

BEST PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ALBERTA



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INTRODUCTION

Public library service in Alberta is delivered by 220 municipal and seven library system boards. Together, they operate 322 public library service points in large and small communities province-wide. The Government of Alberta manages and funds the provincial Public Library Network to support equitable library services. Public library service is governed by standards found in the *Libraries Act* and *Libraries Regulation* and supported by a set of best practices as outlined in this document.

STANDARDS vs. BEST PRACTICES

The terms “standards” and “best practices” are often used interchangeably. Both can be described as a degree or level of requirement, excellence or attainment that serve as a point of reference for comparison and evaluation. They comprise a framework for planning and achieving excellence in the management and provision of library services. At the same time, they provide a baseline measure for providing an essential, or basic, level of service.

In our context, standards and best practices are not the same thing:

<u>Standards</u>	<u>Best Practices</u>
Primarily address governance and board accountability	Primarily address public library service delivery
Mandatory; monitored for compliance	Optional; not monitored for compliance
Embedded in the <i>Libraries Act</i> and <i>Libraries Regulation</i>	Found primarily in supporting documents such as <i>Best Practices for Public Libraries in Alberta</i>

Taken together, standards and best practices provide library boards with a framework to support service delivery excellence in public libraries across the province.

As the standard, the *Libraries Act* sets out the governance structure for public library service. It provides for the establishment of municipal and community library boards at the local level and system boards at the regional level. These autonomous boards cooperate through the provincial Public Library Network and resource-sharing agreements to give access to public library resources to all Albertans. The *Libraries Regulation* establishes key provincially-regulated standards for the planning and development of public library service at the local and system levels.

Best Practices for Public Libraries in Alberta has been developed in response to frequent requests from boards.

Best practices are useful for:

- Encouraging excellence in public library service
- Addressing equity in the delivery of public library services for residents of Alberta
- Providing a point of reference for board self-evaluation
- Providing a framework for future service development (especially when used in conjunction with the Plan of Service)
- Letting municipalities and communities know what they should expect from their public libraries

These best practices do not represent standards required by the province. They provide choices that each board can consider in whether to go beyond the standards, while taking into account a community's expectations, sustainability and growth. Each local library board is responsible for determining the metrics and the measure of their success.

While the best practices in this document are not mandatory requirements, it is hoped that this document communicates a quality public library service in Alberta. Library boards province-wide are encouraged to use this tool extensively in their service planning and evaluation.

CONTEXT

Principles

The provincial Public Library Network in Alberta enables equitable access to public library resources for all Albertans. This is a foundational value for public library service in Alberta, and is embedded in the following principles that can also guide library boards in their service planning and delivery:

- Access: Albertans have an equal right to access information regardless of economic, social, or geographic circumstances.
- Accountability: Provincial and municipal governments are responsible for maintaining a healthy public library service. Library boards are accountable to the citizens and funding authorities.
- Quality service: Cooperation among and through library systems is the most efficient means of providing access to information.
- Funding: Public library service is funded by local and provincial tax dollars. Library boards are not taxing authorities but as corporations may raise additional funds.

Governance

The development and sustainability of quality public library services depend upon sound and resourceful leadership. In Alberta, there are four levels that play a leadership role in the development and sustainability of quality library service:

- Provincial government
- Local municipal governments
- Library system boards
- Municipal library boards

The administrative arms of each level should ensure that community needs are anticipated and that emerging methods of service are employed effectively. Each library should be administered with foresight and integrity.

Provincial Government

The provincial role is to support equitable access to public library service, to maintain a governance structure, to provide funding assistance, and to establish a province-wide network to link public libraries and enable efficient sharing of library resources.

Local Municipal Governments

Public libraries are a municipal service like others such as fire and recreation. Unlike other services, however, municipalities appoint an autonomous board to oversee library service under the *Libraries Act*. Municipal councils have a limited, but important role in public library service delivery. Regardless of the population base, each local municipal government:

- establishes library board by bylaw
- appoints library board members in accordance with the *Libraries Act*
- may appoint up to two council members to the municipal library board
- approves municipal portion of library board's budget
- joins system (where applicable), pays system levy and appoints one representative to library system board

Library System Boards

Library systems provide professional and technical support to public libraries within the system area so that even the smallest library has access to advice and assistance along with the cost effectiveness and synergies made possible by working through a larger unit. Systems manage regional resource development and sharing at the regional level. Systems also function as nodes within the provincial Public Library Network to connect resources to residents using municipal libraries in small rural communities. There are seven regional library systems in Alberta:

- Shortgrass Library System (SLS), headquarters located in Medicine Hat
- Chinook Arch Regional Library System (CARLS), headquarters located in Lethbridge
- Parkland Regional Library (PRL), headquarters located in Lacombe
- Marigold Library System (MLS), headquarters located in Strathmore
- Yellowhead Regional Library (YRL), headquarters located in Spruce Grove
- Northern Lights Library System (NLLS), headquarters located in Elk Point
- Peace Library System (PLS), headquarters located in Grande Prairie

Municipal Library Boards

Under section 7 of the *Libraries Act*, “[t]he municipal board, subject to any enactment that limits its authority, has full management and control of the municipal library and shall, in accordance with the regulations, organize, promote and maintain comprehensive and efficient library services in the municipality and may co-operate with other boards and libraries in the provision of those services.”

Public libraries are a municipal service. Once council passes a bylaw to form a local library board, that board is subsequently responsible for providing public library service to the entire community.

BACKGROUND

The need for standards was originally identified by Alberta's library system directors. Specifically, the systems found it necessary to develop something for their member libraries. The Assistant Director of Marigold Library System chaired the original 2003 committee, which was comprised of representative staff from each of the seven systems (hence, the original title “Standards for Member Libraries...”), and a representative from PLSB. The work was completed entirely by the committee.

PLSB struck a new committee in 2009 to revise the document – casting the net wider to include representation from The Alberta Library (TAL) and municipal libraries as well as systems. The committee drafted the document and solicited input from the stakeholder community (including library directors, managers, and staff from large and small libraries). The second edition was completed in October 2010.

In 2017, PLSB struck an internal team to revise the document yet again. A survey on best practices was distributed to all municipal libraries and the seven systems for input. A total of 143 responses were received.

Based on this feedback, PLSB staff drafted revised sections (as well as three new sections) and sent them out for review to over 40 members of the stakeholder community (selected for their demonstrated expertise in a given area). These “virtual committees” provided useful feedback, which was then incorporated into a second draft that was then reviewed by a final in-person committee of seven. The final draft of *Best Practices for Public Libraries in Alberta* was completed in June 2018. The team will continue to solicit feedback from the stakeholder committee and will review the current edition in twelve to eighteen months.

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

There are ten sections in the current document. The seven “core” sections – personnel, hours of opening, collections, information services, resource sharing, technology, and facilities – have been represented in all three editions of this document. Three new sections – Accessibility, Indigenous Service, and School-housed Public Libraries – have been added.

Each section follows the same basic outline (although not all sections include all the following headings):

- Introduction – a brief overview of the section
- Requirements – any pertinent legislative requirements under the *Libraries Act* or *Libraries Regulation*; boards must ensure they meet these requirements to be in compliance for an annual provincial per-capita operating grant
- Best practices – may include qualitative or quantitative measures
- PLSB support – funding and/or other support that PLSB provides in helping boards meet the best practices and provide equitable access
- Resources – recommended supporting resources to assist boards in the meeting the best practices
- Appendices –documents such as templates

A glossary and a reference list complete this document.

CONCLUSION

PLSB continues to provide consulting support to municipal and system library boards province-wide, as described, in part, in this document. Boards, trustees or library staff can contact PLSB for assistance as follows:

Public Library Services Branch, Alberta Municipal Affairs
803, 10405 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5J 4R7

Phone: [780-427-4871](tel:780-427-4871)

(Dial the Service Alberta toll free line at [310-0000](tel:310-0000) anywhere in Alberta, then enter the number.)

Fax: 780-415-8594

Email: libraries@gov.ab.ca

Website: www.albertalibraries.ca

PLSB staff appreciate the contributions of the approximately 200 library community members who took the time to review an aspect of the *Best Practices for Public Libraries in Alberta*, as well as the previous committee members who drafted the first two editions. We believe that this document reflects what the Alberta public library community considers “quality public library service.”

PERSONNEL

INTRODUCTION

Whether paid staff or volunteers, people are the library's most valuable resource. They are key to providing personal, effective library service to residents of your community. It is essential for Alberta library boards to follow both applicable legislation and best practices when new staff are hired, during their employment, and when they leave. The board must also consider how to apply library personnel standards to library volunteers.

REQUIREMENTS

Required Policies under Library Legislation

Section 7 of the *Libraries Regulation* outlines required personnel policies for municipal library boards in Alberta. Personnel policies are required under the *Libraries Regulation* for:

- Job descriptions for staff and volunteers
- Orientation of staff
- Continuing education for staff, including expenses for attendance at library meetings, conference workshops and courses, and memberships in library associations
- Performance appraisals for staff and volunteers
- Qualifications for staff positions
- Conditions of employment
- Working hours
- Grievance procedure

Other Relevant Legislation

Personnel management is governed by many other pieces of legislation besides the *Libraries Act* and *Libraries Regulation*. Key pieces of legislation are listed below. Note that this other legislation is not administered by PLSB.

Alberta Employment Standards Code: These are the minimum standards of employment for employers and employees in Alberta workplaces. They include standards for:

- Employees under 18
- General holidays and general holiday pay
- Hours of work, rest periods, and days of rest
- Leaves as required by legislation e.g. Sick Leave, Maternity and Parental Leaves, Reservist Leave
- Minimum wage
- Overtime hours and overtime pay
- Payment of earnings
- Termination of employment and termination pay
- Vacations and vacation pay

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Act, Code, and Regulation: This provincial legislation sets rules for safety in the workplace, including rules for working alone.

Many small public libraries have only one employee, who often has to work alone. Alberta has specific legal requirements for employees who have to work alone.

Human Rights Legislation: This legislation prohibits discrimination on various protected grounds, including race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation. Employees have a right to compete for positions under an equitable hiring process and to work in an environment that is free from discrimination.

