

## Public library service in Alberta

*The Alberta Libraries Act* and Regulations form the legal basis for public library service in Alberta.

A library board is formed under the Act and is different from other non-profit and municipal boards.

At the regional level, municipalities can join library systems. A library system is formed by member municipalities and delivers services as defined by the Act.

At the provincial level, Municipal Affairs Public Library Services Branch:

- administers library legislation and grants;
- develops policy; and
- coordinates provincial activities (e.g. resource sharing and network development).

## Municipalities and library boards

A municipality initiates local library service by creating a library board via a municipal bylaw.

The library board is a standalone body with full management and control of the library.

Library board members are appointed by the municipal council. A library board has five to 10 members. Up to two library board members can be municipal councillors.

The library board:

- employs library staff;
- manages the budget, facilities; assets and services; and
- approves library bylaws and policies.

The library board may pass bylaws for the safety and use of the library.

Municipal council may disallow library bylaws.

Municipalities often provide a building or other space for the library but cannot charge rent for a building owned by the municipality.

## Public library funding

Libraries are funded primarily by the local municipality, with supporting funds provided by the province.

Municipalities fund both their local library boards and their library systems. Municipalities with no local library may provide funding to nearby libraries or the library system to provide library services for their residents.

Libraries request a yearly allocation from their municipal council. Council may approve, deny or adjust the allocation. The library board creates and controls the library budget.

Municipal funding triggers funding from the province, as defined in the Public Library Service Grant Program Guidelines. Visit:

[www.albertalibraries.ca](http://www.albertalibraries.ca)

In 2011, municipalities gave an average per capita appropriation of \$34.73 to their local library boards.

## More than books

Public libraries provide more than books to their local communities.

Using the wide range of resources at their disposal – books, computers, staff expertise and more – libraries deliver services that make a difference in Albertans' lives.

Libraries can:

- prepare children for school
- help people develop careers
- preserve local history
- provide comfortable public space
- teach ESL to new citizens

Alberta public libraries are the heart of the community and services are tailored to meet local needs.

In the past year, 62% of Alberta households used a public library.



## More information

Municipal Affairs has responsibility for the administration of the *Alberta Libraries Act*.

The Ministry's Public Library Services Branch also develops provincial policy in areas such as resource sharing and network development.

For detailed information on legislation, grants, statistics and more visit:

[www.albertalibraries.ca](http://www.albertalibraries.ca)

Contact Public Library Services Branch at (780) 427-4871 or email [libraries@gov.ab.ca](mailto:libraries@gov.ab.ca)



# A Guide for Councillors and Municipal Officials

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