2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Cariboo Regional District Library

CHECKLIST

For the PLGR to be considered complete, please ensure you have provided information for each of the following sections. Suggested word counts have been included for each question, but feel free to include more or less text as needed – text boxes will expand as you type. Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

- ☐ 1. INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE
- ☐ 2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS
- ☐ 3. CHALLENGES
- ☐ 4. COVID-19 RELIEF & RECOVERY – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT
- ☐ 5. BOARD APPROVAL

INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year. If provincial funding is primarily used to support your library's core operations, please include a general describe where it is applied (staffing, utilities, collections, etc.).

> The Cariboo Regional District Library (CRDL) is an integrated public library system operating as a Service (or department) of the Cariboo Regional District, known as Library Services. Its 15 branch libraries are dispersed throughout the Cariboo-Chilcotin in central B.C. Most of the branches (12) are in small rural communities to both the east and west of 100 Mile House, Williams Lake and Quesnel.
>
> In the recent years, the community growth has been relatively anemic (1.5%), compared to other regions of the province (overall increase of 7.6%) – seeing overall growth from 61,988 (2016) to 62,931 (2021).
>
> The population that CRDL services skews towards older people (median age: 49), as 48% are over 50 years old (compared to people under 20 (20%), and people between 20 and 50 (31%)). Thus, indicating a specific set of challenges and needs, especially when it comes to accessibility and technology literacy.
>
> Although, the Cariboo Regional District is home to some lucrative professional opportunities, particularly in resource extraction, many people (according to 2021 census) struggled finding gainful employment – nearly 12% received employment insurance benefits (compared to 9% for the rest of

the province). Although, these number are no doubt elevated partly due to the availability of CERB. Regardless, the high unemployment demonstrates that there is a gap that the library services can fill by offering resume-writing workshops or job-training webinars in collaboration with WorkBC.

The educational make-up of the region is also dissimilar to the rest of the province; among the population between the ages of 25 and 64, nearly 20% do not possess a high school diploma. That is twice as high as in the rest of the province (9.6%). Additionally, people with a degree above a Bachelor's constitute only 10.5%, compared to 28.5% for the rest of the province. This disparity highlights an apparent niche that the Library Services can work to remedy, either by supporting the patrons who are engaged in adult education (ex: exam invigilations, study spaces, etc.), or instilling the importance of education through YA programming.

The community that the CRDL serves is predominantly English-speaking, but with significant pockets of other mother tongues. 7% of the population speak a non-official language. These are predominantly non-Indigenous languages (like German, Punjabi, Dutch, and Tagalog). Nevertheless, compared to the rest of the province, the proportion of the population who speak one of many Indigenous languages as their mother tongue, is about ten times higher. The dominant Indigenous languages within the region are: Tsilhqot'in (Chilcotin), Secwepemctsin (Shuswap), and Dakelh (Carrier). The Cariboo Regional District is also home to a large community of First Nations. Nearly 18% of the population identify as Indigenous (compared to 6% for the rest of the province).

Thankfully, in 2022, we have seen a steady return of our patrons to our branches. Lifting of the pandemic restrictions saw a gradual resumption of the services previously paused. The foot traffic, circulation of the materials, and program engagement have all been steadily increasing.

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Please describe any featured projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, "copy" the blank table below and insert additional tables as needed using the "paste" function. Use one table per project/program. You do not need to report on every project/program, only highlights/notable examples.

Project/Program Name
A. Creation of the Code of Conduct
Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
2022 has been a year of transition for the CRDL; we have seen a steady return of library programming and a continued acceleration of service demands; and most importantly, we had a protracted exit of the Manager of Library Services and a shift to new management. Due to these circumstances, many of the desired projects had to be postponed or revised. Nevertheless, four projects of note were either completed or commenced in 2022.   One of the smaller projects was the drafting and implementation of the Code of Conduct for the patrons of the libraries. The work of composing it took a not insignificant amount of staff hours:

literature review had to be conducted, draft had to be written, and several stages of editing had to be completed before the Code was ready for adoption.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

Behavioral issues stemming from the occasional problem patron and the lack of consistent policy on the methods of dealing with such issues, necessitated the need for the Code of Conduct. The Code outlines the procedures the staff may perform in resolving patron-staff conflicts, including the process for issuing a ban and a Notice of Trespass in an extreme case. The development of the Code fits with the overall strategic goal of offering a safe and welcoming space to the members of our community, free of disruption or harassment from other members of the public, and ensures a safe work environment for our staff.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service](#) from the strategic plan, which include:

1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

I believe, even if peripherally, the Code of Conduct helps to buttress the Province's Strategic Goal of Building Capacity. It serves to assist in the delivery of quality programming and services, by ensuring a welcoming environment for members of the community of all denominations and establishing the boundaries for acceptable behaviour in that space.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

The immediate outcome of the creation of the Code is that it gives the library staff precise instructions on what constitutes transgressive behaviour and the exact procedures on how to tackle the situation. Ultimately, the desired impact would be an environment where patrons and staff can feel comfortable, knowing that they have the administrative power to deal with quotidian challenges of patron behaviour.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

The project involved significant staff hours, in terms of research, discussion, communication, writing, editing, and training. However, all of that falls within the operational capacity of the CRDL and did not require grant funding.