There is both provincial and federal legislation related to human rights. Federal human rights legislation includes the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Employment Equity Act*. Provincial human rights legislation includes the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

BEST PRACTICES

Basic Best Practices

To support equitable and effective library service to all members of the public, it is essential that all library boards in Alberta meet these basic best practices:

- The library board employs at least one paid staff member who meets both the basic personnel and library management competencies listed in the Appendix of this section. When the library has more than one employee, all staff meet the basic personnel competencies, but the Library Manager also meets the library management competencies.
- All adult library staff possess a high school diploma.
- Library volunteers are a supplement to, not a substitute for, paid staff. Core operational activities do not depend on volunteer labour.
- When they are hired all staff receive training in library operations.
 - If their municipality is a system member, all staff receive training on the role of the library system. Library Managers also receive training directly from the library system.
 - Volunteers receive training before they begin their duties.
- All staff receive ongoing professional development. This means they attend at least one library conference or one other library-related professional development session per year. This may include training on providing service to print-disabled or Indigenous populations.
- Staff are evaluated annually to ensure they are continuing to meet the requirements of their positions and to plan their work and development for the coming year. Volunteers receive feedback and evaluation as required by the position.
- Library staff have comparable salaries, hours, and benefits to other positions that require a similar education and level of responsibility. Pay scales provide for regular increases (including potential merit increases).
- The board and manager recruit and select staff and volunteers with community demographics in mind.
 - Please refer to the sections on Accessibility and Indigenous Services for more information on ensuring representation of print-disabled and Indigenous users.

Personnel Best Practices Based on Population Size

Definitions of qualification levels:

- Librarians have a Masters in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) or equivalent degree from a university or equivalency accredited by the American Library Association. Managers of larger libraries will often hold an MLIS or equivalent degree.
- Library technicians have a recognized diploma from a technical or educational institute.
- Library staff can obtain a Library Operations (LO) certificate from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT).

Population	Essential (Meets Basic Best Practices plus)	Enhanced (All of Essential plus)	Excellent (All of Enhanced plus)
0 - 600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are paid for open hours plus 20% of open hours for administrative duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are paid for open hours plus 25% of open hours for administrative duties Manager has at least 3 years library experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff member with LO certificate Manager has at least 5 years library experience
601 - 1,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are paid for open hours plus 20% of open hours for administrative duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are paid for open hours plus 25% of open hours for administrative duties Manager has at least 3 years library experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff member with LO certificate Manager has at least 5 years library experience
1,201 - 3,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are paid for open hours plus 20% of open hours for administrative duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are paid for open hours plus 25% of open hours for administrative duties Staff member with LO Certificate Manager has at least 3 years library experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library technician Manager has at least 5 years library experience
3,001 - 5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5 FTE/1000 population Staff member with LO Certificate Manager attends one library conference and one other professional development session per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.7 FTE/1000 population Library technician Manager has at least 3 years library experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.0 FTE/1000 population Manager has at least 5 years library experience
5,001 - 10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5 FTE/1000 population Library Technician Manager attends one library conference and one other professional development session per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.7 FTE/1000 population Manager has at least 3 years library experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.0 FTE/1000 population 1 MLIS Manager has at least 5 years library experience

10,001 - 20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5 FTE/1000 population • At least 1 MLIS required by law for municipalities of 10,000 or greater • Full-time programming positions on staff • IT Staff On-Site • Manager has at least 3 years library experience • Management staff attend one library conference and two other professional development sessions per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.7 FTE/1000 population • 2 MLIS • Manager has at least 5 years library experience • All full-time staff attend two professional development sessions per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.0 FTE/1000 population
>20,001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5 FTE/1000 population • 1 MLIS/10,000 population • IT Staff On-Site • Full-time programming positions on staff • Manager has at least 3 years library experience • All full-time staff attend two professional development sessions per year • Management staff attend one library conference and two other professional development sessions per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.7 FTE/1000 population • Manager has at least 5 years library experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.0 FTE/1000 population

The board supervises the library manager, and the library manager is responsible for everyone else

- Regardless of the size of the community, a library board has one paid staff member who is responsible for the administration of library services: the Library Manager.
- The Library Manager is responsible for recruiting, hiring, training, supervising, and evaluating all staff and service volunteers.
- The Library Manager is directly supervised by the library board, and the Library Manager is responsible for the supervision of all other staff and volunteers.
 - Alberta public library boards are governance boards. They are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the library. Rather, they focus on advocacy, governance, and setting direction for the library through the creation of a plan of service, library policies, and budget.

- The role of the library manger is to work at the library on a daily basis and implement the policy and direction set by the board. If the board takes an active role in supervising other staff, they become more involved in the operations of the library, which minimizes the authority and role of the Library Manager. The board sets direction, and the Library Manager takes the steps needed to fulfill that direction.
- One board member (usually the Board Chair) or a personnel committee serves as the liaison between the board and the Library Manager in between board meetings.

Support your volunteers and give them meaningful work

- Volunteer tasks are of genuine significance, enhancing the services and capabilities of the library.
- Train your volunteers when they begin their positions so they know their roles at the library.
- Evaluate your volunteers regularly to ensure they are meeting the requirements of their position and assure them that their work is competent and valued.
- Develop a volunteer recognition program to highlight your volunteer’s efforts and thank them for their hard work.

Find out how much to pay your staff

The following information may be useful when your board is determining pay scales for your library staff, both while budgeting and when presenting justifications for salary increases to community stakeholders:

- Ask for publicly available salary information from your municipality and neighboring municipalities of similar population size. Seek to have your Library Manager be paid a similar rate to other municipal managers with similar job duties.
- Check Alberta Occupational Information (OCCinfo) for salaries normally paid to Librarians, Library Assistants, Library Clerks, or Library Technicians.
- Your library system may do regular salary surveys of other library staff in your system. Ask them if they have a recent salary survey.

Train your board members, volunteers, and staff when they start and as they work

- New library staff members, including Library Managers, have a lot to learn. Training for new Library Managers includes:
 - Specific duties of their position
 - The operations of the library
 - The structure of public library service in Alberta
- The Library Manager will ensure all other staff receive an orientation, including information on:
 - Specific duties of their position
 - The operations of the library and/or their department
- Usually, orientation for all staff will include:
 - Review of the library board’s Plan of Service and policies
 - A tour of the library
 - Meetings with the Library Manager
 - Meetings with the board chair or another member of the board for the Library Manager
- New staff will receive training on the library system if their municipality is a member.
- Board members and staff will need ongoing training and professional development. Plan for staff and board to attend all the training they will need to keep up with library trends and changes. Training and professional development opportunities to plan for include:

- The Library Manager and sometimes other staff members will attend a system conference and/or the provincial conference each year.
- Staff will participate in relevant workshops or professional development days offered by the library, the library system, or PLSB.
- Staff are able to take relevant coursework from post-secondary institutions, including distance education courses. Encourage staff who are interested to work towards a Library Operations (LO) certificate, a Library Technician diploma, or a Master's in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree.
- Volunteers also receive orientation, including:
 - The responsibilities of the volunteer position
 - The length of the volunteer appointment (Does this appointment have an end date, or is it ongoing? Are there any regular breaks in the appointment, e.g. during the summer or over Christmas?)
 - The regular time commitment for the volunteer appointment (how many hours per week?)
 - Qualifications required for the volunteer position
 - What support the volunteer can expect from library staff
 - What benefits come with the volunteer position

Make sure your staff and volunteers are safe

- All library staff are trained and equipped to deal appropriately with emergency situations in the library.
- There are enough trained first aiders in the building at all times as required by provincial legislation.
- Library staff have access to all necessary equipment required for them to safely complete their job duties.
- Ergonomically appropriate furniture and equipment are available for the comfort and health of library staff.

Evaluate your staff and volunteers regularly

- All staff are evaluated at the end of their probationary period (if applicable) and again on an annual basis, using a written form.
- The library board evaluates the Library Manager. This is usually done via a committee, which may include the board chair or whichever member of the board is assigned as the liaison between the Library Manager and the board.
- The Library Manager is responsible for the evaluation of all other library staff and non-board volunteers.

Have a process for when grievances occur

- Grievances will be submitted as per existing grievance policy.
- Library staff first bring their issues to the Library Manager or their direct supervisor. The Library Manager brings his issue to the board or a designated board committee.
- If the grievance is with a particular member or members of the board, those members do not review the grievance and excuse themselves from all discussions and decisions regarding the grievance.

PLSB SUPPORT

Samples of required personnel policies, including forms for grievances and performance evaluations and sample job descriptions, can be found on PLSB's website or in our document [*Policies and Bylaws: A Guide for Alberta Public Library Boards*](#).

RESOURCES

- Alberta Employment Standards: <https://www.alberta.ca/employment-standards.aspx>
- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS): <https://www.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.aspx>
- Canadian Human Rights Commission: <http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/index.html>
- Alberta Human Rights Commission: <https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/>
- OCCinfo: <https://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/>

APPENDIX: Sample Library Personnel and Management Competencies

Introduction

Library staff and Library Managers possess many skills in order to do their day to day work – how to use the library’s integrated library system (ILS), the order in which to shelve books, how to complete an online order form. But competencies are more than just a collection of skills – they are the ability to use those skills in a specific context to meet the needs of library users and other community stakeholders.

Basic Personnel Competencies

To provide equitable and effective library service to all members of the public, it is essential that all staff in the library possess the following basic competencies:

- Communicates effectively with a variety of audiences and individuals from diverse backgrounds, using a variety of methods
 - Please refer to the sections on Accessibility and Indigenous Services for more information on providing equitable service to print-disabled and Indigenous users.
- Works collaboratively in teams or groups
- Pursues a commitment to self-directed learning
- Anticipates and adapts to change
- Practices creative and innovative approaches to library service
- Understands and acts in accordance with the professional values and ethics of library service, including user privacy and intellectual freedom
- Provides assistance to library users in a manner that is friendly, welcoming, and respectful
- Pro-actively pursues opportunities to assist library users, anticipating needs and exceeding expectations
- Provides informal instruction and assistance to build the skills of library users
- Demonstrates good working knowledge of the full range of programs and services offered by the library
- Applies effective techniques to address difficult situations with users
- Understands and executes the operations of the library required by their position
- Understands and uses basic computer hardware and peripherals (e.g. printer, scanner)
- Understands basic computer operating system functions (e.g. log in, log off, program launch, multiple windows, file launch, print, etc.)
- Understands and uses basic functions of common office programs (email, word processor, spreadsheet, calendar)
- Understands and uses basic common functions of the ILS used by the library
- Demonstrates a general understanding of online services used by the library e.g. online catalogue, website, and social media
- Demonstrates comfort in assisting users with the library’s public access computers, peripherals (e.g. printers), devices (e.g. library tablets), and networks (e.g. public Wi-Fi)
- Demonstrates comfort in assisting users with personal portable devices (e.g. smartphones, tablets, e-readers, etc.)
- Understands and uses the internet and can perform basic internet searches
- Understands common security protocols related to internet use (e.g. antivirus, anti-spam, cookies, secure online transactions)

Basic Library Management Competencies

To provide strategic and effective library management, in addition to possessing the basic competencies listed above it is essential that all Library Managers also possess the following basic library management competencies:

- Understands and employs basic budget and finance concepts and terminology
- Establishes strategic financial management processes, using sound financial judgement
- Cultivates a healthy working relationship with the Friends of the Library or other fundraising group, if applicable
- Understands, applies, and explains applicable laws, including the *Libraries Act* and *Libraries Regulation*
- Drafts effective library policy for library board review
- Develops procedures that guide safe, efficient and effective library operations
- Understands the framework for public library service in Alberta
- Builds relationships with other key agents in Alberta's public library sector, including the local library system if applicable, Public Library Services Branch, and other associations and entities
- Cultivates a healthy, mutually empowering relationship with the library board and supports the board's work
- Cultivates a presence and relationship with municipal council
- Cultivates a good working relationship with municipal staff as applicable
- Seeks to expand and deepen other community leaders' awareness and understanding of the public library
- Ensures implementation of the library board's strategic direction outlined in the Plan of Service
- Provides effective leadership of staff
- Plans for and supports staff development
- Contributes to effective decision making regarding library services and programs
- When leading meetings, manages the meeting to optimize information sharing and decision making
- Applies effective change management strategies to assure effective implementation of change and acceptance by stakeholders
- Understands and applies legal standards and requirements for human resources (HR)/personnel management
- With the library board, develops HR policies that support a healthy work environment and meet applicable standards
- Builds a productive workforce through effective recruitment and selection
- Creates an organizational structure that enables a culture of teamwork and exemplary service
- Empowers and supports staff to deliver effective, high quality library service
- Establishes effective strategies for performance management
- Engages staff in coaching conversations
- Applies and models customer service skills to enhance user satisfaction
- Performs ongoing evaluation to help the library board gauge the success of the Plan of Service
- Contributes to the planning efforts of the municipality and other community organizations
- Ensures accurate statistics are kept
- Documents library use in terms of community impact and value
- Forms strategic partnerships with other community organizations

HOURS OF OPENING

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries should be open throughout the year at times the community can make the most effective and convenient use of library services.

