2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Fort St. James Public Library

CHECKLIST

For the PLGR to be considered complete, please ensure you have provided information for each of the following sections. Suggested word counts have been included for each question, but feel free to include more or less text as needed – text boxes will expand as you type. Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year. If provincial funding is primarily used to support your library's core operations, please include a general describe where it is applied (staffing, utilities, collections, etc.). (250-500 words)

The Fort St. James Public Library acknowledges that the land on which our work takes place is part of the unceded ancestral territories of the Dakelh Peoples.

Fort St. James is in Central BC, on the shores of Nakal'bun (Stuart Lake). Our library serves approximately 5,000 people across the municipality, Nak'azdli Whut'en, Tl'azt'en Nation, Binche Whut'en, Yekooche First Nation, Takla Lake First Nation, and rural areas within Electoral Area C of the Regional District Bulkley-Nechako. Our service area is majority Indigenous, represented within our high school population, which is 70% First Nations. We have a declining forestry sector, stable mining sector, and growing tourism sector. The regional district and municipality are focused on rural economic diversification and resiliency planning as corporate tax revenues decline. The library is located in the downtown core, near the District of Fort St. James office, restaurants, retail shops, banks, and Service BC.

In 2022 the Board of Trustees, in coordination with the Library Director, developed a five-year strategic plan. Near the end of 2022, our Library Director transitioned to a new position in Manitoba, and after a two-month vacancy, a new Library Director was hired.

The library is in a building owned by the District of Fort St. James. In May 2022, a Funding and Service Agreement between the Fort St. James Public Library Association and the District of Fort St. James was formalized, providing a framework for future annual funding increases and facilities maintenance.

Our collective agreement between the Fort St. James Public Library Association and the Canadian Union of Public Employees expired on December 31, 2022. Bargaining negotiations began in November 2022 and are still underway in early February 2023.

Post-pandemic, we observed steady increases in foot traffic, circulation, computer and wifi use, and program participation – although we have yet to fully recover pre-pandemic engagement levels.

Provincial funding for our library was primarily used for collections development (e.g., books, dvds, magazines, e-subscriptions) and facilities upgrades to improve hygiene and prevent disease transmission (e.g., permanent plexiglass barrier, new non-cloth chairs and cushion covers, air purifiers, extra programming supplies for quarantining of items).

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Please describe any featured projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, "copy" the blank table below and insert additional tables as needed using the "paste" function. Use one table per project/program. You do not need to report on every project/program, only highlights/notable examples.

Project/Program Name
Fort St. James Public Library 2022-27 Strategic Plan
Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
In 2022, our Board of Trustees and Library Director anonymized and collated community feedback collected during the pandemic to inform their strategic planning process. They also referenced the guiding documents of BC library partners, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations and BC's Strategic Plan for Library Service.
How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

Our completed strategic plan reflects goals in the areas of:

1. **Advancing Truth and Reconciliation** – nurturing relationships with Dakelh Peoples and learning from Dakelh culture; Indigenizing and decolonizing the library
2. **Promoting Sustainability** – promoting awareness and providing accurate information on the impacts of climate change on libraries and their communities, and delivering on environmental best practices
3. **Providing Equitable Access for All** – introducing, updating, and maintaining technological equipment and resources for the library
4. **Increasing Community Engagement** – enhancing library spaces, services, and relationships to improve patron experiences

Our full strategic plan document can be found here:
file:///C:/Users/libra/Downloads/Strategic-Plan-2022-2027-final.pdf

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service](#) from the strategic plan, which include:
1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

This project aligns with the following BC Strategic Goal areas:

1. **Improving Access** – providing access and helping people navigate the digital world
2. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** - bring the library community together to foster knowledge-sharing, collaboration and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
3. **Enhancing Governance** - Successful leadership and library service excellence depend on effective governance and accountability. Boards provide strategic direction at the local level and are responsible for ensuring libraries meet their financial, legal and community obligations.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

The completed Fort St. James Public Library 2022-27 Strategic Plan is a living document which acts as a focusing lens. It incorporates library sector strategic goals from the federal and provincial levels, refining those goals to ensure they are realistic given our existing local capacities and relevant to the patrons accessing our collection.

