

2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Prince George 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.

- [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.).

Established as a municipal library in 1955, the Prince George Public Library (PGPL) serves the residents of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and the City of Prince George, British Columbia. Altogether this represents a service population of approximately 90,000. Located in central BC, the city of Prince George has a population of 76,708, and is the largest city in a region of almost 320,000. The community is located at the junction of major provincial Highways 16 & 97, and also at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers. The Prince George economy is well-diversified across all sectors. This economic diversification reflects the rising importance of Prince George as a regional hub for residents of north central British Columbia wishing to access products and services that otherwise might not be available due to the remoteness of this region relative to other major urban areas. Over recent decades, Prince George has developed from a mainly forest-based economy to a city that has a strong natural resource base, but also supplies goods and services for a broad range of sector activities throughout Northern BC, within Canada and internationally. The region's largest employment sectors are: healthcare and social assistance; wholesale and retail trade; and manufacturing. The community is served by two post-secondary facilities with a combined 11,000 students: College of New Caledonia (CNC) and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and Prince George have a

relatively young population in comparison to BC as a whole, with 38.6% of the population aged 24 or younger in the Regional District and 35.9% in Prince George.

The Prince George Public Library conducts its work on the ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, whose people have occupied this area for more than 9,000 years. Over 15% of the population of Prince George identifies as Indigenous, which is significantly higher than the provincial average of 6%. The largest visible minority population in the community is that of the South Asian, making up 40.14% of the total visible minority population. The second largest group is the Filipino, at 1,035 people. Following Filipino is Chinese, totalling 15.02% of the visible minority population.

The Prince George Public Library has a staff of 60 employees working across two locations: the Bob Harkins Branch in downtown Prince George and the Nechako Branch in the Hart neighbourhood of northern Prince George. With an annual budget of approximately \$4.1 million, PGPL has amassed a physical collection of over 160,000 books and other materials. In 2022, patrons borrowed over 628,000 items, visiting library branches a total of 143,469 times. In addition, the library website welcomed an additional 322,000 virtual visits, providing access to thousands of ebooks, audiobooks, online articles, and other digital resources.

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.

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|--|
| Project/Program Name |
| Community Seed Library Collection |
| Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program. |
| The new "Community Seed Library" launched on March 5 th , 2022. The initiative is a partnership between PGPL, the Prince George Master Gardeners, and David Douglas Botanical Garden Society. The seed library promotes sustainable development and food security by providing an opportunity for local residents to grow their own healthy, affordable food. Library visitors borrow seeds from the collection housed at the downtown branch of the library. They plant, grow, and harvest plants while letting a few plants mature and return to seed. These new seeds are then returned to the library for the next growing season's collection. Programs hosted at the library provide information and support for community members seeking more information about the Seed Library and about local food production practices. |
| How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals? |
| This collaboration project supports PGPL's strategic goal of improving the user experience by expanding our collections to include non-traditional items that are of interest to our community. It also helps to achieve the goal of "expanding our reach" to identify and build relationships with new audiences and attract new visitors who do not normally visit the library. |

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 program supports BC's strategic goal of improving access by delivering a user-centred program and service that is completely barrier free (no library card is required to borrow seeds from the collection). It also increases opportunities for citizen engagement by providing information, services, and resources that encourage sustainable development and local food security.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Raise community knowledge about local plants and growing, and build awareness of the importance of local food security and sustainable development.

Project/Program Name

Mayor's Select Committee on a Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community

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

Throughout 2022, Library Director Paul Burry participated in the Mayor's Select Committee on a Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community. Committee members attended a number of strategic and planning workshops focused on developing an evaluation framework for assessing the progress of the ongoing efforts to improve the various challenges affecting the Prince George community, and in particular the downtown core. Committee members were drawn from a variety of governmental and non-profit agencies/organizations in the region, including staff members from the municipality and the Northern Health Authority.

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

The work of the committee helps support PGPL's strategic priority of "Designing Welcoming Spaces," by providing opportunities to connect with subject experts from partner agencies who have provided support and suggestions for improving library facilities.

This project has been vital to the library's efforts to achieve the strategic priority of "Developing Partnerships & Advocacy," by providing numerous opportunities to make connections and build relationships with community partners and library stakeholders representing the diversity of our region. This includes developing relationships with decision makers at municipal, regional district, and provincial government levels, and advocating for sustainable and robust investment in the Library. We have also been able to connect and consult with representatives of local agencies who advocate for or represent community members from traditionally marginalized or underserved groups, including BIPOC and those experiencing accessibility barriers.

