



Community-Led

TOOLKIT





Turning to One Another

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask “What’s possible?” not “What’s wrong?” Keep asking.

Notice what you care about.

Assume that many others share your dreams.

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.

Talk to people you know.

Talk to people you don’t know.

Talk to people you never talk to.

Be intrigued by the differences you hear.

Expect to be surprised.

Treasure curiosity more than certainty.

Invite in everybody who cares to work on what’s possible.

Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.

Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

Remember, you don’t fear people whose story you know.

Real listening always brings people closer together.

Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.

Rely on human goodness. Stay together.

- *Margaret J. Wheatley*

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Principles for Toolkit Development

- 1** Community-Led at EPL is a way to build relationships and to improve our ability to identify and meet customer needs. Our focus is on anyone facing barriers to using library services – from those who haven't stepped into a library in decades to those who put in significant effort just to reach our front doors. This will enable service points to prioritize based on their specific communities.
- 2** We will seek input from EPL staff in the development of the Toolkit.
- 3** The Toolkit will not be a detailed, step by step guide, but a framework for guiding decisions.
- 4** Community-Led services, including the Toolkit, is constantly evolving.
- 5** Convivencia is a key part of EPL's approach – shaping not only our library work, but also our spaces and services. This Toolkit demonstrates our long-standing commitment to building capacity for navigating complexity and being comfortable with ambiguity.¹

¹[Convivencia Framework](#)





Introduction and Executive Summary

“When we commit to a vision to do something that has never been done before, there is no way to know how to get there. We simply have to build the bridge as we walk on it.”

- Robert Quinn

The purpose of the Community-Led Toolkit is to provide historical and philosophical context for EPL’s approach and to offer a practical framework upon which all EPL staff can understand and implement Community-Led work.

This Toolkit includes an introduction to how EPL incorporated the Community-Led approach into its business plan in 2006 and hired its first Community Librarian in 2008. As well, this document articulates EPL’s participation position as the level where “local residents and organizations influence the priorities and resources.”

The various levels of EPL staff contribution are detailed by job function demonstrating the different expectations of staff throughout the Library. While all EPL staff are expected to adopt and embody Community-Led service, there are different ways this will be enacted in operational activities.

Community-Led work depends on building relationships with agencies and communities, with a common goal of removing barriers to library service. There are a number of organizations and levels where this relationship building can happen including large and small agencies, interagency groups, community gatherings, and EPL service points.

A variety of tools for EPL staff to use are presented in this Toolkit. EPL Community Profiles offer a compilation of comprehensive information about Edmonton communities using an asset-based approach to highlight strengths, capacities, and organizations. The benefits of sharing successes, failures, and opportunities are discussed within this Toolkit, and resources for sharing both internally and externally are listed. By communicating in a consistent and relevant way, EPL staff will be able to build upon each other’s work and achieve better results.

To ensure that EPL’s Community-Led approach is implemented well and delivers meaningful results, EPL staff are expected to evaluate activities regularly.

A checklist is available to help determine which community participation opportunities align with EPL’s goals and are consistent with what EPL staff provide to community partners throughout the city.

While measuring impact takes time, EPL’s ultimate goal is to reach the Impact level of the Program Logic Model. This Toolkit will be available to EPL staff via EPL’s StaffWeb and in each service point to support their efforts towards this goal.

Background and Context

“True collaborations are not just about working together and doing essentially the same things—but rather they are about setting collective priorities, using resources in different ways, incorporating different perspectives.” - Julie White

John Pateman, a Librarian from Britain, had been active in questioning the common belief that public libraries are accessible to all. Pateman was a member of a government working group which produced *Libraries for All: Social Inclusion in Public Libraries* (1999), a consultation document which identified the role that public libraries could take in addressing social exclusion. Pateman was also a member of the research team which produced *Open to All? The Public Library and Social Exclusion* (2000), which concluded that public libraries need “to become much more proactive, interventionist and educative institutions.”²

In the period preceding and during EPL’s strategic and business plan writing process, community development in Canadian libraries began to strengthen. Vancouver Public Library initiated The Working Together Project in 2004, using a community development approach to expand

ways for libraries to work with low-income communities. Funding for this demonstration project was provided by the Human Resources and Social Development Canada over three years, and then extended to four. Led by Vancouver Public Library, the project included Halifax Public Libraries, Toronto Public Library, and Regina Public Library. The main objective of this project was “to use a community development approach to build relationships and partnerships with community, individuals and groups so that the

Library could better understand what they wanted and needed from the institution. The hoped for result was an approach to library services that emphasized community consultation, collaboration and a willingness to change in order to meet community needs.”³

² “Tackling Social Exclusion in Libraries”: <http://www.librarianactivist.org/socexclusion.pdf>

³ Working Together Project website: http://www.librariesincommunities.ca/?page_id=10



...es across the land
who needs a hand.

BIG RIG SAVES THE DAY

(Not Always!)

BIG RIG loves coming to the rescue,
even when her help isn't always . . . helpful.
Watch what happens when she tries to help
POLICE CARS, FIRE TRUCKS, and even TUGBOATS!

THE BIG RIGS COLLECTION

EPL's history with Community-Led work

A Community-Led approach to service provision at EPL is longstanding. In 2005, EPL confirmed its commitment to expanding its Community-Led service as identified in the Board's Strategic Plan, Enriching People's Lives, Edmonton Public Library Strategic Directions 2006–2010. The specific strategy related to the Community-Led approach was:

The Library will be a socially responsible institution, a participant and an active initiator in community dialogue and development.

This strategy was operationalized in EPL's 2006–2010 Business Plan through specific actions and supporting activities, including:

- A focus on making the Library a place where inner city, at-risk, and Indigenous youth can have fun and access Library Services.
- Carrying forward the recommendations found in the 2006 Internship report entitled *Making Way for the Ducklings: Inter City, At-Risk Aboriginal Youth and the Edmonton Public Library*.
- A commitment by Library management and staff to continue to develop their understanding of Edmonton's many communities and neighbourhoods.

- Establish relationships with Edmonton Community Services social/youth workers, the Edmonton Police Service, and/or workers in other social agencies to invite them into library spaces to work/meet with client youths and adults.

Over the years, staff had worked collaboratively with communities in many ways – building relationships and understanding individual and community needs to develop and deliver services. In particular, EPL staff have a long history of working with various interagency groups, mapping projects, and schools.

In 2008, EPL began a more integrated, systemwide, and strategic approach to Community-Led work. An expectation was established that all Public Services Managers become more engaged with their communities through the MAPS Alberta, Capital Region Mapping Project, which brought organizations and agencies together to cooperatively plan service delivery to children and families.

In May 2008, EPL hired its first Community Development Librarian Intern. This librarian was assigned the following goals:

- Research best practices on community development and social responsibility.
- Identify barriers to service and propose solutions; review EPL services and policies and make recommendations for more inclusive and accessible approaches.
- Identify mechanisms to orient staff to the vision of a socially inclusive library and related staff training needs.
- Develop recommendations for ongoing community development strategy at EPL.

Many of the Intern Librarian’s recommendations about working in a Community-Led Framework have been incorporated into this Toolkit, and the complete recommendations are included as appendices.⁴

In 2025, EPL refreshed the Toolkit to reflect evolving priorities and deepen its alignment with organizational values. New foundational documents—including the [Mandate Statement](#) and the [Convivencia Framework](#)—were incorporated into the text. Staff across all areas of the organization were engaged to share how they demonstrate their commitment to Community-Led work, and insights from focus groups informed updates throughout the Toolkit, especially the “How Do I Contribute” section. In addition, content was revised to reflect new strategic and business plan goals, and a formal timeline was introduced to guide future reviews and updates.

⁴ See Appendices I and II





What is Community Development?

There are many definitions of community development and not one absolute definition is agreed upon by everyone. Words mean different things to different people. Below are some definitions:

1 *“A process through which people and communities acquire the attitudes, skills and abilities for active participation in creating meaningful futures and dealing with community issues.”* - Bill Irwin

2 *“Community development is the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural). It is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems.”*
- Flo Frank and Anne Smith

3 Community Development in a library context has been defined as follows:

“A community development approach encourages and promotes philosophies, strategies and empathies that build and strengthen relationships between socially excluded community members and the Library. At the same time a community development approach contributes to the growth of responsive and relevant library services and models that focus on library community connections.”
- Libraries in Marginal Communities:
A Demonstration Project

The definition that most closely reflects EPL’s Community-Led approach (which is further defined on page 17) is:

“...connecting, consulting and working collaboratively with community members, including individuals and groups. The purpose is to understand the needs of the community in order to inform the direction of library work and policies.”
- Annette DeFaveri

What applies to EPL’s Community-Led approach is “connecting, consulting and collaborating” to strengthen our communities and improve our understanding of our communities so that services can better meet community and individual needs.

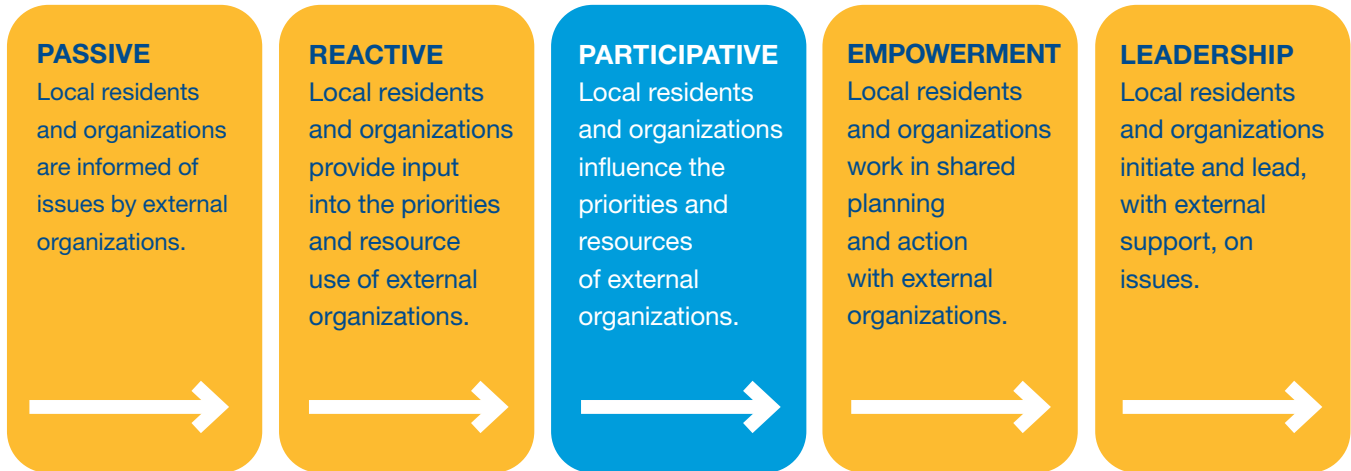
What does this mean within EPL's context?

There is a continuum in Community-Led work. It begins with community engagement where the Library consults with and listens to the community, and develops programs and services in response to needs identified. In traditional community development models, staff work with people to help them achieve their goals. These goals could include building a neighbourhood garden, providing public washrooms in neighbourhoods, or bottom-up budget processes.

