

# 2024 Library Federation Grant Report (LFGR)

## Privacy Notice

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## Overview

### Federation Name

*Public Library InterLINK*

### Federation Profile

*InterLINK provides collaborative resources and services to its 18 member libraries in BC's Lower Mainland, Sunshine Coast, and Sea to Sky Corridor.*

## Executive Summary

Please provide an executive summary on the library federation's activities this past year. This should cover key operations supported by annual provincial funding, as well as planning and use of one-time/targeted grants, including the 2022 Grants for COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant (CRR), Emergency Planning & Preparedness (EPP) and the 2023 Enhancement Grant. The purpose of this section is not to duplicate the individual projects details, instead provide a short analysis and summary of your overall approach and progress. Please limit to 2 paragraphs and feel free to use bullet points.

*In 2024, Public Library InterLINK (InterLINK) was proud to sustain existing services and offer new programs that brought value to member libraries. As the largest Federation in the province, we looked beyond our jurisdiction and worked collaboratively with the other five federations to leverage our size, funding, and infrastructure to benefit all BC libraries. We continued to cooperate with other library organizations in areas of mutual interest to ensure coordinated service delivery and work to create a future public library system that is strong, innovative, and able to meet the needs of British Columbians.*

*This year, InterLINK continued to provide the following critical services that our members depend on, and that are supported by annual provincial funding:*

- Supporting resource sharing between member libraries, including interlibrary loan and non-resident borrowing;*
- Offering opportunities for discounted bulk purchasing, providing cost savings of up to 65%;*
- Providing resources for patrons with print disabilities;*
- Administering NewToBC which connects new immigrants and public libraries, supporting their settlement in BC;*
- Offering training opportunities to library workers and trustees; and*
- Nurturing spaces for information sharing and best practice development between libraries – from the leadership level to support workers.*

*While maintaining these core services, Covid-19 Relief & Recovery, Emergency Planning & Preparedness, and Enhancement grants have enabled InterLINK to build on the strength of its expertise and infrastructure to provide additional supports to members as well as libraries across BC in ways that boost library efficiency, enrich community experience, and make public libraries more welcoming places for all British Columbians. To meet that goal, InterLINK:*

- Developed a new strategic plan to guide the federation in the years to come;*
- Supported members to comply with the Accessible BC Act in order to make libraries more welcoming and accessible spaces;*
- Provided and expanded training opportunities for more than 1,200 library workers and trustees;*
- Hosted virtual programming available to all BC libraries and assessed the ongoing need for this collaborative service.*

*Our report will focus on a representative sample of regular and enhanced services. These initiatives demonstrate how InterLINK's core services are essential to the functioning of the public library sector and how increased investment has resulted in stronger libraries. We are proud of the role InterLINK plays in BC's public library system, and we look forward to 2025 bringing another year of sharing, collaboration, and service.*

## Budget Information

Please outline the current status of your grant spending. This should include: Amounts received under each grant (annual operating, CRR & EPP, Enhancement) for 2022-2024 Amounts of each grant spent to date Operating budget for 2024 Amounts earmarked for upcoming projects Amounts remaining to be allocated

### *Annual Operating Funding (Total 2023-2025)*

*Amount received - \$1,815,540 (3 years, up front\_*

*Amount spent to date - \$1,210,360*

*Amount recognized for next year - \$605,180*

*Amount remaining for allocation - \$0*

### *2022 CRR & EPP Grant*

*Amount received - \$425,000*

*Amount spent to date - \$266,038*

*Amount earmarked for projects - \$158,962*

*Amount remaining for allocation - \$0*

### *Enhancement Grant*

*Amount received - \$335,000*

*Amount spent to date - \$68,229*

*Amount earmarked for projects - \$266,771*

*Amount remaining for allocation - \$0*

## Major themes

Use the checkboxes below to indicate which areas your federation primarily focused on this year. These themes should be reflected in the Featured Initiatives section starting on the next page, and/or in the Executive Summary above. We recommend choosing only the top 3 most relevant themes.

Shared service delivery (e.g. consortium licensing, resource sharing)

Professional learning (e.g. training opportunities, conference planning)

Service expansion beyond community borders

Governance, strategic planning, and regional priorities, membership expansion

## Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the federation has undertaken in the past year. Use one page per initiative. To add more pages, select Yes for "I have more initiatives to report" at the bottom of this page.