Hours of opening are to be determined and implemented based on a community needs assessment and current/anticipated traffic patterns. Based on actual and potential user needs, hours of opening should include evenings and weekends in addition to regular weekdays.

REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for hours of opening appear in section 17(c) of the *Libraries Regulation*. It states:

A public library housed in a school must be open to the public outside of the hours during which the school is in operation for regular classes, including being open during evenings or weekends or both, and during the summer.

This clause ensures that the community has access to the public library outside of school hours and during the summer. For more information see the **School-housed Public Libraries** section of this document.

There are no legislative requirements for hours of opening for stand-alone public libraries or public libraries in joint-use facilities.

BEST PRACTICES

The following are best practices for hours of opening, regardless of the size of population being served:

- Hours of opening are consistent, predictable, and easy for users to understand.
- Library hours are fixed and include a combination of morning, afternoon, evening, and weekend hours, based on assessment of users and potential users.
- Evening hours are hours of opening after 4:00 pm.
- Factors to be considered when assessing hours include:
 - surveys, users' requests
 - book drop usage
 - attendance counts
 - opening hours of neighbouring libraries
- Determining seasonal or summer hours (if applicable), should also consider those factors.
- Hours of opening, once set, are annually reviewed as part of the budgeting and plan of service process and adjusted as needed to take into account changing demographics and circumstances, e.g. the nature of the community is taken into account - young people, families with children, seniors, shift workers, commuters, etc.
- Weekends adjacent to statutory holidays have open hours to allow for access in lieu of being closed for the statutory holiday (if local demand exists).
- Hours of opening are displayed outside service points and posted on the library's website.
- Changes to hours of opening are advertised well in advance.
- The library provides afterhours facilities (book drop) for return of library materials.

- Remote access to library resources (e.g., online library services and resources, including the online catalogue) is available at all times (as license agreements allow).

Mobile Libraries

Mobile library service is provided at times convenient to the needs of the local community, including evenings and weekends. The length of mobile library stops is determined according to the number of potential people to be served. While it is recommended that stops be a minimum of 30 minutes in length, local factors are taken into consideration when determining the locations and lengths of stops. When reporting hours for mobile libraries, the hours of opening are the times spent at a stop where the mobile library is accessible by users. Travelling time between stops is not included.

Recommended Hours per Week

The library board establishes and meets the recommended hours open per week, appropriate for size of population:

Population	Essential	Enhanced	Excellent
0 – 600	15	25	36+
601 – 1,200	20	30	40+
1,201 – 3,000	25	34	44+
3,001 – 5,000	37	45	54+
5,001 – 10,000	43	50	57+
10,001 – 20,000	47	55	63+
20,001 – 40,000	55	59	64+
40,001 – 60,000	57	61	65+
> 60,001	59	62	65+

Recommended Number of Open Weeks

In addition to the recommendations for hours of opening per week, it is recommended that public libraries be open a minimum number of typical weeks throughout the year. A typical week is one with regular scheduled hours of opening. This includes co-located libraries and co-located school-housed public libraries.

Essential: The library is open at least 46 weeks per year, with standard hours that may be seasonally adjusted.

Enhanced: The library is open at least 48 weeks per year with standard hours year-round.

Excellent: The library is open 50 weeks per year, with standard hours appropriate for the size of population served.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Lendable physical collections are an essential core service and collections support many other services. A library collection provides resources to assist individuals in their pursuit of educational, intellectual, and recreational enrichment in their lives. While the collection must maintain a balance of many subjects and perspectives, ultimately the library board is responsible for meeting the needs of the community, as identified in the community needs assessment and Plan of Service.

Collections should incorporate a variety of formats including but not limited to print, audio-visual, and online resources. Library staff should stay aware of emerging formats and add these formats to the collection as appropriate.

Library collections must respond to community needs and demographics (the characteristics of the local population and its subgroups) including consideration of those who do not currently use the library.

Collections should align with the Plan of Service.

Library collections are not static. Materials must be added and removed over time to stay fresh, relevant and appealing.

Libraries share materials between themselves to ensure that all users have the broadest possible access to all content. Libraries should share freely and fully, providing open access to all their collections to ensure that other libraries will provide open access in turn.

In addition to building their own collections, libraries are responsible for enabling users' access to regional and provincial resources provided by systems, PLSB, and others.

REQUIREMENTS

- The *Libraries Act* does not allow Alberta library boards to charge for access to collections. A fee can be charged for a library card, for fines, and for incurred interlibrary loan costs only. Any such fees should be listed in the library board's safety and use bylaw.
- The *Libraries Regulation* requires boards that operate a library service point to establish policies on selection, acquisition, purchase and disposition of library resources including a policy respecting gifts and donations; a policy on resource sharing including participation in the provincial resource sharing network; and a policy on provision of library resources to persons unable to use conventional print resources.
- The provincial government has a *Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries* which libraries must follow to participate in the Public Library Network.

BEST PRACTICES

Build and maintain a quality collection

Consider the following when purchasing materials:

- Plan of Service and the service goals and objectives
- Population demographics including relative numbers of different age groups, incomes, education levels and other factors which influence people's preferences and needs
- Age and size of existing collection

- Collection specialties and priorities
- Demand
- Cultural representation to meet community needs
- Access to other collections in the community and beyond (e.g. at neighboring libraries, through existing electronic resources)
- Membership in collection consortia such as The Regional Automation Consortium (TRAC)

Include the following material types:

- Print materials such as hardcover and paperback fiction including classic, contemporary literary, popular, Canadian, Albertan, genre, and graphic novel titles; non-fiction covering the entire subject range; youth and young adult fiction and non-fiction; and children’s picture books
 - Information in all titles should be current and accurate.
 - Print collections minimum totals (not including periodicals; add 20% for non-print items including electronic):

Population	Essential	Enhanced	Excellent
0 - 600	2,500 items	5,000 items	7,500 items
601 - 1,200	3,000 items	6,000 items	8,000 items
1,201 - 3,000	5,000 or 2.5 items/capita	7,500 or 3 items/capita, whichever is greater	10,000 or 4 items/capita, whichever is greater
3,001 - 5,000	10,000 or 2.5 items/capita	12,500 or 3 items/capita, whichever is greater	15,000 or 3.5 items/capita, whichever is greater
5,001 - 10,000	15,000 or 2.5 items/capita	20,000 or 2.7 items/capita, whichever is greater	25,000 items or 3 items/capita, whichever is greater
10,001 - 20,000	30,000 or 2.2 items/capita	40,000 or 2.5 items/capita, whichever is greater	50,000 or 3 items/capita, whichever is greater
20,000 - 40,000	2 items/capita	2.5 items/capita	3 items/capita
40,001 - 60,000	1.7 items/capita	2.2 items/capita	2.7+ items/capita
>60,000	1.5 items/capita	2 items/capita	2.5+ items/capita

- Audio-visual materials such as movies, TV series, documentaries and non-fiction videos, fiction and nonfiction audiobooks
 - An audio-visual collection should be approximately 0.25 to 0.5 items per capita.
- Periodicals(magazines, and newspapers)
 - A periodical collection should be 0.005 to 0.01 titles per capita for less than 10,000 population served and 0.003 to 0.005 titles per capita for larger populations.
- Large print materials, audiobooks, and other materials for print-disabled users.
- Electronic resources such as ebooks and databases. Regional systems and PLSB provide regional and province-wide collections. Municipal libraries can also select and purchase titles for regional collections if allowed by the platform.
 - Allocate at least 15% of your collections budget to the purchase of e-resources, either by adding materials to a shared platform or purchasing access to a resource for use by your library.
- Include all appropriate media formats and current technology as well as traditional materials.

- Prioritize accessibility when possible (formats for people with print disabilities).
- Include additional materials as required to support service goals, e.g. toys, tools, musical instruments, equipment, and anything else that meets a local need and is appropriate for multiple uses by different people.

House, display, and catalogue collections to maximize their accessibility

- Display materials such that they can be browsed. Effective retail-style display with clear signage will increase circulation and collection use.
- With certain collections, genres or subject areas, choose whether to merge the materials into larger collections or keep them separated. The chosen approach should reflect community preferences and usage patterns. In some cases, e.g. with Indigenous materials, it is important to consult with the stakeholder community.
- Catalogue collections so they can be discovered and located using standard search terms.

Evaluate the collection

- Collection assessment measures can be collection-centered (e.g. collection size compared to other libraries, presence of key titles) or user-centered (e.g. circulation and other use measures). Both types of measures are useful.
- Circulation statistics indicate what collection areas are popular and therefore priorities for future development. Loans per item indicate the overall popularity of the collection.
 - The availability of circulation statistics for e-resources and databases varies based on the vendor and the agency providing the e-resource. Ask for these statistics if they are not directly available to you through the platform.
- User satisfaction can be measured via user feedback, e.g. surveys.

