2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Hazelton District Public Library

CHECKLIST

Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Hazelton District Public Library (HDPL) is located on the bank of the Skeena River in the Village of Hazelton. Although the population of Hazelton is only 300 people, the library provides services to a great number of communities scattered across our region, from residents of the Kispiox Valley living up to 40 kilometres north of the library, to those in Witset, 40 km to the east, all the way west to Gitwangak and Gitanyow, 75 km away. The region's population is made up mainly of indigenous people of the Gitxsan and Wit'suwit'en nations, with the remainder being made up largely of the descendants of European settlers.

As in most northern communities, stable and fulfilling employment continues to be scarce for many people here. There is very high unemployment across the region, as well as low high school graduation and adult literacy rates. These issues, combined with the impacts of colonization, are important factors in other social difficulties that many families in our area face.

Hazelton has limited recreational opportunities and few community gathering places. The library, a welcoming place for all where entry and services are free of charge, plays a crucial role in the community. We are a source of education, entertainment, and of stimulation for children and adults alike. HDPL is also a much-needed access point to information and Internet service in a rural area where connectivity is often unavailable and where many cannot afford a computer at home.

As we all experienced, 2022 allowed for gradual improvement and easing of restrictions in all areas. Library operations continued with a steady move to more open, face-to-face programming as well as more patrons enjoying our collections. Events with partners continued to be sporadic as we needed to respect each partner's comfort with risk mitigation and face-to-face events.

Funding from provincial government sources allowed us to continue to offer the Summer Reading Clubs, re-start story time sessions and generally re-enter the community with more physical events.

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Project/Program Name

STEAM Week at Tsekya (Hagwilget)

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

Tsekya's Education Co-ordinator contacted the library to ask whether we would like to partner with them the week before Christmas to provide a week of programming for children. We saw this as an opportunity to help re-establish some of our community connections that were lost or reduced during the COVID restrictions, and happily agreed.

The Education Coordinator explained that the village had set up several sports activities for kids during the week of no school before Christmas, but there were kids in the community who were not interested in or able to participate in sporting activities, so we decided to offer STEAM (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, **A**rt, and **M**athematics) programming for them. Overall there were 19 children from ages 5 to 15 who registered and attended one or more of the program days. There were also a number of teen volunteers and "drop-ins" who were not actually registered as participants. The village provided the space, food, and many program supplies, as well as some workers and volunteers. The library did most of the program preparation, planning, organizing and recruiting of additional facilitators, and contributed program supplies.

We planned to have STEAM activity sessions interspersed with more active and usually outdoor activities. We also provided a quiet space for children preferred that option. Planning 20+ STEAM activities and additional breaks for the kids was difficult because the children came in a very wide range of ages and abilities. Communications were often difficult, and sometimes things that were planned had to be changed because of changing circumstances such as facilitator availability, weather, and so on. Never-the-less, the programs were successful, and the feedback was positive.

The best outcomes centered around making community connections. Not only did we get to reconnect with Tsekya band administration's education department, we also got to connect with individuals who share our interest in outreach to children, especially First Nations children and marginalized children. Several of them have already expressed interest in being more involved with our library.

We also made connections with the Office of the Witsuwit'en, and with individual elders from the Hagwilget community. The band office hired the HSS grad class to cater the meals as a fund-raiser for their trip to Asia, but there was so much food prepared that she invited community members, especially elders, to join us for lunch every day.

For example, our session facilitated by an engineer from New Hazelton where children were challenged to build a model of the original Hagwilget bridge sparked excellent connections with an elder who used to fish near the location of the original bridge.

Despite the challenges, The Education Coordinator, volunteers and library staff learned a lot and hope to work together again.

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

From HDPL's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023;

Priority #1 – Develop and Support Literacy
- Goal #1 – Programming in-house and out-of-house, coordinated by HDPL
- Goal #2 – Partnerships with other organizations

Priority #3 – Connectivity with our Communities
- Goal #8 – HDPL presence and involvement

All these goals were met as we partnered with the community of Tsekya to produce a STEAM program for their young children. Involving the whole community from toddlers to elders showcased the community connections we all share and included exposure to many different literacies for people of all ages.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan.

1. **Improving Access**

   Transportation in northwest BC is problematic as there is little public transport available with a schedule that did not meet the needs of this program. Winter travel is dangerous if people have a vehicle and not possible if they do not. Hosting the STEAM event at the Tsekya Community Hall instead of the library allowed most participants to either walk or only require a short ride to access this unique program.

   Taking the program to the people rather than having them travel to the library allows us to connect with more patrons.

2. **Building Capacity**

   As mentioned, Tsekya village provided volunteers and workers for the program. Library staff trained these people in the event requirements as well as the value of literacy and numeracy education in young children. These skills, abilities and knowledge are now available to the workers in Tsekya, enhancing their early childhood education programs.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

- Creating and enhancing library connections with communities and community support organizations centered on literacy and learning
- Creating and strengthening library partnerships with communities and other organizations
- Involving all age groups in the education, care and support of members in our whole community
- Introducing science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics literacies to people of all ages.
- Creating a local, safe space for learning and support using local, familiar people (teens though elders that children have already interacted with)
- Including indigenous science and cultural knowledge in our program creates a program that includes all sources of information, giving all of them the same weight.

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

This project was not funded directly by specific grants targeted to this program.

