From: Stephen Abram <stephen.abram@gmail.com>
Sent: December 13, 2016 3:19 PM
To: Stephen Abram
Subject: Public Library Funding Review Discussion Document

FOPL Members

As you are no doubt aware, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport released the First Culture Strategy in Ontario this year. It contains a large number of recommendations including this specific recommendation:

"*Goal 2: Strengthen culture in communities, Strategy 1: Help build strong community-based culture organizations:*

- *Review and update provincial funding programs for public libraries to build the capacity of libraries serving rural and remote communities, improve digital services and support leadership and innovation."*

We have been working on our members' and communities' behalf for a few months meeting with Ministry staff and creating the frameworks for a healthy and productive discussion with the review team.

We now have a Discussion Document created by a strong collaboration within Ontario's library community. Represented in this discussion paper were writing and review teams from:

- Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL)
- Ontario Library Association (OLA and including its divisions: the Ontario Public Library Association (OPLA) and the Ontario Library Boards Association (OLBA))
- Chief Executives of Large Urban Public Libraries (CELUPL)
- Administrators of Medium-sized Public Libraries of Ontario (AMPLO)
- Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO)
- Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC)

In consultation with:

- Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS)
- Ontario Library Service – North (OLS-North)

The goal of our sector is to speak with one voice about our recommendations as a public library community. We support ongoing consultation and engagement with the public library community and municipalities. And, of course, we also support modernized, increased and equitable funding for public libraries.

This discussion paper presents principles for consideration and discussion in response to the recommendation in **The Ontario Culture Strategy - Telling our stories, growing our economy** (2016).

At this point we are not taking strong positions but engaging in good discussion as well as research tasks to present our community well. The time-frame for this funding review is likely 18-24 months and may have an impact in the 2018 provincial budget although there are no guarantees.

We expect to confirm a public forum about the funding review at OLA Super Conference on the afternoon of Wednesday Feb. 1, 2017. We highly recommend your attendance and that you bring short, positive stories and proofs of your library's impact on your community aligned with the provincial goals and priorities.

This is our opportunity to shine! And share positive stories about the value and impact of public libraries. If you'd like to read the discussion paper. This is a living document and will be provided to the review team in good time. Here it is: CultureStrategyFundingReview V8 It is also on the FOPL members only blog at: http://fopl.ca/news/discussion-paper-for-members-on-the-public-library-funding-review/ Any comments are welcome and can be sent to FOPL's Stephen Abram (sabram@fopl.ca) and OLA's Shelagh Paterson (spaterson@accessola.com).

Cheers,

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A Visit Will Get You Thinking.

Discussion Paper
Towards More Effective Public Libraries in the Context of the New Ontario Culture Strategy
Regarding the Ontario Public Library Funding Review

Dec. 12v8, 2016 **Community DRAFT**

ola :. ontario library association

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries / La Fédération des bibliothèques publiques de l'Ontario

ONE VOICE FOR ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Canadian Urban Libraries Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada

ARUPLO Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO)

ARUPLO: Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario
CELUPL: Chief Executives of Large Urban Public Libraries

In consultation with:

Southern Ontario Library Service

Ontario Library Service – North

Towards More Effective Public Libraries in the Context of the New Ontario Culture Strategy

Discussion Paper: 2016

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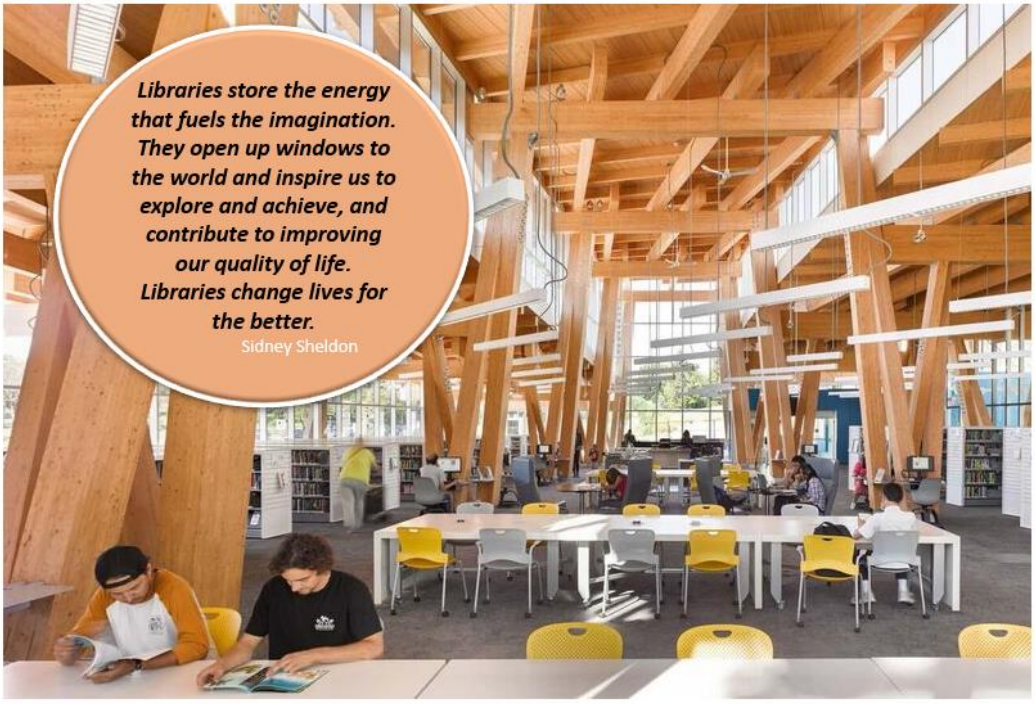
Introduction



Ontario's library community is represented in this discussion paper by:

- Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL)
- Ontario Library Association (OLA and including its divisions: the Ontario Public Library Association (OPLA) and the Ontario Library Boards Association (OLBA))
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The goal of our sector is to speak with one voice about our recommendations as a public library community. We support ongoing consultation and engagement with the public library community.

This discussion paper presents principles for consideration and discussion in response to a recommendation in **The Ontario Culture Strategy - Telling our stories, growing our economy** (2016).