### Initiative Title #1

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

*Provincial Library Staff Training & Professional Development*

## Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

*InterLINK's professional development program continued to provide valuable training opportunities to library staff and trustees at a provincial level, by partnering with all BC library federations and extending service to all library staff and trustees. Responding to the changing needs of our members, the professional development program expanded in 2024 and leveraged funding to provide new live, synchronous learning opportunities focused on mental health and diversity and inclusion, while continuing to offer well-established synchronous and asynchronous training that meets the needs of members. In total, approximately 1,200 BC staff and trustees participated in InterLINK's professional development program in 2024, with countless others benefiting from the knowledge, skills, and insights shared with their colleagues and community.*

## Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative previously, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

*In 2024, InterLINK made significant developments with the professional development (PD) program. This progress included:*

### *Training*

- Offered asynchronous training on topics including Autism Awareness in Libraries, Customer Service, Indigenous Awareness and Relations, and diversity and inclusion reaching a total of approximately 750 participants.*
- Provided synchronous training including 3 Coaching workshops and 6 Managing Hostile Interactions training sessions reaching a total of 168 participants.*
- Established a new agreement with Library Juice Academy and began to offer core, skills-based training at a discounted rate to BC public library staff.*
- Managed a provincial partnership with Ryan Dowd's Homeless Training which offers access to online training for all 71 BC public libraries at no cost.*
- Organized and hosted a new online Mental Health Boundary Setting Workshop with over 200 participants.*
- Provided coaching for approximately 40 library staff who are Indigenous, Black, and/or People of Colour to support staff retention and leadership development.*
- Assessed hostile interaction training; worked with facilitators to adjust courses to better serve participants; researched other training opportunities in this area.*
- Collaborated with BCLA to co-lead the creation of the BC Professional Development Coalition, bringing together all sector partners providing training to ensure efficient delivery of PD and training.*

### *Capacity, Process, and Communications*

- Hired a Strategic Projects Coordinator to support and expand the professional development program.*
- Updated InterLINK's registration reporting process to improve accuracy and streamline workflows between staff members.*
- Developed new PD communication channels to promote our offerings and increase registration. This included the creation of an online PD catalogue, a comprehensive InterLINK library PD listserv, an integrated online PD training calendar, and updated contact lists for all BC federated and unfederated libraries.*
- Updated PD participant survey templates and gathered feedback in a timely manner.*

## Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? Comment on how this supports core operational functions, specified strategic goals, priorities identified in your grant award letter, and/or emerging member library needs.

*Well-trained staff in public libraries are essential to providing equitable and inclusive services to all British Columbians. Supporting training is a critical strategic priority for InterLINK and has become a core federation business over the past decade. This priority aligns with the Public Library Branch's Strategic Plan, Strategy 2 "Building Capacity".*

*Recently, we have seen the pace of change in how libraries must support its community, particularly those with complex needs, increase dramatically. While staff at InterLINK libraries may feel capable in providing traditional library services, they report feeling less equipped to support patrons with complex needs.*

*InterLINK is proud to support its members, and the entire BC library system, as they try to maintain professional skills and keep up with the evolving standards needed to serve all patrons at public libraries.*

*The additional funding we've received has enabled us to offer training opportunities to all 71 BC public libraries, providing consistency, equity, and opportunities for improving service across BC. Once training and its delivery is no longer funded through provincial grants, InterLINK will need to evaluate how to maintain current levels of support for training among its members, and if it is possible to extend opportunities to libraries outside of its jurisdiction.*

## What impacts does/will this initiative have on the federation, member libraries, and/or communities?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

- InterLINK's professional development program decreased costs and centralized training for libraries; regardless of their size or location.*
- The provincial training program creates greater equity in the public library system, ensuring all library staff and trustees have access to the training they need to provide excellent service.*
- Uniform access to core training created shared expectations and best practices for providing library services across BC.*
- Training opportunities helped staff feel more confident in themselves and their ability to support patrons. Staff feel more supported by their employers and are encouraged to put their training into practice.*

*Coaching Foundations training participant quote: "I found so much value in this course! Thanks Simon for your commitment to our learning and for sharing your expertise on this topic. I will look back on it fondly and recommend it to all of my colleagues who are looking for ways to support their staff and build their confidence, develop their problem solving skills and nurture their leadership."*

*IBPOC Coaching participant quote: "As long as I can recall, I've struggled with self-acceptance in both personal and professional contexts. Through the coaching opportunity, I felt invited to explore and challenge, in a safe way, some of what I now know to be self-limiting beliefs and instead, allow for self-compassion and exploration of what I offer through different tools and practices which in turn, has helped me feel more at ease and helped me feel more empowered to be and show up as myself. It's priceless."*

I have more initiatives to report

Yes

## Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the federation has undertaken in the past year. Use one page per initiative. To add more pages, select Yes for "I have more initiatives to report" at the bottom of this page.

