

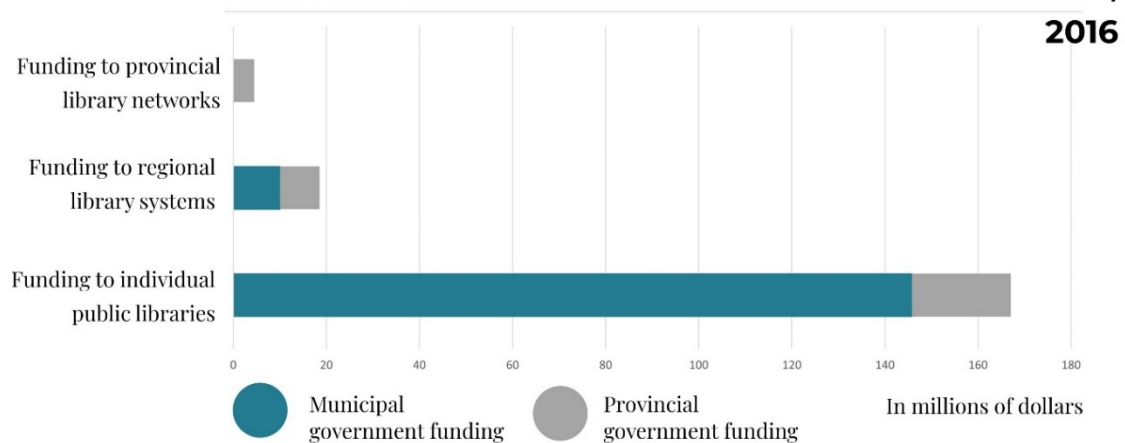
ADVOCATING FOR YOUR LIBRARY

Why should I ask my municipal election candidate about the library?

DID YOU KNOW...

- In Alberta, the Libraries Act gives each municipality the power to establish a library board to oversee the public library
- Library boards may have up to 2 municipal councillors serving on them, along with volunteers from the community
- Municipalities are the primary decision-makers who set library funding levels. In 2016, “municipal contributions (including in-kind support) to public library boards (municipal and system) totaled \$155,817,341. This represented 73% of total library operating revenue.”

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ALBERTA'S PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM,



- Libraries are keystones of communities: they support early literacy, student learning, summer reading, seniors, people experiencing homelessness, and access to technology and information for all
- Your elected mayor and city councillor help make important decisions that affect how your local library operates

Why is the library important?

A 2016 analysis estimates that every dollar invested in the Edmonton Public Library generates \$3.11 of value - the equivalent of \$212 per resident.

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BUSINESS AND THE ECONOMY

- Libraries provide important business resources, particularly for small businesses.
- Every month, 204,000 Canadians get job-seeking help at their public libraryⁱⁱ.

- Libraries are a key support in the Canadian book and ebook market, and they are strong supporters of Canadian and Albertan voices in those fields. They also support the accessibility market by buying large-print books and audiobooks to meet the needs of their users.
- Library buildings attract people, creating economic opportunities for businesses in the surrounding area.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Libraries help preserve the history of their communities through books and documents.
- Libraries support students, seniors, parents, newcomers to Canada, and many other groups. Many users in these groups rely on the library as a place to make social connections and to connect to other local services and supports.
- 69% say their local libraries contribute “a lot” to providing a safe place for people to spend time. ⁱⁱⁱ
- According to a survey of Surrey Libraries users, 40% of respondents felt the library was a place where newcomers could feel connected to the community, meet people and make new friends. During their current visit, 28% of the newcomers met with other people ^{iv}
- In a survey of newcomers to Canada in Surrey, BC, a total of 70% of respondents first visited the library within 1 year of arriving in Canada, including 53% of newcomers who visited a public library within a month

of arrival.^v

LIFELONG LEARNING

- Libraries provide materials, comfortable spaces, and programs to support learners of all ages, from babies to seniors.
- Summer reading programs improve reading ability and academic achievement for students and help them maintain their reading skills over the summer^{v, vi}.
- Libraries provide leadership opportunities, access to technology, career development, and community connections to youth who may not be able to access those things elsewhere^{vii, viii}
- Among those who went to the library in the last 12 months and used library computers, the internet or Wi-Fi, 60% have used those tools to do research for school or work, and 17% have used them for taking an online class or completing an online certification. In addition, 17% did so to attend a class or lecture.^{iv}

TECHNOLOGY TRAINING & ACCESS

- Seventy percent of rural libraries were the only free Internet providers in their entire communities compared to 62% of libraries nationwide^{ix}
- “Canadian libraries offer over 8,500 Internet workstations, which are used over 18 million times annually” in 2011, so most likely much higher nowⁱⁱⁱ
- Among those who have used a public library website or mobile app [in 2015], 42% have used it for research or homework help. For those who have used a public library’s computers or Wi-Fi signal to go online, 60% have used those tools for research or school work.^{iv}

How can I talk to my local candidates about library issues?

The following questions can be used to start a conversation with a political candidate, or their representative, about their view of library services.

1 HOW DO MUNICIPALITIES SUPPORT THEIR LIBRARIES? IF ELECTED, HOW DO YOU PLAN TO BALANCE THE NEEDS OF THE LIBRARY WITH OTHER MUNICIPAL FUNDING OBLIGATIONS?

Municipalities are the primary decision-makers who set library funding levels for public libraries. In addition to approving budgets, city councillors may be interested in serving on the library board or supporting the library at events, for fundraising, etc.

2 WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE THE LIBRARY BRINGS TO OUR COMMUNITIES? and, HOW WILL YOU HELP THE LIBRARY ACHIEVE THAT ROLE IF YOU ARE ELECTED?

Libraries are places of learning and support but to support some of the most vulnerable in this city they require funds and the ongoing support of council.

3 LIBRARIES ARE A KEY SUPPORT FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S SENIORS/STUDENTS/NEWCOMERS. IF ELECTED, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO WORK WITH THE LIBRARY TO HELP THEM SUPPORT THESE GROUPS?

Feel free to adapt this question if there are other groups whose needs you believe need to be considered!

Are there additional funds that you will pledge to the library to run programs for students? Seniors? People experiencing homelessness?

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MUNICIPAL COUNCILS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR APPOINTING TRUSTEES TO THE LIBRARY BOARD. IF ELECTED, HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THAT THE RIGHT PEOPLE ARE APPOINTED?

SOURCES FOR STATISTICS

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