Remove items from the collection in a planned and appropriate manner

- Weeding is an essential part of collection management. A large collection is not necessarily a good collection.
 - To make the task manageable, divide the collection into sections and establish a regular weeding schedule.
 - Discard materials that are damaged, unnecessary or outdated.
 - Take age, frequency of use and physical condition of materials into account when weeding.
 - Weed as materials are circulated. Train and authorize staff to do this on an ongoing basis.
 - Weed electronic collections based on currency and frequency of use, based on available circulation statistics. Your ability to weed these collections may be limited, but weed as much as is allowed by the platform.
- Approximately 10% of the collection should be weeded each year.
 - Regularly review circulation statistics for e-resources where available. Weed low-circulating and out-of-date e-resources as much as is allowed by the platform and provider.
- The entire collection should be reviewed and weeded every three to five years.
- Archival collections such as local history require a different approach. Some materials that would otherwise be weeded may need to be retained because they have unique local value or because they are part of an archive that is being deliberately preserved.

- Prepare for challenges to materials by having policy and procedures including a challenged material form and by training front line staff as necessary. Defend intellectual freedom while being aware of legal limits, e.g. obscenity and hate speech.

PLSB SUPPORT

A sample collections policy, which is required under the *Libraries Regulation*, can be found on PLSB's website or in our document [*Policies and Bylaws: A Guide for Alberta Public Library Boards*](#).

RESOURCES

- Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries: <http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/statement-on-intellectual-freedom-and-libraries/>
- Intellectual Freedom: What You Need to Know – brochure by the Library Association of Alberta: <http://www.laa.memlink.org/IFBrochure%202003-edits%202010.doc>
- Library Association of Alberta's Statement of Intellectual Freedom: <http://www.laa.ca/docs/HB412.doc>

INFORMATION SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Information service is a process by which trained library staff fulfill the information needs of their users by accurately identifying what information and/or resources are required and providing it or referring the user to the most appropriate source. Library staff serves as the link between users and resources.

The core activities associated with information services are:

- provision of information (sometimes referred to as Reference Service);
- guidance in choosing materials appropriate to a user's needs (sometimes referred to as Readers' Advisory); and
- instruction in the effective use of information (known today as Information Literacy).

Information service remains invaluable as libraries' long-standing role in helping people understand how to find and, more importantly, evaluate information has become more crucial. In taking a proactive approach to helping users take a critical and informed approach to what they read, see and hear, libraries make a unique and necessary contribution to society.

According to the American Library Association, "[t]o be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. The information literate individuals are those who have learned how to learn" (ALA, 1989).

Technology is a valuable tool in providing information service, but cannot solve the problems of information overload and misinformation. Indeed, rapid technological advances can exacerbate these issues. In the face of information overload and misinformation, information literacy is a vital skill that public library staff and boards play a role in supporting and fostering. This means supporting users in acquiring and practicing information competencies and critical thinking skills (i.e., the ability to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals.)

Information service relies on intellectual freedom. Library boards endorse principles of intellectual freedom as expressed in such documents as the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' [Statement of Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#).

REQUIREMENTS

Under section 36(3) of the *Libraries Act*, library boards cannot charge members of the public a fee for:

- using library resources on-site;
- consulting with library staff; or
- receiving basic information service.

BEST PRACTICES

- Information service is personal and confidential.
- Users of all ages, abilities and education are able to receive information services, and are supplied resources in appropriate formats.
- Information and resources provided to users in response to queries are accurate and obtained from sources that meet professional standards of authority and timeliness.

- Library staff has sufficient training to know how to access and verify credible authoritative information sources.
- Staff partakes in all available training from library system and/or utilizes training resources from e-resource vendors
- Staff attends conferences/workshops to acquire and/or refresh training in areas of:
 - reference service delivery;
 - readers' advisory;
 - library instruction for all ages and abilities; and
 - supporting information literacy for all users.
- Boards and staff work to deliver services that help to shrink the “digital divide.” This is done by:
 - enabling access to technology by all users, regardless of age, education or ability;
 - providing sufficient support, including equipment and staff, so that individuals can use the internet and gain digital skills; and
 - addressing gaps in access to digital tools and skills through programming.
- Public library service supports users' civic engagement, including the ability to access and participate in e-government.

Essential	Enhanced All of Essential plus:	Excellent All of Enhanced plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information services to users of all ages and levels of literacy in person and by telephone during open hours • clarify requests for information by using appropriate questioning/interviewing techniques • provide information services to users with disabilities in formats they can use • answer requests for information or initiate a referral within one working day • provide users with basic training on the effective use of technologies necessary to access electronic and other non-print resources (licensed or otherwise) • provide users with basic instruction on the use of the online library catalogue • communicate basic principles of digital and information literacy and incorporate these principles into existing information service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information services to users of all ages and levels of literacy by other appropriate virtual means during open hours • answer complex requests for information • provide users with advanced instruction on the use of the online library catalogue • prepare information guides to inform users about the availability of resources on a specific topic or issue • maintain a social media presence that actively engages library users and non-users • incorporate digital and information literacy principles into existing programming and user instruction • cooperate with other agencies in the community to provide up to date community information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer research questions • provide staff trained in reference work, including reference work with children • provide users with advanced training on the effective use of technologies necessary to access electronic or other non-print resources (licensed or otherwise) • provide users with training in digital and information literacy • assist users in using resources available in makerspaces

RESOURCES

- Future of Truth and Misinformation Online:
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2017/10/19/the-future-of-truth-and-misinformation-online>
- CFLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries:
<http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/statement-on-intellectual-freedom-and-libraries>
- The Knight Commission on Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy:
<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/communications-and-society-program/the-knight-commission-on-information-needs-of-communities-in-a-democracy>
- *Guidelines on Information Literacy for Lifelong Learning*:
<https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/information-literacy/publications/ifla-guidelines-en.pdf>
- *Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report*:
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/presidential>

RESOURCE SHARING INCLUDING INTERLIBRARY LOAN

INTRODUCTION

Resource sharing is the lending of local library resources to users of other public libraries. Resource sharing means making available to other libraries the library resources owned by a board, the information contained in those resources, and the staff expertise required to locate and make available the information or the library resources.

Resource sharing strengthens public library service to Albertans by increasing the range of materials available for borrowing. Effective resource sharing must be reciprocal, with each library providing the same level of access to their collections. Users must be able to find and request items, and libraries must be able to administer requests, delivery, tracking, and returns of items effectively. The *Provincial Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries* establishes processes and rules which enforce reciprocity and make effective, consistent workflow and systems possible. Alberta public libraries, regardless of their size, are expected to participate in resource sharing by abiding by the terms set out in the operational policy.

Interlibrary loan is one mechanism used by libraries to fulfill their resource sharing mandates. Interlibrary loan means the lending of local library material to any library outside the municipal library, including within a library system or consortium and to libraries in other library systems.

REQUIREMENTS

The Government of Alberta supports resource sharing between network participants to enable equitable access for Albertans. This is outlined in the *Provincial Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries*. The following applies to public libraries that participate in the resource sharing network:

1. Network participants will share library resources through an organized system coordinated by PLSB in cooperation with the Nodes, as designated in the *Public Library Network Policy*.
2. Network participants are obligated to lend resources at the level defined in the operational guidelines, ensuring reciprocity.
3. Library cards issued by non-network participants are not eligible for resource sharing through the Public Library Network.
4. Albertans have access to resources provided by Alberta public libraries through the network at no additional charge.
5. The local public library has primary responsibility for developing and providing a local library resource collection to meet community needs. Resource sharing, including interlibrary loan service, is supplementary and is not meant to substitute for the local collection.
6. Albertans holding a public library card may borrow on-site from any public library participating in the network through Alberta-Wide Borrowing.

As per the *Libraries Regulation*, local public library boards are required to create and implement local policy on Resource Sharing. The policy must include a statement on participation in the Public Library Network and the conditions that apply to library resources and information acquired from other libraries.

BEST PRACTICES

To provide equitable access to resources and to participate in the Alberta resource sharing network, it is essential that libraries:

- Ensure mutual respect and trust with lending libraries by following the policies of the lending library.
- Consider interlibrary loan between libraries as a mutual relationship.
- Process interlibrary loan requests as quickly as possible.
- Provide loan periods that are sufficient to allow for travel time, special circumstances, etc.
- Make library resources available as defined in the Resource Sharing Operational Policy.
- Check for interlibrary loan requests every open day.
- Exhaust local or library system resources before using the resource sharing network.
- Provide users with the ability to place interlibrary loan requests.
- Provide interlibrary loan services without charge to other libraries within Alberta, and without charge to the users.
- Treat interlibrary loan requests as confidential.
- Provide staff expertise, training, equipment, and resources to promote and support this service.
- Ensure staff members follow resource sharing procedures, guidelines, and policies.
- Track interlibrary loan requests for purposes of collection development.
- Track resource sharing statistics.
- Maintain working knowledge of resource sharing tools and interlibrary loan software.
- Treat Alberta-Wide Borrowing with the same consideration as local users.

PLSB SUPPORT

PLSB provides support for provincial interlibrary loan software, which is used by public libraries and library users to discover, borrow, and share material. PLSB developed and maintains the *Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries* and the *Public Library Network Policy*.

- *Public Library Network Policy*:
<http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/libraries/2012networkpolicyfin66118.pdf>
- *Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries*:
http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/libraries/2015_Resource_Sharing_Policy.pdf

ACCESSIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Accessibility in public libraries means ensuring access to the library, the library's collection, and the library's staff for the entire community. Public libraries have an essential responsibility to serve everyone in their community. This includes those facing physical and other barriers. Creating accessible spaces, resources, and attitudes helps ensure that all members of a community have access to the entirety of what the public library offers.

REQUIREMENTS

The Government of Alberta developed the *Library Service for People with Print Disabilities Policy for Public Libraries*. It states:

Libraries have a fundamental responsibility to provide equitable access to library collections, resources, and facilities. All facets of library service should be made available to every community member. The Alberta Public Library Network aims to support public libraries in the provision of equitable access to library resources for all Albertans.

Equitable access to public libraries for people with print disabilities includes:

- Facilitating engagement and full participation in library services and resources for all people in the community, including those unable to use conventional print
- Creating and adhering to policies that ensure the library is meeting the needs of all people in the community, including those unable to use conventional print
- Collecting and making available material in alternate/accessible formats

As per the *Libraries Regulation*, local public library boards are required to create and implement local policy on *Provision of Resources for Those Unable to use Conventional Print*.

Other policies that library boards may consider implementing include:

- Anti-discrimination
- Service accommodation
- Accessible information
- Accessible customer service training
- Use of guide dogs, service animals, and support persons
- Assistive technology, equipment, and devices
- Accessible communication

BEST PRACTICES

Library collections contain accessible-format material

A print or perceptual disability is defined in Section 2 of the *Copyright Act* as:

a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes such a disability resulting from:

- severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus one's eyes,
- the inability to hold or manipulate a book, or
- an impairment relating to comprehension.

To meet the needs of the community members with print disabilities, libraries:

- have a collection development policy that includes a commitment to procure accessible-format material, either directly or through a service provider such as the National Network for Equitable Library Service ([NNELS](#)) or the Centre for Equitable Library Service ([CELA](#));
- secure resources (both physical and virtual) for a variety of reading preferences, ensuring options and choice for readers, including access to large print, braille, audiobooks, DAISY books, electronic files in multiple of formats for user download;
- ensure that procurement of any electronic resources considers usability for people using assistive technology;
- allow self-declaration of a perceptual disability or print disability as sufficient for users who want to access the library's accessible-format collection.

