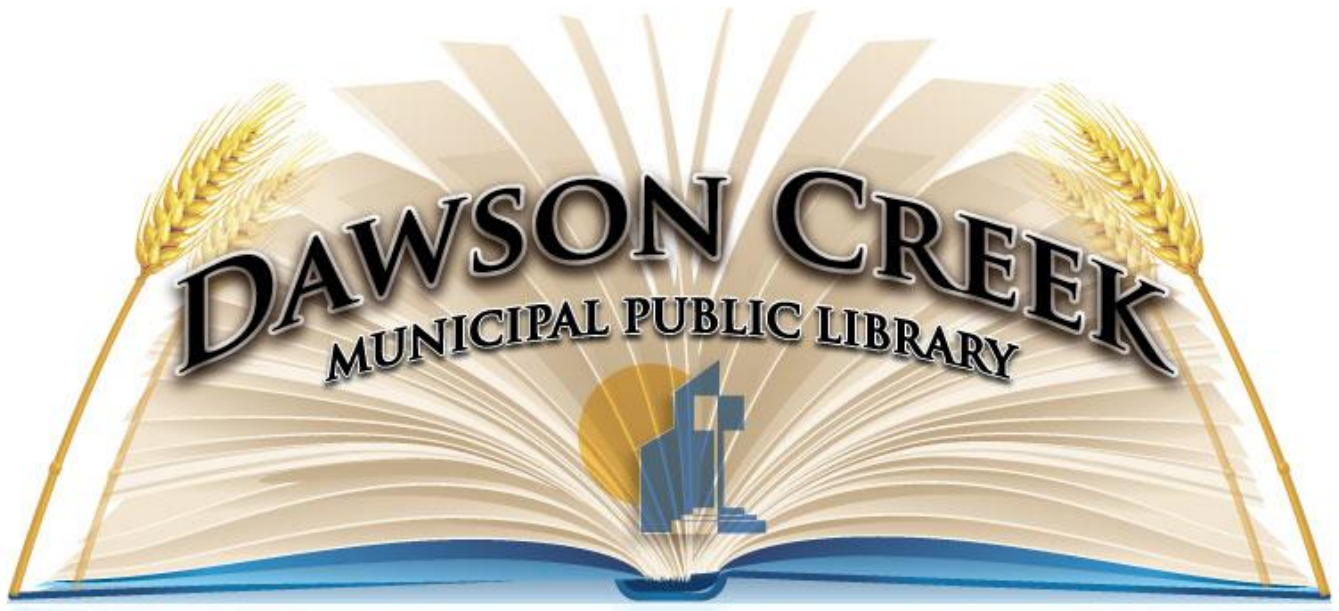


2020 | By: Pamela Morris, Library Manager



# Provincial Library Grants Report

Dawson Creek Municipal Public Library



## Who we are...

The Dawson Creek Public Library is located in northeast BC a few minutes from the Alberta border. We are a city of about 11,500 people with oil and gas, farming, forestry and tourism being our biggest industries. We are located at Mile Zero of the Alaska Highway. Our population includes pioneer families and newcomers to the area and to Canada. Our citizens come here for work and stay because Dawson Creek is a great place to raise families, earn an income and enjoy all that small town life has to offer – including our library.

## Our strategic goals...

Funding from the provincial government helps our library meet its number one strategic goal – enhancing the community via learning and leisure. Every year the library board and staff look at ways to meet that goal while improving access to library services and collaborating with other groups in our community with similar objectives. We look at ways to offer learning experiences and entertainment for everyone from children to seniors. Our library aims to connect people and resources with free and accessible services for all.

## Aligning our goals with the B.C. Strategic Plan...

### Improving Access for British Columbians:

- Funding provided through provincial grants allows the Dawson Creek Public Library to purchase access to the shared Library-To-Go e-books and e-audiobooks collection for our patrons. Library-to-Go is a collection of 90,000 e-books and e-audiobooks accessible through our library website or the Libby App. In 2020, 529 library patrons from our community borrowed 14,263 items. This was an increase of 158 new borrowers of e-materials and a 3,841 increase in circulation over 2019. Access to free e-materials was never more important for our patrons than during the 2020 pandemic. The sudden closure of libraries in March meant many people in our community were left without access to physical reading materials and audiobooks. For some, reading or listening to audiobooks is their only form of at-home entertainment and plays a large role in maintaining good mental health. Having access to these materials through Library-to-Go, at a time that suits our patron's needs without leaving home, has been vital during the pandemic. Access to children's e-books was also important to our young patrons who were finishing their school year at home and could not visit their school library to borrow books. Our library maintained free wi-fi access on the library grounds and parking lot throughout our closure to allow anyone in our community to access and download e-books and e-audiobooks through Library-to-Go. This meant our patrons who do not have adequate internet access at home could borrow e-materials.

