



∴ ontario library association



Dec. 7, 2015

Ontario Culture Strategy Consultation

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Hearst Block, 9th Floor
900 Bay Street Toronto, ON
M7A 2E1

RE: Joint Ontario Culture Strategy Submission by the Ontario Library Association and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

The Ontario Library Association and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries represent the library sector in Ontario. Ontario has thousands of library workers as well as thousands of libraries of all types. Each plays a key role in their sectors and communities in the cultural vitality of Ontario and the ability of Ontarians to access our stories and our culture. Beyond that, we also play a strong role in the ability of Ontario residents to create cultural objects and events, innovate and participate in cultural activities.

Our Context:

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.

EVERYONE LOVES PUBLIC LIBRARIES, BUT JUST HOW MUCH DO WE LOVE THEM IN ONTARIO?



72.5 Million Visits per year



198,630 Visits per day



8,276 Visits per hour



137 Visits per minute!

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...)

We have chosen to provide library examples and comments in the context of your questions in the ***Discussion Paper: Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy: Developing a Culture Strategy for Ontario.***

1. What does culture mean to you and your community?

Libraries take the broadest view of what 'culture' means. We respect and support the mosaic of culture in Ontario while also acknowledging the local and community context of cultural activities. We support 'big' culture through community wide events, concerts, and fairs. We support the local artist and artisan movements. We provide opportunities for the creative class in our communities to thrive and exhibit and perform their creations. We also play a big role in the research and learning spheres where our residents, practitioners, learners and students have access to the resources (people, training, space, collections and technology) that allows them to succeed and learn.

2. What is the greatest cultural experience you have had in Ontario? What made it great?

Libraries provide so many of these experiences! Whether it's a an entry level event for artists, writers, and artisans – local history exhibits, author reading series, art gallery shows highlighting local artists - or a major event - like Word on the Street, Local Concerts, Comic Con or Maker Fairs - that attracts tens of thousands of attendees.

It's the diversity of programs that makes these great and has an impact on the individual artists, the attendees, and the exploration of Canadian culture at the local level that might be impractical in some smaller towns and regions.

These programs in local libraries are growing rapidly and are in partnership and bring together many local groups to succeed.

3. How do you see households (if applicable) participating in culture?

From the library perspective, we see Ontarians increasingly engaging in their libraries as community hub and cultural activities through library programs and partnerships with community arts organizations. According to a 2015 poll by Market Probe Canada, over 73% of Ontarians report using their public library – not just to borrow books, music and film, but to attend programs and engage with their community and culture.

4. Are you participating as much as you would like? If not, why?

There is a lot of room for growth to benefit the quality of cultural life in all of Ontario's communities. Library activities are limited by the lack of clear frameworks for partnerships, inadequate space (including AODA compliance), funding issues, and more.

5. How can we strengthen and grow the culture sector in Ontario so that it continues to contribute to our social and economic well-being?

We support the position of the *The Ontario Book Publishers Organization* in their submission. We do this because Ontario's libraries are a major market for Canadian authors, books and cultural objects. Ontario's libraries stand as a primary support for the Canadian publishing industry and employment for authors and creators as our Canadian creative class. To quote:

"The Ontario government needs to take immediate steps to support Canadian books and Canadian writers in Ontario classrooms, according to a statement released today by the Ontario Book Publishers Organization. "The benefits of having children reading works that reflect their own communities, their own values, and the issues of their own time, are well-established, particularly in as multicultural a society as Ontario," said OBPO president David Caron. "Other provinces, including British Columbia and Saskatchewan, have taken some steps to require that Canadian-authored literature is taught in their schools. Ontario must do no less for its students." The Ontario Book Publishers Organization affirms that mandating Canadian novels in Ontario classrooms is the most urgent step for the provincial government to take of the four major ways that book publishing should be supported as part of Ontario's cultural strategy."

"As part of its culture strategy, there are four major ways in which the Ontario government can support its book publishers and authors they serve:

- ┌ Mandate Canadian novels in the Ontario curriculum
- ┌ Increase support for the Ontario Media Development Corporation and the Ontario Arts Council
- ┌ Increase support for Ontario Libraries"

6. How can we inspire more youth to create, consume, and participate in Ontario culture?

Libraries are very successful in attracting youth to a wide range of programs that go far beyond reading, research and homework. Many libraries now support makerspace activities, arts and crafts, digital innovation centres to create and edit and promote their music, film and spoken word works. These programs attract a wide range of teens and young adults while creating a safe space to explore their talents and abilities.

