



# **Yellowhead Regional Library**

## **2022 Plan of Service**

Approved May 17, 2021



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# Introduction

Yellowhead Regional Library (YRL) provides services to 303,695 Albertans in 54 municipalities and 10,822 students in three school divisions.

Our priority is to provide quality library services to our 43 municipal and 43 school libraries. We continuously strive to be responsive to the needs of our members.

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted library services and changed what the members expected to receive from YRL, and we responded accordingly. However, the timing was such that the Board has opted to move ahead with a one-year plan; a three-year plan is currently in development for 2023-2025.

The 2022 Plan of Service strategic priorities, and goals and objectives, will guide us as we support our member libraries over the next year.

# Message from the Board Chair

As a young man, I dreamt about being a Captain sailing the oceans in a yacht. The seas gently lapping up against the sides of the boat, dolphins racing at the bow. Feeling the ocean's cooling breeze against my face as the miles disappeared behind me. Exploring new worlds, learning about other cultures, and conquering the elements.

YRL has sailed over rough seas and calm waters, yet the journey has always been to provide exceptional services to its stakeholders. At a time when we are emerging from the rough waters of the COVID-19 pandemic and assessing what that means for public libraries and regional service, the 2022 Plan of Service's three strategic priorities will be our compass, keeping us steadfastly focused on those we serve:

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1. Provide quality services that support the priorities of, and challenges faced by, member libraries.
  2. Strengthen organizational capacity.
  3. Demonstrate the value of YRL to its stakeholders.
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Just like a sailboat, YRL requires strong leadership and a committed and engaged crew to anticipate changing conditions, communicate effectively and adjust to keep on course. Together through this plan, we will navigate these waters as we prepare to embark on yet another successful year-long journey of excellence in service to member libraries.

On behalf of the YRL Board of Trustees, thank you to all of those involved with the creation of this plan. Your feedback, wisdom and support helped shape our future. We are looking forward to all the new adventures we will have together.

Hendrik (Hank) Smit

YRL Board Chair

# About Us

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**Yellowhead Regional Library provides materials and services to public and school libraries, and other organizations to assist them in meeting the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of their communities.**

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Established in January 1971, YRL is a co-operative library system that provides services to member libraries within the region.

We strive to provide quality service, support, and training through the following functional areas:

**Collections and Resource Sharing:** Offers a wide range of services including ordering, processing, cataloguing and delivery of library materials, interlibrary loan services, and special collections. Makes traditional library services simple and saves members' time.

**Library Development Services:** Provides consulting services, training, reference and communications. Consults on library operations, procedures and policies, and constantly adapts to libraries' needs with dedicated customer service and innovative solutions.

**Technical Services:** Manages the library software, provides support and consulting services for technology, including desktop and network support. Will consult on technology applications relating to library operations.

**Administrative Services/Administration:** Oversees all areas of YRL including governance, support for the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, communications, financial tracking and deliveries. Coordinates activities inside and outside YRL and often represents the organization to stakeholders.

YRL partners with three other regional libraries to form TRAC (The Regional Automation Consortium), which gives library patrons access to an online catalogue with more than 3.1 million items. YRL is also a member of The Alberta Library.

# Activities Supporting the Strategic Plan

According to Part 4, 18(3) of the Alberta Libraries Regulation, in developing a plan of service a library system board shall establish and include procedures to address five functional requirements. The YRL Board has the following procedures in place to address these points.

1. Cooperation with municipal boards and intermunicipal library boards to assemble, make available, promote, preserve, and dispose of organized collections of library resources to meet the needs and interests of the community served.

## Yellowhead Regional Library:

- Provides materials allocation (set annually as part of YRL's budget) for the purchase of materials by member libraries.
  - Orders, catalogues, processes library materials for member libraries.
  - Provides an integrated library system in co-operation with TRAC.
  - Maintains and makes available a professional collection for members' use.
  - Maintains and makes available collections to supplement what is available in local libraries.
  - Maintains a comprehensive collection development policy for HQ collections, including eResources.
2. Employment of suitably qualified staff, with the knowledge and ability to help municipal boards and intermunicipal boards and their staff to provide comprehensive and efficient library service as well as to operate the library system.

## Yellowhead Regional Library:

- Ensures sufficiently qualified staff are employed to comply with legislative requirements and meet the needs of the system.
  - Creates and passes a budget ensuring adequate funding to meet operational and staffing requirements.
  - Ensures a robust professional development program is available to staff and board members.
3. Co-operation with municipal boards and intermunicipal library boards and other groups in the communities that it serves in the initiation and provision of information services, program events and other activities related to its goals and objectives.

#### Yellowhead Regional Library:

- Provides reference and research supports to member libraries to meet their information needs.
  - Provides programming support through access to programming kits, STEAM kits and professional knowledge.
  - Work with member libraries to offer library services to First Nations Reserves within the region.
  - Coordinates Summer Reading Program and other initiatives.
4. Provision of fixtures, furnishings, and accommodation necessary for proper operation and maintenance of the library services and maintenance of the assets of the library system board in a proper state of preservation and repair.