The specific recommendation we are responding to in the Culture Strategy report is:

> "*Goal 2: Strengthen culture in communities, Strategy 1: Help build strong community-based culture organizations:*
>
> - *Review and update provincial funding programs for public libraries to build the capacity of libraries serving rural and remote communities, improve digital services and support leadership and innovation."*

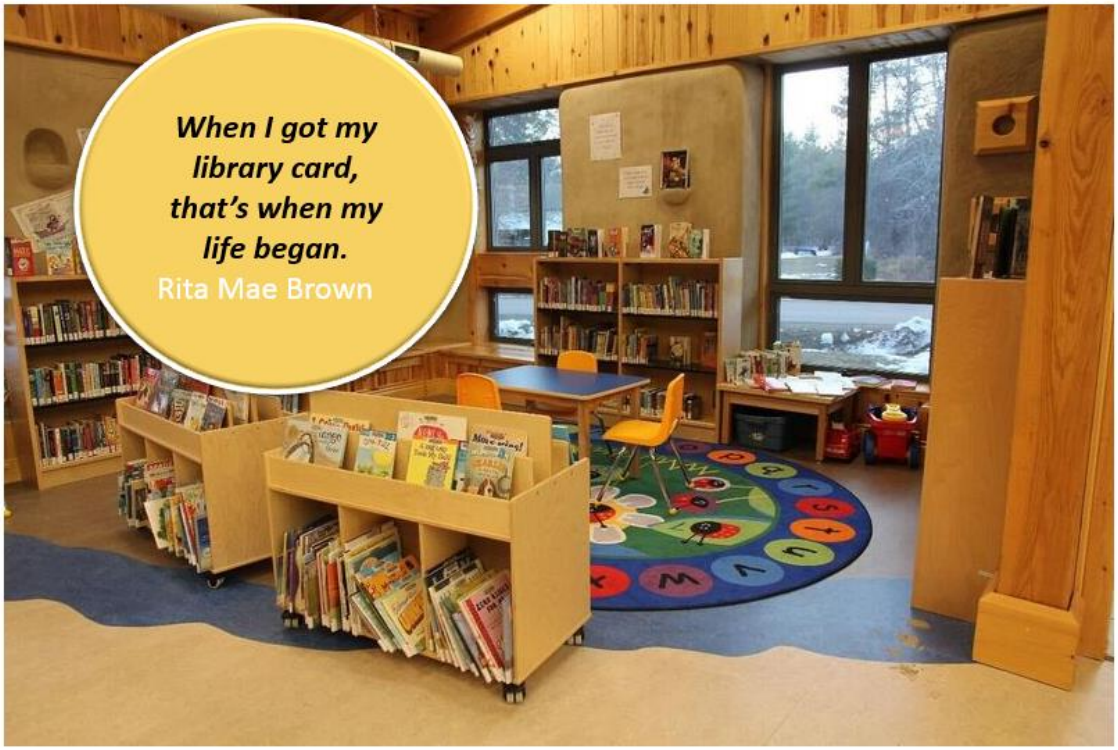
Key Recommendation:

Our sector is focussed on strategies and tactics to meet the vision reflected in this key recommendation, and has always been one of the largest and most dynamic cultural institutions in Ontario. We are the original community hubs.

Modernize the investment and the relationship with Ontario's public library systems and agencies.

For greater clarity we are responding to the broader implications of a public library funding review including our role in culture. Critical strategic themes to consider in a funding review are reflected in our recommendations:

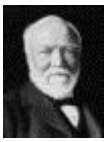
1. The amount of the investment in the public library sector must increase to have greater impact for Ontario residents and keep pace with provincial economy.
2. There must be greater cross-ministerial co-operation in funding capacity recognizing the public library role in our province and communities.
3. Public libraries play a multi-dimensional role in supporting social vitality, educational success, cultural development, employment and provincial and local economic success and in the delivery of government programs and policies.



Provincial Public Library Funding Principles:

Ontario's Public Libraries are funded at the municipal and provincial level with the primary portion of a public library budget funded by the municipal tax base (with the exception of First Nation Public Libraries). The province of Ontario provides a crucial but declining portion of funds annually to each public library through a mix of operating and special grants, and supplements. These funds have traditionally ensured some level of equity in service delivery and programs for public libraries across Ontario. In addition, the province has invested in two provincial service delivery agencies, Southern Ontario Library Service, and Ontario Library Service - North, and provides a small operating grant to a the Ontario Library Association.

In considering a review and update of provincial funding programs, we recommend that the ministry continue to provide funds through a public library operating grant, pay equity, funds for service agencies, and sustained project grants (for example, for connectivity, employment, innovation, research, etc.). (Refer to appendix A: 3 Year Historical Provincial Funding Chart)



"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert."

Andrew Carnegie

Recommendations for modernizing support for the public library sector:

1. **Leverage and maximize the impact of the provincial investment in the capacity of Ontario's public libraries.**

2. **Invest in the public library infrastructure to strategically support Ontario's culture strategy priorities.**

3. **Invest in strategies that will support culture, learning and community development.**

Recommendations and Tactics:

1. Leverage and maximize the impact of the provincial investment in the capacity of Ontario's public libraries.

We recommend that a portion of provincial funding be targeted at the provincial level to leverage partnerships and efficiencies so that public libraries can be more focussed on the unique needs of their communities. Public Libraries can have access to common services and efficiencies that can be developed cost effectively at the provincial level and then disseminated to communities to eliminate duplication of effort and expenditure at local levels and to ensure all public libraries share in an equitable, quality standard of service across the province. Specifically, provincial support for strengthening public libraries should consider:

1.1 Use the OLSs (SOLS and OLS-North) more effectively to maximize service delivery for the Ministry and increase funding for improved capacity for effective province-wide, cross-sector e-resources licensing, grant management, and provincial data collection. Ensure equity of service, regional needs and interests are recognized and funded adequately through the province to meet the needs of different systems. In particular this would mean an increase funding to support collaborative acquisition, cloud ILS, e-resources licensing and delivery, training capacity, and virtual library solutions that cost-effectively provide equity of access for all communities (this is especially crucial for Indigenous communities, and small, rural and remote libraries). The benefit is in the attendant reduction in costs per Ontario resident and learners and more effective and efficient expenditure of public dollars.

1.2 Continue to consult with provincial library and municipal (AMO, ROMA) associations that support Ontario's public libraries on funding decisions or strategies. These organizations look forward to working with public libraries to leverage ideas and provide input to policies and funding for financial and program supports.

1.3 Restore sustained investment in provincial purchasing of e-resources. Lead inter-ministerial coordination where purchasing efficiencies can be realized. The Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport has traditionally supported and invested in province wide consortial purchasing of e-resources for public libraries. Ontario's elementary and high schools, colleges and universities all purchase e-resources and software. We recommend a study to evaluate collaborative acquisition and the cost savings, equity of access, and efficiencies across library sectors to avoid duplication of expense, and to ensure all Ontarians have seamless and equitable access to the resources they need.

