

Nova Scotia Public Libraries: Core services and their impact on the province

May 31, 2018

Prepared by the Library Core Services Working Group

Executive Summary

Beyond providing traditional books and collections, Nova Scotia Public Libraries are uniquely positioned to support government's 2018/19 budget. The impact of their core services is in direct alignment with the budget's goal of strengthening important services and supports so all Nova Scotians have opportunities to grow and succeed.

Libraries strengthen the economy by

- ensuring our province's workforce has the skills they need to remain employable, which benefits their personal economic circumstances and also means they can contribute to the tax base (Core service: supporting and promoting reading and literacy)
- providing Nova Scotians—especially those in rural communities— with the technology, programming, reliable Internet, and one-on-one support needed to access education, training, and business opportunities (Core service: providing access to technology and supporting digital literacy)
- supporting the cultural and creative sectors by providing books, programs, tools, space, and equipment that helps create a thriving creative economy (Core service: preserving and promoting culture and creativity)
- providing the space, equipment, and information navigation needed for many start-up entrepreneurs and independent business people to succeed (Core service: providing safe physical spaces that encourage community involvement)

Libraries build more resilient communities by

- enhancing self-understanding, empathy, and awareness, which leads to more engaged, tolerant, safer communities (Core service: supporting and promoting reading and literacy)
- reducing the digital divide and ensuring all members of the community, including the vulnerable, those on low or fixed incomes, in shelters or housing insecure, and seniors, have safe, equal access to technology and the Internet (Core service: providing access to technology and supporting digital literacy)
- being culture hubs—places where people of all backgrounds, ages, genders, and abilities intersect to celebrate and share their history, genealogy, stories and more—thus building connection and compassion (Core service: preserving and promoting culture and creativity)
- being a trusted “third place”—neutral ground where people and ideas come together in a safe environment and where challenging conversations can happen (Core service: providing safe physical spaces that encourage community involvement)

Libraries promote personal health and well-being by

- providing programs and resources that build health literacy, food literacy, and the ability to access and understand health information (Core service: supporting and promoting reading and literacy)

- providing the access, friendly support, and service that helps people get the information they need to take responsibility for their health (Core service: providing access to technology and supporting digital literacy)
- encouraging physical activity, creative expression, exposure to the arts, and social interaction (Core service: preserving and promoting culture and creativity)
- being a physical refuge for those seeking shelter and support (Core service: providing safe physical spaces that encourage community involvement)

Nova Scotia Public Libraries change lives for the better. Through thoughtful investment and continued partnerships, they will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of the citizens of our province for generations to come.

Introduction:

Nova Scotia Public Libraries have seen many changes since they were first formed in 1937¹, but perhaps none as radical as the past two decades.

While some may have predicted people would need libraries less often as a result of the Internet age, the opposite has been true.

In fact the public's needs and expectations of what the library should deliver are more diverse, urgent, and complicated than ever before.

Today, people come for help with technology because their job has changed and they need new skills to stay employed; for language support so they can integrate into a new society; for parenting skills so they can raise their families; and for help finding social services because they don't know where else to go.

They come for help sorting fact from fiction in an increasingly complex world. And many come because libraries are a warm, welcoming place that won't turn them away.

People come to libraries to explore art, music, science, traditions, spirituality and everything in between, and to delight in human contact that feeds the soul. They also come for what might seem like entertaining programming, and leave better able to care for themselves.

Nova Scotia's Public Libraries' historic role may have been to provide access to books and vibrant collections, but it has evolved—and continues to do so—to provide access to the tools, support, information, and social connections that spans a lifetime.

They do that through their core services of

- supporting and promoting reading and literacy
- providing access to technology and supporting digital literacy
- preserving and promoting culture and creativity
- providing safe physical spaces that encourage community involvement

In its 2018/19 budget, the Nova Scotia Government focused on strengthening important services and supports so all Nova Scotians have opportunities to grow and succeed.

The plan identified four pillars supporting that goal:

- healthy people and communities
- investing in early years and education
- safe and connected communities
- inclusive economic growth

¹ Bateson, N. *Library Survey of Nova Scotia*. 1938.

Nova Scotia Public Libraries' core services are in full alignment with those pillars. This document demonstrates how.

