

2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Vancouver 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.).

Situated on the unceded lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) is one of Vancouver's oldest public institutions. For over one hundred years, VPL has championed the vision of an informed, engaged, and connected city by providing free spaces for everyone to discover, create, and share ideas and information.

The Vancouver Public Library serves a population of 662,248¹ through the Central library and 20 branches across the city. Vancouver is a thriving urban centre known for its ethnically and linguistically diverse neighbourhoods - it is home to a significant Indigenous population, and for 44% of residents, their mother tongue is a language other than English.² It is also a city with an increasing aging population, with the absolute number of seniors growing at twice the rate of growth in the overall population over the past 20 years.³ Vancouver continues to see increased population density and is the densest city in Metro Vancouver.⁴ Population density, and the resulting decrease in private residential space, adds significant pressure to the demand for indoor public space provided by VPL.

¹ "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population" Statistics Canada. Retrieved February 6th 2023 from:

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Vancouver&DGUIDlist=2021A00055915022&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

² "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population" Statistics Canada. Retrieved February 6th 2023 from:

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Vancouver&DGUIDlist=2021A00055915022&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

³ City of Vancouver. Vancouver City Social Indicators Profile 2020. October 2, 2020.

⁴ City of Vancouver. Vancouver City Social Indicators Profile 2020. October 2, 2020.

While the City of Vancouver is one of the fastest-growing major metropolitan economies in Canada, the city faces key challenges in terms of housing and affordability. The 2020 Metro Vancouver homeless count found that in Vancouver 2,095 residents identified as homeless.⁵

In terms of income, Vancouver continues to be one of the more polarized cities in Canada, with disproportionate representation at both ends of the income scale: 14% of Vancouverites are in the top decile of Canadian earners while 15% are in the bottom decile.⁶

In 2022, VPL saw continuing recovery of library usage, recording over 4 million in-person visits. Patrons borrowed over 9 million digital and physical items and received answers to nearly 400,000 reference questions. By continuing to offer virtual programs and reintroducing in-person programs, VPL was able to record total program participation of over 134,000.

Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is based on wide-ranging feedback where we heard that VPL must continue to find ways to meet the needs of seniors, newcomers, children, youth, low-income and Indigenous communities. Our Board identified four strategic priorities grounded in VPL's mission, vision and values: Learning & Creativity; Shared Spaces & Experiences; Belonging & Connection; and Organizational Strength.

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Project/Program Name
Integration of Revised Early Learning Framework into Early Years Practices
Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
<p>VPL reviewed the revised BC Early Learning Framework and identified opportunities to continue integrating the framework into our daily work with Early Years children and the adults who support them.</p> <p>Children's and Teen Services (CTS) Librarians at each branch received an updated copy of the framework to add to their staff professional reading library. The Early Years Cohort completed an analysis of the framework and identified similarities and differences amongst other early literacy resources to inform VPL's Core Early Literacy Messages for Caregivers. These messages are used in VPL's early literacy programming to teach caregivers ways to embed literacy in all their activities with children.</p> <p>VPL hosted our Early Learning Conference for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in-person for the first time in three years. The "2022 Read, Sing, Engage" Storytime Conference was designed to align with, and include content from, the BC Early Learning Framework. Workshops delivered by Children's Librarians focused on techniques to support children in new ways, and how to develop interactive</p>

⁵ Homelessness & Supportive Housing Strategy. City of Vancouver. Retrieved February 5th, 2021
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20201007/documents/pspc1presentation.pdf>

⁶ City of Vancouver. Vancouver City Social Indicators Profile 2020. October 2, 2020. (income data from "Census Profile, 2016 Census" Statistics Canada)

storytimes to support meaningful learning experiences. The conference featured a keynote address from Kinwa Bluesky, Senior Manager of Indigenous Initiatives at UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership and an Indigenous Storyteller, as well as community partner tables hosted by Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre Library and a Vancouver Coastal Health Speech and Language Pathologist.

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

This work supports Goal 1.1 "Champion Early Literacy and Opportunities for Lifelong Learning" in VPL's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Through early literacy services and programs, VPL helps children build a strong foundation for early literacy and continues to support children through their school years.

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

Improving Access

- Provided low-barrier accessible professional development to ECEs and adults who work with children
- Incorporated framework into other accessible programs such as storytimes

Building Capacity

- Ensured library staff have the resources, guidance and support to continue delivering evidence-based services
- Created professional development opportunities for ECEs, a key demographic in the library and early learning community

Advancing Citizen Engagement

- Brought together members of the library and early learning community to learn, engage and collaborate

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

VPL’s Early Learning Conference was fully subscribed, with 78 members of the early learning community attending. Some feedback received:

“I got to learn and connect with other early learning educators. It means I will be more intentional when working with kids and families”.