Library programs and meetings commit to being inclusive

To make sure that libraries are able to make accommodations for all program participants, library boards include options for accommodation on program registration forms. (See Appendix A for a sample accommodations checklist).

In addition to helping the library plan its program, an accommodations checklist is also a welcome message. It tells people “we’ve thought about this; we want everyone to be able to participate in library programs.”

Some basic questions for reflection when developing programs and services:

1. Can all users access and engage in the program?
2. What strategies exist to ensure all users are included?
3. What strategies exist to eliminate barriers that might segregate or stigmatize a user?

Library spaces are barrier-free

Library spaces are accessible, barrier-free, and welcoming. Some considerations for attaining a welcoming and barrier-free space:

- Conduct an accessibility audit or have an expert conduct an audit of the library space. There are some disability organizations that will conduct an accessibility audit. For example, the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities will conduct [accessibility assessments](#) for organizations.
- Consider the [7 principles of Universal Design](#) when evaluating, re-organizing, or renovating the library space.
- List the physical accessibility features of the library building on a library website. This helps users decide whether or not the building can meet their needs.
- When not occupied, a library meeting or programming room can be made available to persons whose sensory needs require a lower level of stimulation.

Library communication and documents are accessible

All library communications and documents are made considering that people read in a variety of ways:

- Use the Accessibility Checker in Word and Power Point to ensure that all documents are accessible for screen readers.
- Use headings and image descriptions in all document.
- When converting a document to a pdf, use “save as pdf” rather than “print to pdf.” This will ensure that the document maintains the navigational features.

- Consider using person-first language. Person-first language emphasizes the person rather than the disability. Language is important. For example: use “people with disabilities” instead of “the disabled.”
- Communicate in a wide variety of formats: print, email, audio.
- Use the library card registration as an opportunity to be inclusive. This is a chance for users to learn about the library’s accessible-format collection. Consider including a section about print disabilities and an option for self-declaration. (See Appendix B)
- Written documents comply with the CNIB’s [Clear Print Guidelines](#).
- The library’s website is accessible and complies with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG). For online accessibility checkers, see the [Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools List](#).
- When assessing accessibility compliance, include consultation with and feedback from people with disabilities.

Library staff are properly trained in accessibility

Staff members are often the first point of contact for users entering the library. All staff should have some training in both accessibility principles and resources. Library boards ensure that:

- Library staff are familiar with the [7 Principles of Universal Design](#).
- Library staff have taken disability awareness training.
- All staff are trained in using the accessible resources and devices that the library offers.
- A staff member is appointed the accessibility advocate for the library. This is someone who cares about accessibility, sees things through the “accessibility lens,” and who is willing to be trained and be an inclusivity advocate.
- Board members are invited and encouraged to participate in disability awareness training.

Communities are consulted and involved

When making decisions, always consult the user-group communities. “Nothing about us without us!” is a common refrain that encapsulates the sentiment of many people with disabilities. When designing library space, when creating programs, when purchasing resources, consult those who will be using them. Look for disability interest organizations in the community and be in regular contact with them. Library boards and staff should include people with disabilities in all community outreach initiatives, such as the community needs assessment process for the library’s Plan of Service.

PLSB SUPPORT

PLSB supports Alberta public library access to the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) and to the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA). PLSB also developed and maintains the *Library Service for People with Print Disabilities Operational Policy for Public Libraries*.

- Alberta Public Library Service for People with Print Disabilities Symposium Report: http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/libraries/Symposium_Report.pdf
- NNELS and CELA:
<https://nnels.ca/>
<http://celalibrary.ca>
- PLSB *Library Service for People with Print Disabilities Operational Policy for Public Libraries*: http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/libraries/2015_Library_Resources_for_People_with_Print_Disabilities_Operational_Policy.pdf

RESOURCES

- 7 principles of Universal Design: <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/>
- CFLA Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities: <http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/guidelines-on-library-and-information-services-for-people-with-disabilities/>
- CNIB's *Clear Print Guidelines*:
<http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/resources/Clearprint/Documents/CNIB%20Clear%20Print%20Guide.pdf>
- Manitoba PLSB: *Universal Access: Customer Service Toolkit*:
<https://digitalcollection.gov.mb.ca/awweb/pdfopener?smd=1&did=25331&md=1>
- Online Accessibility checkers: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/>
- Voice of Albertans with Disabilities: <http://vadsociety.ca/>
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG): <http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php>

APPENDIX A: Library Program Accommodations Checklist

Please check (✓) any support or other accommodations that you may require:

- Braille
- Large Print
- Visual Language Interpreter
- Mobility Needs
- Dexterity Needs
- Computerized Note Taker
- I will be bringing a Personal Attendant
- Other: _____

Information gathered will be used to source available accommodations.

APPENDIX B: Self-Declaration of a Print Disability

A perceptual or print disability is a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes such a disability resulting from:

- severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus one's eyes,
- the inability to hold or manipulate a book, or
- an impairment relating to comprehension.

SELF-DECLARATION

- I certify that I am a person with a perceptual disability based on the provided definition. I understand that the library reserves the right to ask for verification from a competent authority at any time.
- Restricted material is for my personal use only. I will not copy, share or redistribute restricted materials.

INDIGENOUS SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the Alberta Government implemented provision of funding to six regional library systems and three of the large urban libraries to align with the principles and objectives of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This funding creates equitable library access for individuals living in Indigenous on-reserve and on-settlement communities throughout Alberta and serves to eliminate non-resident fees for these citizens. Further to this, the provincial and federal governments have accepted and endorsed UNDRIP. The best practices for service to Indigenous people and communities listed within this document build on fundamental library services provided at all public libraries.

Libraries are founded on the principles of equitable access, intellectual freedom, privacy, and information ethics. Providing service to **all** citizens, regardless of residence serves to fulfill these principles.

REQUIREMENTS

This initiative allows on-reserve and on-settlement library users access to the municipal libraries of municipalities that are members of the library system, and to all the services provided by the Province through the Public Library Network. Library users must be treated by the library board as local residents and will need to acquire a home library card and will be subject to local/municipal card fees if applicable.

In addition, citizens from on-reserve and on-settlement communities may go to any Alberta public library to obtain library cards.

BEST PRACTICES

The best practices noted below are predicated on relationships with Indigenous individuals and organizations that are established and nurtured. In addition to this, library boards can help fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, specifically: 5, 7, 13, 14, 43, 57, 66, 69, 70, 73, 77, and 83 (see Appendix).

Library boards may wish to **endorse** the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), as well as the *Canadian Federation of Libraries Association Truth and Reconciliation Committee Report and Recommendations* (CFLA-FCAB TRC).

Library boards are encouraged to **adopt a formal statement** acknowledging the Treaty and land on which the library is located, for use on websites and for use in meetings. Templates for land recognition can be found on page 86 of the CFLA-FCAB TRC Report and Recommendations (See Resources).

Partnerships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations (for example, Friendship Centres, Parent Link, etc.), groups, and schools are encouraged to create appropriate historical and cultural programming and services. Current matters of concern to Indigenous people should also be considered for programs and services, such as health issues, land claims, employment and educational gaps, parenting programs, criminal justice system, etc.

More information about engaging with Indigenous communities can be found in the Indigenous Canada MOOC Library Toolkit. Suggestions for Traditional Territory Acknowledgement are found on page 86 of the CFLA TRC document.

Understand and respect Indigenous culture

- From an Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) standpoint, relationships are the foundations of heritage, history, culture, teaching, consultation, and decision making. These relationships are built through commitment and trust, are generally face-to-face and often in consultation with Elders.
- Diversity amongst Indigenous persons and a variety of life experiences are understood and respected.
- Flexibility, cultural values and the related practices are accepted and respected by the library board providing library services to these populations.

Consult with Indigenous communities

Indigenous community members are consulted in the Plan of Service process. The process is community driven to ensure relevant, accessible, and inclusive services. This includes Indigenous people living in municipalities and on-reserve, on-settlement populations, where applicable.

Something to consider: Libraries may not be considered a priority for Indigenous communities and leaders. It is recommended that library boards work to provide materials and services to allow communities to address their own priorities. This process allows libraries to address the priorities and needs of Indigenous communities.

Promote Indigenous representation of board, staff and volunteers

- **Equity:** Staff, volunteers, and boards are reflective of the communities they serve. Library boards ensure the percentage of Indigenous persons in these positions is proportionate to the percentage of Indigenous populations in or within the service area to the community.

Library boards develop inclusive hiring practices and create deliberate and targeted strategies to encourage Indigenous applicants in advertised positions (both as employees and board members). Recruitment and retention strategies are adopted for Indigenous projects, programming, and student employees. Boards may also wish to create an ex-officio position for local Elders, or invite Elders to open meetings.

Ensure that all staff are well trained

- **Professional development:** Public library systems and urban libraries are encouraged to provide Indigenous cultural awareness and sensitivity training to board and all library volunteers.

It is essential that staff are well trained, knowledgeable, and welcoming. Supports for awareness and education are in place and include training on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, colonization, Treaties, Indigenous Crown-relations, Indigenous law, residential schools, the sixties scoop, human rights, conflict resolution, anti-racism, awareness of the impacts of trauma, as well as other history and cultural training. Training is part of a library's continuing education strategy. Online training (such as the Indigenous Canada MOOC – see Resources) is available to library staff in areas where face to face training is challenging.

- **Offer educational opportunities for Indigenous community members:** Library boards are encouraged to also develop internships, resume building and job training skill workshops and scholarships for Indigenous persons when possible.

Ensure that the collection is inclusive and policies are in place

- **Inclusion and diversity:** Library boards are encouraged to seek guidance from Indigenous communities with regard to cultural protocols and respect to the access and maintenance of culturally sensitive materials and knowledge. The preservation and revitalization of Indigenous culture and language is important; therefore, it is encouraged to have local and appropriate language materials when possible.
- **Reconciliation:** Public libraries support reconciliation by providing resources that share the concerns, issues and history of Indigenous people for all people to access.
- **Formats:** It is important to recognize Indigenous views on Indigenous culture and history. Print may not hold the same importance for Indigenous communities as for other communities. Rather, sharing is traditionally done through oral stories, dance, songs, anecdotes, hereditary names, place names, and other ways of Indigenous knowing. Indigenous literacies, knowledge, learning, and cultures are historically embedded within story-telling, interpersonal relationship, and shared activity. Formats in print may not hold the same importance as with other communities.
- **Collection:** The collection includes materials in Indigenous languages, in syllabics, oral recordings of Indigenous history and, with permission, stories shared by Elders.
- **Policy:** A collection management policy which integrates Indigenous knowledge is encouraged. Appropriate and updated subject headings in cataloguing are used. A deselection (weeding) system within the collection management policy should be embedded, which recognizes inaccuracies and cultural appropriation.