Core service: Libraries Support and Promote Reading and Literacy

The benefits of reading and literacy extend to every aspect of a person's life from cradle to grave. Without them, how could anyone fill out a credit application? Follow the instructions on a medicine label? Vote? Prepare a recipe? Read to a grandchild?

Yet, in 2014, Nova Scotia earned a "D" grade from the Conference Board of Canada for the number of adults in the province with inadequate literacy skills.²

Nova Scotia needs to do more to support reading and literacy, and Nova Scotia Public Libraries are uniquely positioned to help.

Libraries provide much more than a diverse collection of books and resources in a variety of formats. They provide the support and access that unlocks the possibilities within those collections.

They understand that people learn by reading, seeing, doing, and sharing, and have programs that are designed to stimulate, engage, and connect in all those ways.

Most importantly, libraries have staff who know and care about their communities and take a personal interest in helping each person who comes into the library succeed. Age, background, and status do not matter. Everyone is equal, and equally welcome at the library.

By promoting reading and literacy, libraries have an impact on our province's economy, communities, and well-being in the following ways.

Strengthening the economy

Literacy is the foundation for economic prosperity.

Nova Scotian employers need a workforce that has the right skills for today, and also has the capacity for life-long learning so they can gain the skills needed for tomorrow.

The unemployment rate for people with low levels of literacy is about 26 per cent.³

Library literacy programs, including digital skill and language development, help Nova Scotians of all ages and backgrounds enhance their employability. This includes

² The Conference Board of Canada. "Adults With Inadequate Literacy Skills." The Conference Board of Canada - Economic Forecasts, Public Policy, and Organizational Performance. Accessed May 29, 2018. [http://www.conferenceboard.ca/\(X\(1\)S\(5e5o4o4arsseet1ppcbbsp0dp\)\)/hcp/provincial/education/adlt-lowlit.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/(X(1)S(5e5o4o4arsseet1ppcbbsp0dp))/hcp/provincial/education/adlt-lowlit.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1).

³ Literacy Nova Scotia. "Literacy and employment." Literacy Nova Scotia. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://www.literacyns.ca/factsheets/Fact4.pdf>

newcomers to the province, who represent an opportunity for employers to fill skills gaps, diversify their workforces, and leverage cultural connections to open new markets.

Investing in literacy saves the province money. “The 2011 report *From Poverty to Prosperity: Literacy’s Impact on Canada’s Economic Success* placed the annual savings in social assistance alone of raising every Canadian adult to Level 3 literacy at \$542M.”⁴

Furthermore, a more productive population benefits the province through contributions to the tax base.

Improved literacy has an impact on people’s personal economic well-being as well. A Statistics Canada study, *Insights on Canadian Society: The Association Between Skills and Low Income*, noted:⁵

- the median household income for individuals who were in the lowest category of literacy proficiency (level 1 and below) was \$49,700, compared with \$84,600 among those who were in the two highest categories (level 4 and level 5).
- among individuals in the lowest category of literacy proficiency in 2012, 29% were in a low-income household (households whose income is below the after-tax Low Income Measure), compared with approximately 8 per cent for those in the two highest categories.

Nova Scotia Public Library reading programs encourage all family members regardless of age to read together—setting an example and a habit that will benefit the family for generations to come.

Building more resilient communities

By providing access to a full range of supports that build literacy and other skills, Nova Scotia Libraries are also helping to build more engaged, tolerant, safer communities.

Studies have found that reading for pleasure enhances self-understanding and empathy.⁶

⁴ Frontier College. "2011 National Forum on Literacy and Poverty." Frontier College. 2017. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://www.frontiercollege.ca/getattachment/6f6bd77f-043f-4ce3-96a0-9a2ec2902d73/Discussion-Paper-Literacy-and-Poverty-by-Frontier.aspx>.

⁵ Statistics Canada. "Insights on Canadian Society - The Association between Skills and Low Income." *Agricultural Water Use in Canada*. February 24, 2016. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2016001/article/14322-eng.htm>.

⁶ The Reading Agency. "Literature Review: The Impact of Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment." Neil Gaiman Lecture in Full: Reading and Obligation | Reading Agency. 2015. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://readingagency.org.uk/resources/2277/>.

Conversely, low literacy and crime are related: 79 per cent of Canadians entering correction facilities don't have a high school diploma but literacy programs have proven to work, reducing recidivism by up to 30 per cent.⁷

Having literacy skills also increases a person's political and social participation, thus contributing to the quality of our democracy as well as our political, social, and civic engagement.

