

BC Public Libraries Summit: Value, investment, and results May 11, 2019

Summit Morning Responses

Library values and unique role in the community

- The library is life changing (**access** to learning, government forms, information such as LGBTQ2+, health, and family well-being)
- Welcoming and **inclusive** space for newcomers with programming and resources for integrating into the community and where they can find resources in their home languages.
- Sense of belonging and connection – **inclusive** living room of the community, contributes to strong social infrastructure
- Staff who are passionate about what they do to serve the community – driven by **inclusion, intellectual freedom, privacy, and equitable access** to services, resources and space.
- **Diversity** with spaces and programs for interacting and learning – build community
- **Access** to ideas / information and resources / space / books / learning / online training programs / skills based knowledge /
- The library celebrates **equity, access and inclusivity** through programming, space, resources, and help from expert staff.
- **Inclusive** – “from twinkle to twilight” (all ages), newcomers, vulnerable communities, and increasing connections with those who have not been traditionally served or reflected in the services, spaces, and staffing of the library.

Community Impact

- Work with community partners to build community capacity – not duplicating services
 - Strengthen social infrastructure and community resiliency
- Strengthens reconciliation with trusted space and resources for supporting the community with TRC Calls to Action
- Promoting, encouraging, celebrating local culture, authors, and artists
- Long term impact such as community resiliency and social inclusion
- Building bridges such as welcoming newcomers and connecting them with reconciliation
- Continuous learning for the whole community such as supporting local innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Engaged and informed citizenry, strengthen (vital to) democracy

- Trusted institution for community conversations and forums such as for reconciliation
- Trusted community resource
- Reflects community aspirations and strives to meet community needs
- Improved literacies (traditional, digital, physical, financial, social ...) across the community and for readiness for school learning
- Addresses barriers for alleviating poverty such as access to tools and resources for government forms, community assistance programs, and building a sense of community belonging.
- Foster social inclusion, provide services that make life more affordable and alleviate impacts of poverty.

Summit Afternoon Responses

What is working well?

- Shared goals and collaborations with local government
- Engaged councilor on board who is a genuine advocate
- Having a strong and pro-active chief librarian who takes the library out to the community
- Partnerships with local community based organizations
- Community support and engagement – influences local government for more funding
- Alignments between libraries and government goals (locally and provincially)
- Increased broader understanding of the role of libraries for community social and economic development.
- Staff commitment
- The work of the BC Public Library Partners
- Monthly discussions with local government officials and community partners
 - Shared commitment to engaging with and providing services to vulnerable communities

What is tricky or challenging?

- Funding
- Funding models
- Partners and funders who don't understand the public library legislative framework
- Aligning the role of the library with the expectations / goals of the funder
 - Getting on the radar of government
 - Local government administration not understanding values such as intellectual freedom
- Collaboration and partnerships takes staff time to get results that benefit the partners (local government, community based organizations) and the community.
- The Library Act.
 - What are core services and what do libraries need to deliver core services?

What can we do differently or what are wise practices?

- Develop relationships that aren't about funding – such as with local First Nation governments and Indigenous organizations.
- Generative planning and discussions, for board and staff that that strengthens engagement and relationships between staff, community, and the board.
 - Build trust among the community, staff, and board and move at the speed of trust
 - Regenerative design <-> seed ideas and values <-> staff, community and board
- Bring city council into the library more for events and deeper conversations about the library.
 - Increase understanding of the role of public libraries and the foundational values of public libraries (intellectual freedom, equitable access, inclusivity ...)
- Educate city staff about library values and role of the library
- Ensure library values, such as inclusivity, apply to staff and board recruitment and staff and board development.
- Greater outreach with local government staff and mayor and council
- Work with local and provincial government for a sustained and reliable funding model.
- Be more assertive about public library values and unique role with community partners and funders.
 - Provincial campaign regarding the value of libraries
- Keep funders and partners informed about the enduring and transforming role of the library in the community – don't be boring, engage!
- Understand funders and partners (their goals, capacity, and how they want to work with libraries)
- Know your local Official Community Plan (OCP)
- Keep track of community events and activities and an inventory of possible connections (formal and informal relationships).
 - Show up everywhere – photo ops, social media
 - Be approachable, find common interests, leverage personal stories,
- Keep an influence log (who did you meet, what did you talk about, follow-up), do your research, know their capacity, keep them informed (don't be tedious)
- Board development regarding anti-oppressive governance and commitment to equity and inclusion.
- Spread the word and ask who isn't being reached / included.
- Strengthen advocacy with labour
- Regular reports from the board to local government and community

What would you do with more funding for the library?

- More community outreach, more support for local and provincial government priorities, more community partnerships, more results in the community.
- New facility / facility upgrades
- Programming that impacts community social and economic development
 - Digital programming / digital content co-creation
 - Solve community problems (dialogues, forums, community action planning)
- Services outside of the library – increase connection and access, home delivery for those in need.
- More staff, more programming, more resources – community use has increased
- Keep doors open and service operating – current funding is, due to rising costs is less in real dollars every year.
- More hours to meet growing community demand and need
- Better staff compensation to strengthen recruitment and retainment
- Be able to stop panicking about keeping the door open and find time for long-term strategic planning and infrastructure planning
- Improve connectivity (band width and load)
- Technology upgrades to meet community need
- More resource sharing across the province
- Build and sustain quality of service across the province – address the rural/northern/urban service and resource disparity