1.4 Ontario's public library sector must have access to and use data effectively to provide services that are timely and relevant to their communities. The Ministry has supported an extensive quantitative data set which has helped libraries monitor their programs, services and expenditures and to benchmark against other library systems. We recommend an investment in a user-friendly data management system that can pre-populate relevant data, seamlessly intake data, and provide data reports in real-time so that libraries can effectively plan and benchmark in a timely manner.

1.5 Investigate a province wide open data plan supporting the needs of the non-profit and public sector and to include free access to statistics Canada data, specifically the long form census data so that we can appropriately plan powerful community impacts and government policy alignment.

1.6 We encourage investment in a solution that simplifies the reporting system for our smaller, rural, remote, and Indigenous public libraries. We propose that the ministry issue an RFI/RFP for data collection and analysis to examine this issue.

1.7 Greater provincial support for quality next generation broadband access and bandwidth to support access to culture. Libraries are positioned now as digital hubs. People use libraries to access digital resources such as music, films, magazines, programming, and recording, all of which requires greater broadband capacity at the public library. We recommend that connectivity funding be increased to support capacity in communities and libraries to enable Ontarians to have full access to online library services at home and in the library.

1.8 Given the provincial government commitment to equitable access for people with print disabilities (vision loss, learning or perceptual), make a new and sustained investment in province-wide access to the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) to ensure persons with disabilities fully participate in culture. This grant has always been separate from the PLOG and should remain so.

1.9 Currently the public library operating grant is apportioned on old population numbers resulting in inequitable distribution. The goal of the operating grant was to intentionally deal with the issues faced by small, rural, and

First Nations libraries through a formula that recognized this with equalization payments. We recommend that the government ensure that operating grants appropriately reflect these differences and the population changes over time (including seasonal population changes). Apply a mechanism for ensuring smaller (rural and remote) and Indigenous communities which have high needs and are not growing remain adequately funded. Recognize the very large role urban libraries, which support the vast majority of Ontarians, play in serving the vast majority of Ontarians and ensure a funding formula applied consistently across the province based on recent population statistics and do not negatively impact large urban funding as the large majority of Ontario residents are served by complex, large urban library systems. Note that several large urban systems have many rural populations and service points after the megacity mergers of the 90's. Keep the philosophy that funding for rural, remote and indigenous libraries were founded as equalization payments/grants to ensure equity of access for all Ontarians regardless of the size of their communities. Another complexity is that County library systems may have larger populations but be very rural and quite large geographically. This also needs to be considered.

1.10 Ensure that the conditions for operating and special grants do not enable municipalities to reduce local contributions as a result of provincial support, but encourage greater investment at the local level.

1.11 Review the process for accessing the funding for adjacent communities, counties, and local reserves to ensure more effective access (remove barriers and complexity) to library services and reporting.

2. Invest in the public library infrastructure to strategically support Ontario's culture strategy priorities.

Public libraries access exists for 98% of Ontario residents and we are important partners in supporting the culture strategy. We recommend that investing in government partnerships with public libraries will strengthen Ontario's overall capacity in culture, employment and education.

For example:

2.1 A provincial approach to supporting families and their children in education. Libraries have a strong role to play in early years, school and post-secondary readiness, STEM and STEAM learning and can work with local school boards to support students after school for cultural programming homework and in the summer. (Recommended partner ministries: Education, Children and Youth Services)

2.2 Given that a significant minority (up to 25%) of Ontarians do not have broadband access at home, libraries play a key role in ensuring equity. Government strategies

to increase online learning in post-secondary, secondary and employment contexts require funding recognition for software, equipment, connectivity and staffing to support these important government capacity issues (Partner Ministries: Adult Education and Skills Development, Training, Colleges & Universities, Education).

2.3 Ontario's public libraries are the largest purchasers of Canadian content in print and digitally and our role as a market for Canadian content ensures that there is a market. An investment in public libraries ensures a cultural gateway for access to Canadian produced culture (authors, film-makers, artists, performers, poets, indigenous culture).

2.4 A provincial program for libraries that supports immigration, refugee and newcomer priorities (Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration partnership).

2.5 Infrastructure investment in libraries complying with AODA requirements. A significant number of libraries have AODA compliance issues that remain as unfunded liabilities at the municipal and library board level. We recommend a sector specific funding program for ensuring AODA compliance to the new standards.

2.6 Consider moving beyond tactical funding of Indigenous libraries for staffing and operations and engage in federal/provincial cooperation to ensure that all reserves have the facilities, staff, technology and resources required for community engagement and learning. (Federal Government: Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada)

2.7 Canada's digital cultural heritage is at risk for digital conservation and preservation and access is often overly local. We recommend an investment in funding to support digitization partnerships with archives, museums, local history and arts organizations for Ontario heritage access.

2.8 Given the Public Library's key role in access and training for employment opportunities (including the cultural sector) and as a significant support for student volunteer hours, we recommend an investment in staffing and resourcing that results in youth employment, training and awareness of cultural initiatives and programming.

2.9 Funding for a provincial strategy to invest in expanding the role of the public library to support entrepreneurship, small businesses, start-up opportunities and cultural employment.

3. Invest in strategies that will support community & culture development

Foster collaborative program and funding frameworks for cultural organizations and individuals to work in partnership with libraries:

3.1 Recognize the entry level role of libraries in promoting employment opportunities in cultural activities at the local level for artists, performers, artisans, musicians, Indigenous and digital creators and create programs for province wide activities that build foundations for increasing their success.

3.2 Support cultural activities for all libraries but recognize the special needs and circumstances of rural, northern, francophone, and remote and Indigenous communities.

3.3 Build stronger supports for youth cultural programming in libraries.

3.4 Invest in a centralized, provincial online cultural event and activities directory as well as social media tools to help Ontarians fully engage in Ontario and Canadian culture through all cultural institutions including libraries.

3.5 Ensure that there is free public library service on every reserve in Ontario as well as a digital presence for all indigenous Ontario residents.

Conclusion

Our big message is that Ontario's libraries already act as community hubs for culture and have done so for centuries. The diversity of locations, talent, technology, programming, and open hours can accomplish much more for Ontario and Ontarians with increased funding. We have a long history of community partnerships and working on a collaborative basis and within shared governance models. By embedding libraries into the culture planning cycle and considerations of all ministries, there is a huge opportunity to ensure improved success of government policies, programs and goals in a cost effective and more efficient way and to support the employment, innovation, creativity, and economic impact of our cultural sector.

The library association and organization partners that worked on this submission stand ready through our diverse leadership, volunteer boards, members, and partners, to discuss this submission and the role of libraries in Ontario's culture strategy at any time.

The public library sector welcomes this review and looks forward to powerful government initiatives that support cultural engagement for Ontarians through Ontario's Public Libraries. We encourage the government to consult more widely beyond library organizations and to consult with key players in the municipal community such as Association of Municipal Organizations (AMO) and Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), which represent key players in library funding in Ontario.