Promoting personal health and well-being

Library reading programs are about much more than study and self-entertainment. They literally improve people's physical and mental health.

Research has shown that children and adults who read for pleasure are happier and more confident. Reading can reduce stress and depression and build a sense of empowerment.⁸

Improved literacy levels help with everything from parenting skills and raising children to making informed decisions about their health.

Health literacy includes understanding basic health and medical terminology, as well as being able to understand instructions and protocols. This is essential when talking to a medical professional and taking medication. A person needs to be able to read and understand medication instructions and health information, and fill out consent and personal health forms, in order to get the full benefit of medical attention. This is especially true when English is not the first language.

Food literacy means being able to choose, prepare, and eat food that meets nutritional needs. "Food literacy—like learning to read—is a skill that needs to be taught, developed, and nurtured beginning at an early age."⁹

According to *Thrive! A plan for a healthier Nova Scotia*, "one in three [Nova Scotian] children and youth is overweight or obese, and rates of unhealthy eating, sedentary behaviour, and inactivity are much higher."¹⁰

⁷ Police ABC. "Target Crime with Literacy." Policeabc.ca. 2008. Accessed May 29, 2018. <http://policeabc.ca/>.

⁸ The Reading Agency. "Reading for Pleasure Builds Empathy and Improves Wellbeing, Research from The Reading Agency Finds." Neil Gaiman Lecture in Full: Reading and Obligation | Reading Agency. 2015. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/media/reading-for-pleasure-builds-empathy-and-improves-wellbeing-research-from-the-reading-agency-finds.html>.

⁹ Nourish Nova Scotia. "Food Literacy." Menu. 2018. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://nourishns.ca/program-resources/food-literacy>.

¹⁰ Province of Nova Scotia. "Thrive! A Plan for a Healthier Nova Scotia." Province of Nova Scotia. 2012. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://thrive.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/Thrive-Strategy-Document.pdf>.

While there was a time when eating in the library was unacceptable, Nova Scotia Public Libraries are now increasingly a place for enjoying and sharing food, and a source for food literacy development—something that is also important for helping people stay connected with their culture and being able to share it with others.

Finally, economic well-being often drives social and physical well-being. According to *Thrive! A Plan for a Healthier Nova Scotia*¹¹ an estimated 75 per cent of the factors that determine health lie outside the health-care system. These include education and literacy levels which affect job opportunities; and the environmental, social, economic, and cultural conditions of our society and communities.

¹¹ Province of Nova Scotia. "Thrive! A Plan for a Healthier Nova Scotia." Province of Nova Scotia. 2012. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://thrive.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/Thrive-Strategy-Document.pdf>.

Core Service: Libraries Provide Access to Technology and Support Digital Literacy

The Nova Scotia High-speed Internet Initiative states: “Access to quality Internet service is essential for living, working and competing in a digital world. It's an important part of delivering many of the services that matter most to Nova Scotians – health care, education and services for our most vulnerable citizens.”¹²

However, according to the Nova Scotia Department of Business’s *Review of Alternatives for Rural High Speed Internet*, 15 to 20 per cent of Nova Scotian households lack access to high-speed Internet.

In the Corporate Research Associates study, *Determining the Social Impact of Nova Scotia’s Public Libraries: Public Perception Study* (February 2018), 82 per cent of respondents said “having access to public computers, Wi-Fi, and high-speed Internet” was one of the important services offered by their regional public library.

Physical access to equipment and Wi-Fi is only one part of the digital divide— individuals need to know how to use them. Library staff provide one-on-one support and training and develop programming that help members of the community build their skills and confidence to operate the technology and navigate the Internet.

The digital world is constantly changing. Technology and platforms that seemed revolutionary ten years ago are antiquated today. Expectations of what that world can provide also never plateaus; Nova Scotians increasingly need the Internet to gain education and employment, to access government and financial services, to maintain their health, to start and grow their own businesses, and more.

Libraries keep pace with those changes by constantly keeping up with technology trends, updating programming, and encouraging lifelong learning.

By supporting digital literacy, libraries have an impact on the province’s economy, communities, and well-being in the following ways:

Strengthening the economy

Some studies suggest that every three years, 50 per cent of all workplace skills change, leaving businesses with a shortage of qualified employees and Nova Scotians who lack those skills without work.¹³

¹² Province of Nova Scotia. "Nova Scotia High-Speed Internet Initiative." Province of Nova Scotia. October 20, 2014. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://novascotia.ca/business/internet/>.