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 work of the committee supports the strategic goal of advancing citizen engagement by increasing awareness in our community of the various challenges affecting the Prince George community, and in particular marginalized populations in the downtown core. Developing practical and collaborative solutions to resolve some of these challenges helps demonstrate the value of cooperative inter-agency efforts.

Project/Program Name

National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration

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

Led by Manager of Communications & Engagement Jen Rubadeau, PGPL staff partnered with Lheidli T'enneh First Nation (LTFN) to assist in organizing the community's National Indigenous Peoples Day (NIPD) celebration event on June 21st at Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park. The celebration of Indigenous cultures drew approximately 10,000 attendees. After the event, a number of PGPL Leadership Team and Board members attended the celebration lunch event for community partners who assisted in planning and sponsoring the NIPD festivities. Members of Lheidli T'enneh Chief and Council expressed their thanks for the significant role the library played in organizing NIPD festivities in 2022.

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

PGPL has always been involved in supporting local NIPD celebrations. However, because of the long-term relationships that have formed between members of the PGPL Leadership Team and LTFN, when LTFN found themselves in a time of need they felt comfortable reaching out to ask if PGPL would take a leadership role in planning the event. Building stronger relationships with members of the host First Nation where PGPL is located is a key objective of the library's Reconciliation goals. This means stepping up to support their priorities and activities when requested, and we were pleased to be able to collaborate on this project.

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
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Engaging with and building strong positive relationships with Lheidli T'enneh Chief, Council, Elders, Administration, and community members, as well as community leaders and staff at many Indigenous focused organizations, is important to supporting BC's goal of Advancing Citizen Engagement by "bring[ing] the library community together to foster knowledge-sharing, collaboration and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples."

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Increase trust levels and build positive relationships with members of LTFN and other Indigenous organizations.

Project/Program Name

Municipal Election Events

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

PGPL partnered with UNBC and local media outlets CBC, Pattison/CKPG, and Prince George Citizen, to organize and host a series of municipal election events in the fall of 2022. PGPL hosted the Mayoral Forum on September 28th in partnership with CBC and Downtown Prince George. The forum event was attended by approximately 250 people. In addition, the "Candidating" event held at the library on October 4th attracted over 100 people, who were able to interact in one-on-one conversations with municipal election candidates.

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

Providing access to information and building civic literacy are core functions of public libraries. Voter engagement at all levels of government is low. Representatives of various local municipal and media organizations, including PGPL, Downtown Prince George, UNBC, CBC, Pattison Media/CKPG, and the Prince George Citizen, decided to collaborate to host and promote a number of municipal election events. This collaborative effort supports the library's strategic priority of making connections and building relationships with community partners and library stakeholders representing the diversity of our region.

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

Providing access to information and working to build civic literacy at the local level is vital to the provincial government's goal of Advancing Citizen Engagement.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Increase civic engagement levels and voter turnout.

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| Project/Program Name |
| Homework Help / Study Jam |
| Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program. |
| <p>In November of 2022 PGPL resumed its "Homework Help" tutoring program. In addition, the newly created "Study Jam" program was also launched. These educational programs are made possible thanks to the financial support of the City of Prince George and Integris Credit Union. Homework Help provides one-on-one tutoring support for students in grades 3-12, helping them to build skills in math and/or English. Students are paired with an experienced university student for their weekly session.</p> <p>This program has been extremely popular and so well utilized in the past that that it's been challenging to accommodate everyone who wanted tutoring services. Thanks to the generous support of the City of Prince George and Integris Credit Union, the programs have been expanded. The "Integris Study Jam" is offered as a drop-in program that allows students to bring their homework or school assignments and work on them with the support of an onsite tutor. This flexible option complements the structured "Homework Help" program by not requiring the booking of appointments and allowing students to use the resource as much as needed.</p> |
| How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals? |
| <p>PGPL is committed to removing as many barriers to library access for our community as possible, especially those from traditionally marginalized populations. The two Homework/Study programs help support families who are not able to access tutoring services due to financial constraints. This aligns with PGPL's strategic objective of "Expanding Our Reach" by working to build relationships with new audiences and attracting those community members who may not be regular library users. It also supports the goal of "Designing Welcoming Spaces" by providing opportunities to access services/assistance for everyone in our community, regardless of income level.</p> |
| How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include: |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving Access 2. Building Capacity 3. Advancing Citizen Engagement 4. Enhancing Governance |
| <p>This initiative meets BC's goal of Improving Access by removing barriers and improving support for education/learning regardless of income level.</p> |

