2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Creston Valley Public 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.

INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Creston Valley Public Library serves a population of just over 13,000 people within the Town of Creston and Regional District of Central Kootenay Areas A, B, and C. A few defining characteristics:

- Creston Valley Public Library operates on the unceded homelands of the Yaqan Nukiy people of the Ktunaxa Nation
- Approximately 92% of the population identifies as Caucasian, 6% as Indigenous, and less than 2% as other visible minorities
- Creston has an older population, with a median age of 57.6, compared to the provincial median of 43
- The average total income of households in 2020 was $41,720 compared to the provincial average of $84,850.

The biggest challenge facing Creston Valley Public Library is the continued increase of operational costs without a similar increase in provincial funding. The Regional District of Central Kootenay does its best to increase our annual operating grant as per the relevant CPI (Consumer Price Index) despite collecting lower-than-average tax rates. Last year they funded our library to the maximum amount possible in order to cover the cost of wages for a much-needed, dedicated, Children's & Teen Librarian. However, the provincial grants have remained relatively the same for over a decade.

Last year's one-time funding COVID relief grant provided a much needed boost to our internal programming resources (as they had all been made borrowable as "tech kits" during COVID), our collections, and the initial purchasing costs of various operational needs. However, without annual, reliable increases in operating funds, we cannot pay our staff the wages required to meet current and future service demands. Our front-desk staff (despite our best efforts to raise their wages) are currently making less than local entry-level fast-food franchise workers. We also face an impossible

task when it comes to hiring new talent, covering sufficient training expenses, succession planning for our more experienced positions, and ensuring our collections budget can keep up with rising costs.

Nevertheless, our outcomes are comparable to larger and much better funded libraries, thanks in part to our regional district government, talented staff, an (increasingly smaller) volunteer team, and the tremendous goodwill of our patrons.

This year our library's services started to bounce back in the spring, after COVID-19 pandemic mandates were lifted. We:

- Hosted 38,624 in-person visits (up over 11,000 from the previous year)
- Provided service during 1,962 open hours (up over 200 from the previous year)
- Circulated 119,434 items, both digital and physical (up about 25,000 from the previous year)
- Registered 506 new patrons (up 125 from the previous year)
- Facilitated programs for 1911 in-person participants (up 700 over the previous year)
- Provided access to 4287 public internet sessions through our computer workstations (up over 3000 from the previous year)

This year we spent most of our time transitioning from COVID safety measures to increased library services.

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Project/Program Name
Expanding school-age children and teen services

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
The regional district (RDCK) generously approved an 18% increase in the library's operating grant in 2023 to fund a full-time Children's and Teen Librarian position that enables us to offer a full slate of school-age children's and teen programming on an ongoing basis. Prior to this, the library had been unable to offer teen programming and only a limited amount of school-age children's programming (mostly during the summer) since March 2020, when we lost our part-time programming staff. The Provincial COVID relief grant enabled the library to purchase the following resources for children's and teen (and some adult) programming: - bluetooth speaker - 1 year ACF film license - 2 virtual reality headsets - a rig-a-ma-jig - 3 new ipads - 1 year subscription to Code Combat - Bloxels

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

This position directly supports our strategic goals of:
- Working with stakeholders to ensure our financial sustainability
- Provide equitable access to services that enable our patrons to better participate in our community
- Support all types of literacy
- Support and promote digital literacy to address the digital divide
- Respond to community needs

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

This project directly supports the goal of improving access for children & teens and their families to "have better access to a broad range of library collections, wherever they live." Many of our patrons would not have access to these digital resources, especially supported by qualified staff, if they didn't access them at the library.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Our teen program participation increased from 0 participants from January-June to 152 participants from July-December. We've also seen an increase in teens dropping by the library and using our space and collections as a result.

Children's program participation increased from 613 participants from January-June to 1158 participants from July-December.

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

The programming resources purchased by the COVID relief grant are utilized in our programming. The funding for wages, however, to pay for a staff person to utilize these resources on a regular basis, are only made possible by the regional district's increase in ongoing operational funds.

3. CHALLENGES

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)	Our total COVID expenses up to the end of 2022 were as follows: 2020: $6140 2021: $1681 2022: $719 Total: $8540 These funds were used to adapt our public space to accommodate public health measures to keep our staff, volunteers, and patrons safe while still making core library services available until the safety mandates were lifted.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	The library continues to serve as a cooling centre (with cold iced-tea and water available at a drink station) during the hot and smoky summer months and a warming centre during cold, arctic storms. With windchill, our community experienced several storms this year with -20+ temperatures.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Our library's collective agreement expired at the end of 2022. With 2023 being a bargaining year, we anticipate at least a 4% to 4.5% annual wage increase annually for staff in the next agreement. In addition, our Library Director's salary required an increase (as it had fallen well below industry standards). We have asked our regional district for a 6% budget increase. However, we are still expecting a budget shortfall of $37,000 for the year, which we will endeavour to recoup through applying for grants and pulling funds from our reserve.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)	In 2022 we hired 3 new Student Pages, a new IT Coordinator, a Children's & Teen Librarian, and 2 Summer Reading Club Coordinators. We have an excellent team of staff and volunteers and our Board is very supportive of our overall health and well-being. All staff that work 20hrs a week or more have access to full health benefits, including up to 12hrs of counseling through our EAP.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack	Because of our proximity to the Town of Creston, we have excellent internet service. We had to replace a wi-fi hub at the front of our building that was destroyed by extreme heat and we added another hub behind our building to