“I gained familiarity with library resources and getting fresh ideas for my daily practice in childcare. I am able to reach out to the bigger ECE community”

Revisiting the Early Learning Framework was an opportunity for Children’s Librarians to spend dedicated time reflecting on and reimagining our current practices. We will continue to explore opportunities for intentional learning and application in other areas such as Indigenous Cultural Competencies.

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

Yes, provincial grants provided partial support to this project.

Project/Program Name

Black History Month

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

Through its events and collections, VPL helps raise awareness of Black history and culture and promotes understanding of the experiences of Black Canadians and the ongoing struggle for racial equality.

In 2022, VPL organized a variety of events related to Black History and Black cultural identity, including a reading circle, an author event, and a panel discussion. The author event featured Marlon James, winner of the Man Booker Prize, as part of our Incite series in partnership with the Vancouver Writers Festival. The panel discussion was a conversation with Black athletes about issues of representation, equity, and diversity in sports. VPL also promoted a month-long online concert experience called A Musical Celebration for Black History Month which was available for free via YouTube.

VPL, in partnership with the Museum of Anthropology, hosted curators Nuno Porto and Nya Lewis for a 45 minute live-streamed guided tour of the MOA’s special exhibit: Sankofa. The audience was comprised of Vancouver students in grades 6-12. The curators shared different ways of understanding the world through the lenses of African and Black communities.

Throughout the Central Library and Branches as well as online, displays and book lists highlighted resources related to the Black experience, Black History and culture. VPL is committed to supporting the Black community by providing access to information and resources and strives to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all members of the community.

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

This series supports VPL’s vision of an informed, engaged, and connected city. It also supports our strategic goal of Belonging & Connection: fostering a connected community by providing opportunities for social interaction, sharing, and informed civic dialogue. Through Black History Month programs, events, and resources, the Library is helping to build a more inclusive and diverse community in Vancouver, and to promote understanding and respect for all cultures and backgrounds.

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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Advancing Citizen Engagement

- Promoted the library as a space to engage people in civic conversations
- This series engaged citizens – and listened to the community in raising awareness of Black voices and issues
- Through the design of the series, the public could engage in meaningful ways to help create enhanced social inclusion and ensure that perspectives of traditionally marginalized/equity denied groups were heard.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Black History Month events attracted a higher-than-average attendance, the series received media attention and interviews on the CBC and local news, and it reached new audiences that had never attended library programming before. In total our Black History programming reached an audience of over 1,600.

There has been growing recognition of the importance of Black History Month and the need to recognize Black voices and experiences throughout the year. VPL plays an important role in this ongoing effort, working to make sure that the stories and perspectives of Black individuals and communities are recognized and valued. This was validated in a 2022 Leger public survey, in which 79% of library users agreed that VPL increased their understanding of different cultures and languages. A notable 85% reported that VPL helped them connect with their community.

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

Yes, provincial grants provided partial support to this program.

Project/Program Name
Actions Supporting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)
Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
<p>In 2022, VPL was the first public library in Canada to develop an Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy. The strategy aligns with municipal and provincial UNDRIP strategies, and outlines VPL’s approach under four broad goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Social, Cultural, and Economic Wellbeing • Address Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination • Respect Indigenous Self Determination and the Inherent Right of Self Government • Honour the Rights and Title of Indigenous Peoples <p>To address Indigenous Considerations in all VPL policies and Board reports, VPL created a framework for senior staff and Board Trustees. Considerations include: identifying the impacts that a policy, program or service could have on Indigenous individuals and communities; having conversations with Indigenous groups or organizations to inform policies and services; and identifying opportunities to uphold and embed Indigenous rights and Reconciliation.</p> <p>Contributing to public knowledge and understanding of Indigenous rights and Reconciliation, VPL hosted 45 adult programs in 2022. Storyteller in Residence Eden Fineday hosted online and hybrid programs, and through an expanded partnership with the Indian Residential School Survivors Society, we delivered <i>Kith and Kin: Indigenous Ancestry Search; History and Impacts of Residential School Survivors</i>; and <i>Indian Residential School Survivor Testimony</i> programming at branches. VPL staff designed and delivered a new course to respond to community requests, <i>Indigenous Considerations for Newcomers to Canada</i>, which provided newcomers with a background on the land, languages and art of the local Nations.</p> <p>VPL hosted Indigenous authors such as Jody Wilson-Raybould, Chief Robert Joseph, and Bryan Trottier, who spoke about their latest book releases. The Library also hosted a travelling exhibition the <i>Bi-Giwen: Truth Telling from the Sixties Scoop</i> Exhibition in partnership with the <i>Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta (SSISA)</i>.</p>
How does this project/program support the library’s strategic goals?