#### Yellowhead Regional Library:

- Through budget processes, assesses amounts necessary to maintain and repair the building, furnishings, equipment.
  - Has established schedules for building maintenance, and technology/ computer and vehicle replacement.
  - Maintains financial reserves to ensure ongoing operational funding for planned and unplanned expenses.
5. The development, implementation, and operation of a provincial resource sharing network in partnership with the Minister and other library system boards.

#### Yellowhead Regional Library:

- Provides intra and interlibrary loan services.
- Maintains and manages a region-wide delivery service.
- Manages a centralized interlibrary lending service.
- Participates in resource sharing activities and complies with all provincial and partnership agreements.

# Needs Assessment

2019 was a year of change for Yellowhead Regional Library. A new Board Chair and Director in January; an organizational review through Q1-Q2; implementation of a new organizational structure in Q3. All actions and activities were aligned with the 2019-2021 Plan of Service.

YRL started consistently evaluating and assessing the plan of service goals and objectives starting in 2019, using the model of assessment and evaluation as outlined by Steve Patty. The Executive and Board received 2019-2021 Plan of Service updates as part of each meeting.

This was an iterative process and changes to action items were common through 2019-2021.

In early 2020, operations for YRL and member libraries shifted with the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic. YRL Administration responded by creating a 'Pandemic Plan of Service' based on the 2019-2021 plan. Although the priorities remained the same, the objectives and action items shifted as needed. By late 2020, the two working documents were merged back into one.

YRL Administration started preparing for a 2022 Plan of Service in September 2020. A member survey was circulated, and two focus group sessions were held.

It became clear when assessing the feedback that the respondents were still focused on managing the complexities of shifting local library services to adapt to the challenges of the current environment and not prepared to provide significant insights to Administration on YRL services.

The recommendation, which was accepted by the Board in May 2021, was to maintain a one-year plan for 2022 and continue the priorities from 2019-2021 with adjustments to recognize:

- Recommendations from the organizational review
- Feedback requesting enhancements to communication strategies.
- The need for a robust planning process in 2021-2022 for a three-year plan (2023-2025). A draft planning process and rationale was submitted to the Executive Committee in May 2021 and the Board in June 2021.

# Strategic Priorities

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## 1. Provide quality services that support the priorities of, and challenges faced by, member libraries.

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GOAL: Library staff will have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide excellent customer service to their communities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Establish priorities and develop a schedule for training offerings.
- Support libraries in improving staff competencies.
- Facilitate specialty workshops on topics of library management, encouraging feedback from libraries on the areas of need as organizational needs shift.

GOAL: Libraries will be supported in creating strategies to address service gaps to underserved communities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance YRL physical and electronic collections to support and promote inclusive library services.
- Foster collaboration among libraries to create a network and build on the strengths and expertise of others.
- Explore opportunities with member libraries to develop awareness and knowledge of best practices.
- Completion and evaluation of pilot projects.

GOAL: Technology services will be sustainable and flexible to member library needs.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop and implement YRL technology plan.
  - Ensure network infrastructure and hardware at headquarters and in libraries is secure and meets capacity demands, including considerations around cybersecurity.
  - Explore technology solutions that are focused and maintainable.
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## 2. Strengthen organizational capacity.

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GOAL: YRL will exhibit strong governance and leadership.

OBJECTIVES:

- Evaluate revenue and secure funding to ensure fiscal sustainability.
- Model best practices for board leadership.
  - Human resources: review compensation

- Governance: policy review; alignment of visual identity with values, mission, vision; recognize YRL’s anniversary
- Infrastructure
- Regularly evaluate service areas to ensure they effectively support member needs.
  - Strategic planning process: 2023-2025

GOAL: YRL will coordinate robust and efficient resource sharing services.

OBJECTIVES:

- Influence resource sharing partners to streamline and standardize operations.
- Improve physical delivery services by evaluating alternative methods and best practices.
- Develop and implement projects to improve cataloguing and acquisitions processes.
- Evaluation of pilot projects.

GOAL: The engagement and growth of YRL staff will be fostered so they can offer excellence in service.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop strategies to ensure YRL has a safe and healthy work environment to attract and retain excellent employees.
- Provide training and development opportunities for YRL staff to further their knowledge, productivity and work for the organization.
- Empower staff to become leaders in their fields of expertise.

### 3. Demonstrate the value of YRL to its stakeholders.

GOAL: The perceived value of YRL to its stakeholders will be enhanced through improved communication.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop communications to ensure that member libraries are aware of all the services and resources that are available from YRL.
- Proactively engage with and improve visibility to member municipal councils, school division boards and municipal library boards.

GOAL: YRL trustees will be supported in their governance and reporting responsibilities.

OBJECTIVES:

- Offer orientation sessions and development opportunities.
- Prepare information packages and speaking notes on critical issues for use in reporting to their jurisdictions.

## Evaluation

YRL Administration will set achievable measures of success for each priority area. Regular updates will be provided to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees.

This plan will be connected to the 2022 budget.