

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021

 epl.ca



Message From The Board Chair And Chief Executive Officer

As we turn the page on 2021, the Edmonton Public Library (EPL) can't help but feel humbled by the challenges we've faced in the last 12 months. Continuing from 2020, we, like all of you, faced endless twists, turns and uncertainty. EPL rose to the challenge once again, moving forward with new and innovative ways to support our community.

In 2021, we continued to adapt and connect to our communities. We charged ahead with determination to evolve the Library experience under extraordinary circumstances to better serve our customers. We worked together to continue to bring you the comfort and knowledge found in the pages of a book, the creativity of a makerspace and the sense of connection that comes from your local library, both in person and online.

We knew our customers were relying on us to provide access to information and share new ideas. We continued to bring EPL to you with our Library Takeout service. Since 2021 customers have borrowed over 836,000 items through this service. True to our mission, "We Share", we continued to share our programs and services virtually, with online memberships increasing by 20%. Website visits rose 6%, and you passed the time exploring eContent, with usage increasing by 2% from 2020.

In February 2021, we joined forces with Calgary Public Library to advocate for libraries to be included in Step 2 of the Province's Path Forward plan, enabling us to reopen in person at 15% capacity. We took this on to ensure Albertans were getting the support and services they needed during a challenging time.

It was also another year of significant sadness. Amidst the tragic news of the unmarked children's graves found, our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action continued to strengthen. We saw unwavering support from Edmontonians who attended our Indigenous classes—which included topics about cultural teachings, reclamation of identity, language, names and spaces, and celebration of diverse peoples, voices and experiences. The Exploring Reconciliation series was renamed Mâmwô ayâwin, meaning "all being together" in Plains Cree, reflecting our efforts to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to learn and seek understanding.

In another year where nothing seemed certain, EPL embraced the challenges we faced through being a cornerstone of connection to navigate towards a better future for the Library and our customers.

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Chief Executive Officer, EPL



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Change isn't always easy. Change is an opportunity to move forward, evolve and better ourselves for our community. In the face of challenges brought on by the pandemic, EPL was able to not only adapt our services, but evolve and connect communities. We continued on our path to be the best public service we could be for all Edmontonians. Throughout the ups and downs, closures and openings, public measures and collective uncertainty, we've continued to play an integral role in empowering our customers, connecting them with the resources they need to inform themselves, contemplate new ideas and adapt together.

HOW EPL WAS THERE FOR EDMONTONIANS IN 2021

34,371
new memberships



21%
INCREASE
in Outreach
Services client
encounters

OVER
7,000



**EPL STAFF
TRAINING
HOURS**

2%

INCREASE
in online and
in-person visits

Over
231,000
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED



in website visits



neighborhoods visited weekly in 2021
WITH OUR EPL2GO LITERACY VANS

19,553 ITEMS CIRCULATED
THROUGH PERSONAL PICKS



282%

increase in views
of online live classes
and events

2,877

PERSONAL PICKS
packs requested



over
836,000

ITEMS BORROWED
through Library Takeout



24%
increase
in databases
accessed



16%
INCREASE
in eAudiobook
USAGE



5.5
MILLION
eResources
borrowed



CLOSE TO
280,000
people viewed our
recorded classes
and events online

9% INCREASE IN OUR TOTAL
PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

BEST PLACE TO LEARN

The Library is a place for lifelong learners of all ages to come together to share knowledge, experiences and insights— and a global pandemic didn't change that. In 2021, close to 320,000 people turned to EPL for our virtual classes and events, both live and on-demand.

To help support digital literacy, EPL offered convenient access to one-on-one appointments virtually and in person. Customers were able to learn and practise digital literacy skills using more than 450 free public computers and WiFi service at 21 locations. New gaming consoles in the branches and Gamerspace provided a unique way to gain cognitive benefits through digital literacy. This includes the expansion of literacy skills and vocabulary, visual-spatial awareness and logical reasoning.