VPL's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan prioritizes Truth and Reconciliation. It confirms that VPL is committed to being a place to learn about the history and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. This includes learning about the truths of the historic and ongoing impact of colonization and the importance of movement toward Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

VPL's strategic plan includes two specific goals related to Truth & Reconciliation: Reflect and Celebrate Indigenous Cultures and History, and Enhance Understanding and Appreciation of Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing, in addition to seeking opportunities to act on the Calls to Action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission across all goals.

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

Enhancing Governance

- The Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy provides VPL's Board and leadership with the strategic direction and accountability to ensure the library is meeting its commitments to UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action over the next several years
- The Indigenous Considerations framework enables and strengthens VPL leaders with best practices for including Indigenous considerations in policy development and organizational planning

Advancing Citizen Engagement

- Through Indigenous programming, VPL creates connections and opportunities for Indigenous voices to be heard. We bring the Vancouver community together to foster knowledge sharing, collaboration and lasting Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

With the development of the Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy and the Indigenous Considerations framework, VPL leaders have gained tools to become more knowledgeable, better prepared and more accountable for acting on our commitments towards UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action. The full range of VPL’s actions over time will have the impact of contributing to the well-being and dignity of local Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous programming contributed directly to the learning, growth and connections of over 1,100 program attendees in 2022. In a public survey conducted by Leger, an external research firm, 76% of VPL patrons reported that VPL “helped to increase their understanding and respect for Indigenous peoples’ histories, cultures, and rights”.

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

Yes, provincial grants provided partial support to this work.

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)	<p>VPL serves as a clean air shelter, cooling, and warming centre during climate emergencies. The ‘heat dome’ of 2021 was followed by additional extreme weather events in 2022. To address this, VPL developed a comprehensive climate emergency response, with communication and operational protocols to cope with escalating scenarios. Additional water filling stations are being installed at seven branches that did not previously have water fountains, and enhanced ventilation and cooling has been prioritized for funding. Library hours were extended at a few critical locations to facilitate greater access to respite spaces.</p>
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	<p>Financial pressures are a paramount concern for VPL. Inflationary pressures are compounding cost pressures driven by demand for new and enhanced digital services, caused by a shift in user behaviour. Digital collections, such as e-books and e-audio books, represented 22% of total circulation in 2017 and 40% in 2021. The cost of e-books is often 3-5 times that of print, and e-books have limited time licenses that require more staff time due to the requirement re-purchase.</p> <p>While BC libraries have received one-time Provincial funding grants in addition to operating funding in recent years, the BC government has not increased core operating grants for libraries since 2009. At that time, VPL’s allocation was reduced by 40%. VPL has expanded and added services over the past decade with no substantial increase in budgets and staffing and has relied on the municipal government to address cost pressures. The need for increased ongoing funding is critical to continue meeting community needs.</p>
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)	<p>Since the onset of the pandemic, VPL locations have become an increasingly important part of support systems for people experiencing homelessness, mental health and addiction issues, and those affected by the opioid crisis. VPL staff at most locations have reported increased incidents of hostile patrons, verbal abuse, harassment, threats, and increased incidents of racism and anti-LGBTQ behaviours, and patrons who refuse to leave when asked. In 2022, VPL saw a 46% increase in incidents requiring VPD attendance.</p> <p>While there are policies, programs and procedures in place to keep library staff safe and support them during and after incidents, including counselling services, staff are experiencing increased incidents of trauma, and are reporting declining personal resiliency leading to declining mental health and increased leave. The tools that VPL has to support staff are no longer sufficient in this new environment. VPL has identified the need for a full time, internally facing social worker to provide support to front line staff at a cost</p>

	of \$115K annually, to provide training to build staff skills in crisis prevention and intervention, harassment, mental health and related areas. This need is unfunded.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	Many community organizations rely on volunteers to deliver their much needed services. Post pandemic, these volunteers have not returned, although the services are needed more than ever in Vancouver. The impact on the library is tangible, with an increasing number of patrons turning to the library to help identify supports. In 2022, VPL sought to fill gaps by developing staff referral information on food security resources, reinstating coffee/snack programs at several locations to support patron connection as other social programs have closed down, and partnering with CMHA to deliver a peer navigator program at locations where patrons experiencing homelessness, mental health and addiction issues seek access to services.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	VPL's spaces are increasingly being used as remote work/study locations throughout the city, and in particular at Central Library. This increased demand and intensity of use for video meetings and streaming led to a need for greater bandwidth. Since 2021, VPL has increased wifi speed to a total of 1.6GB monthly, an approximate 100% increase.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	Approximately 70% of VPL's branches are older than 30 years, and one third are deemed to be in poor condition. Some are not fully accessible for people with disabilities. In 2022, VPL continued to invest in accessibility upgrades such as automatic door openers and touchless faucets, as well as upgrades to enhance ventilation in response to the need for cleaner air due to COVID and continued wildfire events. The ventilation improvements to the Inspiration Lab at Central Library and studios at náca?mat ct Strathcona Branch were made possible through the COVID -19 relief fund (see more details below).
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)	<p>In 2022, Telus removed pay phones from public spaces across the province, such as libraries and hospitals, without consultation. This had a negative impact on VPL's patrons who lack cell phones due to homelessness, poverty, or other circumstances such as fleeing domestic violence. Patrons seeking to connect with critical support services were left without a means to get assistance.</p> <p>After Telus declined to restore the phones, staff conducted a needs analysis, and VPL replaced these pay phones with free public phones on levels 2, 4, and 6 at Central Library. These phones are simple and inexpensive landlines which only make outbound local calls, however they provide a valuable connection for individuals without other access to a phone.</p>