- Provincial grants allows the Dawson Creek Public Library to maintain seven free public internet-access computers.  
 On average, 11 people in our community use these computers each day for a wide variety of reasons. Many people are job seeking and use the computers to create or print resumes and fill out job applications. They receive and send emails. In the Dawson Creek area many jobs are in the oil and gas field and require specific safety tickets to allow people to work. Often users need access to our computers to complete courses to earn these tickets. They also use our services to print or scan the tickets to their employers.  
 Many computer users are international college students who need access to government documents only available to them online. Often they don't have access to printers and use the library services to print, copy and scan their documents.  
 Users also include residents of an addiction treatment facility located in a nearby rural area. Once a week residents come to the library in the evening to use the internet computers to communicate with their families at home.  
 The library's computers are also used regularly by those who live in rural areas who do not have adequate access to the internet where they live, as well as people experiencing homelessness in our community.

## Building Capacity:

- In 2020, the Dawson Creek Public Library was able to purchase online professional development classes for six staff members. Through Niche Academy, staff members completed the 'Librarian's Guide to Homelessness' training to help them better communicate and interact with patrons who are experiencing homelessness and/or who are affected by mental health illnesses.  
 Staff working in libraries often encounter patrons who have mental health challenges. Interactions can become difficult when staff are not trained how to approach patrons in a way that recognizes mental health issues. The training gave staff the tools to addresses situations in a way that avoids or de-escalates confrontations.  
 This training has helped staff improve the library's welcoming atmosphere for all of our patrons while maintaining a safe and healthy work and public environment.

## Advancing Citizen Engagement:

- Provincial funding allowed the Dawson Creek Public Library to improve connection with the Nawican Friendship Centre, an indigenous centre in our community.  
 In early 2020 library staff visited the centre to meet with its community and share information about resources available to them at the library. This included information about free public internet-access computers, printing, scanning and copying services, registering for a library card, book and audiobook lending and outreach services. The visit also included creating a lending library at the centre. Pre-pandemic, this lending library was being stocked monthly by the DCPL with a new selection of books and audiobooks, and loaning was administered by the staff of the Friendship Centre. This arrangement will resume and continue as Covid-19 safety restrictions are eased. It is expected that this connection will continue to improve indigenous citizen engagement in the years to come. The Nawican Friendship Centre is currently working towards creating a youth centre and we hope the library's existing connections will help create new engagement partnerships with indigenous youth in our community.
- Provincial funding supports the Dawson Creek Public Library's delivery of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in our community.  
 The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is a free book-gifting program that currently delivers quality children's books to 550 children in our community each month. The children are registered by their parents and receive books each month in the mail until they reach the age of five. Funding helps pay for administering the registration of children and fundraising efforts. This includes printing, photocopying, and purchasing promotional and outreach materials.  
 The goal of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library is to promote early literacy to all children in our community no matter their socio-economic status. Children's exposure to books promotes kindergarten readiness, encourages a love of reading, and creates quality family time when parents and caregivers take time to read to

their children. By offering this program the library is introducing children's books into homes that might not have the resources to do so on their own.

- A Dawson Creek municipal by-election in 2020 prompted the library to use provincial funding to facilitate recording and posting a "Meet the Candidates" forum on our Facebook page. The library purchased audio-visual equipment to record a question and answer session with each of the four candidates. Those sessions were shared on our social media sites.

This engagement happened during the pandemic and there were few opportunities for citizens of our city to hear from the candidates and learn about their platforms. The recordings improved our citizens' access to conversations about services that affect their lives on a local and provincial level.

## Technology grant – final report

The Dawson Creek Public Library received a \$15,646 BC Technology Grant in early 2020. The funds were used to purchase eight new desktop computers for public use to access the internet and printing. Funds were also allocated for the professional installation of the new computers and for the purchase of new surge protectors and battery backups for staff computers. The remainder of the funds were used to contract digital library services for 2020 and continuing into 2021.

- Surge protectors/battery backup - \$416.82
- Eight Dell desktop computers - \$9,102.62
- In-house and on-site set up of new computers by IT professionals - \$2,340.63
- Digital Library Services contract - \$3,785.93

The new desktop computers replaced seven of our aging public internet-access computers, some of which were not fully functional and were slated for replacement by year end. These computers are used, on average, 11 times per day by our patrons (about 4,000 sessions per year).