Amid temporary closures, we supported early literacy, pandemic learning loss and the mental health challenges facing youth through various initiatives, including:

- The Kitchen Table Classroom series, created with the Calgary Public Library. The bi-monthly sessions featured guest speakers with expertise in education, library services, child psychology and more.
- Delivered over 9,700 Welcome Baby early literacy packages to 13 neonatal intensive care units and clinics.
- Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn classes, offered in partnership with the Alberta Health Services Edmonton Early Intervention Program, were available online to help develop children's vocabulary and communication skills.
- Doubled the homework help and tutoring support sessions for school-aged students.

Our Elder in Residence, Nôhkom Jo-Ann Saddleback, held many virtual classes, including Pîkiskwêtân (Let's Talk) with Nôhkom Jo-Ann. These community sessions covered various topics related to Indigenous history and culture.

Through our partnerships with the Canadian Native Friendship Centre and Reconciliation in Solidarity Edmonton (RISE), we continued to offer classes about Indigenous culture, with great success. Customers attended Cree Language, Powwow Dancing, Stoney Language and the RISE Book Club, for a total of 82 classes and an average attendance rate of 84%. Participants were particularly drawn to the Online nehiyawewin: Cree Language class, which had over 1,400 participants and a 94% attendance rate. These learnings demonstrated a strong desire to connect with Indigenous culture and we're so proud to have helped facilitate these opportunities.

In addition, EPL made the pivotal decision to rename the Exploring Reconciliation series to Mâdawô ayâwin. The name means "all being together" in nehiyawewin, or Plains Cree, and reflects our goal of bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to learn, discuss and celebrate under several topics—for example, the Artist Spotlight with comic book illustrator, Kyle Charles and the Reclaiming Indigenous Names panel. The series also explored maskotew pîkiskwewina: an Indigenous Reading Series Collaboration with Norquest College; Métis Week: Forgotten People Online Film Screening and Panel; and Powwow, A Celebration with Karen Pheasant-Neganigwane.



66%
increase in
number of
recorded
classes and
events.



attendance rate for online
CREE LANGUAGE CLASSES

282% 
increase in views
of online live classes
and events

BEST PLACE TO LEARN *continued*

In a period of economic uncertainty during a global pandemic, the Library is more important than ever in ensuring a vibrant community continues to thrive. The municipal election was an opportunity to advocate for services and programs and to highlight our innovative ways to help ensure all Edmontonians have equitable access to library services, with every \$1 invested in EPL returning \$3.11 or the equivalent of \$212 per resident.



Public libraries provide a foundation for a city's long-term economic success and community building. EPL is a key component to a comprehensive solution to the social issues of large urban centres. Libraries help build a thriving economy, are the first place many people go to access and experiment with new technology and are most vital in times of recession. We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion through the programs and services we provide and community partnerships we establish. We provide customers with accessible, barrier-free access to our collections and resources to continue to learn in branch or from home.

To engage the public and encourage them to advocate for EPL during the municipal election and learn about the candidates running for office, we developed a microsite focusing on the municipal election including: candidate profiles, new ward names, blogs, booklists and a video highlighting the positive impact EPL makes on the communities we serve. Municipal election candidates joined us for Library Lunch and Learns at our Riverbend and Milner Library locations to learn more about EPL's role in a thriving dynamic city. As part of our advocacy efforts, we were thrilled to tour mayoral candidates through our Milner Library highlighting our dedicated Indigenous space for ceremony and gatherings (PĪYĒSĪW WĀSKĀHIKAN, or Thunderbird House), 11,000 square feet of fun in our Shelley Milner Children's Library, our Makerspace, a hub for all things making and creating, our Gamerspace, which invites novice and expert gamers to choose from thousands of games, and The Wall, our two-storey, hands-on interactive wall which facilitates multimedia presentations, to name just a few!

In addition, we were pleased to host a virtual Conversation with Mayoral Candidates, with 2,700 households tuning in, making it the best attended mayoral forum in Edmonton.



