

Support EPL

Please take this opportunity to spread the word about all the great things EPL does when candidates knock on your door or when you engage in discussions at candidate forums. Below are a few conversation starters to assist you in voicing support for public libraries:

EPL's services support the success of our communities, including newcomers, job seekers, parents and children, and learners of all ages.

- EPL's early literacy services help set the course for children's futures and prepare them to do well in school. Early literacy is a fundamental prevention strategy; it can level the playing field and compensate for economic disadvantages¹.
- EPL helps people find employment with resume assistance, job search workshops, and access to online job databases.
- EPL bridges the digital divide by supporting Edmontonians' digital needs with free internet access, technology help, and computer classes.
- EPL offers many supports for newcomers to Canada and Edmonton, including hosting settlement workers, providing language learning supports in multiple formats, offering low-cost printing and free computer access.

Public libraries are critical to the economy. As literacy levels rise in a population, so does productivity.

- A 1% increase in adult literacy would create an economic benefit of \$67 billion gross domestic product for Canada per year².
- Public library funding is dollar for dollar one of the most effective and impactful uses of public funds. Every \$1 invested in EPL returns \$3.11, or the equivalent of \$212 per person; EPL saves Edmontonians \$131.5 million every year.
- Edmonton's rapid population growth is increasing demand for library services but funding levels are not growing at the same rate. Federal operating grants are a source of funding for libraries. For decades library grants have enabled libraries to continually develop innovative ways of providing Canadians with equitable library service access

EPL, along with libraries across Canada and beyond, is experiencing an increasing number and intensity of safety and security incidents in library spaces.

- While safety and security incidents represent a small fraction of overall visits, their frequency and intensity are increasing. This growing social disorder threatens EPL's ability to deliver maximum value to our community.

¹ ["Poor reading skills correlate heavily with lack of employment, lower wages, and fewer opportunities for advancement." To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence | National Endowment for the Arts](#)

² Deloitte LLP. An Economic Overview of Children's Literacy in Canada

- Continued and increased support from all levels of government, agencies, and other community safety partners is critical to enable EPL to deliver services to support literacy, newcomers, and workforce readiness in Edmonton.
- Libraries and their staff are not equipped to address instances of overdose or to support those experiencing serious mental health and addiction issues in our spaces. We need all orders of government to help solve the root causes of these issues.