

2023 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Cranbrook Public Library

CHECKLIST

For the PLGR to be considered complete, please ensure you have provided information for each of the following sections. Text boxes will expand as you type. Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

1. [INTRODUCTION](#)
2. [FEATURED INITIATIVES](#)
3. [CHALLENGES](#)
4. [BOARD APPROVAL](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

Library and Community Profile – provide a brief description of your library and the community it serves (e.g., demographics, local economy, governmental relations, historical context, current issues, etc.).

The communities the Cranbrook Public Library serves, Cranbrook and unincorporated communities in the Regional District of East Kootenay Area C, are located on the traditional lands of the Ktunaxa.

Cranbrook is the largest community in the Kootenays, with a population of approximately 21,000 in the city, 6,000 residents located in rural communities in the surrounding Regional District of East Kootenay Area C, and 391 residents in ʔaq'am.¹ It serves as the retail, educational, health care, service and transportation hub in the southeast corner of BC. Unlike other East Kootenay communities, Cranbrook has neither a heavy industry base nor recreational amenities such as lakes, rivers or ski hills.

Since the pandemic, there has been significant growth within the community of the population experiencing homelessness over the past three years, with an 84% increase from 2022 to 2023.² Reflecting this, there has been a marked increase in the number of homeless,

¹ [Profile | aq'am \(aqam.net\)](#)

² [Cranbrook - 2023 Homeless Count \(bchousing.org\)](#)

and those with mental health and addictions issues, visiting the Library. This has put significant strain on employees, who strive to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for everyone who visits. That they succeed is demonstrated by the thousands who visit each month to borrow material, participate in a program, use a computer or the wi-fi, study, work, read, relax, or ask for help, and have a positive experience.

2023 Year in Review – Highlight activities and accomplishments that the library has focused on this year. Briefly outline how library funding (local, provincial, annual, one-time/targeted) has been used or earmarked for library services and/or special initiatives to meet community needs.

The Library reinforced all that it learned in the recent years of upheaval to create a vision for its future.

- At a time when people increasingly need to conduct the business of life online, the Library strengthened its commitment to providing direct, personal service to its patrons by fully staffing both service points and having staff rove the floor to help people.
- Some form of programming takes place every day of the week. There are two types: active (i.e. the Book Bites after school program), and passive (i.e. the puzzle table).
- Social connections are fostered through programs such as the weekly Men’s Social, Knitting Club, painting classes at long-term care facilities, and the Homebound service.
- More effort is being put into letting people know about what’s happening at the Library. A monthly newsletter promoting programs, an active Facebook account, a digital display in the facility, plus regular newspaper articles, and an open house in November, are examples of how the Library is getting out the word.
- Outreach focussed on building relationships with the ʔaq’am community of the Ktunaxa First Nation and Area C communities.
- A consultant assisted in the development of the next strategic plan.

Provincial Funding Allocation

Core Operating Grant – This grant is the major source of funding for acquiring new print, audio-visual and digital collection material for our patrons to borrow and access.

Literacy Equity Grant – This grant supports programs such as the Summer Reading Club, Pre-school Storytime, after school programs, book clubs.

BC OneCard & Resource Sharing Grants – These grants cover the postage costs for interlibrary loans and BC OneCard material, and a portion of the staff time required to administer these services.

CRRD, EPP & Enhancement Grants – In 2023, these grants made possible the strategic planning process, paid for the network backup and disaster recovery solution, stabilized the collections budget, enabled a greater focus on strengthening the working relationship with the ʔaq’am community.

2. FEATURED INITIATIVES

Please describe any significant initiatives the library has undertaken in the past year, focusing particularly on use of the 2022 COVID-19 Relief & Recovery (CRR) and Emergency Planning & Preparedness (EPP) Grants, and plans to use the 2023 Enhancement Grant.