For the first time ever, EPL moved its captivating Forward Thinking Speaker Series online. Views of online live classes and events increased by 282% from the previous year. We continued to host thought-provoking discussions from a variety of industries to stimulate reflection and critical thinking. In 2021, author Irshad Manji discussed the importance of listening to opposing views in her talk, Moral Courage for Messy Times. Journalist and author, Tanya Talaga, shared a powerful message of hope in her talk, All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward. Broadcast producer, Terry O'Reilly, shared the secret to running an exceptional company in his talk, Customer Service IS Marketing. While journalist, Michael Landsberg, helped lift

the stigma surrounding mental health with Darkness and Hope: Depression, Sports and Me. Over 3,800 customers registered for these provocative talks to learn and explore different viewpoints.

Nostalgic Edmontonians who missed the joy of summer reading club as kids joined in on the fun of Summer Reads, which saw a 47% increase from the previous year. Customers were eager to advance their skills! A combined 2,442 people learned about financial literacy, honed job-seeking skills, mastered sourdough starters and more through 108 Life Skills classes.



BEST PLACE TO CREATE

EPL continues to cultivate creativity by implementing new ways for Edmontonians to experiment, explore and incubate ideas through resources and technology that are not always easily accessible. Not only is EPL a place to access the latest making and creating tools like a recording studio, 3D printer or laser cutting machines, but it is also a space for collaboration where ideas can grow and come to fruition.

In 2021, EPL offered 117 making and creating classes for adults and children. These included our popular 3D printing certification, interactive demonstrations of artistic and functional laser-cutting and our popular Teddy Bear T-shirt design series.

The Makerspace is facilitated through Makerspace Assistants who are on hand to help bring projects to life. Edmontonians can earn certifications to operate equipment that will not only allow them to confidently create but gain a deeper understanding of various processes. In 2021, over 1,100 Edmontonians were certified to use EPL Makerspace services independently in areas such as, 3D printing, studio recording, vinyl cutting and the heating press for custom garments.

We continued to spotlight our exciting events, resources and Forward Thinking speakers through our award-winning podcast, Overdue Finds, which released 28 new episodes and was downloaded over 13,000 times in 2021. The most popular episode was an interview with Indigenous author, Tanya Talaga, which was downloaded 400 times.




PODCAST
 downloaded
13,474x


1,067
 attendees of
MAKERSPACE
 classes and events


1,107
MAKERSPACE
 certifications delivered

OVER 110
MAKERSPACE
 classes and
 events offered


BEST PLACE TO BE

Libraries play a critical role in serving our communities including people from all walks of life. When our locations were temporarily closed in 2021, we continued to provide people with the space they needed—even when it meant moving online.

Twelve EPL locations saw upgrades to their physical spaces as they welcomed new furniture, which included chairs and tables in seating and study areas, as well as improvements for a better customer experience at computer stations with new USB and power outlets.

The Wall, our digital, immersive experience at the Stanley A. Milner Library, debuted the Vincent van Gogh Gallery, featuring images of the artist’s public domain art. The Gathering by local Indigenous artist, Lance Cardinal, was displayed as part of the Māmwō ayāwin launch.

EPL remains a welcoming place for everyone. We saw our invaluable Outreach Services encounters with clients increase by 21% in 2021 compared to 2020. The pandemic has exacerbated the struggles of our most vulnerable community members who rely heavily on the services of public libraries.

Our online registration helped keep EPL membership accessible even when our doors were closed, with a 20% increase in new memberships compared to 2020. Edmontonians borrowed almost 2.6 million eBooks and eAudiobooks combined in 2021, a 5% increase in usage since the previous year.

We ramped up our Library Takeout service and Personal Picks packs, which were first implemented in 2020 in response to the pandemic. Staff helped curate almost 20,000 items through Personal Picks, for 2,877 requests. These initiatives allowed our customers to continue to access our physical collections and services even when they couldn’t browse the aisles themselves. Our contactless pickup service offered customers access to our vast physical collections, staff-supported printing, copying, scanning and faxing as well as information services without having to come into the branch.