of home internet in the community)	improve our outdoor wi-fi access. This has increased our internet bill by $100 a month.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	The library continues to work with our regional district to maintain our facilities. Future priorities include installing fire alarms and a fire panel, replacing our front entrance doors & staff entrance door, and installing new flooring in the building.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	Our library facility isn't too far from our main downtown strip. We are located down the street from our high school and a couple of blocks from our RCMP detachment. Our local bus service has a stop directly in front of our building.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	Creston lacks resources for people experiencing homelessness. For example, there is no shelter in town. With temperatures hitting the high 30's and low 40's in the summer and -20+ this winter, we've seen a noticeable increase in community members using the public library to stay cold/warm. We partnered with the Creston Valley Community Foundation to print and distribute brochure directories of local services and hygiene kits for people experiencing homelessness. These items were made accessible at the food bank, the library, and the visitor's centre.
Other (please specify)	Public Libraries need better wages for staff (who have encountered a great deal of abuse, beginning in 2020 and beyond, while trying to enforce Provincial Public Health measures) and more staffing positions to properly support our community's information, social, and learning needs. Our library board is committed to providing equitable wages for our staff and has approved a budget that increases the Library Director and staff wages despite anticipating a $37,000 budget shortfall for the year.

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

Summary and Overview

As mentioned above, Creston Library spent a large portion of the grant funds to replenish our programming resources, focusing especially on STEM related resources. In addition to these programming resources, we also purchased items to support other library operational needs. These include:

- an air quality monitor - to better help inform the community about air quality during wildfire season (which has since been stolen making security cameras a possible future purchase)
- a Meescan self-checkout station (including 1 year subscription for software)
- an OWL camera and speaker system- to support internal library and public online meetings
- 2 Moneris point-of-sale devices (including 1 year service costs) to enable the library to accept debit & credit purchases at our front service desk
- 1 year subscription to Hootsuite software, enabling our staff to quickly and efficiently manage the library's Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube accounts
- a Mac Laptop - to support our IT coordinator to maintain and manage our programming ipads and to support patrons with Mac devices
- Adding $10,000 to our collections budget which had lost a similar amount of funds during COVID to cover those expenses

We also made the following facilities purchases:

- Various items of furniture for our public space
- minor renovations to create an enclosed toddler play area in our children's section to accommodate families with young children

	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	$29227.93	$37970.57
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	$9742.64	$1000
Total Grant Amount	$38970.57	

Project Progress Report

Project/Program/Activity	Hardware/Software for library operations
Rationale	Our library has been in need of several items to lessen our staff workload
Area of Need	-enabling debit/credit purchases at our front service desk -enabling stronger, more regular social media presence - replacing/reinstating self check-out station -providing Mac library & user support by IT coordinator
Action/Output/Deliverable	- 2 Moneris devices and monthly back-end support - 1 year subscription to Hootsuite software - 1 year purchase and subscription to Meescan self-checkout station and software - Purchase of Mac laptop to coordinate iPad manager software and provide mac support for library patrons
Outcome/Impact	- easier accessibility at the front service desk (no longer just cash only transactions) - increased social media presence on Facebook & Instagram - self-checkout enabled for patrons (shorter lineups at the desk) - more streamlined workflow for our programming ipads maintenance and increased ability to support Mac users with troubleshooting in the library
Metrics	- Moneris transactions total since 06/22 = 76 - Hootsuite posts total since 05/22 = 408 - Meescan sessions since 01/23 = 133
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	n/a
Expenditure	Moneris (up to Feb 28/23) = $921.92 Hootsuite (1 year sub) = $849.94 Meescan = $464.80 Total = $2236.66
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Complete (service fees and subscription costs ongoing)
Comments (optional)	

Project/Program/Activity	Tech resources for children's programming and patron support
Rationale	Items to support our staff and patrons with digital/tech learning
Area of Need	see above
Action/Output/Deliverable	Bloxels purchase and license, Code Combat subscription, 2 VR headsets, Mac Laptop, 3 replacement ipads
Outcome/Impact	Restored ongoing children's and teen programming, increased participation, on-demand support for patron troubleshooting and easier iPad maintenance
Metrics	- 152 teen program participants from June - September 2022 -1152 children's program participants from June - September 2022
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	n/a
Expenditure	Bloxels = $545 Code Combat = $640 2 VR headsets= $1479 Laptop = $1469 3 ipads = $1675 Total = $5808
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Complete.
Comments (optional)	

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____ Date: Feb 28/2023

Board Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____February 28, 2023_____