Initiative Title	
Strategic Planning Process	
What is the nature of this initiative? (both may apply)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New targeted initiatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting/enhancing existing operations
Area of Operations (select as many as apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic operations <input type="checkbox"/> Salaries & benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Lease & utilities <input type="checkbox"/> Collections	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> In-house patron software/hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Loanable hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Staff software/hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Connectivity
<input type="checkbox"/> Facility upgrades	<input type="checkbox"/> Library programming
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic planning and governance	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff development
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	
Social Impact (select as many as apply)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessibility and inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental sustainability, climate action
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental health and wellness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconciliation and Indigenous relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	
What is the status of this initiative?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Planning/research stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation in progress
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing as part of operations
Is this a multi-year initiative?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Summary – Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.	
The Cranbrook Public Library could afford to hire a consultant to develop its strategic plan for the first time in its almost 100-year history because of the provincial Enhancement Grant.	

This resulted in the most extensive community engagement process ever. Over a three-day period, the consultant and chief librarian talked with employees, trustees, Library patrons, local government employees, and people out in the community to find out what they expect from, and value in, the Library, and how they envision its future.

Community Consultation

- Focused conversations with key community organizations, including the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy and BGC Cranbrook.
- Pop-up feedback booths around the community, including City Hall, regional district offices, a café, and a grocery store.
- Patron input table within the Library.

Employees gave their insights and perspectives on where the Library is today, and shared their hopes and aspirations for the future, in an all-day workshop. The day highlighted the exceptional dedication staff bring to their jobs. It also energized them, strengthening the team and creating a positive energy that has stayed with it despite some challenging times in the intervening months.

The full-day Library Board session delved into the most significant topics from a Board governance perspective.

What we heard was clear, the Library should keep doing what it's doing, just more. This input, combined with a comprehensive environmental scan, resulted in a strong vision that will guide the Library's development over the next five years.

Progress Report – If you have reported on this initiative in a previous year's PLGR, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

The entirety of this project occurred in 2023.

Budgetary Information – please outline whether/how provincial funding (annual or one-time/targeted e.g., CRR, EPP, Enhancement Grants) contributes to the estimated cost of this initiative.

This project was entirely funded by the Enhancement Grant.

Rationale – Why was this initiative prioritized? (e.g. fulfilling commitments under strategic plan, responding to emergent community need, availability of funding, etc.)

The current strategic plan expired in December 2023.

What impacts does/will this initiative have on the library and/or the community? Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

The 2024 – 2028 strategic plan was officially adopted by the Library Board at its January 2024 meeting. It will guide the development of the Library's services and programs, and how it engages with its community, over the coming five years.

Initiative Title	
Enhancing Collections	
What is the nature of this initiative? (both may apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> New targeted initiatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting/enhancing existing operations
Area of Operations (select as many as apply)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basic operations <input type="checkbox"/> Salaries & benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Lease & utilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collections	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> In-house patron software/hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Loanable hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Staff software/hardware <input type="checkbox"/> Connectivity
<input type="checkbox"/> Facility upgrades	<input type="checkbox"/> Library programming
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic planning and governance	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff development
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	
Social Impact (select as many as apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility and inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental sustainability, climate action
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health and wellness	<input type="checkbox"/> Reconciliation and Indigenous relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	
What is the status of this initiative?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Planning/research stage	<input type="checkbox"/> Implementation in progress
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing as part of operations
Is this a multi-year initiative?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Summary – Provide a brief description of the activities undertaken this year. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this initiative.	
<p>For its physical collections, the Library prioritizes the acquisition of popular fiction and non-fiction new releases in print and audio-visual formats. These items are popular with many patrons, meeting many of their informational and recreational reading and viewing needs.</p> <p>Beyond popular titles, the Library strives to provide material on a broad range of topics to reflect our community's diverse interest. In 2023, efforts focused on acquiring newly published items focusing on architecture, indigenous artists, art history, dance, theatre, and Canadian poetry.</p>	

Progress Report – If you have reported on this initiative in a previous year's PLGR, what has changed since then? What progress has been made, or what obstacles have you encountered?

N/A

Budgetary Information – please outline whether/how provincial funding (annual or one-time/targeted e.g., CRR, EPP, Enhancement Grants) contributes to the estimated cost of this initiative.

The Library allocated \$5,000 from the CRR grant and \$5,000 from the Enhancement grant to keep the collections budget stable at \$90,000. This represents just over 11% of total spending on collections in 2023.

Rationale – Why was this initiative prioritized? (e.g. fulfilling commitments under strategic plan, responding to emergent community need, availability of funding, etc.)