This traditional community development model is entirely community-driven where the community plans, decides, implements, and evaluates. EPL's Community-Led service differs from the traditional model in that it places the Library's community involvement somewhere around the middle of the following diagram (Levels of Community Engagement).



LEVELS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Tamarack Institute

Generally, EPL will be engaged at the participative level; however, with formal partnerships we may be engaged at the empowerment level. One of EPL's most popular programs, Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn is an example. Developed in partnership with Edmonton Early Intervention (Alberta Health Services), this 45-minute early literacy program was initially offered in library branches. Its popularity and impact quickly grew beyond the walls of the library first through branch-level collaborations with community partners and then as outreach visits that brought both the program and library resources directly to community members. In 2023, following a request to City Council, EPL received dedicated funding for

a system-wide effort to even further expand the reach of the program. This investment led to the creation of a cohort of Mobile Library Assistants whose focus is building relationships with community organizations and delivering Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn where it's needed most. A large part of the process involves cultivating a deep understanding of Edmonton's diverse communities—listening closely to what individuals and groups share about their needs and experiences. It also involves working collaboratively with agencies and organizations to create space for non-library programs that meet community needs. This approach ensures EPL remains a trusted partner in advancing community well-being, inclusion and opportunity.

What is Community-Led at EPL?

Community-Led at EPL is a framework to build relationships and to improve our ability to identify and meet customer needs. EPL's focus is on anyone facing barriers to using library services - whether due to systemic challenges, personal experiences, or simply a lack of awareness. These barriers can affect a wide range of individuals, from someone new to the city who doesn't yet know what EPL offers, to a caregiver who felt unwelcome during a past visit. By listening, learning, and adapting, we build trust and create more welcoming spaces and services for all Edmontonians. This broad definition allows service points to prioritize

based on their specific communities within EPL's strategic and business plans and organizational mandate. EPL will be "connecting, consulting and working collaboratively with community members, including individuals and groups" to "understand the needs of the community in order to inform the direction of library work and policies." EPL's commitment to Community-Led is most strongly demonstrated by our Community Librarian position. Each branch has at least one Community Librarian, with the expectation that they devote 70% of their time on Community-Led activities. These activities include (but are not limited to) building relationships with community





organizations in their catchment, attending community meetings, delivering library programs and services in the community, updating their Community Profile, annually working with the Branch Manager to plan outreach priorities, and supporting staff in their understanding of Community-Led service. Community-Led work at EPL is continually evolving.

EPL's approach is to:

- Develop an in-depth understanding of the EPL community, team, and staff responsibilities and roles.
- Develop relationships with EPL colleagues to understand expertise and knowledge of the community.
- Develop a solid understanding of the communities we serve reflected in community profiles.

- Build relationships with the communities we serve based on priorities identified in our strategic and business plans and those identified by management. Listening and understanding community needs is primary.
- Provide services to meet those needs in the context of our business and strategic plans and organizational priorities. EPL will continue to plan and deliver programs and services in consultation with and consideration of community needs.
- Evaluate our services and programs internally and with the community through objective setting. The charts on pages 20 and 21 illustrate the distinctions between the traditional library approach and the Community-Led approach.
- Provide staff with the tools and training to navigate ambiguity, recognizing that working in public spaces requires embracing Convivencia.

Community-Led Planning

TRADITIONAL PLANNING⁵

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

STAFF REVIEW

- Demographic data
- Library use statistics
- Customer feedback
- Community survey results



IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

- Staff identify service gaps or under-served communities



SERVICE PLANNING

- Staff review literature
- Staff consult with other staff and service providers
- Staff develop service response



DELIVERY

STAFF DELIVER SERVICE

- Develop the collection
- Deliver the program
- Design facilities



EVALUATION

STAFF REVIEW VARIOUS INPUTS SUCH AS

- Feedback forms
- Program attendance
- Collection use
- Library card enrollment



⁵ Adapted from Community-Led Libraries Toolkit, 30.

COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

STAFF REVIEW

- Demographic data
- Library use statistics
- Customer feedback, and
- Community survey results
- Staff spend time in community developing relationships with community members
- Staff spend time in Library developing relationships with community and understanding library services and how they are used
- Staff hear from community about what is important to them



IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

- Staff discuss with community members and hear from the community what their needs and priorities are



SERVICE PLANNING

- Service ideas are developed in collaboration with the Library and community
- Community is engaged in the planning of the service sometimes
- Staff act as partners, facilitators and experts on what the Library can do to meet identified needs and priorities
- Community Librarians incorporate community input and develop annual workplans with areas of priority focus



DELIVERY

DELIVERY

- Library staff deliver service; occasionally community members and staff may work together to deliver the service
- Community members are involved in recommending and evaluating collections
- Community members are active in hosting the program
- Community members work collaboratively with the Library to develop policy recommendations



EVALUATION

STAFF REVIEW VARIOUS INPUTS SUCH AS

- Feedback forms
- Program attendance
- Collection use
- Library card enrollment, and
- Other statistics



COMMUNITY AND STAFF TOGETHER DISCUSS

- How did the process work?
- Did the service/policy/etc address the need?
- What difference did we make?
- What could have been done differently?



Community-Led at EPL

In alignment with EPL’s shared values, specifically “One Library, One Team”, Community-Led is a system-wide approach that is practiced by all staff. The approach is applied both within and beyond library walls, with the goal of building relationships and deepening our understanding of the individuals and communities we serve.

The expectation is not that Community Librarians (or any staff member) work exclusively in the community, but rather that they engage both inside and outside the Library to better identify and respond to individual and community needs.

While program planning, development, and delivery are led by library staff, many offerings are co-created with partner organizations to reflect community priorities. Formal partnerships are established through signed agreements, while informal collaborations help extend our reach and responsiveness.

In contrast, non-library programs – those not developed or delivered by EPL – may be hosted in library spaces through collaboration with external organizations. These programs are designed to meet community needs that fall outside of EPL’s mandate but align with our commitment to access and support. Community-Led work is grounded in listening, learning, and adapting—ensuring EPL services are inclusive, relevant, and rooted in trust. An example of this is EPL’s partnership with the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA) to provide settlement services to Newcomers at fourteen of our branch locations. These services are funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and are provided in partnership with the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA). Settlement workers work out on the floor of the library space and offer drop in service to answer questions about moving to Canada and settling into a new home.



HOW DOES OUTREACH FIT WITHIN COMMUNITY-LED AT EPL?

Outreach complements our Community-Led approach and can assist in building relationships with organizations and individuals.

OUTREACH

- Goes out into the community to deliver a service or program (story time at day camp, display at community centre).
- Tells audience what the Library has to offer, but rarely seeks opinions of participants and what they might like the Library to offer. Library to develop policy recommendations.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Begins with relationship building.
- Identifies and assists in articulating individual or community needs.
- Identifies and provides services that meet those needs.
- Investigates ways to work collaboratively to meet needs.
- Identifies gaps in services and policy



OUTREACH SOCIAL WORKER PROGRAM AT MILNER

Outreach Social Worker Services is a specialized expression of the Community-Led framework, delivered by three professional social workers based at the Stanley A. Milner Library. While distinct from traditional library roles, Outreach Workers apply the same principles of relationship-building and responsiveness to support socially vulnerable individuals. These services are made possible through sustained partnerships and dedicated space, including the Robert Tegner Trust Outreach Service Hallway, which hosts

community agencies offering support beyond EPL's mandate. Outreach Workers provide compassionate referrals and warm handoffs to services related to mental health, income, employment, personal identification, and housing.

Though separate in scope, the Outreach Worker Program reflects EPL's commitment to creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces for all Edmontonians.

How Do I Contribute?

The entire organization is committed to the Community-Led approach. Regardless of your role, building relationships is key to deepening our understanding of the communities we serve. Whether you're working the desk at Lois Hole, shelving at Heritage Valley, or answering a LibAnswers ticket, every interaction matters—and every staff member can contribute.

We grow by pushing ourselves outside our comfort zones. It starts with a smile and a simple “hi”. Start conversations. Build connections. Ask customers what they enjoy and what could be better. Get to know someone you haven't spoken to before. Our approach to Community-Led work involves:

- Curiosity, empathy, passion, enthusiasm and honesty.
- Consulting regularly with your Managers, your Community Librarians and colleagues to share ideas.
- Building relationships and truly getting to know our communities - both inside and outside our walls.
- Sharing your successes and consistently evaluating the impact of your work.
- Practicing unconditional positive regard.





EXECUTIVE & SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

The Executive and Senior Leadership teams set the strategic direction for the organization, ensuring our work reflects the evolving needs of Edmonton’s communities. They shape the frameworks and priorities that ensure EPL is continually growing and adapting.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- Set the tone for Community-Led work across the organization by modeling inclusive leadership and long-term vision.
- Support leadership teams in defining clear, community-responsive objectives.
- Embed Community-Led Service Planning (CLSP) principles into all foundational documents—including EPL’s values, mandate, service frameworks, budget, and strategic plan—to ensure alignment and accountability.

ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCE

- Represent EPL’s Community-Led approach at key tables—locally, provincially, and nationally—to advance the library’s mission and amplify community voices.
- Build and sustain strategic relationships with stakeholders, funders, and partners to strengthen EPL’s role as a trusted civic institution.
- Champion the value of libraries as inclusive, responsive spaces that reflect and serve the evolving needs of Edmonton’s communities.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGERS

As leaders in the organization, Managers play a vital role in ensuring staff are provided with what they need to be champions of CLSP. Managers evaluate services, and programs to ensure that EPL is responsive to community needs.

STAFF SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure all staff understand the importance and impact of CLSP.
- Recognize and celebrate staff contributions to Community-Led work.
- Foster a culture of curiosity, empathy and continuous learning.
- Ensure all staff receive a thorough orientation to CLSP within their first three months.

RESPONSIVENESS AND EVALUATION

- Use statistics, customer input, and community knowledge to inform decisions and support Community Librarians.
- Support staff in evaluating the success of community-led initiatives and adapting as needed.
- Share insights and outcomes with senior leadership to inform broader strategy.

PRESENCE, VISIBILITY, AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Be visibly present and engaged in branch activities to build trust and connection with customers and community.
- Attend community meetings and events when appropriate to strengthen local relationships.
- Model relational leadership by initiating conversations and encourage staff to do the same.





LIBRARY SERVICES COORDINATORS

Library Services Coordinators (LSCs) are integral to the daily rhythm and long-term success of branch operations. They work in close partnership with Managers to ensure that branch teams have capacity, clarity, and support to deliver EPL's Community-Led work.

SCHEDULING AND TIME ALLOCATION

- Lead responsive scheduling for outreach, programs, staff training, and desk coverage.
- Balance staffing needs across in-branch services, community outreach, and engagement to ensure presence in both spaces.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

- Help support CMA in ensuring that the collection meets customer needs.
- Ensure library materials are in good condition and easily accessible to customers.

STAFF SUPPORT, TRAINING, AND EMPOWERMENT

- Provide learning, job shadowing, and development opportunities to build staff capacity in Community-Led service.
- Onboard and support paging staff, help them understand their role in contributing to a Community-led Library experience.