We support our government in engaging our sector at the OLA Super Conference February 1 - 4, 2017 for a consultation event and additional group conversations.

We encourage the Ministry to review the white papers and studies provided to the ministry over the past few years (listed in Appendix B) for more background detail.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in this process.

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Sincerely,

Stephen Abram

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Representing its divisions and alliances:

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- Ontario Public Library Association
- Ontario School Library Association
- Ontario Library Boards Association
- L'Association des bibliothèques de l'Ontario-Franco
- Ontario Library Information Technology Association
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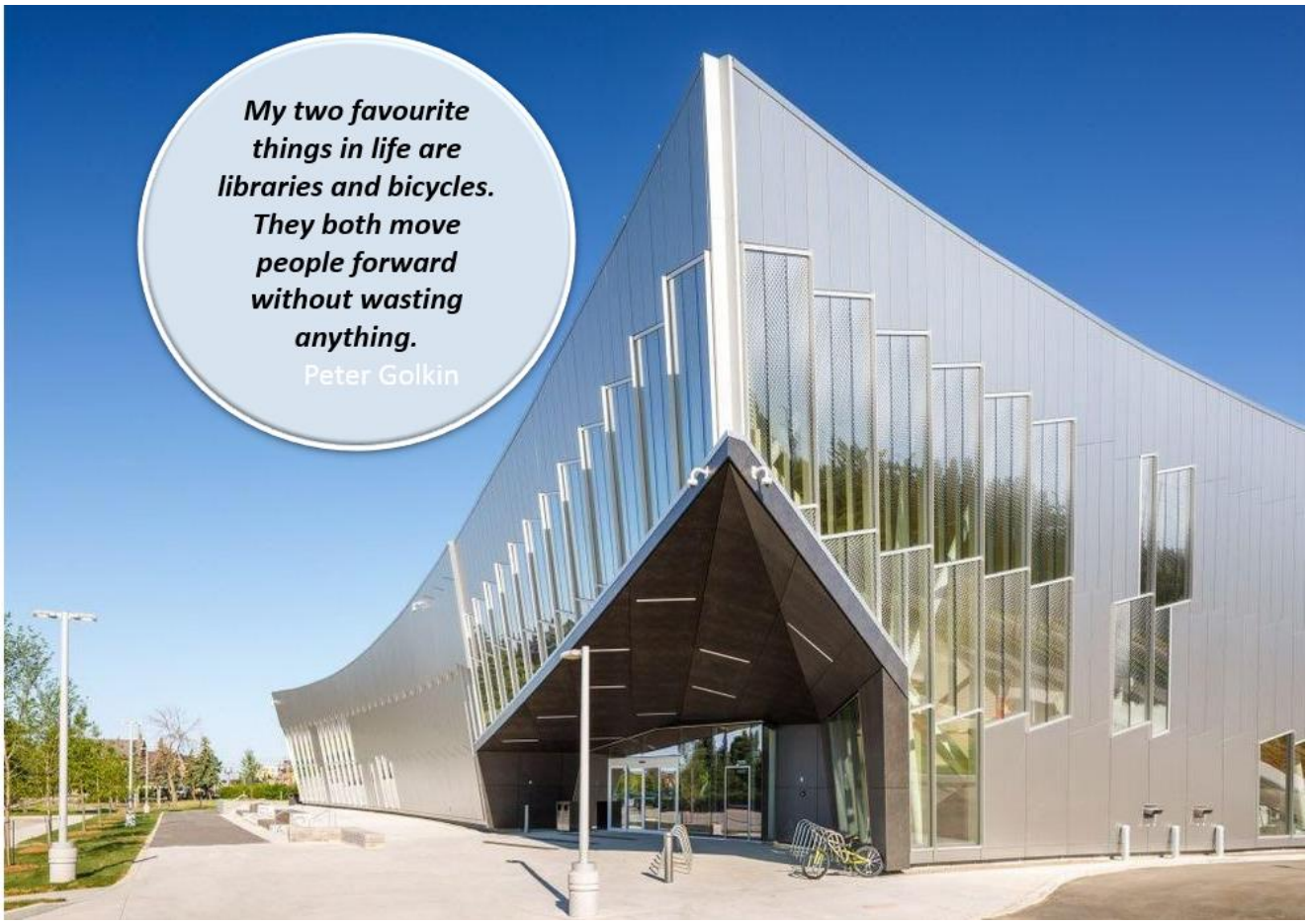
Appendices:

A. Three year historical provincial funding chart.
B. Resources: list of public library white papers and studies
C. Ontario Public Library Associations
D. Ontario Public Library Fact Sheet
E. Principles to Guide Support for the Public Library Role in Culture



A: Three year historical provincial funding chart.

There are several facts that need to be documented here:

1. The Provincial Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) was cut 50% in the mid-nineties.

2. There have been no changes to this lower rate grant for over two decades – not even cost of living increases.

3. The PLOG is widely perceived by municipalities and some libraries as unfair since it has not fully taken into account population changes.

4. While several targeted grant opportunities were offered in the last decade these are now mostly sun-setting with no confidence that they will re-appear.

5. Recent cuts included:
   - e-Resources funding grant ceased at Dec. 31, 2015 - $2.3 million
   - Connectivity funding prior to Dec. 31, 2016 - $400,000

6. The following grants are up for review, renewal or sun-setting:
   - OLCF Funding - $10 million over 3 years through March 31, 2017
   - Connectivity funding
   - CELA funding - $900,000+

7. While we appreciate and apply for grants with gratitude, these do not ensure sustainability for important programs and institutions as our sector transforms itself to adapt to the digital 21st Century.

NOTE:

The Net Present Value (spending power) of $33 million in 1996 has declined over 20 years to $14 million.

The provincial government's PLOG support of Ontario's public libraries has declined every year since the cuts of the 1990's.