Project/Program Name

B. Recruitment and Training

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

As many organizations have experienced, the CRDL has seen a large number of resignations and retirements caused by the pandemic and the ensuing mandated requirements. Many of our smaller community branches have either lost a Community Librarian or a casual (call-in) staff. Given the small pool of candidates that we could draw from, recruitment was (and continues to be) a challenge. Subsequently, given the large amount of the newly hired staff, much effort needed to be expended to on-board the new personnel.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

Recruitment and training was specifically identified within the CRDL's Business Plan as a vital component of reestablishing programmes and services previously (prior to the pandemic) offered to our community.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service](#) from the strategic plan, which include:
1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
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4. Enhancing Governance

Despite this project being operational in nature, this initiative is entirely in line with the provinces strategic goal of Building Capacity. In order to delivery quality services to our community, CRDL must replenish its ranks with qualified and well-trained professionals.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Ultimately, the desired outcome of this project is a fully-staffed organization with well-trained professionals that will allow to deliver programmes and services our community deserves.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

No grants were used in the process of carrying out this project.

Project/Program Name

C. New website

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

The CRDL has been considering updating our current website for a number of years. Its age and usability have become apparently unacceptable. Previously, the CRDL considered earmarking significant capital for consulting and development of the new website. Since then, our timeline has shifted, and our plan has changed. In 2022, we have decided to partner with BC Libraries Coop (LibPress division) in creation of our new website. The much more manageable cost (compared to other vendors) will be supplemented, at least in part (if not entirely), by the COVID Relief and Recovery Grant.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

The new website will further the CRDL's strategic goals of improving engagement and accessibility. It will allow us to promote library materials and services to the community, and it will facilitate the patrons access to the digital resources we subscribes to and host.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service](#) from the strategic plan, which include:
1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

The new website will serve to promote the province's strategic goals of Improving Access for British Columbians – by making the digital collections more accessible to the public – and Advancing Citizen Engagement – by improving the patrons' access to the government-funded resources and raising awareness about PLB's initiatives.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

The immediate outcomes of the new website would be the instant access to the library's collections and the information pertaining to the library programmes and services. The longer outlook will hopefully register an increased engagement with the public, as they become more comfortable with the platform and able to gather necessary information independently.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Yes, the funding for the development (and any additional related expenses) of the new website will be drawn from the COVID Relief and Recovery Grant.

Project/Program Name

D. Equipment upgrades in library branches

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

To continue to provide great service to our community, much of our infrastructure requires a much-desired refurbishment. With the aid of funding from the province's COVID Relief and Recovery Grant, we have begun a multi-year project of identifying necessary upgrades our community branches need, purchasing the materials that would improve the usability and effectiveness of our programmes and services, and rejuvenating the physical spaces our patrons use. Specifically, we are considering replacing old furniture and shelving that no longer serve the desired purpose; upgrading computer workstations for the staff and the public, particularly in remote branches; purchasing and installing Starlink dishes in Community Branches with inadequate connectivity; acquiring new technology for the purpose of creating programming for teens and young adults; and making necessary repairs to our branches that require significant expense.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

Upgrading our equipment and spaces was identified as one of four Business Plan goals. Ultimately, in order to continue to provide the service our community expects and deserves, our infrastructure needs to be revitalized. Many of our branches have furniture that has long outlasted its usability, computer equipment and electronics that are several generations behind the current technology, spaces that have become dated aesthetically, and internet connection that is either non-existent (Tatla Lake recently lost its only available ISP) or unreliable. These challenges need to be swiftly addressed and are definitely within the purview of our long-term strategy.

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service](#) from the strategic plan, which include:

1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

Some of the aims illustrated above fall squarely under the province's strategic goal of Improving Access for British Columbians. The acquisition and installation of the Starlink kits in our Community branches, not only will establish a reliable high-speed internet connection to the patrons, but it will also ensure their access to the Libray's digital collections and the province's online services.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

For at least 3 of our branches the immediate outcome will be re-establishment of the internet connection to the public, or noted improvement in network bandwidth. The desired intermediate outcomes would be visible aesthetic improvements to our branches and more comfortable surroundings, which will please the patrons. The longer foreseeable outcome would be the patrons' continued positive perception of the CRDL libraries as the institution that is forward-looking and an early adopter of new technologies.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Yes, the funding received through the COVID Relief and Recovery Grant will be entirely utilized for completion of this broad project.