COMMUNITY, YOUTH, AND DIGITAL LIBRARIANS AND INDIGENOUS SERVICES CONSULTANT

As front-line relationship builders and leaders, these staff play a vital role in embedding CLSP into everyday practice – bridging community insight with responsive programming, and collaboration. They serve as CLSP champions within their location – modelling inclusive, community-responsive practice.

ACTIVE, ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Cultivate meaningful relationships by attending events, meetings, and gatherings.
- Be visibly present and approachable—engage in conversations and outreach, even when outcomes are not immediately clear.
- Listen deeply and build trust to ensure EPL remains responsive and relevant.

REFLECTIVE, STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

- Use statistics, customer feedback, and community knowledge to inform programming and service decisions.
- Evaluate program ideas and initiatives against EPL’s mandate, business plan and strategic goals.
- Adjust programs based on feedback and observed impact.

INTERNAL COLLABORATION AND STAFF SUPPORT

- Support manager in orientating staff to CLSP.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, curiosity and shared learning across teams.
- Share learnings and successes with colleagues to foster a culture of continuous improvement.



LIBRARY OR CIRCULATION ASSISTANTS AND SUMMER PROGRAMMERS

Library, Circulation and Makerspace Assistants and Summer Programmers help ensure everyone feels welcome. Through daily customer interactions and delivery of programs and services, they build relationships and connect customers to the resources they need.

CONNECT BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

- Approach customers with empathy, cultural awareness and a commitment to respectful service.

RESPONSIVE AND ADAPTIVE PROGRAMMING

- Through daily interactions, build relationships to identify and meet customer needs.

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Stay informed about EPL services and community resources in your service area and beyond.
- Refer customers to relevant community services when appropriate, helping bridge gaps in access

PAGES AND STUDENT PAGES

Pages and Student Pages support EPL's mission by maintaining accessible collections and contributing to a warm, welcoming environment. Their attention to detail and customer experience help ensure smooth service delivery.

COLLECTION AWARENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS

- Maintain collection accessibility.
- Notify branch leadership about gaps due to discards or local demand to support responsive collection development.

CREATE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

- Contribute to a welcoming environment by smiling, greeting, and engaging in casual conversation.
- Practice appropriate warm handoffs to colleagues to ensure seamless customer experiences.
- Share observations of Community-Led service happening in your branch.

SHARED SERVICES

Shared Services are foundational to EPL's ability to deliver responsive, Community-Led service. They engage with our community both internally and externally, ensuring that internal and external customer needs are met. Shared Services employees, from Facilities, to Technology Services, to Finance, contribute to Community-Led in a variety of ways.

Shared Services teams contribute to EPL's Community-Led approach not only through their duties and responsibilities, but through their understanding of what it means to be Community-Led. That means recognizing that their primary community is internal staff and investing in relationships, listening, and shared problem-solving to support frontline service.

When Shared Services teams engage staff through conversations and collaboration, they gain insight into the barriers staff face internally when serving external customers. Whether it's streamlining procedures like cash handling or printing, improving workflows, or building a new branch, their work ultimately supports access and responsiveness for external customers.

Community-Led isn't just about external engagement—it's about how we work together internally to make that engagement possible. When Shared Services teams centre staff needs, build trust, and ask "how can we help you serve better?", they become active partners in EPL's efforts to break down barriers and meet community needs.

PRESENCE AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Be responsive to your internal customers.
- Support EPL's culture of being open, friendly, and Community-Led.
- Visit branches around the city on a regular basis to get to know the staff and their needs.

CONNECT BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

- Support your colleagues by processing requests with speed and accuracy.
- Be an advocate for the best interests of our customers in every piece of work you do or project you support.
- Troubleshoot. If you foresee an issue that could potentially impact EPL's ability to provide good customer service, bring it to your manager's attention.



COMMUNITY-LED SERVICE PHILOSOPHY TEAM

The CLSP Team stewards EPL Community-Led Service Philosophy framework, ensuring it remains a living, responsive framework rooted in staff practice and community connection. They proactively support staff in implementing and evaluating Community-Led activities, helping EPL stay embedded in the communities we serve.

CHAMPIONS OF COMMUNITY-LED SERVICE

- Develop an annual action plan based on the EPL Business Plan, Strategic Plan, CLSP evaluations, customer feedback, and other organizational priorities.
- Collaborate across EPL teams to ensure alignment and shared ownership of CLSP principles.

ONGOING LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT

- Facilitate regular opportunities for managers, librarians and staff to engage in dialogue, implementation, and evaluation of the Community-Led Service Philosophy.
- Maintain and evolve key resources, including the Community-Led Service Philosophy Toolkit and related documentation, and the Community Connection Guide to support consistent, meaningful practice across the organization.

CLSP Yearly Cycle

Q1 COMMON REFERRAL LIST UPDATE

**Q2 COMMON REFERRAL LIST UPDATE
COMMUNITY PROFILE UPDATE REMINDER**

Q3 COMMON REFERRAL LIST UPDATE

**Q4 COMMON REFERRAL LIST UPDATE
COMMUNITY PROFILE UPDATED**

**EVERY 2
YEARS**

**PARTICIPATION
CHECKLIST
UPDATED WITH
BUSINESS PLAN**

**EVERY 3
YEARS**

**NEW MEMBERS
FOR THE
CLSP TEAM**



The Nuts and Bolts of Community-Led at EPL

ENTERING THE COMMUNITY

This section is relevant for all staff directly involved in working with community members and agencies.

PREAMBLE

Fully integrating library staff into the community is a challenging notion which requires time, creativity and dedication. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that when those in our communities ask, “who should be at our table?” The Library is at the top of that list. Traditionally, library workers have engaged with communities primarily through outreach, which can sometimes lead to remaining on the periphery. At EPL, we are firmly embedded in our communities and regarded as a key partner. It is of paramount importance to remember that integrating into the community includes those who are using the Library already. Therefore, in-branch work is vital to Community-Led work. Setting priorities must be done in consultation with a manager and will include consulting the Community Profile, Strategic Plan and Business Plan to ensure that the resource needs are available and that we are operating within systemwide priorities. The following section will provide information on entering the community as learners and citizens, not as experts and outsiders. Working with the community results in mutual learning opportunities that are beneficial for the community and for the Library. This section offers practical examples, as well as in-depth discussions of challenges and strategies for addressing them. You are encouraged to adapt this material to your local context to support effective Community-Led implementation at EPL.



YOUR APPROACH

- Curiosity.
- Empathy, passion, enthusiasm and honesty are essential.
- Consult with your manager and colleagues often.
- Aim to build relationships, truly learn and lend a helping hand.
- Share your successes and consistently evaluate them.
- Be a person of integrity, good faith, warmth and kindness – these can open doors that no degree or title ever will.
- When you are frustrated, remember your successes – even the small ones!
- Adhere to CFLA's statement on Intellectual Freedom and Diversity and Inclusion.
- Embrace the creativity that accompanies working with the community outside of traditional library walls.
- Understand Edmonton's diverse communities.
- Be mindful of past relationships – consider what worked, what didn't and whether re-engagement is appropriate or strategic. Stay connected with fellow Community Librarians – share updates, learn who they are working with, and coordinate efforts to avoid duplication and strengthen community impact.

FOUNDATIONS OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Community-Led work fundamentally relies on cultivating relationships between you and the individuals representing various organizations, agencies, and communities. Community relationships take time to grow. Misconceptions, previous experiences, personal biases, and institutional mistrust are real hurdles that need to be acknowledged. Identify these issues, talk about them openly, and create a plan of action to overcome them. Stay consistently engaged and committed to relationship building, allowing these barriers to gradually diminish. Strong community connections require ongoing time, care, and respect.



GETTING STARTED

LARGE ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES

WHO

These are agencies and organizations that are well-known in your community. They may be local health centres, branches of government, long-standing social service groups, or other well-known community stakeholders. This is a logical place to begin your community work and will help you to build credibility with those organizations that already have community capital via their expertise and respect.

HOW

Find out as much as you can about these organizations by searching online, requesting one-on-one meetings, gathering literature, and attending interagency meetings. Simply accept that you will be an active listener during the first few times you are in contact with these organizations. Your goal is to learn about their work as well as their mandates, philosophies, funding, and clientele. The ability to offer relevant services and resources is dependent on understanding the integral aspects of each organization.

Don't be afraid to think outside the box and encourage your organizational contact to do the same. This creative brainstorming can only be successful with a high degree of mutual respect and an alignment of common goals.

Be sure to actually voice the importance of these commonalities to create a safe environment to share ideas. Several brainstorming meetings may be necessary to really uncover how you can work with this organization.

When working with large organizations be sure to operate within the framework of EPL's established teams and partnerships. Ask yourself, "Who else do I need to talk to before I contact the organization?" For example, you may want to contact the Indigenous Services Team before you get in contact with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. We do not want to have several representatives from EPL contacting the same organization; streamlined continuity in our communications will speak to our professionalism as individuals and as an organization and prevent duplication of resources.

Sometimes the collaboration may be based on outreach – you as a library worker bringing a story time or service to life in their environment or in yours. The collaboration may involve the organization providing a space and access so you can support new customer accounts and resolve any account-related issues. Alternatively, the collaboration may be new and establishing, as you and the organization continue to spend time together to uncover how you can work together. All of these are examples of Community-Led work as it relates to large organizations. They are not step-by-step instructions, but rather a guiding approach that should inform your service-point decisions and community actions.

Another way to gain access to large organizations is to get one organization to invite you to an interagency meeting. At this meeting be sure to promote the Library and your role while explaining your passion and empathy for community work. Be sure to hand out your business card to all in attendance and to stay in the room for all breaks. This will allow you to broach conversations with those who have not returned your calls or who are

unaware of the Community-Led approach and the Library.

CHALLENGES

With larger organizations, it can be difficult to know which individual to contact. This means that there may be several unreturned phone calls and emails. Do not let this impact your enthusiasm! Repeated attempts at contact may be required to finally get a return call/email. You are encouraged to persevere and continue to try to contact whom you believe to be the right person in the organization. Although this may be uncomfortable, it is often necessary. Unfortunately, there will be some organizations that are not interested in working with you. When you feel you have exhausted your contact opportunities, it is best to move on to other community groups.

INTERAGENCY GROUPS

WHO

These are gatherings of representatives from various organizations and agencies around the city. They can include members of government as well as local groups. Interagency groups are a great way to become integrated into the community and learn who the stakeholders are.

HOW

Investigate what groups exist in your area and consult your service point's Community Profile. Talk to your City of Edmonton Community Recreation Coordinator. Ask for an invitation to the next meeting.

Come to the table prepared to ask questions and learn as much as possible. Commit to attending meetings, as this demonstrates interest and commitment. Keep in mind the various ways the Library can assist these groups.

CHALLENGES

These groups are often very welcoming to representatives from the Library. They may be looking for a large commitment from enthusiastic library personnel to commit to the planning/execution of large community or city-based events. Taking on planning responsibilities for these events may be better left to others who may have expertise in this area. Be sure to evaluate the impact it will have on the Library and if it is the best use of your time. Using the [Participation Evaluation Checklist](#) will ensure we contribute where it makes the most sense for EPL.