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

N/A

Project/Program Name

Funding and Service Agreement for the Fort St. James Public Library and the District of Fort St. James

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
Our library is in a building owned and maintained by the District of Fort St. James. In May 2022, a formalized funding and service agreement was adopted. This document is intended to stabilize library services for residents and provide a framework for future funding increases. It outlines the responsibilities of each party in the areas of services and maintenance.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?
This project reflects our goals in the areas of: 1. **Providing Equitable Access for All** – introducing, updating and maintaining technological equipment and resources for the library 2. **Increasing Community Engagement** – enhancing library spaces, services, and relationships to improve patron experiences

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service](#) from the strategic plan, which include: 1. Improving Access 2. Building Capacity 3. Advancing Citizen Engagement 4. Enhancing Governance
This project aligns with the following BC Strategic Goal areas: 1. **Improving Access** – As community hubs, libraries are providing vital access and helping people connect and navigate the digital world. We will continue to facilitate resource-sharing and help the development of a reliable and equitable digital infrastructure for library services. 2. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** - support the delivery of quality programs and services that people depend on

The finalized Funding and Service agreement was signed on May 4, 2022.

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

Project/Program Name
Public Computer Stations

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

In 2022, our library received a $12,625.00 grant from the Integris Community Foundation for the purchase of six new public computers, two new circulation computers and two staff computers. Fully upgrading our computer systems prevents interruptions in service and streamlines daily maintenance procedures – creating more time for meaningful patron interactions.

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

This project reflects our goals in the areas of:

1. **Providing Equitable Access for All** – introducing, updating and maintaining technological equipment and resources for the library
2. **Increasing Community Engagement** – Enhancing library spaces, services, and relationships to improve patron experiences

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include:
1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

This project aligns with the following BC Strategic Goal areas:

1. **Improving Access** – providing access and helping people navigate the digital world
2. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** - bring the library community together to foster knowledge-sharing, collaboration and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

New computers were purchased and installed in summer, 2022.

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

N/A

Project/Program Name

Children and Youth Programming

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

Over the last year, we were able to re-introduce all in-person programming for children and youth. The four programs in this area, which ran at full capacity in 2022 were:

1. Baby Bounce (birth-18mos) – weekly storytime, sing-along and physical exploration of the library outside regular library hours

2. Storytime (birth-6yrs) – weekly storytime, sing-along and group play outside regular library hours
3. Summer Reading Club (ages 6-12yrs)
4. Pro-D Days (ages 6-12yrs) – aligned with SD91's professional development days, we offer themed programming for students during regular library hours when schools are closed

This project reflects our goals in the areas of:

1. **Advancing Truth and Reconciliation** – nurturing relationships with Dakelh Peoples and learning from Dakelh culture; Indigenizing and decolonizing the library
2. **Promoting Sustainability** – promoting awareness and providing accurate information on the impacts of climate change on libraries and their communities, and delivering on environmental best practices
3. **Providing Equitable Access for All** – introducing, updating, and maintaining technological equipment and resources for the library
4. **Increasing Community Engagement** – enhancing library spaces, services, and relationships to improve patron experiences

How does this project/program support the [B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service](#) from the strategic plan, which include:
1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

This project aligns with the following BC Strategic Goal areas:

1. **Improving Access** – providing access and helping people navigate the digital world
2. **Advancing Citizen Engagement** - bring the library community together to foster knowledge-sharing, collaboration and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Re-introducing the full range of our pre-pandemic programming for local children and youth

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

Yes. **Provincial funds** were used to purchase books, games, sensory materials, presentation materials and consumable supplies for these four programs.

3. CHALLENGES

The following topics have been identified as recurring themes in previous years' PLGRs. The intent of this section is to collect detailed information in a structured, consistent format.

Please select the most significant challenges that the library has faced in the past year that you wish to comment on. Leave any other listed topics blank. Use the 'Other' row to include any ongoing or past challenges that not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please insert additional rows into the table.