A 2013 OLA study confirms that more than 70% of Ontario's public libraries offer programs specifically developed for teens. More than half of Ontario public libraries have teen committees planning programming and are involved with collections. The most popular programs for teens are book clubs, makerspaces, film and video, and arts and crafts.

7. How can we help ensure that support for culture reflects Ontario's diverse regions, communities, and populations?

There is a specific need for greater encouragement and funding for local arts as well as collaboration frameworks for a broader strategy focused on the local cultural sector. Libraries are the only space that exists in every community that is fully open to all. Not every community in Ontario has a bank, a post office, a Tim Horton's, or a mall. Every town has a library that is staffed and has space, open hours, collections, WiFi and technology open to all with professional help and programs for all. Indeed it's the library sector that provides the infrastructure for e-government, government program delivery at all levels, and learning support for all residents of Ontario. Indeed, for the 25% of Ontarians who do not have access to the internet at home or work, libraries level the playing field for access to culture digitally and the broader world for Ontario's residents. A cultural hub strategy for local communities which could form a framework to provide the opportunity for various local culture and arts programs to meet and design a community strategy. Public libraries are a logical centre for this transformational activity.

8. How can we help the culture sector respond to digital challenges and opportunities?

Libraries continue to innovate on many levels and have seen huge usage increases in their usage since the advent of the Internet and digital tools and resources. Libraries are a poster child for great adaptation to changing conditions in the 21st Century world. That said, there is a need for:

- [Better funding frameworks to support further innovation through cultural hubs like libraries which are infrastructure that is both well managed and costs effective and has a long history of partnerships with the cultural sector and organizations.
- [Increased involvement of the library sector in government program and policy planning. Libraries are often playing catch up to address government policy priorities and the needs of our communities.
- [Increased recognition of the role of libraries in the development of the creative class and cultural employment which, while it can be a secondary employment sector, more youthful, and often precarious world, is inhabited by passionate talented residents who can be world class artists, creators, and innovators.
- [Ensuring that all libraries have ubiquitous access to broadband infrastructure (including First Nations reserves) and up-to-date technology and digital resources that support the kinds of things that artists and cultural creators use.

9. In a time of scarce resources, what key culture priorities should the Ontario government support? How can your organization (if applicable) work in partnership with the government to support these priorities?
 - [Libraries are recognized, safe repositories of Canadian content and cultural creations. These institutions in all sectors need to be

recognized in government planning and policy implementation. Grants that could be directed to libraries to improve their cultural infrastructure are needed. Libraries already have good 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 performances and other cultural events. For some it may be as simple as buying a set of theatre-style chairs or professional art hanging systems. For others it may be increasing the Canadian content in their collections.

- [Create opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas and partnerships across cultural media with the library sector, including urging inter-ministerial cooperation such as the Ministries of Education and Tourism etc. working together more collaboratively.
- [Recognize that the entry point for culture is NOT with the Big C cultural institutions but at the local level and in our learning institutions of K-12 and Higher Ed. Smaller venues and events are where future careers (and fame) are practiced and these are essential to the planning frameworks for a successful culture strategy. Libraries are an essential component of these foundations.
- [There is concern about the lack of awareness about cultural happenings at the local level. We should consider a central provincial database, calendar and website as well as social media tools that allow people to filter the activities they are interested in by their profile, location and interests. Some libraries create these calendars for their communities and it places library programming in the greater community context.
- [Much like the Early Years Strategy promoted interest in reading from the earliest age, we need to start Ontarians young and offer greater support and standards for school-based programs for arts and culture (music, theatre arts, performances, art/craft, and more). Could there be a provincial tax break for enrolling your kids in cultural programming?
- [We need specific strategies to support those Ontarians who live in regions where cultural activities are essential but largely unaffordable. Strategies to support First Nations, incarcerated individuals, rural and remote regions, and more need to be considered beyond just the big towns and cities.
- [We need to increase and support collaborative frameworks for strengthening curriculum strategies across public libraries, school libraries and school boards.