Surge protectors and battery backup units were purchased to protect staff computers that are vital for the day-to-day operation of the library. These include computers that are used for cataloguing, acquisitions, interlibrary loan transactions, bookkeeping, catalogue searches and circulation transactions.

The pandemic forced the library to look at ways to provide services to our patrons while under Covid-19 restrictions. We also needed to communicate with our patrons virtually. The remainder of the funds provided through the technology grant continue to be used to pay a monthly fee to a digital library services provider. The library has tasked the provider with creating regular social media posts, YouTube channel creation and posting, website maintenance, database management and creating virtual programming for the library. Our digital library service provider has implemented the following projects:

- Social media posts promoting access to e-materials through Library-to-Go
- Website and social media updates around Covid-19-forced library closure, promotion of Library Take Out services and library safety precautions upon re-opening
- Website cleanup – updating webpages, checking links, improving website navigation for our patrons
- Contacting community organizations and individuals to create upcoming virtual programming
- Creating a YouTube channel for virtual children's storytime
- Posting virtual storytime on library Facebook page
- Scheduled posting and sharing of community events on library social media

## Adapting to a pandemic...

The emergence of Covid-19 had a major impact on public libraries throughout British Columbia in 2020, and the Dawson Creek Public Library was no exception. The library was ordered closed by the provincial health authority and

our municipality in mid-March and remained closed until the beginning of July. The closure meant much of our planned programming was cancelled or put on hold. In-person services were immediately unavailable.

Library staff was temporarily reduced from 11 staff to just two. The library continued to accept returns of borrowed materials through our outside book drop and encouraged our patrons to keep any materials they had until the library re-opened if they wished. No fines were levied against any items on loan.

While physical items were not loanable at this time, patrons were encouraged to borrow e-books and e-audiobooks. For those who did not have a library card that was required to borrow these materials, staff registered new patrons over the phone and by email to allow access. The library website and Facebook page were used to communicate how to access online materials which also included free children's e-books, encyclopedias, math databases and homework resources while students were finishing their school year virtually at home. During 2020, there were 11,432 library website and catalogue virtual visits.

Free public wifi was available throughout the library closure as the signal was strong enough for people to login from the parking lot and library lawn. A large sign was placed in the window of the library with the wifi password and we encouraged free use for those who would otherwise not have access to the internet.

At the beginning of June the library initiated Library Take Out – a contactless curbside delivery of books to our patrons. Patrons could call, email or use their online account to order books and staff delivered their books to their vehicle in the parking lot or to the front door of the library. Library Take Out was a welcome service for many patrons who were not able to access electronic books and were surprised by the sudden closure of the library. The DCPL continues to offer this service and will do so until the Covid-19 restrictions end for good.

When the library re-opened to the public on July 7<sup>th</sup>, a number of safety restrictions were put in place including limiting the number of patrons in the building, plexiglass barriers, hand sanitizing and quarantining of returned items for three days before they were returned to the library shelves. Two public internet computers were made available in compliance with physical distancing guidelines and printing, copying and scanning services resumed.

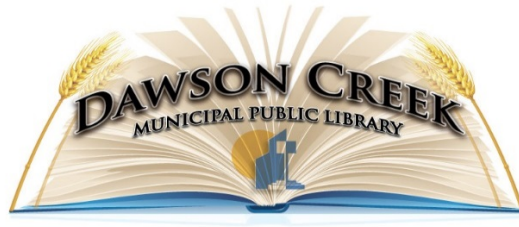
The same day the library re-opened, the annual children's summer reading club kicked off. In a regular year, the club includes special event days and activities all summer long – due to Covid-19 restrictions the 2020 summer reading club was modified. For eight weeks the club was conducted almost entirely outside on the lawn of the library. Each week children dropped by to pick up a new bagged activity or craft to take home. Children were able to borrow books and record their reading throughout the summer. Book grab bags were available if families did not want to enter the library to choose their books. An online version of the club was also available to the library's young patrons.

In the fall, children's storytime programming was adapted to be delivered on the library's Facebook page and a library YouTube channel was created so storytimes could be watched anytime. Children registered in the Afterschool Kidz program were able to pick up activity and craft bags to take home each week. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, the library provided a free holiday-themed book to any child who came through the doors. The library also teamed up the Tourism Dawson Creek to provide free children's books to the families who took part in a Covid-safe Christmas event at the Tourism Visitor's Centre.