We’re bigger than our buildings. If Edmontonians can’t be at the Library, EPL goes into the communities where they are needed most with help from our epl2go Literacy Vans. epl2go delivered 82 classes and events to over 2,200 attendees in 13 neighbourhoods that were visited weekly. The Life Skills Team hosted a new series of classes, Kick Start a New You, focused around three themes: health and wellness, financial literacy and job-seeking.

Can you hear the beat? Capital City Records, a celebration of Edmonton’s music scene and history, is a special digital collection that includes some of our city’s best contemporary music. Customers accessed local content, streamed over 500 albums and downloaded over 5,500 tracks for free with their library cards. For Valentine’s Day, Capital City Records and the EPL Telephone Social delivered love songs virtually to 175 sweethearts in long-term care centres and AHS hospital wards. As of 2021, there was enough music in the Capital City Records collection to keep your ears occupied for six days, seven hours and 25 seconds!



6 MILLION
VISITS TO
EPL.CA

OVER 34,000
new memberships

Spread the words.

Library card.

MORE THAN
181,000
HOURS

of in-house
computer use

OVER
800,000
ITEMS

BORROWED
via Library
Takeout



BEST PLACE TO WORK

Not all heroes wear capes. The staff at EPL never cease to amaze with their ability to adapt and grow to best support our community. And in an ever-evolving environment coupled with sudden changes and restrictions, their passion and dedication are what makes EPL a special and welcoming place for the community.

EPL continues to be a place of learning and professional development for our staff with over 1,700 employees receiving over 7,000 hours of training in 104 courses offered. Our information ninjas were always prepared to serve our community. We remained agile to keep our customers connected to our services and resources. Self-improvement and ongoing training helped staff better meet Edmontonians' needs—from their dream projects in the Makerspace, to supporting them in updating their resumes, to curating content to meet their interests.

Our staff are always there to lend a hand, support new ideas and share information. In 2021, EPL offered 104 staff courses to inspire our information ninjas to strive for customer service excellence. Our Leading from Any Position course, a leadership development program where staff gain personal insights and practical skills to feel empowered to lead and make a positive impact at EPL, was attended by 30% of staff during 11 sessions.

We maintained ongoing communication with staff through two virtual town hall sessions that had 267 staff in attendance and over 60 all-staff emails and blog posts from the CEO. These opportunities were vital for providing updates, fielding questions and sharing feedback.

As part of the Enterprise Commons rollout in partnership with the City of Edmonton, our Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology and Supply Chain Management teams prepared for implementation, software testing and developing procedures.



231,443
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED 

104 
STAFF COURSES
offered in 2021

**OVER
7,000**

EPL STAFF
TRAINING
HOURS

100%
OF STAFF SURVEYED
agreed course content was
applicable to their work 

BEST PLACE TO SUPPORT

Feeling inspired by all that goes on at EPL? The life-changing resources at the Library are made possible in large part by our generous supporters.



Ready. Set. READ!

The first five years of a child's life are foundational in their learning and development and are indicators for success for the rest of their lives. Research shows that books play a pivotal role in early childhood development, and programs that place books in children's homes are an effective tool in supporting early literacy. The Ready. Set. READ! program is one way EPL sets children up for lifelong learning and success. Through the program, children in need will receive a new book to keep every month until the age of five. **It only takes \$5.50 to gift a child their first book.**

Ways to Give to EPL

Any amount counts. Gifts can be donated:

- One-time
- Monthly
- Legacy
- In honour and memorial
- As a seat in the Muttart Theatre

Learn more at epl.ca/give.

To contact us about giving, reach out to give@epl.ca or (587) 588-9034.

EPL'S GREATEST CHAMPION

Stanley A. Milner, 1930-2021

A forward-thinking businessman and city builder who took a keen interest in not just buildings, but the people in them, Stanley A. Milner was the Library's greatest champion. His vision for library systems and belief that public libraries were the gateway to lifelong learning laid the foundation for EPL to become the cutting-edge library system it is today—to transform lives in a profound way.