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;

10. Do the guiding principles on page 9 reflect what is important to you? Are there others we should consider?

Yes. These are good guiding principles.

We would suggest the addition of one more – the concept of **Cooperation, collaboration and partnerships**. The cultural sector is a huge sector of largely smaller, underfunded organizations combined with creators who largely live below the poverty line or are employed in precarious working arrangements. A key principal that encourages working together (and follow through with funding and organizational support as well as the provision or shared space and facilities) plays into the best practice of cost-effective collaborations that become more sustainable and use resources and funding well. Libraries are great partners and have a long history of supporting cooperative frameworks while respecting what the other partners bring to the table.

11. What is the Ontario government doing well to support the arts, cultural industries, public libraries, and cultural heritage sectors? What would you like to see changed? Are there best practices that Ontario could learn from and adapt? The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport provides many supporting services and some funding for public libraries. It collects data and makes these data available under the open data initiative for our sector to use and analyze. Public Libraries and School Libraries often have joint programming and work together but there are few if any cross-ministry provincial frameworks, resources, or funding from the Ministry of Education that support these needed activities – especially with the decline in school libraries across the province and the concomitant increase in homework helper work taken on by public libraries with no Ministry of Education funding. Other provinces like Alberta, Nova Scotia, BC, and Saskatchewan address this issue much better with joint planning and funding of digital resources and programs.

Summary OLA/FOPL Recommendations

1. Include the library sector in cultural planning as a rule.
2. Support Canadian authors by encouraging the provision and acquisition of their works by libraries and in the curriculum – in print, digitally, and including non-print cultural collections like music and film.
3. Support cultural activities for all libraries but recognize the special needs and circumstances of rural, northern, francophone, and remote and First Nations communities.

4. Build stronger supports for youth cultural programming in libraries.
5. Consider building a centralized cultural events and activities provincial database, calendar and website as well as social media tools that allow people to filter the activities they are interested in by their profile, location and interests as well as allowing the program and event planners to promote their initiatives.
6. Recognize the entry level role of libraries in promoting cultural activities at the local level for artists, performers, artisans, musicians, and digital creators and create programs for province-wide activities that build foundations for increasing their success.
7. Foster collaborative frameworks for cultural organizations and individuals to work in partnership with libraries. Add the principle of 'Cooperation, Collaboration and Partnerships'.
8. Share government sponsored and collected data on the cultural sector transparently as an open data initiative. Encourage and support the GIS mapping tools necessary for targeted analysis and program prioritization.
9. Better funding frameworks that encourage and support collaboration to support further innovation and renovation through cultural hubs like libraries which are infrastructure that is both well managed and costs effective and has a long history of partnerships with the cultural sector and organizations.
10. Increase involvement of the library sector in Ontario government program and policy planning.
11. Increase the recognition of the role of libraries in the development of the creative class and cultural employment which, while it can be a secondary employment sector, more youthful, and often precarious world, is inhabited by passionate talented residents who can be world class artists, creators, and innovators.
12. Ensure that all libraries have ubiquitous access to broadband infrastructure (including First Nations reserves) and up-to-date technology and the digital resources that support the kinds of things that artists and cultural creators use.
13. Cross license digital resources that support learning and creative activities across both the public library and K-12 educational sector to create seamless access and experiences to support Ontarians successful learning and skills growth.

Conclusion

Our big message here 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 more for Ontario and Ontarians. 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your important work in building a framework for Ontario's FIRST culture strategy.

The Federation of Public Libraries, the Ontario Library Association (including Ontario Public Library Association, Ontario Library Boards Association, Ontario School Libraries Association), and our 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.

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Sincerely,

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Executive Director

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries
"One Voice for Ontario's Public Libraries"

[Shelagh Paterson](#)

Shelagh Paterson
Executive Director

Ontario Library Association

Representing its divisions and alliances:

Ontario Library Association
Ontario Public Library Association
Ontario School Library Association
Ontario Library Boards Association
Ontario Library Information Technology Association
Ontario College and University Libraries Association
First Nations Libraries Association

APPENDICES:

Selected References:

The following reports are selected as they may be of interest to the Culture Strategy deliberations in their deliberations. Included here are recent studies on the impact of libraries on student performance, impact studies on business and community economic development, as well as independent qualitative and quantitative studies on the impact of libraries on their communities.

