware upgrades New monitors with privacy screens	The privacy screens on the larger monitors will enable patrons to feel that their private information can stay that way while being easier to navigate.	We have a secure network but because our space is small, privacy is an issue. This will increase privacy for each user and thus increasing usership.	This purchase supports the provincial priority: Improve access to British Columbians	Purchase larger monitors to replace all the old ones in the library and ensure privacy and ease of use for users.	This was a purchase for in-house use. No collaboration possible	We have been doing upgrades on our public and staff computers and this enables us to complete the project by the end of 2020	2304.00	Staff time for set up	
Digital Programming Green Screen and camera	To Provide the best possible online programming and in-house use.	To increase our online presence and give us many more options to reach the public.	This purchase supports the provincial priority: Building Capacity and Advancing Citizen Engagement	The use of a green screen and camera will grow our online presence and allow for more access to patrons	This was a purchase for in-house use. No Collaboration possible	We have started using the green screen in September but do not have the camera yet. All should be available by the end of Oct.	631.00	In-Kind: 400.00 from the BC Literacy grant	
Digital programming Jackbox party pack	Jackbox for online gaming to provide a safe place for teens to gather online and have fun	The addition of this online subscription has increased our teen programming by 50%.	This purchase supports the provincial priority: Building Capacity and Advancing Citizen Engagement	Purchase of an online Jackbox game for the use of youth programming both in and out of the library.	This was a purchase for in-house use. No collaboration possible	We first started looking into this is March but did not purchase until August. We are using it weekly	111.00	We have staff that are offering free, weekly teen gaming afternoons and devices to use if needed.	
Electronic devices that can be borrowed by patrons	GoPro HERO8 Black Bundle to help improve access to electronics to all	To add to our loanable electronic resources by 20%.	This purchase supports the provincial priority: Building Capacity and Advancing Citizen Engagement	Purchase a GoPro kit that is loanable to the public	This was a purchase for in-house use. No collaboration possible	The GoPro should be loanable by the end of Oct.2020	470.00	The library will be putting these in a kit and will be providing free training on how to use the device.	

Patron software upgrades Deep Freeze for all public use computers	Deep Freeze security system for the public computers and laptops to easily remove unwanted changes.	To improve public security, safety, and access on all public computers	This purchase supports the provincial priority: Improve access to British Columbians	Purchase the deep freeze and install on all patron devices.	This was a purchase for in-house use. No collaboration possible	We started researching a new security system in August, hope to have this in by early Nov. 2020.	1278.00	The library will be putting this software on devices that are used by the public. Some can be checked out.	
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.) Upgrades to the server	Upgrade the server and migrate over to make daily operations smoother.	to improve our connection speed and be able to safely back up critical data.	This purchase supports the provincial priority: Improve access to British Columbians	Our current server is over 15 years old and is needing to be replaced to improve speed and access.	This was a purchase for in-house use. No collaboration possible	This has been something we have known for a year would need to be upgraded and plans are under way to have it installed by Nov. 2020	5420.00	In-Kind: Time from our IT	