Our operational grant from the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine is the primary funding source for all that we do, allowing us to offer programs such as this in our area. (80% of this program funding)

The BC Government Operational Grant and the Literacy and Equity Grant funds are also used for literacy-based programs such as this one. (20% of this program funding)

3. CHALLENGES

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2022. (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19	Service levels and restrictions have been reduced in 2022 but not eliminated. These continue to cost the library in either additional staff time required, additional equipment needed thereby reducing the availability of financial resources.
Emergency response	
Financial pressure	Costs of goods and services have increased significantly in the past year and have continued to do so for the past decade. Static grant allocations are forcing the library to reduce costly activities, substituting less costly and less inviting alternatives.
Staffing	Due to static grant allocations, we can neither increase our wages to attract new employees nor can we increase the hours of our part-time employees to allow more service to our community. Hours of operation have been reduced in some cases due to a lack of staffing.
Disappearing services in the community	The Hazelton area has lost popular youth groups such as Scouts and Guides. This increases the importance of providing additional library programs for those youth who do not want to participate in sporting activities. Finding the time and resources for programming is limited by our budgets.
Connectivity	Lack of Internet access or computer systems in various communities in our catchment area restricts how the library can reach patrons there. Lack of cellular service as an alternate data connection method also increases the isolation and reduces our reach. This issue is beyond the library's ability to solve, we advocate for these changes but are almost always disappointed with the inaction on these fronts.
Aging/damaged facilities	
Community access to the library	HDPL is located on a centrally located community on a transit route. Although this sounds like a positive, transit schedules are sporadic, not hourly or even daily in some cases. This lack of transit on the Highway of Tears, in an area known for its poverty, lack of vehicle ownership and distances between towns eliminates the ability for patrons in outlying communities to access the resources that our library offers
Vulnerable communities	
Other	

Summary and Overview

Summary and Overview
The interim report for the COVID-19 Recovery and Emergency Preparedness grants indicated what was intended with the funding and this has not changed. What has changed is the timeline for delivery on some of the projects. We enhanced the safety, scope and delivery model for our Summer Reading Clubs; covered the cost of extra digital collections that would have been dropped; provided 10 tutorial sessions for elders and others in how to use their computers or smartphones; trained our staff in the use of new technology and expanded website design features. The Emergency Preparedness Planning project allocations were all expended, and we have a basic plan. Planning will continue as time and resources become available. Training and educations portions of the project have been completed. Exercising portions of the plan will take place some time starting in 2023. Recovery from unexpected COVID costs through this grant continues with a reallocation of $4,749.63 for continuing janitorial costs in 2023 not covered by our base grant. We had proposed to upgrade our IT infrastructure with current computing systems in December 2022. The project was delayed until mid-2023. This adds a $7,000 reallocation to our total below.

	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	$ 23,849.63	$ 11,749.63
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	$ 7,949.88	$ 0
Total Grant Amount	$ 31,799.51	$ 11,749.63

Project Progress Reports

Project/Program/Activity	Emergency Response Plan
Rationale	The library needs to document, train and exercise emergency procedures to ensure staff and patron safety.
Area of Need	Occupational Health and Safety, Emergency Preparedness
Action/Output/Deliverable	Produce an emergency plan for the library
Outcome/Impact	Staff response to emergency situations will be planned and less stressful. Staff will know how to respond to emergencies and have practiced how to do it quickly and safely.
Metrics	Deliver a basic emergency plan, schedule training
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	Meetings with the Village of Hazelton on emergency planning and support in and from the village.
Expenditure	Wages: planning and training $ 8,000 total
Detailed status update since the interim report.	Basic plans complete, training started in 2022 with plan exercises scheduled for 2023/24.
Comments (optional)	This is an ongoing project. The library started with no documentation and now has some of the more critical procedures documented.

Project/Program/Activity	Mitigation of increasing costs due to COVID and price increases of services due to inflation.
Rationale	Patrons want and deserve all the library services they have come to expect from us. Increasing costs from COVID requirements, costs for required new online services and additional patron training in how to use those online services means budget pressure to reduce services overall. Increases in funding would relieve some of this pressure.
Area of Need	Patron access to increasing online and reduced in-person services
Action/Output/Deliverable	Training session for staff and patrons (how to access government documents, etc.) Mitigation of increased janitorial wages and supply costs Compensation for increased online database and collection costs
Outcome/Impact	Services were enhanced in some areas and maintained in others. This was directly a result of financial support for our unexpected and increased costs.
Metrics	No reduction in library services for 2022
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	
Expenditure	Janitorial Wages for increased cleaning $5,500 Increased online database and collection costs $1,000 Patron and staff training (staff wages) $2,600
Detailed status update since the interim report.	All expenses covered, 10 patron tutoring sessions completed, 5 staff training session completed
Comments (optional)	

Project/Program/Activity	Summer Reading Club: outdoor venue enhancements
Rationale	COVID restrictions have eased but social distancing is still an effective way to reduce communicable disease transmission. Our Summer Reading Clubs (SRCs) would be problematic in enclosed spaces but moving these events outdoors would ease those issues. Providing safe, easy to use weather covers and equipment to allow exciting outdoor events would ensure safe, welcoming opportunities for community involvement in library activities.
Area of Need	Program Delivery, Community involvement
Action/Output/Deliverable	Safe outdoor events and information sessions for community involvement
Outcome/Impact	Safer and more welcoming library community events
Metrics	Feedback from SRC and other event participants on their comfort during the outdoor events. All positive!
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	Partnership: Village of Hazelton Pioneer Day
Expenditure	$ 3,000 for weather covers and equipment
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Outdoor covers and equipment have been purchased and used to deliver, not only SRC programs but other community centered events.
Comments (optional)	

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____   Date: Mar 13, 2023

Board Chair Signature: _____   Date: March 9/23