Our analysis of the funding of Public Libraries in Ontario: for discussion purposes only

GRANTS	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	COMMENTS
Library sector support	**$ 28,594,600**	**$ 29,094,600.00**	**$ 27,494,600.00**	numbers from Budgets Estimates
PLOG	$ 18,712,676	$ 18,712,676	$ 18,712,676	$4,127,362 for TPL included
Other grants:	$ 9,881,924	$ 10,381,924	$ 8,781,924	formula based calculation
OLCF: IT & Service Capacity	$ 2,983,759	$ 2,478,142	$ 2,500,000	from Ministry website
OLCF: Research Projects		$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000	from Ministry website
Pay Equity	$ 2,009,431	$ 2,009,431	$ 2,009,431	select library recipients
First Nation Supplements	$ 585,000	$ 585,000	$ 585,000	$13,000 per FN library (45 libraries)
Connectivity	$ 573,373	$ 513,029	$ 260,000	
OLA	$ 40,000	$ 40,000	$ 40,000	
Total	***$ 6,191,563***	***$ 6,625,602***	***$ 6,394,431***	
OLS:				
SOLS	$ 3,145,800	$ 3,145,800	$ 3,145,800	numbers from Budgets Estimates
OLS-North	$ 1,645,800	$ 1,645,800	$ 1,645,800	numbers from Budgets Estimates
Total	***$ 4,791,600***	***$ 4,791,600***	***$ 4,791,600***	
CELA				$900,000 per year ask from MTCS

TOTAL SECTOR SUPPORT:	**$ 33,386,200**	**$ 33,886,200**	**$ 32,286,200**	Library sector support + OLS numbers

B. Resources: list of public library white papers and studies

References and Websites:

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries / La Fédération des Bibliothèques Publique de L'Ontario (FOPL)

http://www.fopl.ca

FOPL Strategic Plan
http://fopl.ca/news/new-fopl-strategic-plan-2016-2020/

FOPL Visuals: Graphics for Social Media: The Exciting FOPL Project
http://stephenslighthouse.com/2015/11/05/graphics-for-social-media-the-exciting-fopl-project/

Joint FOPL/OLA White Paper submission to the Ontario Premier's Council on Culture Strategy
http://fopl.ca/fopl-2015-public-policy-submissions-to-the-ontario-government/culture_strategy_discussion_paper/

Joint FOPL/OLA White Paper submission to the Ontario Premier's Council on Community Hubs
http://fopl.ca/fopl-2015-public-policy-submissions-to-the-ontario-government/pitresubmissionjune-3-2015/

FOPL Ontario Public Library Statistics and Operating Data 2005-2014
http://fopl.ca/news/ontario-public-library-statistics-2001-2014-full-report

FOPL Analysis of First Nation Library Peers and Influencers
http://www.slideshare.net/stephenabram1/fn-libraries-and-their-peers-2

FOPL Market Probe Public Opinion Poll on the Attitudes of Ontarians about Public Libraries 2015
http://www.slideshare.net/stephenabram1/market-probe-fopl-presentation-20150509v7animated-68588314

FOPL Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries
http://fopl.ca/media/2013/11/OISE-Report-FINAL-29June2012.pdf

Press Release: Ontario Public Library Usage and Visits at an All Time High! January 13, 2015

Other relevant government submissions
http://fopl.ca/news/fopl-2015-public-policy-submissions-to-the-ontario-government/

Ontario Library Association (OLA, OPLA, OLBA)

http://www.accessola.com

Ontario Public Libraries Week
http://www.oplw.ca

OPLA Children's Services Benchmark and Statistical Report 2016
http://www.accessola.org/WEB/Documents/OLA/Divisions/OPLA/ChildandYouthReport2015_FINAL_web.pdf

Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS)

https://www.sols.org/

LearnHQ (SOLS)
http://www.learnhq.ca/

Libraries 2025 website

http://symposia.library.on.ca/?id=2025.asp&label=2025
Libraries 2020 website
http://symposia.library.on.ca/?id=2020.asp&label=2020
Anne Marie Madziak of SOLS has written excellent articles for Canada's *Municipal World* magazine about public libraries and culture – here are the links:
How the staff in your public library are local culture heroes
http://sols.org/files/docs/News%20Feeds/municipalworld_sept2015_am.pdf
Public Libraries: where impromptu exchanges build community and belonging
http://www.learnhq.ca/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3068523/File/docs/MW-Sep2014-Madziak.pdf
Public Libraries: helping communities thrive in a changing world
http://www.sols.org/files/docs/develop/advice/communitydev/Municipal_World_July2012_Madziak.pdf
Supporting success for newcomers
http://www.sols.org/files/docs/News/MW-May2016-Madziak.pdf

Ontario Library Service - North (OLS-North)
http://www.olsn.ca/

Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC)
http://www.culc.ca/

Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport

Ontario public library statistics open data
https://www.ontario.ca/data/ontario-public-library-statistics
The Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling our stories, growing our economy
https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-culture-strategy-telling-our-stories-growing-our-economy

Stephen's Lighthouse blog by Stephen Abram, MLS
http://www.stephenslighthouse.com
Value of Libraries Megapost: Impact Studies: Read through the list of public library and other library impact studies
http://stephenslighthouse.com/2013/08/29/value-of-libraries-megapost/

*"Books permit us to voyage through time, to tap the wisdom of our ancestors. The library connects us with the insight and knowledge, painfully extracted from Nature, of the greatest minds that ever were, with the best teachers, drawn from the entire planet and from all our history, to instruct us without tiring, and to inspire us to make our own contribution to the collective knowledge of the human species. I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries." –***Carl Sagan*, **Cosmos**

C. Ontario Public Library Associations

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D. Ontario Public Libraries Fact Sheets

1) **Public Libraries in Ontario**
2) **Rural Public Libraries in Ontario**
3) **First Nation Public Libraries in Ontario**

The Facts on Public Libraries in Ontario

Talking Points That Hit Home (Ontario's communities are our home!)

Ontario's Public Libraries are the ORIGINAL Community Hubs

Public libraries as Ontario's most important **community hubs** aligns us with a key cabinet level consultation agenda on community hubs. Our libraries have always been **essential digital hubs** for all Ontarians regardless of their means. **We support all Ontarians**; from youths and new Canadians to the employed and unemployed alike.

Ontario's Public Libraries are CULTURAL Hubs in Every Community

In 2015 Ontario's Cabinet is consulting Ontarians about Ontario's First Culture Strategy for Ontario. OLA and FOPL will be submitting ideas and recommendations on behalf of all libraries. **Public libraries play local and provincial cultural roles** beyond just building collections for the creative community. They also support 'Culture Days', provide exhibit space for artists and artisans, support Canadian authors, performers, and artists and educate visitors in the arts and culture sector.

Ontario's Public Libraries Bridge the Learning and Digital Divide

As Ontario's government moves inevitably towards providing more e-government services to reduce costs and increase efficiency, **Ontario's public libraries are the source for the almost 25% of Ontarians who have no access to the internet at home or work**. Only libraries have the professional staff, training opportunities, equipment, access, and time to serve every community in the province.