SMALL ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES

WHO

These organizations tend to be non-governmental and are often not widely known. These are organizations or agencies that exist at the community level serving a specific niche in a specific community. They are more grassroots and, as such, feel the pressures of being small but heavily needed. These organizations are often constrained by uncertain and sporadic funding. They are often run by churches and other passionate organizations trying to serve those in the community who need it.

Examples include:

- neighbourhood drop-in centres,
- community leagues, and
- local youth groups.

These organizations often meet in the evenings and on weekends so your community work may require being available at those times.

HOW

It may be easier to gain access to small organizations as these organizations are usually

less bureaucratic than large organizations. Often small organizations are looking for help on a variety of levels and are very welcoming to a well-respected, city-wide organization such as EPL. Frequently, phone calls and/or emails are enough to gain entry to small groups, but don't be afraid to just drop by.

CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges in working with small organizations can be balancing your overwhelming desire to help and their enthusiasm to have you on board. It is imperative that you ensure the Community-Led approach, and not your personal feelings, or compassions drive your work. View all requests through a Community-Led lens, keeping our mandate and values in mind to maintain professionalism as a representative of the Library. Use the Participation Evaluation Checklist to assess how each request aligns with EPL's goals. It can be difficult to decline repeated requests for your time or suggestions that you visit an organization multiple times per week. When this happens, explain that while you are interested in collaborating, you cannot commit to that level of involvement. Offer a manageable alternative that still demonstrates your willingness to work with them. This might include a weekly drop-in lunch, tailored program delivery for their specialized needs, participating in one-off events, or making periodic visits to connect with staff and clients.

Ensure your priorities are clear by consulting with your Manager and referring to the Business and Strategic Plans and Community Profiles. Another common challenge is that some organizations may worry you will visit once or twice and then disappear. Many well-intentioned groups have had this experience with outside partners, so you may

“Every living person has some gift or capacity of value to others. A strong community is a place that recognizes these gifts and ensures that they are given.” - John McKnight and Jody Kretzman, Creators of Asset-Based Community Development

need to build trust. The most effective way to do this is to attend regularly scheduled meetings and put in extra effort when possible. Acknowledge their past experiences and commit openly and honestly to ongoing collaboration. Occasionally stopping by with discarded library books for their clients or titles that may interest staff can also help strengthen the relationship.

THE SERVICE POINT

WHO

It is also imperative to be visible on the public floor of your service point. Communicating with colleagues and fostering discussion around Community-Led work will ensure that as “One Library, One Team” we respond uniformly to customer requests originating in the community. Being in the service point allows opportunities to meet current library users and to form relationships with them. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to connect with community contacts who have come into the service point. The Community-Led approach is intended to drive in-branch activities as well as activities that occur outside the service point.

HOW

Simply being in the public space of your service point provides ample opportunity for relationship building. This can include:

- on the spot programming,
- one-on-one story time,
- roving,
- reference and customer service desk, and
- promotion of our language materials and other collections.

Interactions such as these can lead to further community contacts while placing simultaneous importance on those already using our resources. Also, it's important to maintain core library skills such as readers advisory programming and familiarity with our resources. Furthermore, presence in the service point allows for an ongoing dialogue with your colleagues regarding Community-Led work.

CHALLENGES

Working at the service point can present a number of challenges. Operational needs may require you to remain onsite, limiting the time you can spend in the community. Conversely, strong community demand may make it difficult to schedule adequate in-branch time. In both cases, it's important to remember the value of service point work and how reassuring it is for customers to see you actively engaged both inside the library and out in the community. Balancing these competing demands can be difficult, especially when community needs are high. Open communication with your Manager and Library Services Coordinator can help you navigate these pressures and find workable solutions.

COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

WHO

Community gatherings can take place in seniors' centres, large apartment complexes, sport centres, malls, and, of course, libraries. These are all places where community members gather. While community work is often associated with socially vulnerable populations, EPL's framework focuses on "anyone facing barriers".

HOW

These community gatherings create ideal opportunities for connections and relationship-building, as people are already together, participating and open to interaction. Jim Diers, American expert on community building and special guest of the City of Edmonton's Office of Great Neighbourhoods, said one of the most important components of community work is going to where the people are – finding those "bumping places". Community gatherings are perfect for this. Be sure to remember that the Library is a "bumping place" and, therefore, your regular presence on the public floor is essential. If you are interested in working with seniors, be sure to go to local seniors' centres and homes. If you have established children as a priority, try the large apartment complex in your community. The gathering groups are often open to visits by the library, and you may be surprised in the various ways you can work with these groups.

CHALLENGES

The challenge of community gathering places may be in finding them. This could necessitate some thinking outside of the box. Additionally, being comfortable just 'hanging out' in these spaces may seem difficult at first but there is merit in simply being seen in your community spaces.

“Every living person has some gift or capacity of value to others. A strong community is a place that recognizes these gifts and ensures that they are given.”

- John McKnight and Jody Kretzman, Creators of Asset-Based Community Development



WORK PLANS

- Work Plans are a collaborative exercise between a Manager and Librarian to determine the focus for Community-Led work for the upcoming year.
- Community Profiles and EPL's Business Plan will inform priorities, identifying those organizations with which you haven't worked, those where work needs to continue or stop, and those that have needs that the library may be able to address.
- The Work Plan is used in concert with other tools, such as the Objective Setting template, to focus the work you will be doing with the organization and to establish a means of evaluating that work.
- Performance objectives align with the Work Plan.

Community-Led work requires ongoing prioritization and evaluation. Community Librarians complete work plans that identify areas of priority focus for work with the community, as well as evaluative models.

TIPS AND TRICKS

Here are some tips and tricks to keep in mind:

- Send a follow-up thank you email after meeting with an organization/agency or after an event. It's a chance to show appreciation, reinforce the connection, and emphasize meaningful details that help strengthen the ongoing relationship.
- Take photos and note moments that illustrate impact. These stories strengthen relationships and help show the value of your work.
- Enter your meetings in the Outreach App. It's important for us to keep an accurate record to demonstrate the amount and diversity of our engagement with the community. Please refer to the Outreach Manual on EPL's StaffWeb for more details on entering meeting information.
- Stay aligned with EPL's messaging by communicating about Library and Community-Led services in a consistent and professional way.
- Share and collaborate with your colleagues as much as possible – don't hesitate to rely on or consult the expertise of others.
- There are some EPL catchments that may not have established agencies and organizations. Take this opportunity to work with neighbouring branches to collaborate on community initiatives. Contact your local schools, and the City of Edmonton's Community Recreation Coordinators.
- Our work is Community-Led, but outreach still plays an important role. It's often one of the best ways to begin meaningful conversations with community members.
- When evaluating requests for your time, consider:
 - Whether the request fits EPL's mandate and shared values, and
 - Whether it aligns with EPL's mission and Strategic and Business Plan goals.





- Do not underestimate the value of each interaction – sometimes it takes multiple attempts, and the benefits may not become clear until much later.
- Community leagues and City of Edmonton Community Recreation Coordinators are invaluable resources. Get to know those in your area and ask them to share community contacts. Taking a tour of the neighbourhood with them can deepen your understanding of the area’s history, diversity, and its place within the wider city.
- It may be challenging to develop collaborative ideas that are not outreach. Outreach is a useful way to begin connecting with an organization or agency, but it is distinct from Community-Led work. In some cases, the relationship may not progress beyond the outreach stage - and that’s okay. Maintaining an outreach connection can still be valuable and may eventually lead to deeper engagement. For example, the simple act of presenting a story to a group not only affects the children in the room but also the adults and the parents who hear about it later at home. This may also provide an opportunity to understand phiindividual and community needs.
- If you are new to the position, be sure to say “yes” to as many invitations as you can when they meet EPL criteria. You never know which event will truly connect you with your community and demonstrate your commitment to the Community-Led approach. Accepting community invitations always involves some risk, and it’s important to consider the time-cost/benefit of each opportunity. Still, you may be surprised by which events ultimately spark deeper relationships and lead to future collaboration.
- It is equally important to understand how and when to say “no”. Establish your priorities with your Manager.
- Ask yourself “what is my presence” when at a meeting. Be visible and an active listener. Being present means more than being a body in a chair.
- Maintain an up-to-date calendar and communicate your whereabouts with your leadership team. Keep your phone charged and with you during work hours to support timely communication and responsiveness.

EPL Community Profiles

OBJECTIVE

To gather and analyze information about the primary service area of a service point into one concise document for the following purposes:

- To develop an understanding of the communities in a service point catchment area.
- For the design and delivery of services which respond to customer needs.
- To ensure activities align with business plan and strategic directions.
- To provide a planning tool primarily for Community Librarians, Managers, service point staff, senior management, and trustees. It could also be used to support the work of teams and communities of practice.

COMMUNITY PROFILE STYLE GUIDE

**SEE APPENDIX III FOR THE
COMMUNITY PROFILE TEMPLATE.**

- Assume an asset-based view, focusing on the strengths, capacities, and resources already existing in the community.
- Make it clear why you are including the information you are providing and think critically about the information you decide to add.
- Present opinions/anecdotal information as such and not as factual representation of the community.
- Keep the profile focused on the specific branch. Any content that would apply to all branches should be omitted unless it is clear how the content applies uniquely to the particular circumstances of a community.
- Provide dates (month, year) when discussing activities and events.
- Provide contact information for agencies and highlight any individuals at an agency that have been supportive of the relationship with the Library.
- Include hyperlinks whenever they would aid the reader (e.g. to direct someone to an agency's website, to another relevant section of the document or to send email to a contact).
- When using acronyms, be aware that readers may only be reading sections of the document and reintroduce acronyms as appropriate. Avoid EPL-specific jargon.
- Use professional (third person) language throughout. Rather than referring to the branch as "we" or talking about "our plans", please use either "EPL" or "the branch".
- Include concrete plans and active language when talking about future plans. (E.g., "We will work towards strengthening ties with community organizations" becomes,

“The Meadows Branch will attend all community group meetings, reach out to community league representatives, and host a community league meeting at the branch, thereby strengthening ties with community organizations.”)

- Use respectful, person-first language in all community profiles. For example, write “people with disabilities” rather than “the disabled,” to avoid defining people by a condition. If you’re unsure, consult EPL’s Writing and Spelling Style Guide or contact the Marketing Team.

“You can start anywhere; it doesn’t matter where you start, as long as you do start. It means that you get to work with and for the very people who care most about your area, the people who live there. It means that you get to experiment and innovate, which is one of the huge advantages you have.” - Vicki Buck, New Zealand Politician



PUBLIC VERSION

- Remove all personally identifying information about third party organizations.
- Remove all links to “Meeting History” as this is an internal database.
- Are there organizations which serve vulnerable groups that do not want their activities advertised? For example, domestic violence shelters.
- Be thoughtful about how you share any sensitive information related to the branch, its customers, or its catchment area – especially when that information could have safety implications.
- Be thoughtful about the language we use when discussing groups that have been harder to engage or welcome into the Library’s space. Our goal is to speak respectfully and avoid framing these groups in ways that reinforce barriers.
- Managers and Community Librarians should regard staff monthly reports as potential sources of information to amend the document.
- Community Profiles are living documents and should be adjusted as needed to reflect changing conditions and priorities.
- Community Librarians’ Work Plans should build upon information contained within a Community Profile, and in turn should be used to update said profiles.
- Make sure to keep the objectives of the document in mind as you are adding to it.