¹³ EMP Solutions. "Employer Services." Nova Scotia Works - Employment Services Centre. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://empsolutions.ca/employer-services/>.

Also, some forms of education—such as distance or continuing education—are offered exclusively online.

Libraries help close these gaps by providing the technology, programming, and one-on-one support Nova Scotians need to access the education and training they need to gain and maintain employment. Best of all, they provide it right in the person's home community, so there is no need for them to re-locate.

Libraries also connect Nova Scotians to new opportunities. The decline of print newspapers, in terms of both availability and subscribers, means the loss of a traditional job forum. These days, positions are advertised online, giving employers and job seekers alike a much larger field of opportunity.

Small and start-up businesses often don't have the means right away to procure their own office space. Many virtual businesses never want space or need it. All of them need a place to work, to access Wi-Fi, and to meet with prospective clients, partners, and potential employees. This is especially true for Nova Scotian businesses that have challenges getting reliable high-speed Internet in their own community.

Libraries provide free high-speed Internet access, Wi-Fi, and technology support. In rural centres, this is often the best quality connection in the community. Libraries also provide space and equipment essential to small business. Some libraries even have coffee.

Building more resilient communities

Inconsistent, or non-existent, access to technology leads to inequality in society. Libraries are safe, welcoming spaces. They support digital literacy for all member of the community, including the vulnerable, those on low or fixed incomes, in shelters, or those who are housing insecure.

Shift: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population recognizes that "challenges such as access, cost, literacy, and comfort with the technology are factors in the isolation of older adults."¹⁴ Libraries provide free access to technologies and have been teaching seniors how to use computers, tablets and mobiles for the past few decades. The demand for this support remains strong.

More and more businesses and organizations—including government—are reducing their physical infrastructure and moving their services online. Libraries provide reliable access and in-person support for Nova Scotians who want to renew or pay for licences and permits; apply for birth, marriage or death certificates; renew vehicle permits, pay fines and tickets; make payments to provincially monitored services, and more.

¹⁴ Province of Scotia. "SHIFT: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population." Province of Nova Scotia. December 10, 2017. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://novascotia.ca/shift/shift-action-plan.pdf>.

Promoting personal health and well-being

Libraries provide access to research and programming that helps people get more information about, and take more responsibility for, their health.

This is especially critical in areas where Nova Scotians don't have easy access to a physician.

Also for a growing number of Nova Scotians, access to health care requires access to the Internet: "The government, in an effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery continues to expand healthcare, educational, and general services over Internet-based channels, which requires effective connections and bandwidth to access them."¹⁵

Libraries provide the connection, and the friendly support and service that helps people understand the information they receive.

Social health is important, too. Age and distance may drive families and friends apart, but social media and other forms of online communication, such as email and Skype, can help keep those linkages alive. Libraries provide democratic access to the technology along with the help so people can learn how to use it.

¹⁵ Province of Nova Scotia. " Review of Alternatives for Rural High Speed Internet." Province of Nova Scotia. 2016. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://novascotia.ca/business/docs/Broadband-Deliverable-Report.pdf>.

Core Service: Libraries Preserve and Promote Culture and Creativity

Today, when you walk in a library, you see art hanging on the walls. You may also see a local author giving a reading in a corner, or a musician explaining her songwriting process to a group of rapt listeners. In another spot, a craftsperson is teaching his skill to the next generation.

Nova Scotia Public Libraries are vibrant, flexible, welcoming spaces where people can connect with arts, literature, music, and creativity. Through libraries, everyone can explore and share cultural identity, traditions, language—sometimes even food.

These experiences enrich lives and help develop a sense of place and individual well-being.

By preserving and promoting culture and creativity, libraries have an impact on the province's economy, communities, and well-being in the following ways:

Strengthening the economy

Culture and creativity help drive successful economies and communities. "Places with thriving cultural sectors attract people and business because they are great places to live, raise families, and work"¹⁶

Libraries support those cultural sectors by providing the books, programs, tools (such as 3D printers and recording studios) and physical spaces that result in people developing new skills, techniques, and connections that can lead to cottage industries, side businesses, and, ultimately, small businesses.