Ontario's Public Libraries by the Numbers

(From the 2015 FOPL / Market Probe Canada public opinion poll and the FOPL 2013 Ontario Public Library Data Analysis)

- Ontario's Public Library Systems **serve over 98% of Ontarians** in some capacity.
    - Ontarians borrowed almost 134 million items in 2013; about 10 items for every Ontario resident.
    - Ontario has over 307 library systems with over 1100 service points and over 11,000 public access computer workstations.
    - **Ontarians asked over 5.6 million research questions** through public libraries.

- Over **5 million Ontario residents** make hundreds of millions of visits to the library, in person and virtually, *every* year.
    - **Two thirds of Ontarians report visiting a public library last year**.

- **Over 5.1 million Ontarians have an active library membership card** – a number grows every year a true measure of public support. **73% of Ontarians report owning a public library card!**

- **Ontario's Libraries offer over 204,000 programs per year, attended by over 3.7 million people!**

- Ontario's over 10,000 library workers engage over 17,000 **volunteers** – especially high schoolers meeting their volunteer hour commitments.

- Ontario's public libraries offer access to millions of dollars of **high quality electronic resources, databases and e-books for just over $1 per Ontarian**.
    - Nearly every Ontario library system has multiple presences on the web including their website and social media presences that provide constant access to many of the library's resources.

Return on Investments from Ontario's Public Libraries

- Many studies show that **public investment in libraries delivers a measurable, positive return on investment** economically, socially and for the capacity of communities to attract businesses and residents.

- A 2012 study by the University of Toronto's Martin Prosperity Institute for the Toronto Public Library (TPL) discovered that:
    - TPL creates over **$1 billion in total economic impact**.
    - TPL delivers **$5.63 of economic impact for every $1 spent**.
    - The return from the City of Toronto's investment in the Toronto Public Library is **463%**, which is the midpoint of a range very conservatively estimated to be 244% and is comfortably shown to reach 681%.
    - This study has been repeated over systems large and small with similar results!

Rural Public Libraries in Ontario

Public libraries are an integral part of any community, regardless of size. However there are unique **opportunities for libraries to strengthen rural communities**, as well as unique challenges.

Essential Services Public Libraries Provide Rural Communities

- Libraries **provide agricultural and business development resources**, as well as workshops to support rural entrepreneurs.

- They serve a variety of functions as important **business spaces**.
    - Pre-screening centres allow for job seekers to avoid travelling to a larger city.
    - Exam proctors spaces (i.e. real-estate exams, and Agri-business courses).
    - Act as a significant community **youth employer**/provider of Ontario **student volunteer hours** (OSSD hours).

- They can act as **catalysts for downtown revitalization** in rural communities.
    - Key contact points for government services via **Service Canada outlets**.
    - Allow for free, 24 hour **access to the internet**, and specifically broadband access.
    - They are leaders and facilitators of cultural mapping for regional townships.
    - Provide gallery spaces for local artists.

- They provide crucial **services for community outreach**.
    - Often house **municipal information desks and services**: tax payment, dog tags, marriage licenses, water sample drops off, burn permits, and a multitude of other services.
    - They are key locations for **local fundraising efforts**.
    - Active partners with local agencies such as the YWCA (i.e. babysitting, programming).

Challenges Faced by Ontario's Rural Public Libraries

- Funding to support employment and government related services at the library has diminished, despite that these services are very much in demand.

- **10% of Ontario's library systems** require residents to travel **more than 30 minutes** to reach the nearest public library.

- **Few rural schools have a resourced school library program**, which negatively impacts reading engagement and digital media skills for students in rural communities.

- The estimated public library capital infrastructure obligation in Ontario for all communities is $1.4 billion at present. If not properly addressed, this obligation will grow to $2.1 billion by 2021.

First Nations Public Libraries in Ontario

- First Nations communities require public libraries just as much as any other community.

- Public libraries often serve as an **accessible gathering place** and **information sharing resource** for many First Nations communities, where they exist.

- There is broad recognition and support for the concept of continuing education at the community level as well as **increased accessibility to all educational outlets**, including public libraries.

- There are **133 First Nations communities** in Ontario. Of these, only **46 have public libraries**.

Funding Ontario's First Nations Public Libraries

- The traditional source of tax revenue for non-native public libraries does not exist for public libraries in First Nations communities.

- Provincial funding for these libraries is administered by the **Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport** through the Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) and the First Nation Salary Supplement Grant (FNSS). These funds provide on average **$15,000/year** to each of these existing libraries.

- Federal funding for these libraries is taken from funds that are **allocated for on-reserve education**. Funding levels for on-reserve education are **more than 30% lower than off-reserve**, leaving little left to establish new libraries.

- **Band Councils** are therefore tasked with **providing essential support** such as rent, hydro, internet, fax and telephone service.

Challenges Faced by Ontario's First Nations Public Libraries

First Nations public libraries are either governed by their Band primarily in the culture, recreation, or education departments. The location of the library in the school system can make it difficult to establish a public library identity in the community.

- A significant number First Nations people **do not own or have access to a computer and the internet**. Many **cannot afford to buy books** for themselves and their families.

- Ontario's First Nations students under the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada system face an **80% failure rate**.
    - Students who participated in provincial standardized testing in 2013-2014 showed an **average literacy score of 21% for boys and 32% for girls**.
    - In terms of overall literacy, these numbers place Ontario First Nations students **behind 205 other countries** -- at levels slightly higher than Sub-Saharan Africa.

  *Six Nations Public Library is a FNPL but is governed by a separate Library Board according to the requirement of Boards under the Public Library Act.

E. Principles to Guide Support for Public Library Roles in Culture

The Culture Strategy for Ontario: Telling our stories; Growing our economy

"Based on public feedback, Ontario's first Culture Strategy focuses on four key goals:

- promote cultural engagement and inclusion
- strengthen culture in communities
- fuel the creative economy
- Promote the value of the arts throughout government.

To realize these four goals, we're taking action in a number of areas, including:

- supporting the conservation of heritage buildings by making energy efficiency improvements through Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan
- creating a new fund that will support publishers to develop learning resources to encourage the use of diverse Canadian content in schools
- creating opportunities for workers in the culture sector to enhance their technical and business skills training
- developing a new fund to support cultural activities in Indigenous communities and supporting youth cultural camps to build leadership skills and promote awareness of traditional knowledge"

Ontario's Public Libraries

Key themes

- Protection of Canadian content in the culture media world
- Cross-fertilization of ideas and partnerships across cultural media, including urging the Ministries of Education and Culture, etc. to work together
- Concern about whether big C culture enthusiasts do not do enough to make space/welcome/promote small 'c' culture
- Concern about lack of awareness about cultural happenings – do we need a central provincial database or website?
- Interest in starting Ontarians young – school-based programs for arts and culture
- Could there be a provincial tax break for enrolling your kids in cultural programming?