STAFF INVOLVEMENT AND NEXT STEPS

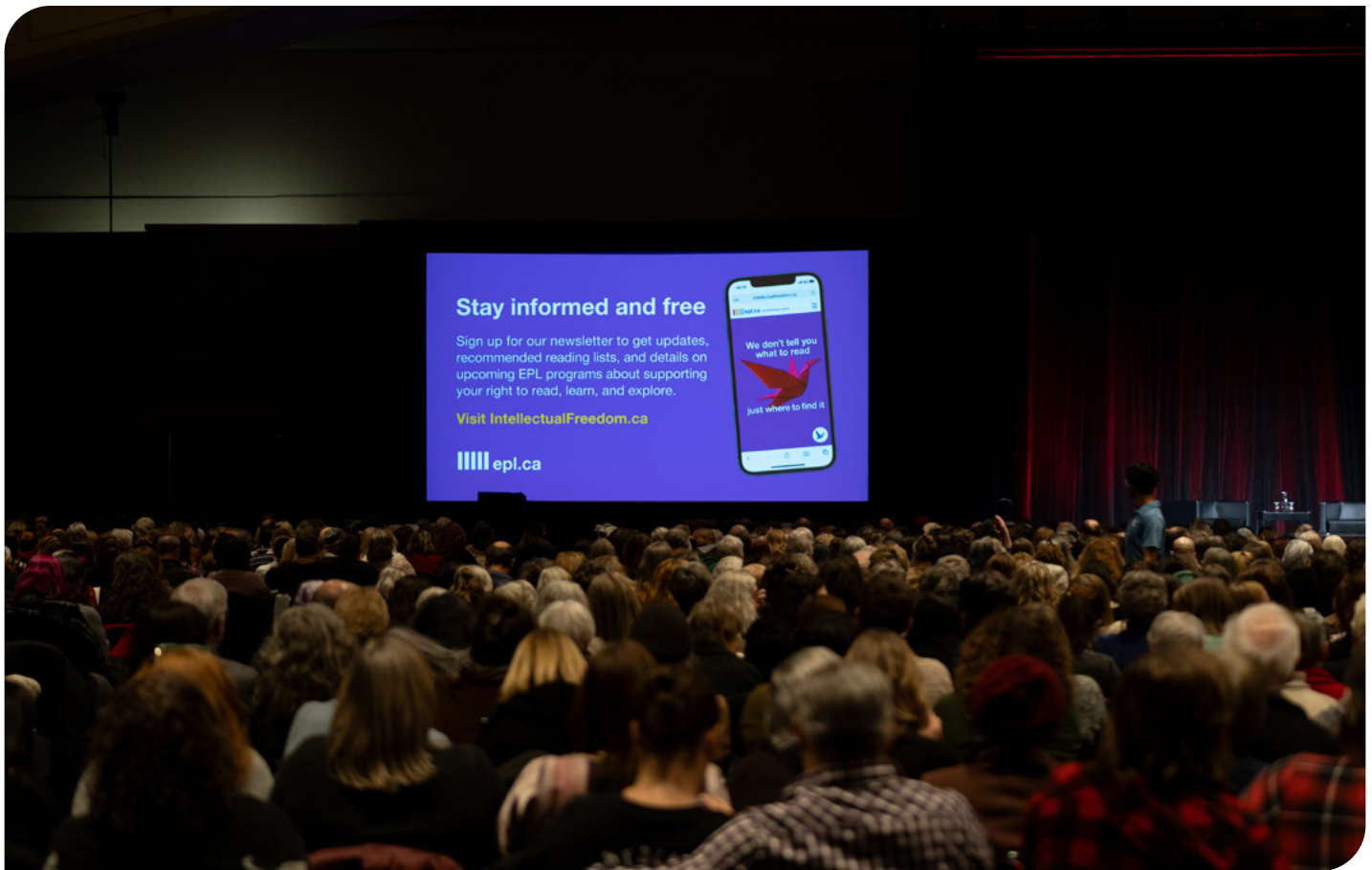
Community Profiles involve input from various staff positions and perspectives within EPL, including service point staff, Managers, and the Manager of Planning, Assessment and Research. This approach helps capture characteristics that are unique to different service areas. At the same time, it provides enough consistency to allow for comparison across service points.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Planning, Assessment, and Research (PAR) will be the central coordinator responsible for providing data to each service point for its catchment area. The CLSP team will reach out to PAR in June of each year to acquire the Environics data for branches.
- Community Librarians will be responsible for developing profile content for their locations as noted in Appendix III and updating the profile at least every 2 years.
- Service point staff may be involved in providing profile content and may be delegated portions of the profile content to complete.

STRATEGIES FOR STAFF CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

- Monthly Reports and Work Plans are good sources of information to populate the Community Profile.
- Discussions at staff meetings can help identify which sections would benefit from staff input and provide a foundation for expanding or refining them.
- Information and analysis presented in the profile provides a basis for branch/staff action plans.



HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET THE WORD OUT?

The responsibility for implementing EPL's Community-Led model does not rest solely on the shoulders of Librarians. It applies to the organization as a whole. As such, it is every employee's responsibility to understand and apply it as relates to their position. In order for this comprehensive approach to work, all employees must have access to the stories that drive the Community-Led model.

ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF:

- Who do I need to talk to before I contact an organization or a community member?
- Do I need to contact the chair of the Indigenous Services Team if the action relates to an Indigenous initiative?
- Do I need to contact a Community Librarian colleague if there is customer overlap into geographic catchment areas?

Consistently asking this question and consulting internal documentation will help avoid redundant efforts and ensure everyone is on the same page.

WHAT TO SHARE

Communicating a consistent message about EPL's Community-Led Service Philosophy, both with our colleagues and our community members, is essential as we all represent EPL.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- Existing programs and events can reveal gaps or barriers to services. For example, talking to participants in a story time may reveal a need for a world language Story Stop. Sharing these interactions with other staff members and the branch Leadership Team could help bring needed services to the branch.
- Information gathered from the community in-branch and out may be useful to systemwide teams. For example, the community response to a Lego Robotics pilot program may build a case to move the program to the established phase.
- Providing examples of successful Community-Led programs and events with staff is a great way to illustrate implementation of the Community-Led model in real and practical terms.
- Sharing examples of activities that are less successful can be a great learning tool and helps the branch and the system evaluate changes that can be made for future success.

STORIES

- Successes and challenges.
- Meaningful interactions: Not all activities happen on a large scale. Impromptu one-on-one conversations with community members are often the first step to Community-Led programs or events.
- Lessons learned: Often the most challenging community interactions are also the most useful. It is through challenges that we learn and move forward.

USEFUL INFORMATION / CONTACTS

Agencies and organizations often have staff working at different locations throughout Edmonton. Sharing contacts and information about one of these staff members is useful because it can lead to a partnership with someone working for the same organization or agency in a different area. It can also cut down on duplicated efforts. Some agencies and organizations operate from a centralized location with community members from all over the city. Communicating partnerships with others ensures that we are not approaching the same people repeatedly. Concerted efforts can be more effective than isolated attempts at community interactions.

MONTHLY REPORTS

CommunityLibrarian monthly reports increase understanding of the Community-Led work happening in each catchment. Highlighting stories, success, and challenges from reports can help Branch leadership Teams focus on current and future community-led projects.

WHERE TO SHARE

EPL STAFFWEB

- Branch blogs: Posts to a branch blog can be made public (available to everyone at EPL) or private (only branch staff members will have access to them).

MEETINGS

- Up to Speed Meetings are excellent opportunities to share presentations and updates with staff from across the system about significant projects.
- Staff meetings – consider having a “Community-Led update” as a standing agenda item.
- Branch Leadership Team meetings.
- Regular meetings between Manager, Library Service Coordinator(s), and Librarian(s) allow Branch Leadership Team members to be mutually informed of all community work planning.
- Community Librarians meetings. Service points in close proximity to each other often

share the same customers and communities; meetings between these service points may help reduce redundant efforts and identify opportunities for teamwork and collaboration.

- EPL team meetings.

STAFF NEWSLETTER

- A weekly newsletter, titled *Between the Lines*, is sent to all staff of EPL each week.
- Submit content via email or by sharing a blog post with newsletter@epl.ca the Wednesday prior to each issue –no longer than 300 words and including images.
- Past examples of *Between the Lines* can be found on EPL’s StaffWeb.

TIP

DOUBLE UP!

To ensure that more people have access to the information you are attempting to share, why not both **post it on EPL’s StaffWeb** and **email it** to whom it may be especially relevant. Increasing the points of access for information makes it more likely to be found and utilized.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The Community-Led approach shapes every service we offer at EPL. As EPL continues to grow and evolve, sharing the stories and successes that emerge from Community-Led work helps the public understand our impact and reinforces the Library’s role as a vital part of the Edmonton community. EPL’s Marketing Team plays a key role in communicating these stories externally, but strong internal communication is what makes that possible. When we share clear, consistent information with one another, it becomes easier to identify which stories best illustrate our work and resonate with the broader community. If you have a story to contribute, please forward it to the Marketing Team. These stories not only highlight our achievements - they help ensure we are representing EPL’s Community-Led Philosophy accurately and consistently across all service points and community interactions. To support this shared message, the Community-Led Team has developed a PowerPoint for Managers and Librarians, along with the graphic below and the graphic on page 16 of the Toolkit:

What Community-Led at EPL is About



Planning for Staff Turnover

SEE APPENDIX IV.

In order to ensure continuity and maintain strong relationships during times of staff transition, Community Librarians are requested to complete a transition document. This document outlines the Community Librarian's duties and responsibilities across in-branch work, system-wide commitments, and community expectations. It provides essential context for incoming Community Librarians and helps ensure a smooth transition for both staff and the communities we serve.



Evaluating Community-Led Work

PRINCIPLES

- Evaluation is conducted at the branch, organization, and community level.
- Evaluation is not an event – but an ongoing process that addresses what we’ve done, how we’ve done it and why, how we impact participants, partner agencies, and the community.
- Evaluation is concerned not only with the specific outcomes, but also with the skills, knowledge, and perspectives acquired by the participants who are involved.
- Evaluation shouldn’t only demonstrate whether something worked and why, it should also help improve the work itself. Think of evaluation not just as a measuring stick, but as a tool for learning, reflection, and ongoing decision making.
- Success, whether immediate, short, or long term, is measured on a continuum from resources to impacts.

GATHERING STATISTICS

As a complement to the stories we gather through our work, statistics help to tell the tale in more measurable terms. Program and outreach statistics are important to EPL because they provide quantifiable outcomes that support the stories we share. Therefore, it is important to use the Outreach App to record activities that relate to Community-Led work. As described in the first section of the Toolkit, Community-Led work and outreach often inform and support each other. Please refer to the Outreach Manual on EPL’s StaffWeb for more

FYI

PARTICIPATION EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Before sponsoring or participating in an activity, the request must be evaluated to ensure that it aligns with the goals and objectives outlined in EPL’s Business Plan. The Participation Evaluation Checklist can be found on **the CLSP Team’s Staffweb page**.

details on entering meeting information.