Should you require more literature, Ontario's Public Libraries stand at the ready!

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries 2014-2015 Research Package:

Of particular interest to your special advisory position and team is some of the work currently being accomplished by FOPL. We can share these with your team. These include:

1. A Market Probe Canada 2015 public opinion poll on the attitudes and use of public libraries on Ontario that was recently completed for FOPL.
2. An analysis of public library engagement with their communities from 2001-2013 that will be completed for FOPL in spring 2015 and released to members.
3. A census of digital presence of all public libraries in Ontario and analysis of the role of digital communities as public library hub strategies.
4. Recent research on the roles of public libraries to measurably contribute to and enhance school performance and readiness, the economic performance of communities, job and career activities, and the health and vitality of Ontarians.

All of these data show the essential relationship of public libraries as key community hubs and cultural support institutions with existing physical and digital infrastructure that can be exploited further to benefit Ontario

Economic Impact of Milton Public Library:

http://www.mpl.on.ca/documents/2014_10EconomicImpact.pdf

Economic Impact of Stratford Public Library

<http://www.stratfordbeaconherald.com/2015/01/27/economic-impact-of-stratford-public-library-estimated-at-nearly-15-million>

Economic Impact of Toronto Public Library

http://martinprosperity.org/media/TPL%20Economic%20Impact_Dec2013_LR_FINAL.pdf

Value Research Summary Independent and Academic Studies and Reports of Public Libraries and School Libraries

Value of Libraries Megapost

<http://stephenslighthouse.com/2013/08/29/value-of-libraries-megapost/>

The Value of Public Libraries

<http://stephenslighthouse.com/2010/04/06/the-value-of-public-libraries/>

The Value of School Libraries

<http://stephenslighthouse.com/2010/04/06/the-value-of-school-libraries/>

The Value of Academic and College Libraries

<http://stephenslighthouse.com/2010/04/07/value-of-academic-and-college-libraries/>

The Value of Special Libraries

<http://stephenslighthouse.com/2010/04/07/value-of-special-libraries/>

Cheryl Stenström's PhD dissertation on Politicians' and senior civil servants' views of Public Libraries

<http://eprints.qut.edu.au/59510/>

School Readiness – Research and Infographic

FOPL has been investing in research on our members' behalf. We are excited to share digital copies with the library community at large:

Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Public Libraries

by Drs. Shelley Stagg Peterson and Eunice Jang

Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

OISE/University of Toronto

<http://fopl.ca/news/school-readiness-research-and-infographic/>

The Ontario Public Library Association Child and Youth Services Committee. **Teen Services Benchmarks and Statistical Report 2013**

https://www.accessola.org/web/Documents/OLA/Divisions/OPLA/Child_and_youth/OPLATeenReport-FINALb.pdf

The Ontario Public Library Association Child and Youth Services Committee. **Child & Youth Services Benchmarks and Statistical Report**, 2009.

http://accessola2.com/data/5/rec_docs/774_OLACChildrenSurvey2009FINAL.pdf

OLA, OSLA and Ministry of Education School Library Guidelines

Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons

A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY (OSLA)

<https://www.accessola.org/web/Documents/OLA/Divisions/OSLA/TogetherforLearning.pdf>

Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada 2014 (CLA)

<http://clatoolbox.ca/casl/slic/lisop.pdf>

Treasure Mountain

<http://tmcanada.pbworks.com/w/page/22304836/FrontPage>

Here are three articles published in *Municipal World* by Anne Marie Madziak.

“Public Libraries: Champions and Facilitators of Local Culture”, *Municipal World*, Sept. 2015

<http://stephenslighthouse.com/2015/09/01/public-libraries-on-the-cover-of-municipal-world-sept-2015-issue/>

Public Libraries: Where impromptu exchanges build community and belonging (Sept. 2014) 3 page PDF

[MW-Sep2014-Madziak \(1\)](#)

Public Libraries: Helping communities thrive in a changing world (July 2012) 2 page PDF

[MW-July2012-Madziak_helping_communities_thrive \(1\)](#)

More Examples

Library employs new event-planning strategy

May 26, 2015 <http://haliburtonecho.ca/?p=14788>

By Chad Ingram

The Haliburton County Public Library changed the way it planned events for 2015, coordinating with community groups in order to prevent overlapping of programming. The library recently released its 2014 annual report.