3. CHALLENGES

The following topics have been identified as recurring themes in previous years' PLGRs. The intent of this section is to collect detailed information in a structured, consistent format.

Please select the most significant challenges that the library has faced in the past year that you wish to comment on. Leave any other listed topics blank. Use the 'Other' row to include any ongoing or past challenges that not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please insert additional rows into the table.

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2022. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	The challenges caused by the pandemic in 2022 were different from challenges of the preceding 2 years. In 2022, we have seen a resurgence of visitors and revival of dormant services and programmes. Nevertheless, we continued to feel the reverberations from the decisions made to stymie the spread of coronavirus infections, namely the vaccine mandate. Because the CRD had instituted a proof of vaccination requirement for all new open positions within the organization, we have had substantial difficulty in recruiting new employees, particularly in rural areas. [More on that in Staffing]
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Another unintended consequence of the post-pandemic recovery is the continued financial pressure we experience due to excessive inflation. While we were able to secure an above average (compared to previous years) funding increase from the Regional District government, it is still being outpaced by the increases we have seen from our vendors and suppliers. Particularly, the astounding 9% increase we have been presented with by OverDrive. Similarly high increases were seen from other vendors of digital resources. These jarring hikes forced us to cull our digital subscriptions and reduce our physical collection budgets. Future price escalations that exceed budgetary increases will undoubtedly force us to reevaluate this service.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)	As mentioned above, the implementation of the vaccine mandate in our organization precipitated an unanticipated level of resignations, administrative leaves, and terminations. These numerous vacancies presented a challenge for the remaining staff – as they took on additional tasks and duties left unattended by the missing workers - and put additional pressures on the human resources department as we struggled to fill the vacant positions in a highly competitive job market. It took the CRDL most of 2022 to hire enough personnel to ensure uninterrupted service to our community. At the year's close, one of our branches remained without a permanent Community Librarian (that position was finally filled in March of 2023).
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	

Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	Many of our branches, especially remote rural branches, operate with old and outdated equipment and require a much-needed facelift. Connectivity is not only an issue of availability, but also of outdated equipment. In order to offer the services our patrons require, we must expedite our efforts in bringing high-speed internet to them. The acquisition of Starlink satellite dishes, upgraded public computer stations, and robust WIFI networks will facilitate this endeavour. Additionally, in order to demonstrate to our patrons that our facilities can accommodate their needs, we must also consider aesthetics as well as functionality. We need to create spaces for our patrons that are welcoming and comfortable, in addition to providing them with modern technology.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	Like most urban public libraries, the three main branches of the CRDL (located at 100 Mile House, Quesnel, and Williams Lake) are experiencing a steady rise in interactions with patrons who are either unhoused, suffer from substance use and/or mental disorders. Despite our best efforts and training, our staff is simply outmatched. We just cannot provide the type of assistance these people require. Additionally, the risks involved are not insignificant. While for the most part our staff are able to develop a rapport with these patrons, serious incidents are a common occurrence. And with many public libraries already feeling the financial pressures of maintaining the same services, the prospect of hiring full-time security is frankly not feasible. Needless to say, public libraries need help from all levels of government.
Other (please specify)	

4. COVID-19 RELIEF & RECOVERY GRANT – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

Summary and Overview

Please provide an executive summary (overview summary) on the library's use of the COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Grants. 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.

Summary and Overview
The major project that was to be covered by the CRR Grant (of upgrading the 15 branches) has been received and, as of now, left unspent, as we continue the work of collaborating with all the community librarians in identifying specific needs of each location. It is expected that this initial phase will conclude in May (2023) and we will commence the following step of procurement.   The secondary project of developing a new website is well-underway, as we have already consulted with the developer, submitted our preferences, and now await the first draft. At this moment, no funds have been spent.

	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	$95,959.52	$0
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	$31,986.51	$0
Total Grant Amount	$127,946.03	$0

Project Progress Report

Please use this section for:

1. Report progress on projects included interim report **and/ or**
2. New projects developed since interim report (copy and paste tables as needed)

Project/Program/Activity	
Rationale	
Area of Need	
Action/Output/Deliverable	
Outcome/Impact	
Metrics	
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	
Expenditure	
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	
Comments (optional)	

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____ Date: ___March 28, 2023___

Board Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____