



NEW WESTMINSTER
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Naomi Perks, Chair
New Westminister Public Library Board
716 6th Avenue
New Westminister, BC V3M 2B3
June 17, 2019

Attention: Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Regarding 2020 BC Government Budget Priorities

Dear Committee Members,

This submission is on behalf of the New Westminister Public Library Board:

It is urgent that we bring to your immediate attention the importance of provincial support for public libraries. Public libraries are the only public institutions that are truly equitable in providing services for all community members so that they may participate in, and benefit from the social and economic development of their communities. Public libraries are also the only freely accessible public spaces for all British Columbians to connect with, learn about, and experience, the advantages of living in this province.

We know that public libraries significantly contribute to the government's goals for making life more affordable, improving services, and building a strong, sustainable and innovative economy for all British Columbians. This committee is aware of the important role of public libraries from the annual UBCM resolutions regarding provincial public library funding and from the compelling stories and evidence annually submitted to this committee from public library trustees, staff, community members, and local government officials from across the province.

We appreciate the provincial government's recognition of the public library funding issue. In 2017 the provincial government, in response to the UBCM Resolution B60, acknowledged that the cost of delivering public library services has increased with changing technology and other demands. We are heartened that we all share the understanding of the need for adequate and reliable provincial funding for public libraries.



Across the 247 public library service points serving BC we are making a difference to community social and economic development and individual well-being through:

- Reconciliation initiatives that open dialogue and advance the TRC Calls to Action.
 - [First Nations 101; an evening with Lynda Gray](#), New Westminster Public Library
 - [Honouring Reconciliation: Ambleside by Canoe](#), West Vancouver Memorial Library
 - [Indigenous Storyteller in Residence](#), Vancouver Public Library
- People accessing the information and resources they need for personal enjoyment and life needs, learning new skills, starting a local business, and connecting with government services, with the help of expert library staff and connectivity that bridges the continued digital divide.
 - [Lynda.com online learning](#), New Westminster Public Library
 - [Gale Courses](#), Fraser Lake Public Library
 - [Assistive Services](#), Greater Victoria Public Library
- Newcomers finding welcoming services and support for integration.
 - [New-to-BC: The Library Link for Newcomers](#)
 - [ESL Conversation Circles](#), New Westminster Public Library
- Community members learning together, whatever their need and background
 - [Microsoft Excel for Beginners](#), New Westminster Public Library
 - [Tuesday Night Music Jam](#), McBride Public Library
 - [LGBTQ2 and Allies Youth Group](#), Gibsons and District Public Library
- Families thriving through the joy of reading and attending programs that support childhood and family development.
 - [BC Summer Reading Club](#)
 - [Code Club for Kids](#), New Westminster Public Library
 - [Northern Routes Discovery Pass](#), Prince George Public Library

The New Westminster Public Library Board urges the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to act on our shared understanding that provincial government financial support is critical to the successful continuance of public libraries and their positive impact on BC communities.

While libraries appreciate the stability of grant funding that the provincial government has provided since 2010 (approximately \$14 million per year), the lack of regular increases means that each year libraries receive less and less support, due to inflationary pressures. After many years of this, libraries are falling behind in their ability to meet growing needs. Since 2009 the public library community has asked that the provincial government provide

funding for public libraries that at a minimum includes annual increases to account for inflation. Despite these repeated requests, for the past decade public libraries have received no increase to funding.

This year we are asking the provincial government for \$20 million for public libraries in 2020 as this will help address the chronic under-funding, lack of increases for inflation, and past government cuts.

Your attention to this urgent issue is appreciated.



Sincerely,

Naomi Perks, Chair, New Westminster Public Library Board

CC:

Minister Fleming, Ministry of Education

Minister Judy Darcy, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

Mayor Jonathan Cote, City of New Westminster

The BC Public Library Partners:

Scott Hargrove, Chair, Association of BC Public Library Directors

Babs Kelly, Executive Director, BC Library Trustees Association

Annette DeFaveri, Executive Director, BC Library Association

Kevin Millsip, Executive Director, BC Libraries Cooperative