Information service to all library users is important

Library boards understand that Indigenous communities often have complex information needs. These may range from protection and revival of Indigenous languages and culture, Indigenous rights, and self-determination and governance. They may also include access to popular materials. These necessitate layered services. Libraries should serve to propagate Indigenous knowledge protection and as cultural memory institutions in conjunction with community. Public libraries should work with Indigenous communities to enhance and promote literacy initiatives amongst Indigenous people.

As all Canadians, particularly Indigenous Canadians have the right to know the truth about Indigenous history, concerns and issues, including what is known as the “Sixties scoop” and residential schooling, appropriate and factual information sources shall be made available to all community members.

If local training is unavailable, there are many legitimate, online training opportunities, such as the Indigenous Canada MOOC, with library toolkit available.

Ensure access to resource sharing including interlibrary loan

- **Equitable access and inclusivity:** access of the full range of services must be equal, including those who live on reserve or on settlements.
- **Resource sharing:** Library service to Indigenous peoples is strengthened through resource-sharing and partnerships. If collections in a local library are not sufficient to meet the needs of the Indigenous population, access to borrowing and sharing materials must be promoted and partnerships should be considered.

Ensure access to technology

All communication and information technologies must be made available to Indigenous community members, including access to public internet.

Efforts should be made to include links to community-specific Indigenous history, culture, and language learning on library websites and in public access catalogues. Indigenous translations of websites should be made available when possible.

Projects undertaking digitizing Indigenous knowledge should have Indigenous input and control when using and accessing these materials.

Open hours should be flexible

Library hours should be flexible to accommodate the needs of adult users (particularly in school-housed public libraries). Flexibility with open hours, programming, and outreach timelines is also important when dealing with cultural protocols for events.

Strive to have welcoming, inclusive facilities and to decolonize space

Space, resources, and facilities to enable public, dialogue, partnerships and initiatives to consider for reconciliation are encouraged. To ensure that the library is as welcoming as possible, some steps for decolonizing space in libraries are (but are not limited to):

- display signage in local Indigenous languages (including translations);
- dedicate space in the library for Indigenous knowledge transmission and learning, programming, and general gatherings;
- display Indigenous art and crafts, authors, and other Indigenous materials;
- play Indigenous music in the library (i.e. Pow wow music, Métis fiddle music);
- place appropriate Treaty Flags and Métis Nation Flags alongside Canadian and Albertan flags;
- have suggestion boxes to encourage ideas on creating a more welcoming space;
- consultation with Indigenous stakeholders during renovations or construction projects to better incorporate Indigenous designs where appropriate.

Implement programming in the library

Indigenous ways of knowing include land-based education, which should be considered when implementing programming, exploring library spaces as well as with collection development considerations. Culturally relevant workshops in information literacy, cultural story times in an Indigenous language when appropriate, having Elders or Indigenous storytellers and speakers at library functions are recommended.

Ongoing efforts should be made

Continue with efforts to encourage discussion, understanding, and collaboration between non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities.

PLSB SUPPORT

- In addition to annual per-capita grant support, PLSB has hosted a symposium on library services to Indigenous communities. Information can be found here:
<http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/public-library-service-symposia-2017>

- PLSB hosts a webpage with information about Indigenous services: <http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/public-library-service-indigenous-services>
- Many locally published Indigenous materials can be found in the Read Alberta ebook platform: <http://bookpublishers.ab.ca/programs/read-alberta-ebooks-project/>
- Support to and working with Edmonton Public Library to build out “Voices of Amiskwaciy,” as a province-wide digital story-sharing platform: <https://voicesofamiskwaciy.ca/>

RESOURCES

- The Canadian Federation of Library Associations Truth and Reconciliation Report and Recommendations can be found here: https://librarianship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CFLA_TRC_Report.pdf
- Indigenous Canada Massive Online Open Course Library Toolkit: http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/indigenous_canada_mooc/
- The Alberta Library hosts a database called Indigenous Peoples of North America. It can be found here: http://gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/artemis?p=INDP&u=alberta_portal
- Truth and Reconciliation Canada. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Retrieved from: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf
- The United Nations General Assembly. (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

APPENDIX: TRC Calls to Action that Libraries can Endorse and Implement

5. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

13. We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

14. We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

- i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
- ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.
- iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.
- iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.
- v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

66. We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.

69. We call upon Library and Archives Canada to:

- i. Fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joint-Orontlicher Peoples*, as related to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in residential schools.
- ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public
- iii. Commit more resources to its public education material and programming on residential schools.

70. We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a nation review of archival policies and best practices to:

- i. Determine the level of compliance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and the *United Nations Joint-Orontlicher Principles*, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in residential schools.
- ii. Produce a report with recommendations for full implementation of these international mechanisms as a reconciliation framework for Canadian Archives.

73. We call upon the federal government to work with churches, Aboriginal communities, and former residential school students to establish and maintain an online registry of residential school cemeteries, including, where possible, plot maps showing the location of deceased residential school children.

77. We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

83. We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Technology is a tool that helps provide public library service. This can include direct service to the community (such as access to the library's collections, resources available on the internet, or technology devices available in the library) or support for the core functions of the library such as cataloguing the collections to facilitate discovery, checking loans in and out, and communicating with users, service providers, and vendors. Adoption and development of technological resources should fulfill specific needs and service principles, as opposed to implementing new technology tools for progress' sake alone.

Technology is as important to the delivery of public library services as the library building. It is a basic part of the library's infrastructure and should be integrated at all levels of library organization.

Technology is a tool that facilitates and enhances access to information and resources both within the library and remotely. It is an ever-evolving area of development and thus requires a progressive and proactive, yet balanced, approach to planning. It should complement and not compromise other important areas of public library service delivery.

In order for users to derive maximum benefit using technology tools provided in the public library, boards must:

- budget appropriately when making technology expenditures;
- develop a robust technology policy framework to enable sound decision-making;
- provide sufficient support for staff and users, including training; and
- continuously evaluate the use and impact of technology use in the library to inform future choices.

Library boards that fail to sustain a dependable technology infrastructure or do not adapt to evolving technologies will find themselves ill equipped to serve the community effectively and, possibly, increasingly irrelevant to those users they wish to serve.

Library boards should recognize that users' technology needs vary widely. Some users may not have access to the internet or even a computer at home. Others may conduct all their library business using only their mobile device. Some may be very tech-savvy users who may have expertise to share with other library users. Others may have very limited technology skills. Boards should strive to meet these diverse needs as much as possible.

For libraries participating in a library system, the system will provide much of the following technological resources and expertise. Boards should consult with system staff required to make appropriate technology decisions that will maximize the benefits of system and network participation.

REQUIREMENTS

Technology standards are set or determined as per the provincial *Public Library Network Policy* and its associated operational policies (see below). Further, all library boards must comply with the *Libraries Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)* in removing past usage and internet histories on public stations, and protecting all user information.

Library boards must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the *SuperNet Operational Policy for Public Library Services Branch* in order to receive SuperNet support. (For instance, school-housed public libraries must have a dedicated SuperNet connection separate from the school's connection).

Library boards that are Network Participants under the Public Library Network policy must participate in the resource-sharing network as per the *Resource Sharing Operational Policy for Public Libraries*.

BEST PRACTICES

It is imperative to the strength of the Public Library Network that library boards consider network compatibility when making technology decisions for their library service delivery. The Public Library Network Nodes identified in the Public Library Network Policy are the primary means by which public libraries access and utilize the Public Library Network. Thus, it is essential that boards consult with their network node/library system before making any purchases or implementing any new technology.

Infrastructure, including equipment (public & staff), connectivity, and network			
Population	Essential	Enhanced All of Essential plus:	Excellent All of Enhanced plus:
Up to 1,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 public access computer with virus protection • 1 staff workstation • Printer/copier/scanner for public use • SuperNet connectivity as per provincial policy • High-speed broadband internet access • Free public internet access during all library open hours • Free public Wi-Fi during all library open hours • Productivity software for public use • Staff email with qualified domain name • Phone service with voicemail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 public access computers • 1 staff workstation/FTE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 staff workstations • Free public Wi-Fi both during and after library opening hours • Provision of assistive technologies

<p>1,201 – 3,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 public access computers • 1 staff workstation • Printer/copier/scanner for public use • SuperNet connectivity as per provincial policy • High-speed broadband internet access • Free public internet access during all library open hours • Free public Wi-Fi during all library open hours • Productivity software for public use • Staff email with qualified domain name • Phone service with voicemail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 3 public access computers • 1 staff workstation/FTE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 3 staff workstations • Free public Wi-Fi both during and after library opening hours • Provision of assistive technologies
<p>3,001 – 5,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 public access computers • 2 staff workstations • Printer/copier/scanner for public use • SuperNet connectivity as per provincial policy • High-speed broadband internet access • Free public internet access during all library open hours • Free public Wi-Fi during all library open hours • Productivity software for public use • Staff email with qualified domain name • Phone service with voicemail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 public access computers +1 computer per 3,000 population • 1 staff workstation/FTE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 public access computers + 1 computer per 2,000 population • Free public Wi-Fi both during and after library opening hours • Provision of assistive technologies

<p>Over 5,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 public access computers + 1 computer per 5,000 population • 1 staff workstation/FTE • Printer/copier/scanner for public use • SuperNet connectivity as per provincial policy • High-speed broadband internet access • Free public internet access during all library open hours • Free public Wi-Fi during all library open hours • Productivity software for public use • Staff email with qualified domain name • Phone service with voicemail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 public access computers +1 computer per 3,000 population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 public access computers +1 computer per 2,000 population • Free public Wi-Fi both during and after library opening hours • Provision of assistive technologies • Content creation software for public use
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Management			
	Essential	Enhanced All of Essential plus:	Excellent All of Enhanced plus:
Policies and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptable use policy • Privacy policy • Security policy • Disaster recovery & business continuity plan • Long range technology plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destruction and removal policies • Asset inventory management • Evergreening plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging tech policy and/or plan
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained staff on site to support daily operations • Access to technology staff trained to install and support computer hardware and software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site staff trained on basic network maintenance and support • IT workshops and training session provided for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated staff person with formal training in information technology to manage the library's network, including all hardware and software • Job descriptions for staff include technology competencies
Support & security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure public access computing environment with appropriate security measure including: • Firewalls • Authentication provision • Spam-blocker • Anti-virus protection • Protocol to ensure critical updates & patches are regularly installed on operating systems and software • Computers configured to maximize user privacy while minimizing "hackability" • Data backup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate (physical or virtually) staff and public network traffic • Secure socket layer (SSL) • Library-specific security best-practices plan that is followed at all times (developed where necessary in conjunction with associated library system) 	

Library Resource Access		
Essential	Enhanced All of Essential plus:	Excellent All of Enhanced plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library website • Web-based public catalogue • Access to available provincial suite of e-resources • Access to available regional suite of e-resources • Appropriate library software for staff use (i.e., resource sharing, ILS) • Remote user access to online library resources 24/7 (as license agreements allow) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based ILS access with responsive design or mobile-friendly app • User support and/or training in the use of available e-resources • Library website with responsive design or mobile-friendly app • RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-check

Planning

Public library boards need to have a technology plan tied to budget that includes hardware, software, and training. The plan will include statements about authorized software, licenses, authorized use, and a yearly review of hardware and software. Boards also need to have computer/network use policies in place to govern user use of in-house technology as well as the available public network and internet access.