Other (please specify)	
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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
VPL used these grants to respond to critical pressures on operations that arose due to COVID that had costs not included in our existing operating and capital budgets. This included expanding our digital resources due to higher public demand, with an emphasis on newcomer supports; a critical need for staff training on workplace violence prevention after considerable hiring in 2022 as a consequence of layoffs and decreased hours due to COVID, and improving ventilation for our highly used recording studios, where staff and public expectations for cleaner air evolved during COVID.

	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	\$152,885.32	\$173,847.09
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	\$50,961.77	\$30,000.00
Total Grant Amount	\$203,847.09	\$203,847.09

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	Inspiration Lab Upgrades
Rationale	Implement physical enhancements to our Central Library and náca?mat ct Strathcona Branch digital creation spaces to enhance community service capacity.
Area of Need	COVID-19 Relief
Action/Output/Deliverable	<p>Electrical, mechanical and structural upgrades related to ventilation enhancements within the recording studios are completed.</p> <p>Conduct structural and mechanical upgrades to Inspiration Lab including electrical and ventilation enhancements, and ventilation enhancements at náca?mat ct Strathcona Branch.</p>
Outcome/Impact	The recording studios are a healthy safe space with enhanced usability and improved health and safety measures, used regularly by several thousand patrons per year.
Metrics	Project completed to meet current building code and standards.
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$100,000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Work at the náca?mat ct Strathcona Branch is completed. Detailed design and drawings have been prepared for the work to be done at Central Library, permits have been issued for the work, and construction contracts to complete the mechanical and structural upgrades and enhancements are in the process of being awarded.
Comments (optional)	The Inspiration Lab, which opened in 2015, and the náca?mat ct Strathcona Branch studio, which opened in 2017, enable digital story creation and other digital creation projects through access to audio, video, digitizing, and graphics equipment and software, as well as recording studio space. Community members who are new to digital creation, as well as those who want to increase their skills, are supported by resources for learning including courses (currently being presented virtually), online guides and learning such as Lynda.com, as well as a dedicated staff with digital creation and instruction experience.

Project/Program/Activity	Workplace Violence Prevention Training
Rationale	Support staff through enhanced access to training in light of significant internal and external changes brought about by the pandemic.
Area of Need	Emergency Planning & Preparedness
Action/Output/Deliverable	Workplace Violence Prevention training is completed by over 300 VPL staff.
Outcome/Impact	Staff are equipped with the right tools, resources, and skill sets to provide positive experiences to patrons in a safe environment, in a context of increased worksite incidents related to mental health challenges experienced in our community.
Metrics	300 staff complete Workplace Violence Prevention training
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$30,000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	This is in progress, approximately 200 of the 300 staff have completed this training.
Comments (optional)	Workplace Violence Prevention Training is increasingly important as VPL's services, resources, and access to public space has become even more critical during the pandemic with other community serving spaces used by people living with poverty closed to the public. During this time, there has been a rise in incidents at VPL worksites related to patron mental health, distress, and violence. These incidents have challenged staff preparedness and impacted the mental, psychological, and physical safety of our staff, especially those in high-risk branch neighbourhoods.

Project/Program/Activity	Digital Collections
Rationale	Expand our digital collections to meet evolving patrons needs and enhance our community service capacity.
Area of Need	COVID Relief / Recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	Acquisition of new ESL database resources and additional downloadable digital content.
Outcome/Impact	Vancouver residents have enhanced access to digital resources to support their learning and literacy needs, including English language learning.
Metrics	Addition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 database resources • 150 ebooks • 50 audio books to VPL's digital collections
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$23,847.09
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	This project is complete. We increased VPL's digital collections with the addition of 200 ebooks and eaudio books, and three database resources to support English Language Learning. New resources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beginner and advanced speech sound and pronunciation lessons that will help ESL learners recognize and pronounce the 43 sounds of English • test preparation tools for the four parts of the IELTS test: Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing • picture books in 50+ languages paired with their English translation.
Comments (optional)	

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: 

Date: March 1, 2023

Board Chair Signature: 

Date: March 1, 2023