## Initiative Title #2

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

*Accessibility Support Services*

## Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

*In order to support BC public libraries become more open and welcoming to all, InterLINK built on its existing expertise in accessible services by:*

- Collaborating with sector partners on the Public Library Accessibility Working Group (PLAWG) to identify and make available supports to educate libraries on the Accessible BC Act (ABCA);*
- Administering a federated InterLINK Public Library Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), supporting the creation of an Accessibility Plan for 6 libraries;*
- Negotiating and launching accessibility audit services for all InterLINK members; and*
- Continuing to provide access to audiobooks for InterLINK community members with print disabilities.*

## Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative previously, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

*The Public Library Accessibility Working Group (PLAWG) moved the BC Library community closer to goals of compliance with the Accessible BC Act through:*

- Consulting library CEOs and Directors across BC on current needs in order to support compliance with the ABCA;*
- Collaborating with Disability Alliance BC (DABC) and meeting with the Accessibility Directorate to discuss what public libraries need to support communities with lived experience of disability; and*
- Liaising with Untapped Accessibility with the aim of developing a Framework for all public libraries to use to audit and improve accessibility at their libraries.*

*InterLINK Federated Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) supported InterLINK members seeking a collaborative approach to compliance by:*

- Meeting 6 times to advance compliance work for their libraries;*
- Developing a Terms of Reference to ensure healthy governance and a shared understanding of goals; and*
- Drafting an Accessibility Plan, which is awaiting finalized approval in Q1 2025.*

*InterLINK negotiated and facilitated Accessibility Audits for its members:*

- Engaging Social Planning And Research Council BC (SPARC BC) to provide accessibility audits for member libraries;*
- Collaborating on Shared Accessibility Audits - investigating attitudes of organizations as well as the accessibility of programs and services across a representative sample of InterLINK libraries; and*
- Providing Opt-in Accessibility Audits of library built environments, technological communications, and human resources were scheduled with participating libraries for Q4 2024 and Q1-3 of 2025.*

*The InterLINK Audiobook program continues to play a vital role in member libraries' accessible services departments, providing hours of entertainment and engagement for print disabled patrons.*

- 2,036 patrons are registered for the service.*
- 15,554 total titles are in the collection, with 790 titles added in 2024.*
- Materials were circulated 32,294 times in 2024.*

## Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? Comment on how this supports core operational functions, specified strategic goals, priorities identified in your grant award letter, and/or emerging member library needs.

*Providing supports to make libraries more accessible to patrons is an existing part of InterLINK's core services. Through our support of audio books and the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) collections for patrons with print disabilities, InterLINK continues to work to support members to provide welcoming and accessible services for all.*

*Leveraging existing expertise, infrastructure, and community contacts, in 2024 InterLINK prioritised accessibility work based on member-driven feedback and needs created by targeted deadlines for compliance with the Act.*

*Monies targeted for Accessibility in the Covid Recovery and Relief Grant provided necessary funding to provide the significant service growth in this area. It is expected that when accessibility standards are launched, the needs in this area will only increase. With limited capacity, InterLINK will struggle to continue to support the growing demand.*

What impacts does/will this initiative have on the federation, member libraries, and/or communities?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

*By centralising support with federations and sector partners, funders create accessibility services that provide opportunities for shared learning, efficiencies and cost savings, greater equity, and better experiences for the communities.*

*The work accomplished through the Public Library Accessibility Working Group is an excellent example of how to create shared understanding through centralised learning support. By providing a common tool, developed by experts at Untapped Accessibility, libraries develop shared understanding of requirements and create communities of practice, where libraries share their experiences and learn from each other.*

*Leveraging federated infrastructure to create a shared Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) and identify opportunities for shared accessible service provision creates both efficiencies and cost savings for member libraries, communities, and the province. Taking a federated approach to the creation of an AAC makes the administration of the Committee more efficient, enables libraries to collaborate and learn across municipal jurisdictions, and reduces the burden on the disabled community who have felt the strain of increased need for volunteers.*

*Providing shared accessibility audit services provides cost savings and efficiencies through centralized negotiations and administration, while opening the door to benchmarking and providing collaborative approaches to resolve shared problems.*

*As concrete standards are released, libraries will need to find ways to determine if they meet those and, if not, how to do so. Finding opportunities to centrally contract services like those for accessibility audits, to create significant cost savings and efficiencies, to provide opportunities to create equitable participation for all libraries through shared funding sources, and most importantly to create spaces and services that all BC citizens can use.*

