



B.C.'s Strategic Plan for **PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE** Refreshed Strategies and Actions

2024



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

Message from the Minister



Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Municipal Affairs

B.C.'s public libraries are an important part of communities throughout the province, delivering services we rely on every day. They play a crucial role in promoting education and learning, while ensuring that people have access to important information and technology when they need it. As the Minister for public libraries, I am pleased to introduce our refreshed strategic plan for public library services.

The Public Libraries Branch, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, has renewed its priorities and focused its actions to better support the province's commitment to providing accessible and inclusive services.

Over the next few years, we will continue working with our valued partners to guide B.C.'s public library system, helping to ensure people have ongoing access to library resources and services that enrich their lives and strengthen community connections.

Our government understands the importance of libraries and the impact they have on people's lives. In 2023, we contributed \$45 million in one-time grants throughout all 71 of B.C. public libraries and organizations beyond the annual contribution. This enhanced funding has already helped libraries expand their digital collections, increased local programs and improved their internet connectivity.

Thank you to public library leaders, trustees, staff and volunteers for your commitment and hard work. You are helping to ensure B.C.'s public libraries are more equitable, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone.

Sincerely,

Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Municipal Affairs



Refreshed Strategies and Actions

About

This refreshed strategic plan continues the important work originally presented in *B.C.'s Strategic Plan for Public Library Service* (2020).

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs – Public Libraries Branch (PLB) will continue to work with our partners in the public library system, including public libraries represented by boards and staff, library federations, the BC Libraries Cooperative, the BC Library Trustees Association, the BC Library Association, and the Association of BC Public Library Directors.

The following four strategies are founded on established partnerships and successful collaborations. They are also a reflection of the ministry's renewed commitment to supporting inclusive, accessible, and future-focused public libraries that are effectively governed.

The B.C. Public Service acknowledges the territories of First Nations throughout B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.

Enhancing Connectivity and Digital Access

Public libraries are connected, community hubs that provide vital access to the internet, technology, and quality digital resources. The PLB's role is to strengthen the library system by supporting collaboration, shared services, and innovative programs.

Actions:



- » **SUPPORT COOPERATION** on the delivery of shared services and digital resources.
- » **PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES** to improve connectivity and online access.



B.C.'s public libraries are making an impact

97.2% of library customers in the City of North Vancouver indicated they would recommend the library to a friend or neighbour, and **95.8%** reported they feel inspired to learn more because of using the library.

Building Capacity

Communities are changing and libraries are facing new and complex demands. The PLB will continue to work with the library community to guide provincial investment in training and professional development opportunities.

Actions:



- » **CONTINUE TO BUILD** a learning framework and improve the provincial learning strategy.
- » **LEVERAGE RELATIONSHIPS** with partner organizations to create a wider range of learning opportunities.
- » **SUPPORT INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES** that enable staff and boards to lead in an evolving digital, societal, and community landscape.



Library services are constantly evolving

Our four strategies are founded on established partnerships and successful collaborations. This results in more learning opportunities for staff and library trustees.

Advancing Citizen Engagement

Through libraries, people have more opportunities to connect with all levels of government, making it easier for them to access vital services, quality information, and resources. Engagement creates social inclusion and helps ensure the perspectives of traditionally marginalized groups are heard. At the same time, libraries remain key to supporting foundational skills including critical thinking, reading and digital literacies. The ministry will work with libraries and support their important role in engaging and informing British Columbians.

Actions:



- » **SUPPORT THE PROMOTION OF PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES** and information through libraries.
- » **PROMOTE LIBRARIES AS SPACES** for community engagement and support activities that promote transparent, inclusive, and responsive governance.



Accessibility and Inclusion

The Government of British Columbia is working towards B.C. being an inclusive province. Over the last few years, government has worked to make services more accessible by introducing accessibility legislation and developing a provincial accessibility plan. As part of the AccessibleBC plan, the ministry has committed to improve digital access to public libraries and work with others to make more books available in accessible formats.

Strengthening Governance

Successful leadership and library service excellence depend on effective governance and accountability. Boards provide strategic direction and are responsible, in partnership with staff, for ensuring libraries meet their financial, legal, and community obligations. As governance grows more complex, the ministry continues to provide guidance and resources to support communities, library boards, and library sector leaders.

Actions:

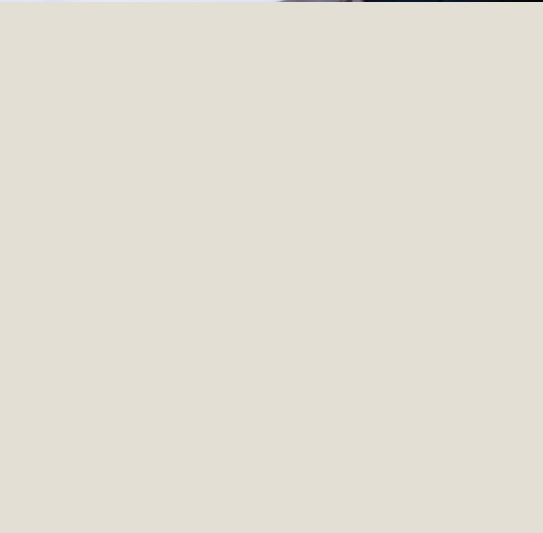
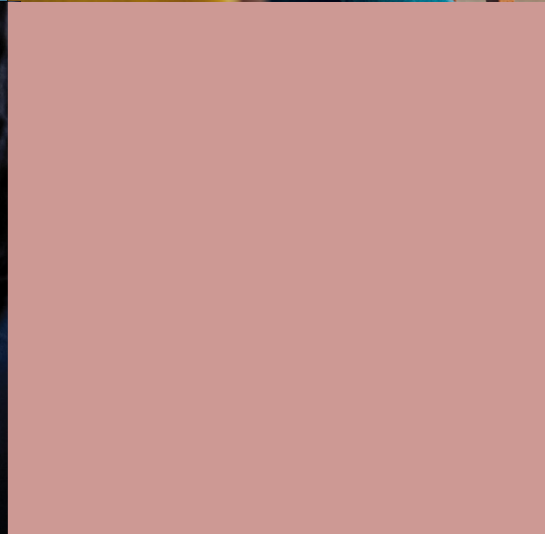


- » **PROVIDE STRATEGIC DIRECTION** at the provincial level and continue to support governance education, succession planning, business continuity, and knowledge management.
- » **STRENGTHEN SYSTEM GOVERNANCE** by enabling greater knowledge-sharing between organizations.
- » **REVIEW AND MODERNIZE** the provincial library grant framework.



Advancing Reconciliation

As part of its work to create true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in B.C., the provincial government has adopted the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as its framework for reconciliation, as called for by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#). Work is ongoing to make B.C. a more equitable, inclusive, and welcoming province for everyone, recognizing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people as distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments. Public libraries are a place to foster collaboration, understanding, and to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The PLB has a role in supporting more inclusive governance practices, policies, and programs that public libraries may use to develop meaningful local relationships.



TO LEARN MORE about B.C.'s 71 public libraries, and the network of province-wide services they offer, please visit: www.gov.bc.ca/publiclibraries