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2022. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	**Provincial funding** was used to upgrade furniture, install a permanent plexiglass barrier, purchase air purifiers, duplicate programming supplies for quarantining items, and for cleaning supplies.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	The library acted as a cooling station during summer 2022 heat waves and wildfires impacted air quality at various points throughout the year. We are hopeful the air purifiers purchased with **provincial funding** will also help address smoke particulate matter in the library.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	The impacts of 13+ years of stagnated **provincial funding** in the library sector have been brutal. It has impacted our library in all areas of operations: facilities, equipment, materials, collections, staff recruitment and retention, programming, services, and hours of operation. Our current Funding and Service Agreement with the District of Fort St. James, our largest funding partner, includes a 1% increase annually for office costs and library maintenance. Due to increasing costs of materials, shipping and services – this is unsustainable. At the end of 2022, we had 58% overages in office costs and 96% overages in maintenance costs.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)	Administrative costs (salaries, MERCs, benefits) are paid by the District of Fort St. James. Lower library sector wages, both in comparison to similar non-profit jobs and similar district municipality jobs, make recruitment and retention incredibly challenging. New administrative assistants with our district municipality make $4/hr more than library staff with seven years seniority. A new secondary summer student with the district municipality makes $3/hr more than library staff with five years seniority.

Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	In 2022, we lost five of our eight local physicians, as well as many nurses and other health paraprofessionals. These staff shortages resulted in several temporary diversions of our emergency room and/or hospital. SD91, our largest employer in the region, lost many employees and are approaching a mass retirement event. Job vacancies in healthcare and education sectors represent diminishing services to residents, and further complicate library recruitment and retention.
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	Our library's download speed is 12 Mbps, far below Canada's national averages for both rural (20.9 Mbps) and urban (74.61 Mbps) areas. Our phone services were an ongoing problem in 2022. Phones were completely down for a total of two months, and intermittent/crackling during the rest of the year. Telus Communications Service Department is in Prince George (160km away) and response time was variable (three days to two weeks) without resolution. We are temporarily using our fax line as both a phone and fax service. The Library Director uses their personal cell phone for non-patron communications, to help keep the library line open for patrons.
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	The library's heating and cooling system is geothermal, taking several days to 'catch up' to outdoor temperatures. When there is a dramatic increase or decrease in outdoor temperature, we use supplemental heating and cooling devices to keep staff and patrons comfortable. These adjustment periods can't be planned for and significantly increase our hydro expenses for these periods. Our library lift is 13 years old. Inspections and maintenance of the lift are done quarterly by Venture Elevators in Prince George (160km away). There were several delays in repairs, leaving the lift out of service for a total of three months in 2022. We are working in coordination with the District of Fort St. James to plan for capital funding to replace the lift in future.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	The library is located in the downtown core, within walking distance of residents in the district municipality and Nak'azdli Whut'en. Tl'azt'en Nation and Binche Whut'en offer once/daily round-trip bus service for their residents. Residents in Yekooche First Nation, Takla Lake First Nation, and the regional district rural areas do not have access to public transportation.

Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	2022 library incident reports record five ambulance service calls to revive non-responsive patrons struggling with complex social/medical issues. We also had four incident reports related to open container alcohol consumption and/or second-hand cannabis exposure in the library. Our library is committed to remaining a safe space for all individuals in our community. We provide bottled water for vulnerable patrons and their pets, and direct patrons to social or medical support services when they are struggling or ask for help.
Other (please specify)	

4. COVID-19 RELIEF & RECOVERY GRANT – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

Summary and Overview

Please provide an executive summary (overview summary) on the library's use of the COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Grants. The purpose of this section is not to duplicate the individual projects details, instead provide a short analysis and summary of your overall approach and progress. Please limit to 2 paragraphs and feel free to use bullet points.

Summary and Overview
Given our library's small size and patron population, we reallocated $6,422.50 from our Emergency Planning Grant to improve COVID-19 Relief & Recovery impacts for our community.   The pandemic highlighted specific areas we could improve library procedures, materials and facilities to support staff and patron health and reduce disease transmission. Our application of these funds focused on transitioning to materials which can be cleaned between use, improving air quality, multi-purpose space use/distancing strategies, and enhanced programming.