Providing people with access to current and accurate information from reliable sources is at the core of the Library's mandate. It also strives to acquire popular reading material to meet our patrons' broad range of interests. Support from the CRRD and Enhancement grants has enabled the Library to maintain its overall collections budget.

In 2021, the Library Board committed to a long-range strategy to increase the collections budget involving three phases. The first phase involved allocating \$5,000 per year from the operating reserve between 2021 and 2023. The second phase involves one-time funding from local governments from 2024 to 2026. Phase 3 involves securing ongoing additional funding for collections.

Through the provincial grants, the Library did not have to use funds from the operating reserve in 2022 and 2023.

What impacts does/will this initiative have on the library and/or the community? Please include any applicable metrics or quantitative data to demonstrate impact.

Circulation statistics for physical material increased in 2023 compared to 2022. The items acquired as part of the focused collection development effort are circulating nearly as well as the popular works.

3. CHALLENGES

The following topics have been identified as recurrent themes in prior years' PLGRs, along with challenges that have surfaced throughout the current year. Use the 'Other' row at the bottom of the table to include any ongoing or past challenges that are not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please "copy" the last row and use the "paste" function to insert additional rows as needed.

Please use the check boxes in the 'Rating' column to specify how severely your library has been impacted by each challenge in the past year. If a listed challenge does not affect your library, you may leave that row blank.

Use the 'Response' column to briefly describe how the challenge has affected your library in the past year, and what actions your library has taken to address it, referring to the Featured Initiatives section above where applicable. If no action was taken, explain what the barriers are.

Challenge	Rating	Response
<p>Financial pressure (e.g. rising costs, reduced revenues, forecasting uncertainty, local budget)</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern</p>	<p>While the one-time provincial grants have helped the Library undertake a number of initiatives to improve front-line services, provide professional development that helped staff deal with difficult situations, create a new strategic plan, strengthen IT infrastructure, and develop a business continuity plan (in-process), getting additional funding to cover increases in ongoing operational costs is a major challenge.</p> <p>Increases in operating grants have not kept pace with rising costs in all aspects of operations. Therefore, funds originally intended to offset increased costs of books, digital material, and other collections material were reallocated to cover increases in non-discretionary items such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance (liability & contents) – 57% increase in one year

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual audit – 21% increase in two years • Provincial minimum wage – 11% increase between 2022 and 2024 <p>The Board understands that collections are critical in fulfilling a library’s core mandate to provide access to current, reliable and reputable information to support an informed and engaged citizenry. Therefore, it has used a variety of one-time grants to keep the overall collections budget at the same dollar amount for the past 15 years.</p>
<p>Governance (e.g. changes on the library board, relationship/ conversations with local government)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Least concern	<p>Over the past years, the Library Board focussed on working with local governments to improve the new trustee recruitment process, to strengthen the new trustee orientation process, and to strengthen the engagement of existing trustees by holding an annual retreat where members can have in-depth discussions on topics of current import.</p>
<p>Emergency response (e.g. fires, floods, extreme weather)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern	<p>The Library is an official community heating/cooling/clean air centre within the scope of its existing operating hours.</p> <p>Although the services that the Library provides did not extend beyond the regular scope of operations, the impact on the Library, particularly employees, is noticeable. A significant proportion of individuals who took advantage of the Library as a community centre tended to be in precarious situations: homeless, suffering from addictions, mental health conditions. At times they displayed behaviours that made other patrons,</p>

		<p>including children, feel unsafe or uncomfortable.</p> <p>Library employees relied on their training to deal with these situations, calling emergency services when needed.</p> <p>The 'Vulnerable Communities' section provides further details.</p>
<p>Staffing (e.g. recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern</p>	<p>Supporting employees so they can maintain good mental health and build resiliency, particularly while dealing with a greater number of difficult interactions with Library visitors, was a challenge in 2023. An all-staff professional development day that focused on strengthening mental health, and a refresher Naloxone training seminar for those who wished to take it, was well-received.</p> <p>2023 was a year that demonstrated the resiliency of our staff. Several full-time employees had to take unexpected leaves with a high degree of uncertainty as to their duration. This resulted in a lot of uncertainty for remaining staff as these positions had to be temporarily filled, often on a week-by-week basis, because the return-to-work timeline was uncertain. Still, part-time and on-call staff did an exceptional job filling in to provide a consistent level of high-quality service.</p>
<p>Connectivity (e.g. low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern</p>	<p>Current bandwidth is just able to meet the needs of the Library. Traffic is shaped so that the staff network always has sufficient bandwidth to run core services (cloud-based integrated library system, email, virtual meetings, etc.).</p> <p>Public internet and wi-fi users at times find there is too little bandwidth available to meet their needs, as more try to use</p>