Libraries also represent infrastructure that attracts businesses and residents to an area, thus helping to create a thriving economy on a local scale.

Building more resilient communities

Libraries are critical to having a well-rounded, accepting community.

Nova Scotia is made up of diverse cultures: the Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotians, Acadian, English, Gaelic and others. Each year Nova Scotia welcomes more immigrants and refugees.

¹⁶ Province of Nova Scotia. "Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community." Province of Nova Scotia. February 22, 2017. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://novascotia.ca/culture/Culture-Action-Plan--English.pdf>.

Along with these diverse cultural backgrounds, the province’s population also includes persons of differing physical and mental abilities, gender identities, and ages, as well as those who are vulnerable or housing insecure.

Libraries are open, free, and welcoming to all members of the community, respecting the dignity of all. This creates an opportunity for the full community to interact, participate in community life, encounter different perspectives, and develop empathy and compassion.

Libraries are also culture hubs—the keepers of local history and special collections, genealogy, plays, music, and more. Programs and services encourage interaction and knowledge sharing. These are experiences that challenge attitudes and foster understanding.

This is especially important for newcomers looking to establish a sense of belonging and acceptance. Libraries are often their entry point, helping them integrate into the community by being a source for everything from language services, navigation assistance, to something as simple as providing a place for children to play and make new friends.

In CRA’s *Determining the Social Impact of Nova Scotia Public Libraries* study, 77 per cent of respondents rated libraries and our services as “highly important to them personally,” 90 per cent said the library “enriches community,” and 75 per cent of respondents rated libraries as “an important meeting place for newcomers.”

Promoting personal health and well-being

Libraries provide access to so many factors that promote personal well-being.

Their welcoming spaces and free programs and services encourage human interaction, physical activity, and creative expression. People can drop in to play games, learn a new hobby, catch up with friends, listen to music, borrow sports and recreation equipment, join a makerspace, and more. Having this resource is important to all Nova Scotians, but is particularly critical in a province with one of the oldest populations in Canada.

“Keeping older adults socially connected has been described as the number one emerging issue facing seniors in Canada. Social isolation is commonly defined as a low quantity and quality of relationships with others. Poor health can lead to social isolation; it can also be a result of social isolation.”¹⁷ Further, according to the chief

¹⁷ Province of Scotia. "SHIFT: Nova Scotia's Action Plan for an Aging Population." Province of Nova Scotia. December 10, 2017. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://novascotia.ca/shift/shift-action-plan.pdf>.

office of Age UK, “social isolation could be worse for a person’s health than smoking fifteen cigarettes a day.”¹⁸

Exposure to art is also important to well-being at any age, and libraries ensure that all members in the community have access to its benefits. Where an art gallery or symphony may require paid admission, and also might be intimidating to some, libraries offer everyone a free opportunity to engage with the arts. And no one has to dress up.

Libraries organize performer tours that expose children and families to art opportunities they may not otherwise have had. Libraries also support local and emerging authors, poets, spoken word artists, musicians, visual artists, and more by making their work available and providing them with a stage.

Exposure to the arts makes people think. It opens our minds, sometimes challenges us, and invites new questions. Best of all, art is not dependent on language—it transcends barriers.

¹⁸ Mead, Rebecca. "What Britain's "Minister of Loneliness" Says About Brexit and the Legacy of Jo Cox." *The New Yorker*. January 31, 2018. Accessed May 29, 2018. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/britain-minister-of-loneliness-brexit-jo-cox>.

Core Service: Libraries Provide Safe Physical Spaces that Encourage Community Involvement

Nova Scotia Public Libraries play an important role as “third places” in our province.

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg coined the term “third places” to describe the places where people gather that are neither their homes (“first place”) nor their work (“second place”).

Oldenburg further describes them as “providing the foundation for a functioning democracy, these spaces promote social equity by leveling the status of guests, providing a setting for grassroots politics, creating habits of public association, and offering psychological support for individuals and communities.”¹⁹

The citizens of Nova Scotia already see public libraries as the third places in their lives. In the 2018 CRA study *Determining the Social Impact of Nova Scotia’s Public Libraries*:

- 95% of participants said the library provided a safe and welcoming place for everyone
- libraries as a meeting place/place for people to meet ranked in the top three of Most Important Things about Public Libraries

Beyond being a trusted, neutral space that is both physically and socially accessible, libraries are important third places because of the other roles they fulfill. Today’s library staff are often ad hoc social workers and service/information navigators, providing programming, events, and support that have a direct impact on our province’s economy, our communities’ resiliency, and our citizen’s health and well-being.