	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	$24,192.54	$30,516.04
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	$8,084.18	$1,641.68
Total Grant Amount	$32, 256.72	$32,256.72

Project Progress Report

Please use this section for:

1. Report progress on projects included interim report **and/ or**
2. New projects developed since interim report (copy and paste tables as needed)

Project/Program/Activity	Chair Replacement
Rationale	COVID-19 Recovery
Area of Need	Replace old cloth covered chairs with new leather or plastic chairs.
Action/Output/Deliverable	Ten leather chairs were purchased from Staples, and the old cloth chairs were donated to those around town who needed them.
Outcome/Impact	By replacing cloth with leather/plastic chairs, staff can easily wipe down and clean the furniture.
Metrics	Replace all ten cloth chairs in the public seating area with leather chairs.
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$2615.04
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Complete

Project/Program/Activity	New Plexiglass Barrier
Rationale	COVID-19 Recovery
Area of Need	A better, more professionally built barrier will provide better protection for staff and patrons
Action/Output/Deliverable	Replace three free-standing plexiglass barriers with one long, permanent, sturdy barrier
Outcome/Impact	Contact nearby plexiglass installers for quotes
Metrics	Barrier will be less prone to wobbling and will have no gaps (other than the opening for library materials) which should help staff and patrons feel more at ease interacting at the circulation desk
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$3115.00
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g.,	Complete

complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	

Project/Program/Activity	Cleaner, better cushions
Rationale	COVID-19 Recovery
Area of Need	Recover or replace the nine large green sitting cushions in public spaces
Action/Output/Deliverable	Look into local craftspeople who can create custom-made slip covers for the cushions, the shape of which makes it difficult to find new covers for purchase in store/online. If unsuccessful, will look for replacement cushions
Outcome/Impact	New cushions will have slipcovers that are easier to clean and not made of cloth but vinyl or leather or something else that can be wiped down
Metrics	Cushions will look better and be cleaner for patron use
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$3000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	In Progress - as of February 2023, we are currently on a waitlist with a local re-upholsterer

Project/Program/Activity	Enhanced Programing
Rationale	COVID-19 Recovery
Area of Need	Now that programing is back at the library, we purchased materials to enhance programing for those in attendance and draw back the patrons who have not attended programing since 2019
Action/Output/Deliverable	Research into various programs and activities at other libraries to see what would work best for the library; make notes of what is needed for current programs to enhance the experience
Outcome/Impact	Programing will be improved for patrons and staff, with more options for activities and involvement
Metrics	Enhanced programing should see an increase in patron involvement
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$3000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g.,	Complete

complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	

Project/Program/Activity	Study Area
Rationale	COVID-19 Recovery
Area of Need	Replace current desks with study pods/carrels
Action/Output/Deliverable	Purchase 2-3 YA study carrels
Outcome/Impact	Purchase carrels from Canadian-based company (currently looking into Brodart and Carr McLean)
Metrics	Provide young patrons with a quiet, private area to study
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$3000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Pending - purchase pods/carrels by March 2023

Project/Program/Activity	Cleaner Air
Rationale	COVID-19 Recovery
Area of Need	Purchase 1-3 air purifiers for interior library building to help with dust and allergies
Action/Output/Deliverable	Research best air purifiers for large spaces
Outcome/Impact	Improve air quality for patrons and staff
Metrics	Improve air quality and health in library
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$7500
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	In Progress - three Conway Airmega 400 (4000 sqft) air purifiers and related filter replacements were purchased in February 2023.

Project/Program/Activity	Family Workstation
Rationale	COVID-19 Recovery
Area of Need	Purchase one family workstation (i.e., a computer desk with an attached playpen for those with small children)
Action/Output/Deliverable	Purchase family workstation desk from Canadian Museum & Library Supply
Outcome/Impact	Patrons with small children can use public computers
Metrics	Provide patrons with small children a chance to use the public computer without worrying about where their children are or what they are doing
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$8500
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Pending - purchase and install by March 2023

Project/Program/Activity	COVID Preparation
Rationale	Emergency Planning
Area of Need	Purchase COVID supplies
Action/Output/Deliverable	Purchase hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, and cleaning supplies to be stored away for use during a potential future COVID (or other communicable disease) outbreak. Purchase posters for children's area and bathrooms regarding hand washing and disease prevention
Outcome/Impact	The library will be prepared for the event of a sudden or quick change in COVID policies and procedures
Metrics	The library will be prepared should any future outbreaks or changes in COVID guidelines come into effect; given the rural location of the library, it is wise to have these supplies on hand ahead of time as it can be very difficult to find supplies at the last minute
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	$1641.68
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Complete

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____   Date: _____

Board Chair Signature: _____   Date: _____