*Testimonial about InterLINK's audiobook collection:*

*"We have a patron who (reluctantly!) signed up for Talking Books with us early last year. Her diminishing vision has meant the loss of many things she loved-especially her fine needle work. We set her up with a Daisy player & a selection of audiobooks from InterLINK's collection to try and she was amazed at the variety of choices and the many wonderful narrators. She has placed her 'listening chair' near a bright window & is still able to knit a little and hear stories at the same time. Her residence has a book club & they check with us to choose titles that are also in audio format so she can be included. She is delighted to now be able to enjoy social time with her neighbours chatting about books! She has become one of our most voracious readers & it has been a wonderful experience to get to know her and help keep her connected to literature."*

I have more initiatives to report

Yes

## Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the federation has undertaken in the past year. Use one page per initiative. To add more pages, select Yes for "I have more initiatives to report" at the bottom of this page.

**Initiative Title #3**

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

*NewToBC: The Library Link for Newcomers*

## Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

*NewToBC is a library settlement initiative focused on raising awareness about and connecting newcomers to Canada to public libraries and to other community events, programs, resources, and services.*

*In 2024, NewToBC continued to deliver the Library Champions Project; to develop, maintain and deliver accurate settlement information on its website; and to make extensive use of social media to share information and engage with stakeholders.*

*After learning that its application for continued funding from Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) was not successful - a decision reflective of a wide scale decrease in federal settlement funding due to significantly lower newcomer arrivals called for in the federal government's Immigration Levels Plan - InterLINK has engaged stakeholders in conversations about finding ways to continue providing the service.*

## Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative previously, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

*NewToBC was established in 2012. Between 2012 and 2014, the provincial government contributed \$1.5 million to the project. This funding allowed InterLINK to conduct a comprehensive community consultation, draft an action plan, and develop core services for the project.*

*NewToBC became a federally funded settlement service in 2014. Between 2014 and 2024, InterLINK successfully negotiated 3 Contribution Agreements with the IRCC to provide funding and a mandate for the project. NewToBC has consistently exceeded targets and achieved positive outcomes for newcomers, libraries, and communities.*

*In 2024:*

*- NewToBC planned and delivered 24 cycles of the Library Champions Project (LCP), a volunteer community engagement project. 339 newcomers participated in the project. These Library Champions connected with more than 13,000 other newcomers and made social media posts that generated more than 225,000 impressions. Library Champions helped over 750 other newcomers in their communities get library cards.*

*- NewToBC continued to develop, maintain, and share accurate and up-to-date settlement information resources through the NewToBC website. Approximately 75,000 users visited the website and generated nearly 150,000 page views.*

*- NewToBC made extensive use of social media (including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X) to share information and to engage with stakeholders including newcomers to Canada and library staff and administration in dynamic, low barrier digital environments. In 2024, NewToBC made over 400 posts to each of the platforms including over 2000 posts to X. Posts to NewToBC's Facebook page generated nearly 1.5 million impressions. At the end of 2024, NewToBC's Facebook page had over 74,000 likes and followers.*

*Early in 2024, InterLINK submitted a proposal for continued program funding for NewToBC through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's CFP 2024 process. In November 2024, InterLINK learned that the proposal had not been selected to receive funding, a decision reflective of a wide scale decrease in federal settlement funding due to significantly lower newcomer arrivals called for in the federal government's Immigration Levels Plan.*

*Public Library InterLINK is now focused on working out the details of a sustainable, affordable, and feasible service delivery and funding model for NewToBC. The new model will focus on the planning and delivery of cycles of the LCP in collaboration with select libraries in the InterLINK federation. The LCP will be supported by the maintenance of select settlement information resources on the NewToBC website and by social media.*

## Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? Comment on how this supports core operational functions, specified strategic goals, priorities identified in your grant award letter, and/or emerging member library needs.

*Since its inception, NewToBC has focused on supporting the critical role that public libraries can and do play in the settlement of newcomers. NewToBC services are based on and informed by priorities originally identified in a comprehensive community consultation undertaken in 2012 and reinforced by formal and informal input from stakeholders throughout the life of the project. NewToBC strives to:*

- Identify and remove barriers to and raise awareness of public library programs, resources, and services for newcomers to Canada;*
- Provide newcomers with opportunities to make meaningful connections with and contributions to their communities; and*
- Foster information sharing and collaboration amongst public libraries and between public libraries and other settlement service provider organizations and community agencies.*

## What impacts does/will this initiative have on the federation, member libraries, and/or communities?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

*NewToBC supports the settlement of newcomers by connecting them to public libraries and to other settlement and community information, programs, resources, and services. NewToBC supports the work of public libraries by:*

- Identifying and removing barriers faced by newcomers;*
- Raising awareness about library facilities, programs, resources, and services;*
- Developing and providing ready access to settlement information to inform libraries' reference work, program planning, collections development, and strategic planning;*
- Providing opportunities and venues for libraries to connect with newcomers as well as with other libraries, settlement service providers, and community agencies; and*
- Connecting libraries to newcomer Library Champions to support staff and board recruitment.*

## I have more initiatives to report

Yes

## Featured Initiatives

Use this section to provide detail on up to four significant initiatives the federation has undertaken in the past year. Use one page per initiative. You have reached the maximum number of reportable initiatives.