		<p>streaming and virtual services. For example, it is impractical to attempt to download a digital audiobook from Libby.</p> <p>Service providers have the capacity to offer more bandwidth, but the Library is unable to take advantage of this offering due to financial constraints.</p>
<p>Infrastructure/facilities (e.g. aging/damaged, renovations, new builds/upgrades/expansions)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern</p>	<p>It has been 18 years since the Library opened in its current location. While the overall condition is good, some components of the physical plant are reaching their end of life. Lighting fixtures are wearing out and cannot be repaired due to components no longer being manufactured, resulting in suboptimal lighting in some areas. The flooring at the entrances has almost worn through to the substrate.</p> <p>The Library is working with the City to come up with a plan for updating the facility over the coming years.</p>
<p>Community access to the library (e.g. geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Least concern</p>	<p>The Library is located at northern edge of the downtown, with a bus stop located just beyond it.</p> <p>Parking availability is a major issue as the Library is located in the same facility as a number of City departments and provincial government offices, whose employees occupy most, if not all of the spaces, prior to the Library opening. This is especially challenging for those with mobility issues and young children who are uncomfortable parking along an arterial road.</p>
<p>Disappearing services in the community (e.g. government, banking, health)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Least concern</p>	<p>As a regional centre, services in the community tend to be robust. That said, a number of organizations, including Service Canada, refer people to the Library for computer access so they can</p>

		fill out forms online. Library staff often have to support people to complete their tasks successfully as many have limited computer skills and are uncomfortable filling out forms online.
Public health (e.g. COVID-19, vaccinations, access to Telehealth)	<input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Least concern	With the lifting of pandemic measures, this is no longer a topic that requires special attention. A number of safety measures, such as glass barriers around service desks, providing hand sanitizers for public use, and masks for staff have been retained.
Regulatory impacts (e.g. accessibility, privacy, employment standards)	<input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern	<p>The Library was on the City's Interim DEI Committee charged with working with a consultant to create a DEI strategy and terms of reference for the permanent DEI committee. The Library will be represented on the permanent committee.</p> <p>Work has begun to develop a privacy impact assessment process that can meet legislative requirements although the Library has extremely limited capacity or expertise to complete the PIAs.</p>
Vulnerable communities (e.g. people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern	<p>The 84% growth of the homeless population in Cranbrook over the past year made itself noticeable in the Library. Vulnerable individuals use the facility in its capacity of a warming/ cooling/ clean air centre. While many used the Library's services responsibly, a significant minority behaved in a manner that risked the safety of patrons and employees.</p> <p>As a consequence of multiple instances of drug use in the public washrooms, which included one confirmed spill of fentanyl, the children's washroom had to have a lock installed. Children and guardians</p>

		<p>now have to ask for a key at the Welcome Desk.</p> <p>The Library is working with the City's Social Development Coordinator to develop a plan for peer support for vulnerable individuals at the Library.</p>
<p>Sociopolitical tensions (e.g. intellectual freedom, protests, global events, racism, homophobia)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern	<p>In May and June 2023, the Library received two form-letter petitions from a local group affiliated with a national organization. One titled 'Ban non-government and Special Interest Group Flags' and the other 'Notice of Personal Liability: Facilitating in Exposure of Minors to Sexually Explicit Educational Resources, Performers, Activities and/or Events'. The latter included web link with the request that the books listed on that site be removed from the Library's collection.</p> <p>The Library sent a letter to the contact email provided outlining the Library's request for reconsideration of a title and freedom of information request processes. The Library received no further correspondence from the group.</p>
<p>Other (please specify)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> High concern <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate concern <input type="checkbox"/> Least concern	N/A

4. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature:



Date: 14 March 2024

Board Chair Signature:



Date: 14 March 2024