Meetings, where people gather with an agenda, are distinct from outreach activities. Managers and Librarians use this Community-Led database to record meetings and contact information for the organizations they work with. Email should not be entered as meetings. This database enables us to track which organizations we are working with and plays an important role in our reporting. It also supports evidence-based decision-making by helping us align our work with organizational priorities. Examples that fit in this category include:

- meeting with the seniors’ nurse at a public health centre,
- crime council meetings, and
- community league meetings.

In order to warrant being recorded, interactions need to be significant. This could include phone



conversations. You may also choose to exclude some in-person interactions if you do not deem them to be substantial enough. Follow the guidelines for entry outlined in the Outreach App Manual to ensure consistent taxonomy when entering new information.

SUCCESS

Success at EPL is grounded in our shared values and our ‘One Library, One Team’ approach. At its core, Community-Led service is about building relationships and improving our ability to understand and respond to community needs. The key question becomes: How will we know, through our relationships and conversations, that we are identifying and addressing the barriers community members face?

How will we assess whether our actions reflect what we’ve learned from the community and whether they are improving access to library services?

Community-Led success can’t be predetermined; it can, however, be measured at any point on a continuum from the level of demand on resources

to the impact our work has in reducing barriers and meeting community needs.

- Resources include staffing, financial, and organizational resources. Evaluating the demand on resources will give an indication of efficiency and productivity.
- Outputs are direct products of a program or event, such as the number of people in attendance.
- Outcomes are changes in the behaviour of participants. For example, an outcome of Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn is that children develop early literacy skills. Outcomes may take time to achieve.
 - Types of Outcomes:
 - Program focus: Goals for the program are stated in terms of service delivery—e.g. increase the number of teens who come to the library.
 - Client focus: (answers “So what?”) How customers’ lives will improve as a result of the program – e.g. youth develop assets as engaged community members.
- Impact often takes time and is a consequence of the outcome. For example, the impact of

Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn is that as a result of developing early literacy skills, a child does better in school.

MEASURING IMPACT THROUGH A PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

Using a logic model provides a visual means of showing relationships among the resources we have to do what we do, activities we plan, and any changes or results we hope to achieve. We can see how resources and activities are linked to outcomes and understand how initiatives affect short term outcomes that lead to impacts. The model helps focus the evaluation on measuring each element to see what happens, what works, what doesn't work, and for whom. Documenting initial and/or interim steps shows whether the initiative is on track and shows success along a continuum. Ideally, we want to be able to indicate impact; however, we recognize that impact is often intangible and complex, and may not be realized

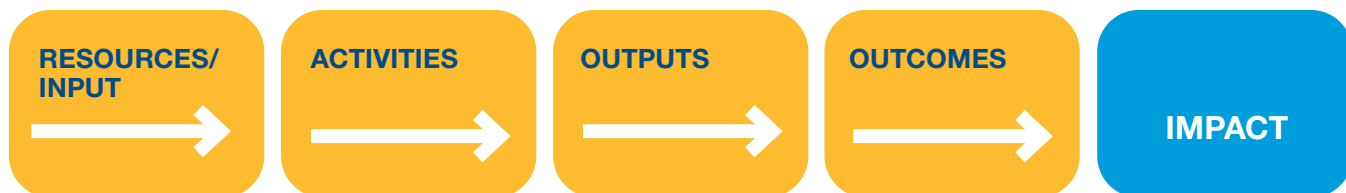
for several years. This means that success may be determined at the output or outcome level. Most of our evaluation will be based on outcomes. Consider the following questions as they apply to each of the elements (shown in the graphic below):

- Why has it worked or not worked; for whom and in what circumstances?
- What were the stumbling blocks?
- What do the experiences mean to people along the way (benefits to customers)?
- Was there a process of implementation? What was it?
- What lessons have we learned? Are there any unanswered questions? How will you find the answers?
- What are the hard-to-measure impacts?
- What identified need was met?



BASIC LOGIC MODEL

This model assumes that a need or asset has been identified. Elements of the model are:



EXAMPLES:

RESOURCES/ INPUT	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Librarian • Travel • Program supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit a New Mom's group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people visited • Number of new moms who came to SSL program for the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships • Library becomes a 'place' for new moms • Child develops early literacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child has skills to do well in school • Moms are connected with other people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Librarian • Travel • Program supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct computer training at the Welcome Centre for Immigrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number attending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced relationship with individuals in the community • Individuals developed basic computer skills such as... • Individual created resume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will follow up (Cannot measure impact at this point – but it doesn't mean it wasn't successful!) • What are the stories?

Program Logic Model: A model that provides a visual means of showing relationships among the resources available to run a program and the desired outcome of the program. It illustrates how resources (demand on resources) and activities are linked to outcomes.



Conclusion

The development of the Community-Led Service Philosophy at EPL has been an inclusive process which has had the benefit of a strong foundation of relationship-building and collaboration laid over many decades. The Toolkit development, along with the Community-Led approach, has been a grassroots initiative including consultation with staff from all divisions of the organization and, most notably, the practice, knowledge and experience of EPL's Community Development Librarian Intern and the first EPL Community Librarians. While this Toolkit provides a framework for understanding and applying consistent practices, it is understood that the Community-Led approach at EPL is an evolving and ever-changing process as the Library and the individuals and communities we serve continue to learn and evolve.

Together, we can transform communities.

“When we commit to a vision to do something that has never been done before, there is no way to know how to get there. We simply have to build the bridge as we walk on it.”

- Robert Quinn



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APPENDIX I

Recommendations for Conducting Community Development Work

Prepared by Amelia Martin, April 2009

Background

FYI

The recommendations in this report originate from Amelia Martin's work applying a community development model with Edmonton's inner-city homeless community. Since the report's completion in 2009, EPL has incorporated many of these recommendations into both the Toolkit and the Community-Led Service Philosophy. As staff engage with different populations across the city, their experiences with the community development model will naturally vary.

IDENTIFY GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND TARGET POPULATION

It is critical to begin any long-term community development approach with the identification of a target population and specified geographic area within which you will be working. This will help focus your work and make you more successful in the longer term. The target population will vary depending on the area – often groups that are recognized as being underserved by the library are selected. In any case, it is important to remember that flexibility is still required even with the selection of a target population group and area (i.e. if another colleague is working with a similar organization outside of

your geographic area, you may find it helpful to learn more about their services and programs despite its geographical location). Ensure that you know what other staff members involved with community development are focusing on so that you can effectively communicate and work together.

FIND RELEVANT AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

There are multiple different ways to find out which agencies and organizations in your geographic area are serving your target population. Ideas are listed below to help you get started:

- Check with fellow staff members to see if they have already conducted any work with the target population group.
- Attend local social service agency or mapping meetings to network and learn more about agencies in the area.
- Search community directories and browse community league newsletters. Edmonton has a fantastic online database that is searchable by keyword (www.informedmonton.com).
- Talk to agencies/organizations (when you start visits) about what other agencies/organizations they work with regularly.

SETTING UP VISITS WITH AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Begin contacting appropriate agencies and organizations to set up informational meetings. Emailing or phoning is often the best route to get

in touch initially. Introduce yourself, your role with Edmonton Public Library and why you would like to meet with the agency or organization (i.e. to learn more about the programs and services they offer to the target population). Listed below are a few key points to keep in mind when setting up visits:

- Non-profit agencies and organizations are often extremely busy and in many cases, understaffed, so keep in mind that they may take a while to get back to you and they may not be able to meet with you right away. With that in mind, follow up if you haven't heard back after a week or two.
- Ask your contact to meet at a time that works best for them – certain agencies tend to be extremely busy on certain days or times of the month, so find out when it is most convenient for them.
- Meet at the agency or organization. It is important to meet people where they are at and it will help give you a better sense of the organization/agency.
- Try to set aside two hours for each initial visit. Some visits will be short, but others may be more in-depth and it is always good to avoid rushing through things.



INITIAL AGENCY AND ORGANIZATION VISITS

Initial visits to agencies and organizations are generally intended to be informational meetings where you have the opportunity to hear about the programs and services offered by the agencies and organizations. They are not intended to be traditional outreach visits whereby we present what EPL has to offer. Instead, it gives us the opportunity to act as learners and listeners and to ask the agency/organization how they think EPL might be able to help support their work (within our mandate as a public library). In some cases, you may also have the opportunity to speak to people using the services at the agency. Before your visit, prepare a list of questions to ask your contact to ensure you collect as much information as possible. It is extremely important to research the agencies and organizations you will be visiting before you visit. This will not only help you formulate questions, but ensure you leave your contact with a good impression. Below is a general list of good questions to ask:

- What services does your agency offer? Who are these services offered to? What are your hours of operation? (i.e. when can your clients access your services)
- Does your agency offer any programs? If so, what are they, how often are they offered, for whom, and what have they found to be successful? (Programming, especially for socially vulnerable populations, can be difficult so it's important to find out what successes others have had and why)
- How many people visit your agency on a daily basis? Do you have drop-in clientele or can only people registered use your facilities?
- What are some of the other organizations and

agencies in the area that you work with?

- Do you have computers? If so, do they have internet access?
- Do you have any reading material available?
- Do you know of any clients that currently use the library or have used the library in the past?
- What do they tend to think of the library? Do you know of any problems they may have encountered in using the library?
- How could Edmonton Public Library help support your agency?

It is important to record your thoughts and impressions after each visit. Note down any barriers to library access that you uncovered during your visit and if any initial solutions come to mind, write them down. While you may not have the opportunity to immediately begin breaking down these barriers, it is critical to make record of them until you can look into them further. It also helps to make note of any ways you see EPL working with the agency in the future. You will often have lots of new ideas flowing after a meeting, so make sure to record them for future reference and for sharing with your colleagues (i.e. Can the agency assist with staff training? Could they offer their programs in-library to customers?, etc.). Lastly, make note of any possibilities you see for engaging in community development work with the agency (i.e. Is there an opportunity for a staff member to join one of the agency's programs to get to know clients better? Would agency staff be comfortable have an EPL staff member "hang out" to get to know people?).





SELECTING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK

After you have visited the agencies within your geographic area that serve your target population, you have to make a decision about where to begin your community development work. It is important to recognize that to effectively engage in community development work, you cannot work with every agency initially. It is recommended that you select 2–3 agencies in the beginning and you can (and should) continue to maintain contact with the other agencies you have visited. This could be as simple as sending periodic emails alerting them to upcoming library events or asking them to send you an updated list of programs and services they are offering.

Selecting the agencies and organizations you will begin working with can be challenging. There are two things to think about that may help make your decision easier:

- Are there opportunities for you to easily interact with the target population group? (i.e. Is there an opportunity for you to sit in on a weekly program? Is there a “drop-in” where you could meet people?)
- Would staff members at the agency or organization be comfortable with you visiting and interacting with their clients on a regular basis? If you are lucky enough to have an enthusiastic staff member on your side, it is a huge bonus.

ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK

Talk with your agency or organization contact to find the best way to begin engaging with their clients. Refer back to the notes from your initial visit and suggest possible means of entrance. This might include sitting in on a program that's offered regularly, hanging out in a drop-in space or offering to co-host a weekly activity at the agency (i.e. games afternoon, movie night, etc.). Your agency contact may also have some suggestions for how you could best start building relationships with clients.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you prepare for your first visits:

- Dress appropriately for your target population (i.e. jeans and a sweater would be appropriate when visiting a homeless shelter).
- Wear your EPL ID to help people identify you. When you introduce yourself to people, mention your first name and that you are from Edmonton Public Library (including specific location).
- Ask staff members to introduce you to some of their regular clients - this is a great way to begin building relationships and trust.
- Be prepared for awkwardness – you will probably feel awkward to start with and you will likely encounter a great deal of awkward silence – remember that this is how many people may feel when they come to the library, so it can be a great learning experience.
- Never put yourself in a situation where you feel unsafe.
- Make sure you have someone to debrief with after your visit – this may be a manager, another EPL staff member or an agency

contact. It is important to talk about your experiences for your own self-care, especially in instances where you may have had an emotionally stressful experience (i.e. hearing people's personal stories of struggle can sometimes be very difficult to process on your own).

In the beginning, try to visit the agencies or organizations you are working with at least once a week. The more time you spend at an agency, the more comfortable you will become interacting with members of your target population and vice versa. As you become more comfortable talking with people, it is important to keep a few key things in mind:

- Do not give advice to people about their personal situations. You will hear many people's stories and that is part of the relationship building process, but as an EPL employee, we are not qualified nor mandated to give people advice. We can certainly help people with any situations they have related to library usage (i.e. dealing with past fines, inadequate ID for a library card, etc.), but you should refer people to agency staff for any other assistance they may require.
- Be careful not to mix the personal and professional. While some people may choose to share their personal stories with you, this does not mean you should reciprocate with your own personal stories. Do your best to avoid answering personal questions – this is not part of your job. Always try to bring the conversation back to the library and your role at EPL.
- Do not meet with people outside of agency sanctioned activities. There will be instances

when people invite you for coffee, lunch or to their own personal events (i.e. birthday parties, BBQs, etc.). Politely turn down these invitations and remind individuals that if they want to discuss any library-related matters, you are happy to talk to them during your agency visits or at the library.

ONGOING EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK

Evaluation is a critical component of community development work. It is important to remember that building relationships with your target community will not be an overnight process. It can often take weeks or months to start breaking through to your community and identifying their library and information service needs. With this in mind, you should reflect back on your visits on a monthly basis – submitting monthly reports helps with this process. Evaluating your work can sometimes be challenging since community development work often doesn't involve counting numbers, but rather, tracking the progress you are making with people you have met in the community. A good measure when you are starting out is to take note of people's impressions of you and the library on your first visit and compare them with how people interact with you on future visits.

AN EXAMPLE OF EVALUATION FROM OUR PLACE:

Our Place is a 10-person transitional housing facility for women with serious long-term mental health concerns. On my first visit, only one resident mentioned using the library on a regular basis and none of the other residents were even interested in getting a library card. On my second visit, the residents remembered me as being from the library and one of the first things they asked

me was if they could all get library cards. In just two visits, I could see I was making progress. Since then, I have had the residents ask me numerous questions about the library –everything from hours of operation to what kinds of books we have on certain topics to what happens if they lose their card. While not all of my visits have been productive in terms of identifying their library needs, I have accepted that this is part of the community development process. One step I have taken since starting my visits is to establish a regular pattern of visiting – every three weeks on a Wednesday. Since I have developed a good rapport with the residents, I have found that I do not need to visit as regularly. Every three weeks has worked well – the agency workers note my visit on the residents' event calendar and a couple of the women have mentioned how much they look forward to having me come down. As my visits continue, I will continue to evaluate my progress to ensure that I am still moving forward.

FINAL WORDS

Be sure to share your stories with your colleagues. Community development is often a process of trial and error. There is no finite roadmap for community development librarianship, so it's important for EPL staff to learn from each other and test out new ideas to see what will work for them. The Community-Led Libraries has lots of great stories of experiences as well, so be sure to consult it if you're looking for other real world examples.

APPENDIX II

Recommendations for Implementing a Sustainable Community Development Strategy at Edmonton Public Library

Prepared by Amelia Martin, March 2009

FYI

Since this report's completion in 2009, EPL has incorporated many of these recommendations into the Toolkit and the Community-Led Service Philosophy.

The following list of recommendations is based on my experience as the Community Development Librarian intern, information obtained from Vancouver Public Library about their experiences and conversations I have had with current Community Librarians at Edmonton Public Library. This is intended to be a living document that will change over time as we garner more knowledge and experience regarding Community Development work. I am also creating a document outlining the basic process I used for conducting my community development work, along with information on what I found worked and did not work.

CLEARLY DEFINE THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LIBRARY WORK AT EDMONTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Of foremost importance in developing a sustainable community development strategy at Edmonton Public Library is defining our organization's vision regarding community development library work. This includes outlining how we see community development work as being different from current community work we already do (i.e. outreach, home service, etc.) and why we consider the community development model of library work important to the growth and development of EPL. This will help the new community librarians better understand their roles in the organization and assist managers in providing more effective guidance and mentorship to these librarians. A clearly defined vision of community development library work will help clear up many misconceptions that currently exist about the differences between outreach and community development models of library work.

TRAINING INITIATIVES FOR MANAGERS AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIANS

Once the scope and nature of community development work at EPL has been determined, training for managers and community librarians needs to be initiated. It is critical that managers and community librarians must receive training in community development library work and develop a thorough understanding of how it differs from traditional community outreach library work. It is of critical importance that all administrators, managers, librarians and any other staff who are directly involved in community development initiatives understand the theoretical and practical implications of community development based work (i.e. the need for fewer desk hours, understanding that building relationships with socially vulnerable groups is a slow and time consuming process, etc.). It would be ideal to conduct an initial training and orientation session and then a follow-up session after managers and librarians have had the opportunity to gain experience working in the community. Many questions form upon entry into the community

and it would be very helpful for staff members to have the opportunity to share their questions and explore possible answers (though not every question can be definitively answered). Given the relatively new nature of community development work to Edmonton Public Library, it would be beneficial to enlist external help for training, particularly anyone who may have been involved with the Working Together Project. While EPL may not follow the exact same model, both managers and librarians will experience the same first time jitters as those involved with the project. It will provide staff members with the opportunity to ask questions of people who have already been involved with and have experience conducting community development library work. This would be extremely helpful for librarians and managers. Once EPL staff members have more extensive experience conducting community development work, an in-house training session might be a viable option.

STAFF AWARENESS TRAINING

It is important that other library staff members are aware of EPL's community development strategy and that they understand the nature of community development work. This training could be done in-house and could be as simple as presentations conducted by community librarians during staff meetings. Ideally, EPL's community development strategy would be integrated into employee orientation training to ensure that all new employees are also made aware. This will help staff members better understand the role of community librarians in the system. It is also of critical importance so that other staff members can get involved in community development work in the future.



CLEARLY DEFINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY LIBRARIANS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LIBRARY WORK

Working with administration and managers, each community librarian should have a clear understanding of what role they will be playing in their local community. Are they to engage primarily in community development initiatives? Will they be involved with outreach work? How much time will they be spending at their home library? While it is expected that each branch will be somewhat different in the mandate they lay out for their community librarian, there should be some basic guidelines set out regarding what kind of work the community librarians will be involved in the future. A more clearly defined role with less ambiguity will help community librarians better communicate their role to other staff members and to the community at large. It will also help managers to better guide and mentor their new librarians.

CLARIFY GOALS OF COMMUNITY LIBRARIANS

If one of the primary goals of the new community librarians is to engage in community development work, each community librarian will have to lay out some specific goals and objectives. Given the time consuming nature of community development library work, it is important that each community librarian defines a population group with which to initially start working. It is anticipated the target population groups will vary widely depending the community librarian's geographic area. During the Working Together Project, the libraries involved chose to engage in community development work with socially vulnerable population groups that often consisted of individuals who were considered to be library non-users. If EPL's community development strategy is intended to help breakdown barriers and make EPL more inclusive, then it would make the most sense for the community librarians to reach out to socially vulnerable population groups





who may not already use the library regularly. For librarians starting community development work, having a defined population group will make it much easier to begin breaking down barriers and building relationships. It also helps to limit the number of agencies one visits initially and makes it easier to identify where one can most easily begin engaging the target community. This is not intended to prevent community librarians from meeting with other groups during this time, but it is recommended that only one target population and 2-3 agencies be selected for beginning community development work.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

Librarians and any other staff members who are directly involved with community development

work should have a forum to openly share their experiences with each other on an ongoing basis (to be determined by librarians – could involve smaller meetings of geographically close librarians, larger meetings of all librarians, an online forum, etc.). Community development library work is often unpredictable, challenging

and confusing, which makes it necessary for staff members involved to have the chance to engage in regular dialogue with each other to share successes and difficulties. This also has the added bonus of being another way to ensure community efforts are not being duplicated.

EMPOWER COMMUNITY LIBRARIANS

To successfully break down barriers and encourage socially vulnerable groups to come to EPL (or return to EPL), community librarians should have the ability to waive past charges, relax identification requirements and pilot other ideas that will make library services more accessible. Community development library work is the opportunity for EPL to truly break down barriers and for this to happen effectively, those engaged in this work need to be empowered to break down barriers where they can and test out new ideas without fear of repercussion. Engaging socially vulnerable populations often requires us to visit uncharted territory and requires us to fully engage in non-traditional methods of librarianship.

SYSTEM-WIDE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLEARINGHOUSE

To ensure that community librarians and other EPL staff members are not duplicating efforts, a system-wide clearinghouse of community engagement initiatives should be instituted. This is particularly critical when it relates to agencies that serve people throughout Edmonton, not just in specific geographic areas (i.e. Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Multicultural Health Brokers, etc.). Such a clearinghouse would not act as a community directory or database, but as a comprehensive list of all community contacts made by EPL staff members. This would allow anyone engaged in community work to easily search to see if contact had already been made with a specific group, agency or organization. Information included would not have to be detailed to ensure that the database remained up to date and easy to use (i.e. include name of agency, contact at agency, date of last visit,

and staff member's name). Such a tool is also of critical importance given that community visits are not always conducted by staff members who work in that geographic area (i.e. Youth-At-Risk team members visited agencies that were not in their geographic boundaries).

CREATE AN EPL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT

An EPL-specific Toolkit on community development could be a living document that each staff member involved with community development work could contribute to as they gained experience. There is no concrete roadmap for conducting community development library work, but there are often more effective ways to engage certain groups, which may only be discovered through trial and error. Including stories, tips and recommendations for the future would help both current and future staff members at EPL more effectively and efficiently engage in community development library work.





SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

It is critically important for staff members involved with community development work to have the chance to share their knowledge and experiences with others and also to hear from others who are involved in similar work (this could include community development work but not necessarily

library-based community development work). Allowing staff members to have the opportunity to build on their community-based work skills is critically important to ensuring that EPL continues to progress in the future. It is also important that any valuable information gained through professional development is shared among staff members.