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) | |
| Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather) | |
| Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues) | <p>Fluctuating currency exchange rates and inflationary increases are making it increasingly difficult to maintain library collections, staffing, equipment, facilities, and services at current levels. PGPL enjoys strong funding support from municipal and regional district stakeholders, however funding increases are sometimes not sufficient to cover increasing costs, making facilities and service improvements extremely challenging. Eliminating overdue fees has put pressure on the organization to replace those internally generated funds with other sources of revenue generation.</p> <p>Post-pandemic changes to how staff use vacation leave allowances has led to significant increases in vacation accrual amounts, representing a growing financial liability for the organization.</p> |
| Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness) | <p>Security challenges from increasing occurrences of code of conduct violations, especially substance use on library property, has resulted in significant mental health and wellness challenges for many staff members, leading to staff turnover and increased use of sick leave.</p> |
| Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health) | |

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| Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community) | |
| Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions) | |
| 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) | Vulnerable community members facing challenges such as homelessness, mental health crises, and substance use issues continue to pose significant challenges to the Prince George community, particularly in the downtown area where the Bob Harkins Branch of the library is located. Library staff are committed to offering welcoming spaces for vulnerable community members to relax and spend time in a safe and comfortable environment, helping them to access library computers and resources, as well as other forms of social supports available in the community. Serving vulnerable populations sometimes leads to increases in incidents of substance use, drug overdoses, vandalism, property damage, and abusive/threatening behaviour. |
| 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 COVID-19 Relief & Recovery funds have allowed PGPL to upgrade a number of items that had reached the end of their life cycle and needed replacing. After detailed costing and prioritizing of areas of greatest need, PGPL leadership decided to use these funds mainly to replace existing equipment and furniture, and to rely on other available accessibility grants/funding sources to pursue options for improving the physical accessibility of library facilities.

| | Grant budget | Reallocated budget |
|---|--------------|--------------------|
| COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount | \$62,121.56 | |
| Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount | \$20,707.19 | |
| Total Grant Amount | \$82,828.75 | |

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 | Children's Play Structures & Sensory Activities |
| Rationale | |
| Area of Need | COVID-19 Recovery |
| Action/Output/Deliverable | Support interactive play and sensory learning for children through play structures and sensory activities |
| Outcome/Impact | |
| Metrics | Increase visits/use of the children's area of the library |
| Collaborative Links (if applicable) | |
| Expenditure | \$14,121.47 |
| Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.). | Complete: a number of new play structures and sensory toys/objects have been added to both library branches. |
| Comments (optional) | In-person visits and use of the children's areas of the library have increased since these items were purchased. January of 2023 saw the daily average of in-person visits increase by 24% over the daily average for all of 2022. |


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|--|---|
| Project/Program/Activity | Computer Infrastructure Upgrades |
| Rationale | |
| Area of Need | COVID19 Recovery/ Emergency Planning & Preparedness |
| Action/Output/Deliverable | Upgrade end-of-life computer hardware. |
| Outcome/Impact | Computer/IT hardware upgrades, including new backup UPS batteries for critical servers improves efficiency and emergency preparedness |
| Metrics | |
| Collaborative Links (if applicable) | |
| Expenditure | \$22,461.48 |
| Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.). | Complete |
| Comments (optional) | |

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| Project/Program/Activity | Upgrade Seating Options |
| Rationale | |
| Area of Need | COVID19 Recovery/ Emergency Planning & Preparedness |
| Action/Output/Deliverable | New chairs and desks to upgrade aging furniture. Purchase a variety of chairs and desks/tables that use washable materials and that include ability to include charging stations for mobile device use |
| Outcome/Impact | Lack of seating options with a number of old furniture items retired during COVID-19 restrictions and not yet replaced. Provides attractive and easy to sanitize seating options that will increase the capacity of library facilities. |
| Metrics | Increase seating capacity and number of visits |
| Collaborative Links (if applicable) | |
| Expenditure | \$18,984.31 |
| Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.). | Complete |
| Comments (optional) | |


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| Project/Program/Activity | Equipment Upgrades |
| Rationale | Upgrade end-of-life equipment |
| Area of Need | COVID19 Recovery |
| Action/Output/Deliverable | Replace critical equipment that has reached end-of-life, including book bins and carts |
| Outcome/Impact | Improve staff performance and safety by replacing damaged/worn equipment needed to complete everyday tasks. |
| Metrics | |
| Collaborative Links (if applicable) | |
| Expenditure | \$12,063.40 |
| 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: _____

Board Chair Signature: _____


Date: _____