“It was observed that many of the organizations offering March Break programming both for free and a fee were doing so on overlapping dates,” library CEO Bessie Sullivan wrote in the report. “This was creating unnecessary competition and less choice for people in the Haliburton Highlands.”

Last fall, the library contacted organizations including The Art Hive, Abbey Gardens, Rails End Gallery, the Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve, the Haliburton Highlands Museum, the Minden Hills Cultural Centre, and Municipality of Dysart et al to

ensure that in 2015 there was programming throughout the week of March Break and that the county's free programming was not competing with programs trying to recoup costs.

"This did involve some long range planning and the participation of all organizations to create the schedule," Sullivan wrote.

Circulation grew by two per cent in 2014, from 144,925 items to 147,649. The library added more than 7,200 items to its catalogue, bringing total holdings to more than 50,000 items.

The library has eight branches throughout the county.

Continuing to partner with community organizations – the library has more than 50 strategic partnerships – a highlight of 2014 was work with the Ontario Early Years Centre, which helped provide various programming including a family literacy day, Baby Share a Book, Reading and Parent Program and Two Week Trip on a Reading Rocket Ship.

"Community partnerships continue to be an excellent way to provide quality programming while investing limited staff time and resources," the report reads. Another highlight of 2014 was the opening of the new branch in Wilberforce, a creation of Fleming College's sustainable building design and construction program.

Library staff were busy, with Sullivan presenting a session called 50 Ways to Run a Library on a Shoestring at the Ontario Library Association's Super Conference. Sullivan and branch services librarian Erin Kernohan-Berning presented Using Local Media to Promote Your Library Collection at the University of Western Ontario. Both Sullivan and Kernohan-Berning made presentations at a number of other conferences as well and as co-chair of the Ontario Library Association's advocacy committee, Sullivan was part of a delegation of library leaders who met with MPPs and ministers at Queen's Park, emphasizing libraries' link to community-building and economic development.

The Library as Community Hub: Video Examples

A Day in the Life of Northern York Region Libraries

(Public Libraries in Whitchurch-Stouffville, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket, Georgina, King Township Libraries) – 2:42 minutes

<http://stephenslighthouse.com/2015/05/06/a-day-in-the-life-of-niagara-region-libraries/>

[**Innisfil Public Library: 2014 Year in Review** (4:16 minutes): examples of why and how people use the library (new business, learning, crafts, games, how schools use the library).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ym85gTIKBiA>

[**Building Strong Communities** (5 minutes): (local health unit partnership, newcomers)

https://www.accessola.org/web/OLAWEB/Super_Conference/Video/Community_Development.aspx

Provincial Inter-Ministerial Public Library Discussion Forum, January 29, 2014, OLA Super Conference

Co-hosted and co-sponsored by Administrators of Medium-sized Public Libraries in Ontario (AMPLO) and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

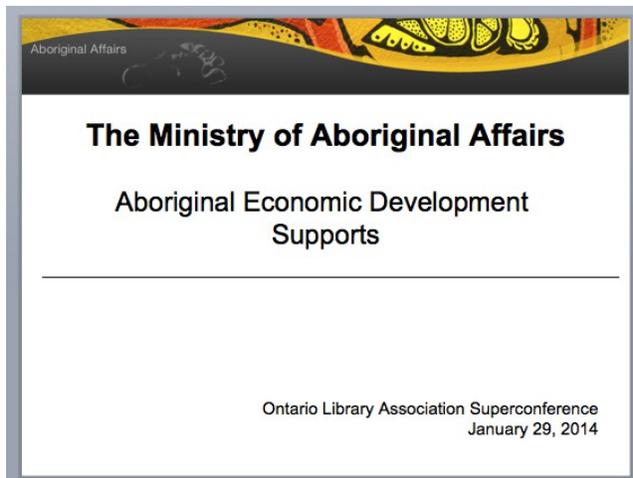
https://www.accessola.org/web/OLAWEB/Super_Conference/Provincial_Inter_Ministerial_Public_Library_Discussion_Forum.aspx

This session was a facilitated discussion about common themes and interests between Ontario provincial ministries and Public Libraries. Objectives included informing staff in key ministries about existing and potential partnership opportunities and providing information about government goals, policies, and programs to consider how Public Libraries and ministries can work together.