Strengthening the economy

For many start-up entrepreneurs and independent businesspeople, libraries provide space for working, meeting, and collaborating, along with equipment and technology. Library staff are information professionals able to help navigate anything from completing incorporation paperwork to small business finance, to research needed for a business plan.

Libraries are also desirable infrastructure in a community: both businesses and residents are attracted to locations that feature a library, resulting in a stronger local economy. Real estate agents mention public libraries along with schools as being positive selling features for home and retail locations.

Nova Scotia’s creative economy is also strongly supported by libraries. Libraries provide public space to showcase writing, art, music, and dance, along with studio and

¹⁹ Oldenburg, Ray. *Celebrating the Third Place*. New York: Marlowe & Compant, 2001.

recording facilities for artists. They give communities and people a place to celebrate and learn about culture through cultural displays and programs and the promotion of cultural collections.

Building more resilient communities

As trusted third places, libraries are neutral ground where people and ideas intersect and both facilitated and informal challenging conversations happen. This builds engagement, understanding, and knowledge in the community.

They are social hubs where status does not matter, and, as such, are catalysts for building relationships between people who otherwise may not meet.

This includes the most vulnerable and those, like seniors, who are often at risk of being socially isolated. The library is the place where these people are visible, welcome, and able to interact with others on an equal basis. Their very presence opens eyes and minds around them to issues that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Promoting personal health and well-being

Today's library uses space to focus on a full spectrum of human needs.

Libraries use their space to expose people to art and culture and also invite participation—an experience that can enrich lives and individual well-being.

They use their space for programming on topics that benefit all members of the community at all stages of their lives—including challenging times and times of transition.

Libraries are often the first place people go to sort out fact from fiction, and to find credible, relevant information on their personal situations.

They are a physical refuge for those seeking shelter. Libraries provide a safe, dignified place with amenities not freely available elsewhere.

Libraries promote social connection and reduce isolation by giving people—including those on fixed or low incomes—a place to go and participate in programs, events, and activities for all ages. They're also a place to be socially antisocial—if someone doesn't want to participate, they are welcome to just be by themselves while still gaining the benefit of the energy and activity around them. One can choose to be alone in a library, and be comfortable doing so.

The library is an oasis filled with assets and professionals that all have one goal: helping the people of our communities lead happier, healthier lives so they can achieve their full potential.

In Closing

Through their core services, Nova Scotia Public Libraries support every person in the province at every stage of their lives.

Libraries help them to become literate, connected, lifelong learners to

- improve themselves and their opportunities
- realize their full potential
- celebrate their heritage and that of others
- lead healthier, happier lives
- be engaged citizens

In short, libraries change lives for the better, and that is a benefit that ripples out across the province.

Through thoughtful investment and continued partnerships, Nova Scotia Public Libraries will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of the citizens of our province for generations to come.

Appendix: Case Studies and Illustrations

Core Service: Supporting and promoting reading and literacy

The programs, services and stories below highlight some ways that libraries support reading and literacy:

- Shelburne and Yarmouth branches host free Super Nova camps for kids, which provide STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning opportunities over the summer months. The libraries provide the space and support where needed. University students gain employment experience by conducting the programs.
- Cape Breton Regional Library's Babies & Books programs include rhymes, stories, songs, and activities. The program supports early literacy and allows parents of young children to meet and converse, something that often results in new friendships. As one parent recently said, "My son met his best friend in Babies & Books – 11 years ago!"
- Adopt A Library/Wow Reading Challenge is a provincewide crime prevention initiative that includes a friendly challenge among schools to see how much can be read.
- Libraries partner with Read to Me to promote the benefits of early literacy and library programming to new parents across the province.
- The Caisse Populaire de Clare partnered with the library to provide information sessions on personal finances that helped people learn how to budget, avoid fraud, and keep their money safe, as well as the importance of filing income taxes. This dovetailed nicely into the programs for seniors and low-income earners who benefited from the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program.
- CART (Children and Adults Reading Together), an 8 week preschool program that is designed to teach pre-literacy skills to children and to teach their parents to continue encouraging these skills at home, is undergoing changes to accommodate the availability of more pre-primary programs in Cumberland County.
- Cape Breton Regional library loans snowshoes, cross-country skis, tennis racquets, walking poles and other fitness related equipment which are made available through partnerships with health and recreation organizations. This is an important opportunity for patrons who may not be able to afford to purchase equipment or do not want to invest in equipment when they were not sure if they would like the sport.
- Pictou Antigonish Regional Library has partnered with local fitness facilities to loan fitness passes.
- Halifax Public Libraries partners with Saint Mary's University to offer public access to university classes every term. Registered students and members of the general public enjoy learning about topics as diverse as Islam or Bollywood.
- Libraries partner with local correctional facilities to improve inmates' reading abilities.