Libraries can participate:

- In our role as connectors – connecting cultural media to one another is natural for us (bringing a book to life via films, theatre, spoken word poetry, linking the opera to mythology, books about painting etc.) and we are a natural hub

- In our role as facilitators of lifelong learning: bringing the maker culture into the creative realm, for instance
- As a cultural institution that has many customers and garners public respect – available to partner on grant applications
- As a low-barrier physical space that equalizes members of the community and provides a natural third place for cultural events and collaborations the idea of grants that could be directed to libraries to improve their cultural infrastructure. Libraries already have facilities with programming space, and are ubiquitous in every community, but for a small investment these facilities could be upgraded or expanded to make them more amenable to things like performance. For some it could be a simple as buying a set of theatre-style chairs!

Libraries are Your Cultural Playground

Your local public and school library is ready to support culture! Libraries are meeting and working with other community organizations to collectively support the aspirations and needs of their community in a strategic way. Libraries are community hubs and can be:

- A platform and space for cultural programs, projects and events
- A venue for civic art
- The public space for showcasing and learning about the literary arts (book culture)
- Digital learning hubs: 3-D printers, maker-spaces, digital literacy (how to use devices, programs, etc.)
- A connector to local historical associations to bring regional heritage (including a great deal of cultural heritage) to the fore. In some cases, local libraries can be de facto archives, or enhance the archival collections held elsewhere in the community.
- A valuable source of genealogical information, which can then be used to highlight shared experiences.

Libraries can be a discovery gateway for literary, film, fine and music arts, as well as the most comprehensive destination to access philosophies and academic studies on arts and culture.

Libraries can be a public space where people of all cultures and who practice all beliefs are welcome and the place where barriers can be broken down through sharing and learning.

Our goal is to sustain the cultural vitality of a community by nurturing creative expression, hosting and promoting a range of culture events and celebrating diversity and ethnicities by inviting different generations and different cultures to come together to share experiences.

The Ontario library community would like to expand our programs to help people realize their cultural aspirations.

Culture Strategy Principles

Our sector supports the vision and principles of this first Ontario Culture Strategy. Indeed public libraries have been engaging in these strategies for many decades.

"A vision for culture in Ontario

An Ontario where every person has the opportunity for creative expression and cultural participation, and where the diversity of our stories and communities is reflected, valued and celebrated, now and as part of our legacy to future generations.

Principles to guide government support for culture

Creativity and innovation

Culture exposes us to new ideas and inspires new ways of thinking. Support for culture should help to nourish and reward creativity, exploration, experimentation and innovation.

Quality of life and economic development

Culture contributes significantly to both quality of life and economic development in Ontario. Support for culture should help to enrich our lives, strengthen and animate our communities and build a dynamic business environment in Ontario.

Diversity and inclusion

Ontario's rich diversity is one of our greatest strengths. We should all have the opportunity to participate in Ontario's diverse cultural life, regardless of age, background, language, ability or where we live in the province. Support for culture should recognize people with disabilities and people who are Deaf as cultural and linguistic communities with unique identities, experiences and values.

Respect for Indigenous peoples

Indigenous cultures, languages and heritage represent distinct identities, histories and ways of life. Ontario is committed to reconciliation by strengthening and transforming its relationship with Indigenous communities and by implementing changes that reflect Indigenous priorities.

Collaboration and partnerships

The talents and contributions of many people and organizations make our culture sector strong and vibrant. Support for culture should encourage collaboration and partnerships among provincial ministries and agencies; municipal, provincial/territorial, federal and Indigenous partners; not-for-profit arts and culture organizations; the private sector; and all communities and individuals.

Public value and accountability

Government investment in culture should be guided by what Ontarians value and by what makes a positive difference in the lives of individuals and communities. This ministry, its agencies and the organizations we fund are accountable for achieving the best possible outcomes within available resources."

FOPL's Role and Principles:

In the context of this Ontario Culture Strategy above, we share the following:

Our role and the Public Library value proposition is strong and includes (but isn't limited to):

- ***Support*** **Cultural Vitality**
- ***Excellent*** **Return on Investment**
- ***Strong*** **Economic Development**
- ***Great*** **Employment Support**
- ***Welcoming*** **New Canadians**
- ***Provable*** **Early Literacy Development**
- ***Ongoing*** **Support for Formal Education and Homework Help**
- **Serve the whole community *equitably***
- ***Affordable*** **access to community resources**
- **Access to Government Services and *e-government***
- **Questions Deserve *Quality* Answers**
- **Develop community partnerships to ensure vital communities**
- **Digital literacy training and support**
- **Creation and performance spaces**
- **Recognized and *Valued* Leisure Activities for majority of Ontarians**

In this context we encourage the Ministry's Public Library Funding Review to filter any ideas and ultimate recommendations through these lens:

- Sustainability
- Dependability
- Special Needs

- Value for indigenous communities as well as small, rural, and remote libraries
- Recognition of Large Urban public libraries as key socio-cultural institutions for dealing with New Canadians, Refugees, social issues, etc. on a much larger scale and as the key gateway to Ontario and Canada.
- Recognition of public libraries as the key “homework helper’ in all communities delivered with zero funding from the responsible Ministry of Education.
- Recognition of public libraries as the key “e-learning and distance education’ support in all communities delivered with zero funding from the responsible Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.
- Recognition that public libraries are the key connectivity provider for up to 25% of Ontario families and residents. Cuts to connectivity funding will damage our progress in serving these under-resourced communities and have a bad effect on people in poverty or at subsistence.
- Equity and Access
- Government Policy Impact
- Balance and Service Equity for Ontarians
- Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity
- Value for government investment
- Community engagement

Do a large number of Ministries have a provincial interest in funding public libraries? YES!

Broad principles:

Working towards equity of access:

- Building a successful/stronger province
- Educated citizenry
- Support broad range of government policy initiatives (early years, newcomers)
- Provincial contribution could be ameliorated to promote provincial policies and priorities
- AODA (CELA), Anti-Poverty, FN, Franco-Ontarians, Indigenous, rural, and remote communities

Strong agencies to support even the smallest libraries:

- SOLS and OLS-North are vital supports for cost-effective, collaborative public library services.
- Assist in providing library service: virtual and live
- Provide staff training, support, and professional development online and locally
- Serve as a cost-effective way to consult, deliver grants, serve under-served communities like indigenous reserves, provide a collaboration nexus, and much more.

Key Issues

The issues our sector most wants to address is the inadequate funding of public libraries in Ontario given the great strides we have made in supporting government policy and Ontario residents. We want to ensure stable funding, flexible funding, ease of access for Ontarians, equity of access for all, and ensuring the ongoing success of our communities as they live, work, play, and learn. Public Libraries have proven the value and strong ability to adapt to constant demographic, technological, and policy change.