Setting the context: Examples of Public Library programs and initiatives matched to government priorities (videos), and Ministry presentations (PowerPoint presentations). Economic Development ([Video](#))

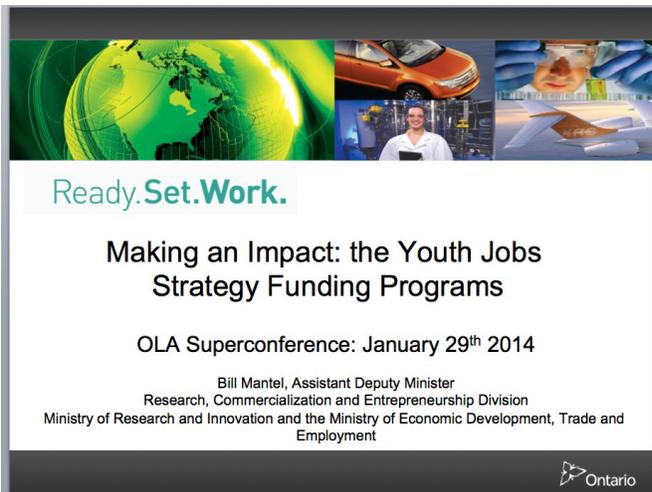


Sharing knowledge and communicating ideas at the library. Develop your skills, create, and become an entrepreneur. Libraries are helping to drive innovation in communities.



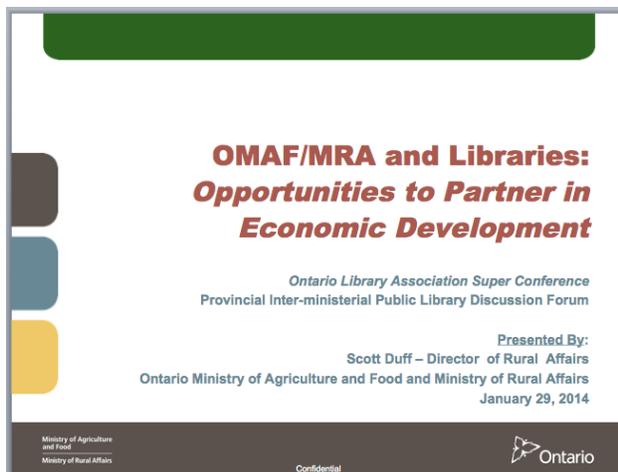
([Presentation](#)):

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs: Aboriginal Economic Development Supports



([Presentation](#)):

Ministry of Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment



([Presentation](#)):

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Ministry of Rural Affairs

Building Strong Communities ([video](#))



The library can be a welcoming and socially inclusive place for families. Examples: a place to get referrals to other community services, a place for specialists to visit with families (nutritionists, early childhood education, etc.), a place for young parents and their children. The library can offer a multitude of services for people new to

Canada.



[\(Presentation\):](#)

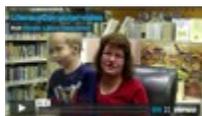
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Health Promotion Priorities: Building Healthy Communities



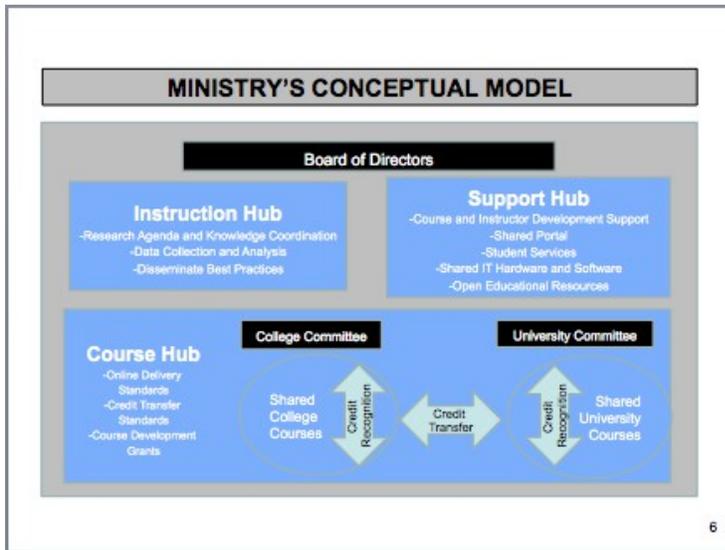
[\(Presentation\):](#)

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)

Lifelong Learning and Literacy ([Video](#))



Programs for babies, pre-school children, and youth in the library and with community partners. Children can even read a story to a non-judgmental dog! The library provides services for people who have disabilities, job seekers, and those looking to upgrade their skills and education.