Core Service: Providing access to technology and supporting digital literacy

The programs, services and stories below highlight some ways libraries support access to technology and the promotion of digital literacy:

- Pictou Antigonish Regional Library's partnership with Riverview Residential Home provides equipment and training to adults with intellectual and physical disabilities.
- Having a Maker Lab in the community means there is now a free space to create, invent and learn in a safe environment. Some programming examples include:
 - 3D printer programs.
 - Youth coding and science-based programs.
 - Computer training programs. For people who struggle with computers or those falling into the +65 age range

Core Service: Preserving and promoting culture and creativity

The programs, services and stories below highlight some ways libraries support culture and creativity:

- Cape Breton has a Storyteller-in-Residence program, where the library is a partner in hosting storytelling events and workshops. These sessions were very popular across the region, were intergenerational, and sparked a lot of discussion and interest in local history and lore. This resulted in many positive outcomes, including a DVD and the Isle of Story Festival.
- Film director Cory Bowles spoke in the library about his success and failures as part of the African Heritage Month programming. More than 100 people came to the talk.
- Participants made clay figures and used the library's camera to take pictures and then edited them into short movies.
- Stewiacke's teen group made a movie about recycling called *Trashy the Trashman*, which was entered into the Viewfinders International Film Festival for Youth and won 2nd place. The youth wrote, directed, and filmed the movie themselves. Today, it's available on YouTube.
- Teens at Halifax Central Library have created a podcast using the library's media studios called *It Came from the Second Floor*.
- During Pride Week in 2017, the library had a representative from the Mi'kmaq community talk about Two-Spirit Peoples. The library also hosted a Pride Storytime that was attended by nearly 50 people.

Core Service: Providing safe physical spaces that encourage community involvement

The programs, services and stories below highlight some ways that a library's physical space impacts individuals and communities:

- Winner of the national 2014 Great Places Award, "People's Place," the Pictou-Antigonish library collaborated with the community to build a library that meets the needs of the community.

- Sarah, a young woman in her 20s, (not her real name) recently told a staff member that she came to the library daily when she was in her teens. Her family was going through a very difficult time, and for Sarah the library was a place where she could feel safe. She said she didn't know what would have happened to her had she not had the library.
- The Eastern Counties Regional Library has seven community gardens focused on growing food that can be shared with library users.
- Members of the Truro Police Service gave a talk about bullying and what to do if a child is being targeted for this behaviour. The session generated much discussion amongst the parents. One parent, whose son was the bully, said she had been at a loss as to how to handle it. The other parents in attendance got to see how complex an issue bullying can be.
- A Climate Change presentation at the Annapolis Valley Regional Library gathered 10 per cent of a town's population and resulted in a town-formed Environmental Advisory Council.
- Free tax help is available at libraries for low-income taxpayers. Tax volunteers help complete tax forms.
- Death Cafes are frank conversations about preparing for eventual death to the fore. People are encouraged to think about, and prepare for, the business of leaving this life and the impact it would have on others. The grieving process, the emotional impact, as well as the practical and financial impact of death are explored.
- Libraries have partnered with local grocery stores to offer healthy cooking classes.
- A woman with challenges/barriers helps with the library's Toddle and Tumble program. The library benefits from the extra help with crafts and snack preparation, and the volunteer has a meaningful experience and gets out in the community more often.
- Halifax Public Libraries have been providing programs and entertainment, free Wi-Fi and information support alongside the Mobile Food Market, a bus that travels to areas of Halifax that have poor access to healthy food.
- Libraries are a partner in the YREACH program providing information, orientation and settlement support to immigrants and temporary foreign workers and their families who are new to communities across the province of Nova Scotia and helping to build awareness and understanding among cultures.

Library Core Services Working Group

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