### Initiative Title #4

Enter a brief, descriptive title for your initiative.

*BC Public Libraries Present - Provincial Virtual Programming Pilot*

## Summary

Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.

*In 2024, in partnership with all library federations, InterLINK coordinated a 2nd season of the provincial virtual program, BC Libraries Present (BCLP). In Fall, BCLP hosted three virtual conversations with indigenous authors whose books asked British Columbians to think about reconciliation and the lived experience of indigenous peoples and communities.*

## Timeline and Progress Report

What is the expected timeline for this initiative? What is the current status (e.g. planning, implementation, complete, ongoing). If you have reported on this initiative previously, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

*In Fall 2024, BCLP hosted the following three virtual programs open to the province.  
In all, approximately 425 people participated with more attending viewing parties at their home libraries.*

- Alicia Elliot: And Then She Fell, ~100 participants*
- Katherine Vermette: Real Ones, ~175 participants*
- Jessica Johns: Bad Cree, ~150 participants*

*Centralised negotiation, planning, and marketing enabled all 71 libraries across BC to participate, no matter their internal capacity.*

*Work has begun on soliciting feedback from libraries on how to improve patron experience, provide materials needed to advertise the events, and what topics should be investigated for the next series in 2025.*

*Funding for this pilot project is provided through Enhancement grants. To determine the ongoing need for collaborative virtual programming and to support future planning, InterLINK:*

- Solicited feedback on the current BC Libraries Present pilot, learning its strengths as well as what could be improved;*
- Undertook a needs assessment, engaging library leaders and programmers from across the province to determine if there is sufficient interest in maintaining a collaborative approach to virtual programming after 2025/6; and*
- Developed a preliminary business case for collaborative virtual programming to support discussions with the province.*

## Rationale

Why was this initiative prioritized? Comment on how this supports core operational functions, specified strategic goals, priorities identified in your grant award letter, and/or emerging member library needs.

*Prior to 2021 few libraries hosted virtual programs with any regularity, if at all. During the pandemic, virtual programming became a critical service, keeping patrons connected when in person services were paused due to health and safety concerns. As libraries surface from the pandemic, it is unclear how best to balance in person and virtual programs in ways that support community access and participation but do not stretch staffing.*

*The pilot BCLP program's goal is to investigate opportunities for efficiencies and savings through centralised provision of virtual programming to British Columbians, which aligns with InterLINK's strategic directions to enrich patron experience and build member capacity.*

*Additionally, during accessibility audits of InterLINK programs and services, providing regular access to virtual programming was identified as a clear and tangible way to make library programming more accessible to those with lived experience of disability.*

*It also supports Covid Relief and Recovery grant priorities to assist libraries as they recover from pandemic operations and seek ways to meet the changing needs of their communities.*

## What impacts does/will this initiative have on the federation, member libraries, and/or communities?

Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

*A provincial approach to virtual programming:*

- Creates cost efficiencies through centralised service and staffing;*
- Builds capacity in and understanding of the complex service provision of virtual environments to participating libraries;*
- Creates equity through providing premier, high-profile events that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive for single libraries to hold on their own;*
- Promotes accessibility through enabling participation for community members who are homebound or for whom going to an in-person program would be challenging; and*
- Provides an opportunity for shared connections and conversations on issues important to British Columbians.*

*"I am so grateful to our libraries for providing the opportunity to experience authors in person. I learn so much & come away from feeling enriched."*

*Virtual Program Attendee, 2024*

You have reached the maximum number of reportable initiatives. Click [Previous Page](#) to edit your initiatives, or [Next Page](#) to proceed to the following section.

## Board Approval

Download the board approval signature form from the Public Libraries Branch website here: [<LINK>](#)

Upload the signed form by clicking the button below.

Upload Board Approval Signature Form

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## Your 2024 Library Federation Grant Report is almost complete.

Once you click Submit, you will no longer be able to edit or download your report.

You may use the download options at the bottom of this page to save a copy of your report before submitting.

If you need to edit your report after submitting, please contact the Public Libraries Branch at [PUBLIB@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PUBLIB@gov.bc.ca).