[\(Presentation\):](#)

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities: Strategic Policy and Programs Division



Early Years Division, Ministry of Education ([pdf](#))



.. ontario library association



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!



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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**.
 - o Pre-screening centres allow for job seekers to avoid travelling to a larger city.
 - o Exam proctors spaces (i.e. real-estate exams, and Agri-business courses).
 - o 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.
 - o Key contact points for government services via **Service Canada outlets**.
 - o Allow for free, 24 hour **access to the internet**, and specifically broadband access.
 - o They are leaders and facilitators of cultural mapping for regional townships.
 - o Provide gallery spaces for local artists.
- They provide crucial **services for community outreach**.
 - o 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.
 - o They are key locations for **local fundraising efforts**.
 - o 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.



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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 Council or their education department**. 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**.
 - o 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.



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Academic Libraries in Ontario

- Ontario's College and University Libraries act as **central destinations on their respective campuses** that **provide essential resources to all students and staff**.
- Academic libraries play an **integral role in the success of colleges and universities as a whole**.

How Ontario's College and University Libraries Support Academic Success

- Academic libraries **help students navigate an array of information resources**, to critically evaluate them and to use them effectively.
 - o Teaching students **information and media literacy**.
- They **help faculty design effective research assignments** that are supported by academic information sources.
 - o **Providing scholarly resources** that enable faculty research and student learning.
- They often **provide online research support to all learners** through virtual reference services.
 - o Creating hubs for collaboration, discovery and innovation.
- They also keep abreast of and **utilize changing technologies to enhance services**, information discovery and instruction to faculty and students.
 - o Supporting the **preservation and curation of content** from universities and colleges.

Challenges Faced by Ontario's Academic Libraries

- Academic libraries in Ontario are in need of further funding in order to **hire more qualified librarians and library staff**.
- These libraries are also in need of expanded funding in order to **purchase new information resources and technologies** that help facilitate research and knowledge creation.



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School Libraries in Ontario

- Ontario's school libraries **provide safe and welcoming spaces for students** to learn effectively.
- They centrally managing resources that **support school curriculums; teaching information technology skills** and ensuring that students have the **critical thinking skills needed to be contributing citizens** of Ontario in employment and/or post-secondary education.

Essential Services School Libraries Provide

- School librarians take part in the **teaching and assessing process of students**, from full-day kindergarten through Grade 12.
 - o They serve as **literacy partners with teachers** and act as **technology leaders** in each school.
 - o Facilitates programs that promote the enjoyment of reading.
- They directly support the implementation of **new curriculums and teaching strategies**.
 - o A Teacher-Librarian becomes a **technology mentor and coach for all staff and students**.
 - o Provides equitable access to technology.
- They provide **open and flexible multipurpose learning spaces** that promote curiosity and creativity.
 - o Allowing **equitable access to authoritative digital resources** to support inquiry learning.

Challenges Faced by Ontario's School Libraries

- There are currently **large inequities in school library staffing models** across Ontario.
 - o Including staff funding for staffing **models that do not include a Teacher-Librarian**.
 - o Less than **56% of elementary schools have a Teacher-Librarian** on staff— roughly 80% of whom work part-time.

- **E-resources funding**, which allows Ontarian's access to digital resources through their public libraries, **will cease at end of 2015**.
 - Access to digital content in an increasingly digital era **must be a strategic priority**.
 - A program of **coordinated provincial purchasing for all school boards should be introduced** in order to allow all school libraries in Ontario access to online e-resources.

- There is a **lack of awareness at both local and provincial level** of the potential of effective school library programs.

- Pre-service teachers receive little to **no exposure about the role of effective school libraries** and school library programs.

- There is no definitive strategy for ensuring that school libraries are accessible to all students throughout the school day.