When purchasing equipment, setting up network configurations, or deciding on placement of equipment, public library boards are strongly encouraged to involve their node partner or library system staff. Library systems will help member libraries purchase equipment that meets existing industry standards as well as SuperNet connectivity requirements. Library system staff will also suggest compatible equipment for reliable and stable Internet connectivity

Boards need to collect data about things such as website usage, usage of equipment, and e-resource circulation. This data reflects library use beyond the traditional borrowing of materials and answering of reference questions.

PLSB SUPPORT

Public Library Services Branch supports the infrastructure that underlies the Public Library Network by paying for SuperNet connectivity for eligible Network Participants.

PLSB also provides 100% funding for the provincial resource-sharing software and provides funding for a province-wide library catalog.

PLSB funds a suite of e-resources available province-wide for all library users to access. The suite includes (but may not be limited to): ebook content, online magazines, newspapers, and language learning resources.

FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

This section deals with the building or buildings that house the library and library services, and the furnishings within (shelving, seating, etc.) Equipment such as computers used by staff and library users is not included.

Library services are often delivered offsite or digitally, but the library building is still essential. The library building itself is a form of library service, a neutral public space that houses library collections and services as well as community activities.

- The library is a safe, neutral, open “third space.” The library is typically the best example in the community of an interior space that is non-commercial, open to all, and free of ideology or expectations.
- Libraries are a social gathering space and community hub, a role which is increasingly important and relevant.
- Libraries are often located in visible, accessible locations in a community.
- Physical collections, such as books, require space as do many newer services (such as makerspaces).

Library space needs to be flexible and adaptable to meet different needs. Good library facilities will securely house library resources, enable quality library services, provide users with common space where they can see and interact with their fellow citizens, support solitary library use such as reading and studying, provide children with rich and engaging learning opportunities, enable local library services, and support the needs of staff.

Public library facilities share some common characteristics (e.g. they are all public buildings, they generally require high floor load capacity to accommodate heavy shelving) but different library services have different requirements. A library must therefore be planned and built to fit the local situation.

Library services, and therefore library facilities, must respond to local needs as determined by community needs assessment and as defined in the library’s mission statement, service goals and Plan of Service. The board must give consideration in its planning to how library users actually use the space.

To ensure equitable access, the library building must accommodate people with disabilities (including mobility challenges).

Public and staff safety is a priority. The building, location, and interior/exterior design should consider public and staff safety.

REQUIREMENTS

Library buildings must conform to legislative regulations for public buildings and for workplaces.

If there are meeting rooms in the library, there must be a policy defining terms of public use, as per section 7(2) of the *Libraries Regulation*.

Under section 36 of the *Libraries Act*, library boards may pass bylaws for the safety and use of the library. Fibre optic connectivity including wiring to building and facilities within the building as per the *SuperNet*

Operational Policy for Public Library Services Branch is required for participation in the Public Library Network.

As per section 17(a) of the *Libraries Regulation*, library boards operating libraries housed in schools are required to have an agreement in place. See the **School-Housed Public Libraries** section for more information.

BEST PRACTICES

- Site the library to maximize presence and accessibility.
- Library architecture should balance the formality of a civic building with the informality of an inclusive community setting.
- Building design should contribute to the dignity of each user and promote a diverse yet interconnected community. Aesthetics, usability, opportunities for social connection and individual privacy, personal autonomy, and the overall user experience are significant factors of success.
- Building design should promote health and comfort by considering environmental conditions including light, acoustics, movement and ergonomics.
 - Building temperatures of 20°Celsius to 21°Celsius during heating and 23 to 25 during cooling balance comfort and efficiency.
 - Temperature of 22°Celsius and relative humidity of 45% are optimal for people, collections and equipment.
- Include natural lighting and window views. Natural lighting complements artificial lighting and contributes to a sense of wellness. Window views make spaces more pleasant, connect the library to the larger community and allow informal monitoring of exterior spaces such as parking lots.
 - Windows, particularly low windows, can interfere with shelving layouts. High windows reduce this conflict and provide natural lighting, but do not provide views.
 - Direct sunlight can be damaging to materials, can be harsh in some situations and can make adjoining spaces look relatively dark.
- Different services, e.g. children’s programming and academic study areas, can have contradictory acoustical needs. Acoustically isolate higher noise activities if quiet is required for other services.
- Pick or design furniture and fittings that are ergonomic and that accommodate the physical diversity of users.
- Windows that open may improve air quality and user satisfaction. Opening windows may also create challenges.
- Architecture should provide an easily understandable layout of functional spaces. Public space should be designed with a clear, sequential path leading to all public areas, allowing for continuous movement without the need to retrace one’s steps. The building should have sufficient capacity to allow visitors to circulate freely.
 - Library shelving creates heavy floor loads and shelving areas are typically designed for a 150 lb/ft² load.

Ensure that cooperative arrangements work for the library

- Accommodate the public library’s separate identity, mandate and requirements in shared facilities.
 - Provide a separate entrance for the public library if possible. This gives the library visibility and identity, allows the library to maintain its own hours, and reduces conflict with partners

such as schools which may have different security needs or mandates. An easily visible library entrance in close proximity to the main building entrance is second best.

- Consider loading and delivery needs and provide capacity for day to day business including interlibrary loan deliveries.
- In shared facilities, document the conditions of occupancy, maintenance arrangements, and other details.

Make the library accessible to all

- The library must accommodate people with disabilities.
 - Provide the best level of access possible.
 - If sited in an older facility, make accommodations where possible.

Be prepared for the future

- Space requirements change in the short term (as different activities are scheduled) and the long term (as library services evolve). Spaces should ideally support multiple uses. Built-in and hardwired infrastructure should be as generic as possible. Specialized spaces should be reconfigurable if possible.
 - Use mobile Furniture and shelving when applicable.
 - Room size and layout can be made adjustable with movable partitions.
 - Raised floor systems allow adjustments to power, data and HVAC delivery. However, raised floor systems may limit the ability to move heavy floor loads such as shelving.
 - Install, maintain and update network wiring and other complex infrastructure in a structured, organized way. Wiring etc. should be documented in diagrams.
 - Technology and digital elements tend to play an increasingly larger part in library service delivery. Consider future capacity needs.
- Plan for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the library building and allocate funds for such purposes in capital or operating budget reserves.

Factors to consider when planning facilities

- Collections
- Furnishings and equipment (e.g. computers)
- Programming (adult and children)
- Children's area and dedicated space for other identified demographic groups (e.g. teen area)
- Seating
- Meeting rooms
- Specialized service areas (e.g. makerspace)
- Kitchen facilities to support public programming and staff needs
- Service areas (e.g. bathrooms, hallways, storage, mechanical rooms, server rooms and wiring closets)
- Signage to allow self-directed use of facilities, collections and equipment
- SuperNet connectivity

Staff work and rest areas

- Offices, cubicles and other individual work areas
- Materials processing areas
- Shipping and receiving, including loading dock
- Lunchroom and/or break areas

- Staff washrooms
- Locker rooms and washing facilities for bicycle commuters

Exterior

- Public transit access
- Passenger drop-off for automobiles and larger commercial vehicles
- Parking
 - Automobile
 - Bicycle
 - Stroller
 - Skateboard / scooter / etc. storage
- Signage including a prominent “library” sign, hours of operation and an “open/closed” sign
- Lighting
- Materials return when library is closed (drive-through access or otherwise convenient for users)
- Consideration of library users and also non-users; e.g. signage could advertise community events to street traffic

APPENDIX: Space Planning Worksheet

(A tool to assist boards and staff in space planning)

Library _____

Person completing form _____ Date _____

1 Projected Population Served

a) Projected (future) local population _____

b) Projected non-resident service population (e.g. local county, First Nations) _____

c) Total (a+b) _____

2 Collection Space

a) Total projected number of books & audiobooks _____ /100 = _____ m²

b) Total projected number of audiovisual items _____ /200 = _____ m²

c) Total projected number of periodicals _____ /10 = _____ m²

d) Periodical storage: # of titles stored _____ * # of years retained /20 = _____ m²

e) Total (a+b+c+d) _____ m²

3 User seating space

a) Total projected population (1c) _____ /200 = _____ seats

b) Seats (3a) _____ * 3 = _____ m²

4 Staff space

a) Staff workstations _____ * 7 = _____ m²

b) Staff offices _____ * 12 = _____ m²

c) Other staff areas (reference desk, shipping and receiving, ILL sorting, breakroom etc.) _____ m²

d) Total (a + b+c) _____ m²

5 Meeting rooms and programming space

- a) General meeting / programming rooms: # of seats _____ = _____ m²
- b) Conference room: # of seats _____ *3 = _____ m²
- c) Children's programs: # of seats _____ = _____ m²
- d) Computer training lab: # of seats _____ *5 = _____ m²
- e) Total (a+b+c+d) _____ m²

6 Public access computers

- a) # of workstations _____ * 3 = _____ m²

7 Other spaces

(Add space required for planned special use areas, e.g. makerspace, children's play space, fireplace, theatre)

- a) Required additional space _____ m²

8 Net space requirement

(add 10% for other furnishings and equipment such as photocopiers, printers, self checkout)

- a) m² values from 2e + 3b +4d + 5e +6a + 7a _____ *1.1 = _____ m²

9 Gross space requirement

(add 25% space required for HVAC, corridors, stairwells, elevators, restrooms, interior walls etc)

- a) m² value from 8a _____ *1.25 = _____ m²

SCHOOL-HOUSED PUBLIC LIBRARIES

INTRODUCTION

A school-housed public library is a public library located on, or within, school property.

Being a school-housed public library comes with an added layer of complexity, which arises from the library being located on school property. The relationship between the library board (and library staff) and the school authority varies from location to location, dependent on local circumstances. These variances fall somewhere on a continuum, with a strictly lessor-lessee arrangement at one end of the spectrum and fully integrated public and school library services on the other.

The mandates of school libraries and public libraries sometimes differ. School libraries exist to support a defined and specific curriculum, while public libraries determine service priorities based on community needs. School libraries have a specific user base and school staff act *in loco parentis* for the students. Public libraries are open spaces where anyone can come and use the space without judgement, censorship, or supervision, as per the principles of intellectual freedom.