Ontario's Public Libraries are Ontario's largest cultural institution as measured by gate count, program attendance, number of sites, and our valued role in Ontario's communities.

Ontario's libraries are by many measures one of the most popular cultural institutions in the province.

Ontario's publicly funded library sector includes academic, school and public libraries. For the scope of this consultation we recognize public libraries as a leading cultural hub, with opportunities to leverage staff, space, technology and programs to benefit Ontario cultural strategies.

Libraries are Your Cultural Playground

Your local public and school library is a key support infrastructure for culture! Libraries are meeting and working with other community organizations to collectively support the aspirations and needs of their communities in a strategic way. Libraries are community hubs and are:

- A platform and space for cultural programs, projects and events
- A venue for local and Canadian art, craft, artisans and artists
- The public space for showcasing and learning about the literary arts (book culture), especially Local Canadian authors in reading series and their collections. Library cardholders discover Ontario and Canadian writers at the library.
- Digital learning hubs: 3-D printers, maker-spaces, digital literacy (how to use devices, programs, etc.) and the photographic arts.
- A connector to local historical associations to bring regional heritage (including a great deal of cultural heritage) to the fore. In some cases, local libraries can be de facto archives, or enhance the archival collections held elsewhere in the community. Many operate as museums and galleries for local culture and collections.
- A valuable source of genealogical information, which can then be used to highlight shared experiences.

Libraries are a discovery gateway for literary, film, fine and music arts, as well as the most comprehensive destination to access philosophies and academic studies on arts and culture.

Libraries are a public space where people of all cultures and who practice all beliefs are welcome and the place where barriers can be broken down through sharing and learning.

Our goal is to sustain the cultural vitality of a community by nurturing creative expression, hosting and promoting a range of culture events and celebrating diversity and ethnicities by inviting different generations and different cultures to come together to share experiences.

The Ontario library community would like to hear from communities how we can help people realize their cultural aspirations.

About Public Libraries in Ontario:

For just 49 cents per capita public libraries offer:

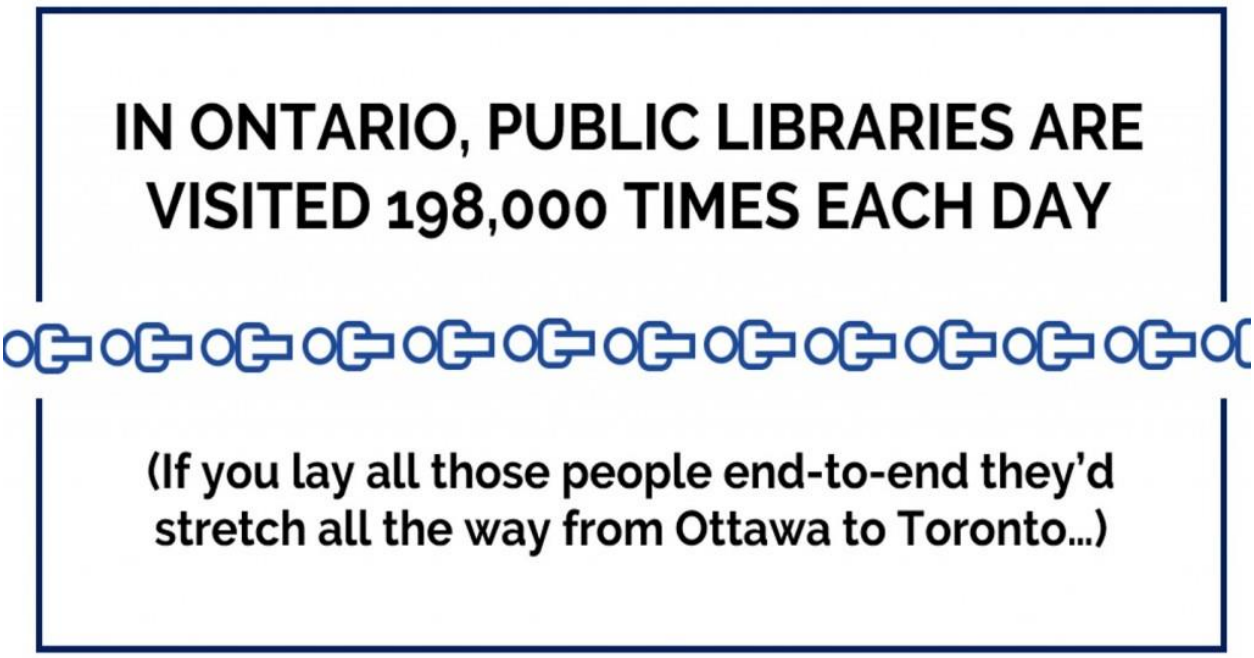
- Access to public library service for 99.34% of Ontarians and 444 municipalities offer public library service through 1,157 service outlets (with the exception of First Nation reserves, where there are limited public library services, **there is a public library in every community**).
- Public libraries are non-partisan and are free of charge by law.
- Almost 5.0 million Ontario residents have *active* library cards and over 73% of Ontarians used their library last year
- Ontarians borrow over 131 million items a year.
- Ontario's public libraries provide access to 11,500 public computer workstations, and hundreds of online resources.
- Ontario's public libraries offer 203,964 programs with annual attendance of 3,719,083 people.
- There are over 175,000,000 visits to libraries a year – in person and digitally.
- Many public libraries are located with other community hubs: in recreation centres, malls, and schools.

Source: 2013 Ontario Public Library Statistics, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport.

All library services have grown as the digital age continues apace. Cardholders have increased, collections grow, and programs are hugely more popular than ever before.

IN ONTARIO, PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE VISITED 72.5 MILLION TIMES EACH YEAR
That's 12 million more visits than the NFL, NHL and NBA's combined North American ticket sales
That's around 1.4 million visits per week – more people than live in Hamilton, Oshawa and Windsor combined!
That's 8,276 visits EVERY hour...
SO NEXT TIME SOMEONE SAYS LIBRARIES ARE NO LONGER RELEVANT, CONSIDER THOSE STATS FOR A MINUTE.
(AND DURING THAT MINUTE, 137 PEOPLE WILL VISIT A PUBLIC LIBRARY.)

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES BY TYPE:
PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS ATTENDING
Any Museum: 32%
Public & Commercial Art Galleries: 33%
Any Performing Arts: 55.0%
Public Libraries: 73%


IN ONTARIO, PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE VISITED 198,000 TIMES EACH DAY
(If you lay all those people end-to-end they'd stretch all the way from Ottawa to Toronto...)