“You have to consider that a library is the beginning of education. It is a joyous place.”

- Stanley A. Milner, 1930-2021

Mr. Milner served as chair of the EPL Board of Trustees from 1963-68. His vision and advocacy ensured the capital funding for Edmonton's central library, renamed in Mr. Milner's honour in 1996. Thanks to Mr. Milner's passion and dedication to championing the library's resources, our flagship branch serves as a hub of learning, innovation and inspiration for all who use it. His significant and ongoing contributions also enabled the development of the 21 locations across Edmonton.

Mr. Milner loved books, reading and the opportunities that public libraries offered to people from all backgrounds. He continued his loyal support for 60 years, leaving a long-lasting legacy on the Library. His advice and innovative ideas have been of tremendous support and inspiration, and he will be deeply missed by all of those whose lives he touched.



GRATITUDE REPORT

♥ Current and Past EPL Staff
 ♥ Current and Past EPL Trustees

We know that EPL is a cherished resource, and it wouldn't be possible without the continued support and the generous donations from our customers, staff, as well as former and current Library Trustees, community groups and corporations. Without your generosity, amounting to \$1,170,000 in gifts, we wouldn't be able to make meaningful connections that Edmontonians rely on. It is thanks to the kindness of our donors that we're able to lay the foundation of learning for so many.

THANK YOU!

\$100,000 - \$499,999

Estate of Robert Tegler
 Jim & Sharon Brown

\$10,000 - \$99,999

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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Nico Cailles
Norton Family
Padmini Jandhyala
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Patrick Leech
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Sarah Stepney
Seamus Rudden ♥
Serge Prefontaine
Sheila Bertram ♥
Sherman Chan
Simone Doucette
Sonia Varela
Sonya Contessa Mowbrey
Stephanie McCabe
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Susanne Frolek
Tami Johnson
Tamika Wildcat
The Barnum Family

Timothy Hartnagel
Vanessa Garcia ♥
Wanda & Rodney Krieger
Wendy Magill Sykes

GIFTS IN KIND:

Woodridge Homes
Corporation
Orange Avocado Jewelry

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF:

Alex Parsons
Ann Elizabeth Dea
Anterpreet Singh
Barb Wright
Benjamin Pang
Bernice Magee
Brian Hesje
Carol Bacon ♥
Carole Byrne
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Mathilde “Tillie” Kram
Mavanur Suresh
Nathaniel Clark
New Immigrants
Nguyen van Cu
Patricia Barnum
Penny McClure
Pratham Vyas
Robert (Bob) Butler
Rodica Rosculet
Rose Alexander Markoff
Rune Backstrom
Sally Smart
Sam, Israel & Lola
Goldberg & Louis, Fay &
Dr. Joe Lipkowitz
Sharon Wanchulak
Shirley Gunn
Stanley A. Milner ♥
Sylvia Day

GIFTS IN HONOUR OF:

Alicia Garcia
Brent and Lori Kieser
Carissa Halton
Cecile Henley
Channing &
Matteo Meunier
Chidambaravasi &
Kanthimathi &
Athmaramavasi
Cohen Turgeon
Dave Lapp
Donna Fong ♥
Edmonton Public Library

Eliot & Fiona
Emmet M. Watt
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My 10 Grand Children
Outreach Program
Pilar Martinez ♥
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Roger Klemm
Silveen Pritchard
Stephanie Dubois
The Jette Family
Tom & Betsy Fletcher
Val

COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES

	2021	% CHANGE	2020
In-Person Visits	1,775,026	-8%	1,931,417
Website Visits	5,972,865	6%	5,659,693
TOTAL VISITS	7,747,891	2%	7,591,110
Adult	1,639,666	17%	1,405,633
Juvenile	1,652,348	41%	1,171,582
Renewals	1,093,215	37%	800,699
Total Physical Circulation	4,385,229	30%	3,377,914
eBooks	1,808,389	1%	1,793,942
eNewspapers & Magazines	1,141,535	10%	1,041,131
eAudiobooks	879,089	16%	760,082
eVideos	258,505	-18%	316,977
eMusic	90,827	-31%	130,852
eLearning Programs	676,712	-20%	847,139
Databases	656,705	24%	531,120
Total eUsage	5,511,762	2%	5,421,243
TOTAL ITEMS BORROWED	9,896,991	12%	8,799,157
In-house Computer Usage (hours)	181,204	-19%	224,616
Questions Answered	231,443	-6%	247,137

COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES CONTINUED

	2021	% CHANGE	2020
Physical Items Purchased	308,132	27%	243,392
Outreach Service Encounters with Clients	1,084	21%	894
Physical Collections	1,095,902	-1%	1,108,777
Digital Collections	5,828,011	11%	5,261,286
TOTAL PHYSICAL & DIGITAL COLLECTIONS	6,923,913	9%	6,370,063
In-Person Classes & Events Presented	82	-97%	2,933
Online Live Classes and Events Presented	1,864	221%	581
Online Recorded Classes and Events Shared	822	66%	496
TOTAL CLASSES & EVENTS OFFERED*	2,768	-31%	4,010
In-Person Classes and Events Attendance	974	-98%	47,085
Views of Online Live Classes and Events	40,664	282%	10,647
Views of Online Recorded Classes and Events	279,045	-73%	1,018,588
TOTAL CLASSES & EVENTS ATTENDANCE**	320,683	-70%	1,076,320
New Memberships	34,371	20%	28,648
ACTIVE MEMBERSHIPS	205,343	-27%	280,787
Number of Branches	21	0	21

*Total classes and events in-person, live and recorded offered at EPL.

**Total classes and events attended in person, live or recorded.

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

	2021	2020
City of Edmonton	47,014,916	44,661,550
Provincial Government	5,181,513	5,195,514
Federal Government	-	-
Grants		
Funding for Capital Projects ¹	8,652,415	14,979,376
Fees and charges	73,712	201,617
Other ²	1,824,713	1,423,231
TOTAL REVENUE	62,747,269	66,461,287
Salaries, wages and benefits	33,902,645	31,757,999
Books and library materials ³	9,697,963	9,220,312
Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment	2,226,331	8,678,150
Building operations	3,326,993	2,852,597
Utilities and other	3,477,565	3,433,638
Material goods and supplies	2,046,020	2,516,601
Services	1,402,297	1,967,602
Carryforwards	539,077	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	56,618,891	60,426,899
Revenue in Excess of Expenditures ⁴	6,128,379	6,034,388

Notes - Statement of Revenue and Expenditures

¹ Includes capital funding from grants and contributions.

² Includes room rentals, leases, interest earned, donations, photocopying and proceeds from sale of capital assets.

³ Includes salaries, wages and benefits for Collection, Management and Access staff.

⁴ Funding is earmarked for future year commitments on EPL projects.



The Edmonton Public Library recognizes that we are located on Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis Nation.

LIBRARY LOVE



“ Over the past couple of years, with restricted and limited activities, two of my boys, ages 12 and 14, found a fabulous new opportunity to explore baking with a professional chef in EPL’s online classes. They have gained life skills including food handling safety, measuring and following directions, teamwork, patience as well as basic chemistry and why baking works.

The boys were able to try new recipes that they likely would not have tried on their own. The family benefitted from delicious treats such as thumb-print jelly cookies, braided Greek Easter bread, cinnamon buns, doughnut holes, pretzels, cinnamon coffee cake, butter tarts and apple pie.

The connection to people during a time of isolation was terrific. Their confidence in the kitchen and asking questions in a group setting really increased. ”

- EPL customer Sherry Norton



“ We love the shirt and it fits great on the stuffie. Mia, our 6 year-old, made it as a gift for her younger sister, Ava. Thank you for creating such a cool event for kids. ”

- EPL customer and mother of two, Grace

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