REQUIREMENTS

Public libraries in Alberta are established under the authority of the *Libraries Act*. The Act sets out the process for the legal establishment of municipal library boards, and allows for the establishment of a public library in collaboration with a school authority, on or in school property.

Dealing largely with operational considerations, the *Libraries Regulation* specifies in Part 3 Section 17 parameters under which a library board may operate a public library in a school. This section of the regulation states:

17 A municipal board or intermunicipal library board shall not operate a library housed in a school unless

- (a) the board enters into an agreement with the school authority that sets out the responsibilities of the board and the school authority for the operation of the library, including the responsibilities of the employees and volunteers of both,*
- (b) the board has its own bank account and signing officers, none of whom are employees of the school authority, and*
- (c) the library is open to the public outside of the hours during which the school is in operation for regular classes, including being open during evenings and weekends or both, and during the summer.*

Clause a) makes certain that a foundation is set for a relationship between two similar but differently mandated parties. The agreement ensures that both parties have considered how library service will be delivered, defines boundaries and areas of responsibility, and protects each party in a legally binding document.

Clause b) is in place to guarantee the public library board's financial independence.

Clause c) requires that the community has access to the public library outside of school hours and during the summer. Public libraries are funded using municipal and provincial tax dollars; therefore community members should have access to the service year round. Also, it is not uncommon to hear community members express

that they are uncomfortable with entering the school while students are there. Having hours outside of when school is in session addresses that concern.

All provisions of both the *Libraries Act* and the *Libraries Regulation* are applicable to all public libraries in Alberta, including public libraries housed in schools or on school property.

The public library's hours of operation during the school day is a decision made as part of the formal agreement between the library board and the school authority. It is recommended that at least some open hours are available for public library users during the day. This facilitates the public library's ability to provide important early literacy programs for preschoolers, to provide space and resources for homeschooling families, to account for members of the community who work shift hours, and to be accessible for those who may not be able or willing to venture out at night or have physical or other accessibility issues.

BEST PRACTICES

While the school-housed public library may (or may not) be providing library service to the school, **it is still a public library and should to adhere to the best practices as outlined in this document.** For example, the size of the library takes into account the recommendations in the **Facilities** section, the number of materials available reflects the recommendations in the **Collection Management** section, best practices for accessibility are implemented, and so on.

There are additional fundamental best practices for library boards in school-housed public library arrangements to ensure that public library service delivery is protected, preserved, and promoted. They are as follows:

The public library is functional, visible, welcoming and accessible to all members of the community

- The library has a separate entrance, which allows members of the public to access the library year-round without having to walk through the school and negating any potential safety concerns.
- The library has a separate washroom on-site for staff and/or public to use so users do not have to use student or school staff facilities, and access is available year-round.
- Dedicated parking for public library staff and users is available, away from buses for safety reasons, and clearly marked.
- Exterior signage indicating that a public library is present is clearly visible, including hours of operation.
- A book drop is available for returning materials after hours.
- Dedicated storage space and programming space for the public library is available year-round, and meeting space for community groups is provided as local needs require.
- Space planning allows for the public library's physical and digital materials to be easily and comfortably accessed by all members of the community, especially if the public library is accessible during school hours.
- Property (e.g. furniture, computers, books) owned by the public library board is clearly identified and inventoried, and is not be moved or removed by the school authority without consent.
- If applicable, the library space is large enough to accommodate the simultaneous use of public library users and school students, offering areas for group activities and quiet study.
- The public library is open during Spring Break or other scheduled school closings when community needs indicate a need.

The public library collection is diverse, accessible to everyone, reflects all members of the community, and upholds the core public library principle of intellectual freedom

- The library board and staff uphold the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' [*Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries*](#).
- Public library staff are not held responsible by the school authority for monitoring (and deeming appropriate) the materials that students sign out during school hours.
- The public library board does not subsidize the school library's collection by buying curriculum based materials and items (e.g. Chromebooks) with public tax dollars on behalf of the school.
- Collections reflect the entire community, providing a wide range of materials for adults, as well as children, in a variety of formats.
- The collection is of an appropriate size (see the Collection Management section) so as not to rely on interlibrary loan as a means to meet public library user demands for materials.
- The library board has full and sole control of their collection, including the selection and disposal of materials, as well as having an established policy and procedure for dealing with challenged materials.
- Resources for underserved communities, including print-disabled users and Indigenous community members, are freely available. When required, self-declaration of a perceptual disability or print disability is sufficient for users who want to access the library's accessible format collection.

Responsibilities and reporting relationships of library staff are clear and embedded in job descriptions

- The public library board has paid staff that manage and deliver public library service.
- The responsibilities and reporting relationships of both public and school library staff (if applicable) is clearly articulated and embedded in job descriptions.
- Provisions are made for public library staff that operate the public library during school hours to partake in professional development opportunities during those hours at no expense to the individual.

Ensure the public has dedicated access to technology and provide an unfiltered Internet connection

- In order to align with the principles of intellectual freedom, the public library provides dedicated, unfiltered Internet access (public access computers or mobile devices) for public library user use only (in addition to dedicated school library computers).
- Free public Wi-Fi is available during all and after public library opening hours.
- The public library has a dedicated and separate SuperNet connection, independent of the school's SuperNet.
- The public library has a separate phone line so library users can contact the library directly without having to call the school office (which is closed during evenings and weekends).

The agreement between the public library board and the school authority sets out the responsibilities of each of the parties, and does not infringe on the public library board's autonomy and authority for delivering public library service

Library boards are required by legislation to enter into an agreement with the school authority that sets out the responsibilities of the board and the school authority for the operation of the library. The agreement should reflect that school library services are provided by an organizationally and financially separate school library, or provided by the public library under a formally contracted arrangement, with funding provided by the school authority.

These agreements should include clauses on the following:

- Facility maintenance, access, security, access to washrooms, etc. (if there is not a separate lease agreement)
- Shared and separate finances, insurance responsibilities
- Access and ownership of materials and furniture
- Collection policy, intellectual freedom, challenged materials procedure, inventory
- Resource sharing
- Responsibilities and reporting relationships of all library staff
- Hours of opening
- Equipment and computer maintenance, SuperNet connectivity
- Internet filtering, public access computers, acceptable use
- Review of agreement, termination of agreement
- Procedure on how to handle disputes and breaches of the agreement

GLOSSARY

Accessible Formats: Formats designed for people with disabilities. Accessible formats for traditional print material may be tactile (e.g., Braille), audio (e.g., DAISY), or visual (e.g., specialized fonts).

Alberta-Wide Borrowing: The right of any resident in Alberta holding an eligible public library card to borrow on-site from any other network participant as if they were a local user, without using interlibrary loan mechanisms.

Assistive Technologies: Technology tools designed for people with disabilities.

CELA: Centre for Equitable Library Access.

Decolonization of space: A way of reframing public space to create a safe and comfortable space and support for Indigenous people to reclaim what was lost to them (i.e. ceremony, culture, language, art).

E-government: The use of electronic communications devices, computers, and the Internet to provide public services to citizens and other persons in a country, province or municipality.

Equitable Access: Fair and reasonable in a way that gives equal treatment to everyone

Friends of the Library: A group that fundraises for the library board and supports the library within the community. This group is often registered as a society or a charity.

Indigenous: First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Information Ethics: That which focuses on the relationship between the creation, organization, dissemination, and use of information, and the ethical standards and moral codes governing human conduct in society.

Integrated Library System (ILS): A software package that enables library staff to manage library resources and library users to access them. Specifically, an ILS consolidates a variety of components that enable core library service functions such as acquisitions (ordering, receiving and invoicing for materials), cataloguing (classifying and indexing materials), searching (public interface for finding and requesting items), and circulation (lending materials to patrons and receiving them back).

Intellectual Freedom: The right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL): The transfer of print and non-print library materials, or a copy of those materials, from one participating library to another in response to a specific patron request. This may be done physically or electronically.

Intermunicipal Library Board: A library board formed by two or three municipalities under section 12.2(1) of the *Libraries Act*.

Joint-Use Facility – A joint-use facility is defined as a public library co-located with another entity (other than a school) such as a community centre, recreation centre, or a post office. Or, when there are three or more parties involved, e.g. a public library, a school, and a community centre.

Library Board: A municipal, intermunicipal, or system library board, as defined in the *Libraries Act*.

Library Manager: The position in the library or library system that reports directly to the library board and is responsible for all operational management of the library or library system, including the management of other staff. May also be referred to by other titles (e.g. CAO, Chief Librarian, Director, etc.)

Library Resources: Any material, regardless of format, that is held in a library's collection and includes books, periodicals, audio recordings, video recordings, projected media, paintings, drawings, photographs, micromaterials, toys and games, kits, CD-ROMs and electronic databases.

Library Staff: Paid employees of the library board, including the Library Manager.

Library System: A corporation established by the Minister under the *Libraries Act* when municipalities in an area agree to jointly provide regional library services. Library systems provide professional and technical support to public libraries within the system area, manage resource development and sharing at the regional level, and function as nodes within the provincial public library network to connect resources to residents via municipal libraries.

Library Volunteers: Citizens who provide service to the library on an unpaid basis.

Mobile Library: A mobile service point, specifically a vehicle that is designed for and used to provide public library service outside of the physical library, such as a bookmobile or book bike.

Municipal Library Board: A library board formed by a single municipality under section 3(1) of the *Libraries Act*.

NNELS: The National Network for Equitable Library Service.

Periodical: A magazine or newspaper that is published on a regular basis.

Plan of Service: A strategic plan based on a community needs assessment that identifies the mission statement, goals, and objectives of the library for a defined period of time. All municipal and system library boards are required by the *Libraries Act* to have a plan of service.

Print Disability or Perceptual Disability: Defined in the Canadian *Copyright Act* (1985, s 2) as mobility, cognitive, and vision impairments that prevent individuals from being able to read traditional print.

Public Library Network: A technological and operational framework that connects Alberta's public libraries to enable access to public library resources and services for Albertans. The network is coordinated and supported by PLSB.

Resource Sharing: Making available to other libraries the library resources owned by a board, the information contained in those resources, and the staff expertise required to locate and make available the information or the library resources.

School Authority: Means a school district, school division or regional division.

SuperNet: A broadband network built by the Alberta government to connect public institutions across the province and enable them to access high-speed internet access, video conference, and other services. SuperNet supersedes high-speed Internet access by providing enhanced speed, stability and security, which are key to facilitating basic library operations such as integrated library system (ILS) and network functions and enabling access to other network services such as multimedia services and digital resources.

Universal Design: An environment that is designed so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability (National Disability Authority, n.d.).

VDX: Interlibrary loan software used by Alberta public libraries to borrow and lend library material.

Weeding: In librarianship, the systematic removal of resources from a library based on selected criteria, usually age, appearance, and frequency of use.

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