The library began delivering materials to its senior outreach patrons again in the fall (with safety measures) and virtual bookclub meetings began in December.

The Dawson Creek Public Library will continue to offer as many services as safely possible to our patrons and community in 2021. Some of these services will be in-person but many will continue to be virtual. This will be a priority until Covid-19 restrictions are eased. We expect the circulation of e-materials to continue to be popular and grow as many of our patrons were introduced to e-books during the pandemic and have discovered they are enjoying the ease of use of this new-to-them medium. The pandemic has created many challenges for libraries but it has also proved our services are important to our community and we are proud of our resiliency during these difficult times.





September, 23, 2020

## 2020 Library Technology Grant Cover Letter

The 2020 Library Technology Grant was delivered to the Dawson Creek Public Library at an important and opportune time as we all are dealing with a global pandemic and need access to technology more than ever.

Before Covid-19 hit Canada in March, the Dawson Creek Public Library had been preparing to replace seven aging public access internet computers. In fact, we had just recently lost two of the seven computers and we knew it was time to begin considering adding the cost of replacement to our budget over the next two years. Heavy use over the past five years meant our computers were quickly becoming frustrating to our patrons as they slowed and malfunctioned. We will be using our technology grant to purchase eight new public access internet computers, increasing access by one computer. These computers allow anyone in our community access to job finding sites, workplace training, government forms and websites, emails, links to family and friends, etc. They are a vital part of our service to our community. While Covid-19 physical distancing restrictions will limit our patrons to just two computers, when Covid restrictions end, we will have brand new computers for our patrons to use for many years to come.

The pandemic has highlighted deficiencies in our online programming, access to digital services, resources and databases. Website maintenance and content is also a concern - updating information on our website and social media has been run off the side of staff desks for years. The technology grant will allow us to increase one staff member's hours temporarily to take on creating digital and online programming while in-person programming is not possible due to Covid-19. This digital library assistant duties will include everything from creating a library YouTube account so our community is able to access children's storytimes, to creating tutorials on our website on how to access e-books and e-audiobooks. Database licencing will also be analysed to be sure we are offering the best resources for our patrons that the library can afford. There has never been a better time to increase our online engagement and we hope dedicating a staff member to this task now will benefit our community long after the pandemic has ended.

Pamela Morris

Library Manager  
Dawson Creek Public Library

## 2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: DAWSON CREEK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$15,646

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
<b>Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.)</b>	Access to computers and the internet for everyone in our community. Allowing access to job finding sites and resources, online workplace training, email, government forms and information etc.	Maintaining and increasing access to the internet for everyone in our community . Increase of one additional computer will allow for an increase in access by approximately 15%.	Replacing the aging computers relate to the provincial priorities by improving access for British Columbians and advances citizen engagement by maintaining and improving access to government resources and tools.	Purchase of eight new public access computers to replace existing aging computers and adding one additional computer. Purchase surge protectors/battery backups for new computers	No opportunity to collaborate with this action.	Computers were purchased in September and will be used for at least five years. Due to Covid safe distancing restrictions, only two computers will be used in 2020 and a portion of 2021. When restrictions ease we will have all computers accessible.	\$9,527.98 computer purchase  \$1,664.00 projected cost of IT professional services to set up computers.  \$436.30 Surge protectors/battery backup	None	
<b>Digital programming</b>	To provide digital programming	Increased visits and engagement	Increasing engagement with our	The remainder of our grant would be used to pay the	No opportunity to collaborate	September 2020 through March 2021.	\$4,017.72	Wages would be paid by the municipality	Have asked the municipality



<p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>	<p>for our community while in-person programming is not possible due to Covid-19. Create, improve or maintain access to online programming and services such as children's storytimes and teen and adult programming. Improve awareness of digital and online services and collections.</p>	<p>with our webpage, social media and eBooks and eAudiobooks.</p>	<p>digital programming and services relates to improving access for British Columbians and advancing citizen engagement by creating access to knowledge-sharing.</p>	<p>wages of a staff member to improve and create website and social media content. This staff member would also create a YouTube channel for our patrons and community to access online programming such as storytimes, meet the candidate interviews for the provincial election etc. Duties will also include analyzing our database licencing to determine if the library is providing the most relevant databases for our patrons.</p>	<p>with this action.</p>			<p>until the end of 2020 and the tech grant will pay wages until March 2020.  Municipal wage portion is projected to be approximately \$4,500.</p>	<p>to create a 25-hour per week part time position to be created permanently but proposal was rejected.</p>
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