APPENDIX III

Community Profile Template

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Include information regarding:

- Community features
- Industry/community businesses
- Recreation
- Challenges
- What makes the community unique

DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Include:

- Links to City of Edmonton neighbourhood indicator sheets
- Analysis of environics sheet (see example on the next page)

FYI

Use respectful, person-first language in all community profiles. For example, write “people with disabilities” rather than “the disabled,” to avoid defining people by a condition. If you’re unsure, consult EPL’s Writing and Spelling Style Guide or contact the Marketing Team.

For example: People who have low literacy proficiency.





DemoStats (2014) Summary
Trade Area: ABB Catchment
Benchmark: Edmonton (AB) (CSD)

Trade Area: User-drawn polygon
 Benchmark: 2011 Census Subdivisions

Variable	Trade Area		Benchmark	Index	Variable	Trade Area		Benchmark	Index
	Count	%	%			Count	%	%	
Base Variables					Education & Employment				
Total households	5,690		354,924	----	Education (2013)				
Total population	13,773		895,791	----	No certificate, diploma or degree	3,478	32.02%	19.34%	166
Household Characteristics					High school certificate or equivalent	2,774	25.54%	24.14%	106
Age of Household Maintainer					Apprenticeship or trades cert/dipl	1,621	14.92%	9.48%	157
Under 25 years	267	4.69%	5.41%	87	College/CEGEP/non-uni cert/dipl	1,764	16.24%	17.10%	95
25 to 34 years	1,032	18.14%	22.00%	82	University cert/dipl below bachelor's	321	2.96%	4.84%	61
35-44 years	1,025	18.01%	19.45%	93	University degree	902	8.30%	25.10%	33
45-54 years	1,112	19.54%	19.61%	100	Labour Force				
55-64 years	1,020	17.93%	17.15%	105	In the labour force (15+)	7,331	65.83%	72.17%	91
65-74 years	600	10.54%	9.13%	115	Labour Force by Occupation				
75 years or over	633	11.12%	7.24%	154	Management	382	3.43%	5.38%	64
Size of Household					Business, Finance, Administration	1,011	9.08%	11.37%	80
1 person	1,721	30.25%	28.63%	106	Sciences	368	3.30%	6.17%	54
2 persons	1,882	33.08%	32.43%	102	Health	264	2.37%	5.36%	44
3 persons	950	16.70%	16.09%	104	Soc. Sci, Education, Gov't, Religion	490	4.40%	7.19%	61
4+ persons	1,137	19.98%	22.85%	87	Art, Culture, Recreation, Sport	86	0.77%	1.60%	48
Household Type					Sales and Service	1,926	17.30%	17.50%	99
Family households	3,508	100.00%	100.00%	100	Trades, Transport, Operators	2,094	18.80%	13.31%	141
Couples with children	1,404	40.02%	47.47%	84	Unique to Primary Industries	195	1.75%	1.20%	146
Couples without children	1,122	31.98%	35.44%	90	Unique to Manufacture and Utilities	268	2.41%	1.90%	126
Lone-parent	982	27.99%	17.09%	164	Commuting				
1 family households	3,389	59.56%	61.35%	97	Car	4,797	74.19%	72.45%	102
Multiple-family households	120	2.11%	2.20%	96	Public Transit	931	14.40%	14.66%	98
Non-family households	2,182	38.35%	36.45%	105	Walking	195	3.02%	4.55%	66
Marital Status					Bicycle	17	0.26%	1.35%	19
Single (never married)	3,835	33.96%	31.97%	106	Household Income				
Married or common-law	5,340	47.29%	53.84%	88	Average household income	\$72,197		\$99,602	72
Widowed	773	6.84%	4.85%	141	Language, Immigration & Ethno-Cultural				
Divorced	969	8.58%	6.73%	128	Immigration Status (2013)				
Separated (legally married)	376	3.33%	2.61%	128	Non-immigrant population	10,798	81.59%	75.03%	109
Age of Children At Home					Born in province of residence	7,247	54.76%	52.40%	105
Total children at home	4,121	100.00%	100.00%	100	Born outside province of residence	3,551	26.83%	22.63%	119
Under 5 years of age	969	23.51%	21.81%	108	Immigrant population	2,351	17.76%	24.02%	74
5-9 years	814	19.75%	18.77%	105	Visible Minority (2013)				
10-14 years	678	16.45%	17.20%	96	Total visible minority	2,600	19.65%	26.96%	73
15 -19 years	706	17.13%	17.97%	95	Chinese	179	1.35%	6.71%	20
20-24 years	510	12.38%	13.23%	94	South Asian	326	2.46%	6.37%	39
25 years and over	444	10.77%	11.02%	98	Black	1,503	11.36%	3.49%	325
Dwelling Characteristics					Filipino	83	0.63%	3.16%	20
Housing Tenure (2013)					Latin American	144	1.09%	1.22%	89
Owned	3,305	58.08%	64.60%	90	Southeast Asian	163	1.23%	1.79%	69
Rented	2,204	38.73%	32.81%	118	Arab	28	0.21%	1.92%	11
Band housing	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	West Asian	50	0.38%	0.50%	76
Housing Type					Korean	24	0.18%	0.55%	33
Houses	4,280	75.22%	66.24%	114	Japanese	0	0.00%	0.28%	0
Semi-detached house	186	3.27%	5.54%	59	Mother Tongue (2013 - Top 12)				
Single-detached house	3,150	55.36%	51.03%	108	English	10,212	77.16%	68.03%	113
Row house	944	16.59%	9.67%	172	French	294	2.22%	2.10%	106
Apartments	1,247	21.92%	30.40%	72	Total Non-Official	2,505	18.93%	27.40%	69
Low-rise (<5 floors)	1,247	21.92%	21.91%	100	Ukrainian	312	2.36%	1.14%	207
High-rise (5+ floors)	0	0.00%	8.50%	0	German	188	1.42%	1.28%	111
Detached duplex	148	2.60%	2.45%	106	Spanish	177	1.34%	1.68%	80
Movable dwelling	0	0.00%	0.85%	0	Dutch	130	0.98%	0.33%	295
Age of Housing					Polish	122	0.92%	0.94%	98
Before 1960	1,818	31.95%	16.58%	193	Chinese n.o.s	110	0.83%	2.25%	37
1961-1980	2,792	49.07%	33.20%	148	Somali	109	0.80%	0.43%	188
1981-1990	595	10.46%	13.88%	75	Hindi	106	0.80%	0.72%	111
1991-2000	177	3.11%	10.36%	30	Tagalog	103	0.78%	2.65%	29
2001-2005	44	0.77%	10.28%	8	Portuguese	98	0.74%	0.42%	175
2006-2011	33	0.58%	10.45%	6	Aboriginal Languages	83	0.63%	0.22%	286
After 2011	231	4.06%	5.24%	77	Vietnamese	73	0.55%	0.94%	59

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 Source: DemoStats 2014, Environics Analytics acquires and distributes Statistics Canada files in accordance with the Government of Canada's Open Data Policy. No confidential information was provided by Statistics Canada.

BRANCH

BRANCH DESCRIPTION

Include information regarding:

- Physical location
- Transportation
- Parking
- Surrounding attractions (malls, stores, recreation, etc.)
- Facility challenges

BRANCH HISTORY

Include information regarding:

- When the branch opened
- Facility changes/moves
- Past successes or key initiatives
- Changes in service direction

FACILITIES

Example of data to include:

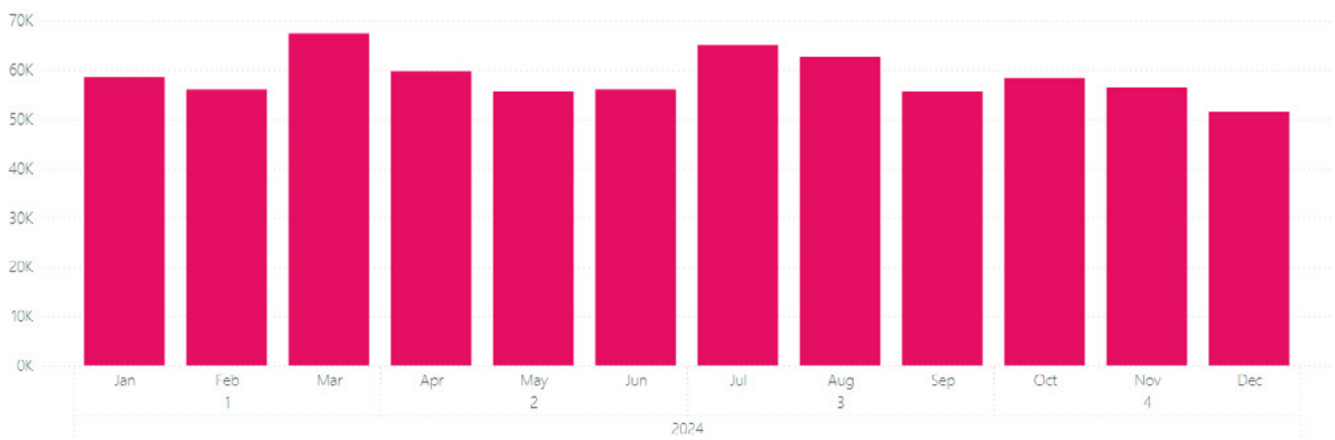
- 8,500 square feet on one floor
- 1 program room, 1 quiet study room
- 1 male and 1 female washroom
- The branch is wheelchair accessible except for parts of the staff area, and larger wheelchairs may not fit through the door to the program room

BRANCH STATISTICS

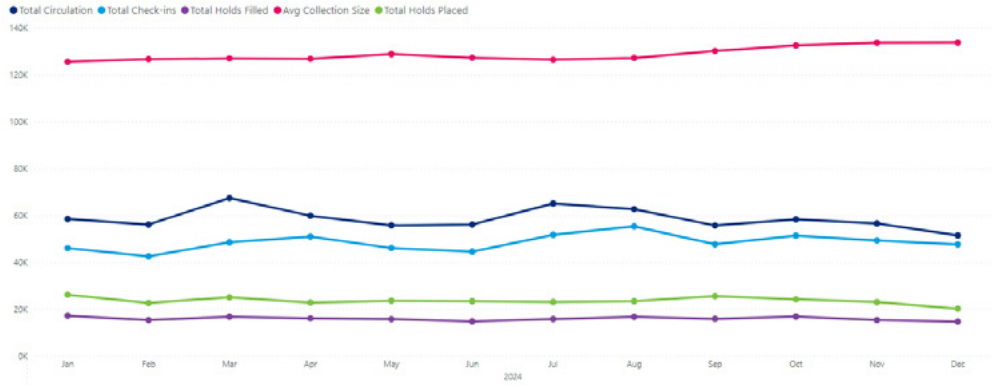
For each of the following sections, data or instructions for obtaining the data and a template for representing the data will be provided from Planning, Assessment and Research on demand. Please include analysis of the data, including any contextual information based on your knowledge of the branch.

[All examples from WMC Jan 2024-Dec 2024]

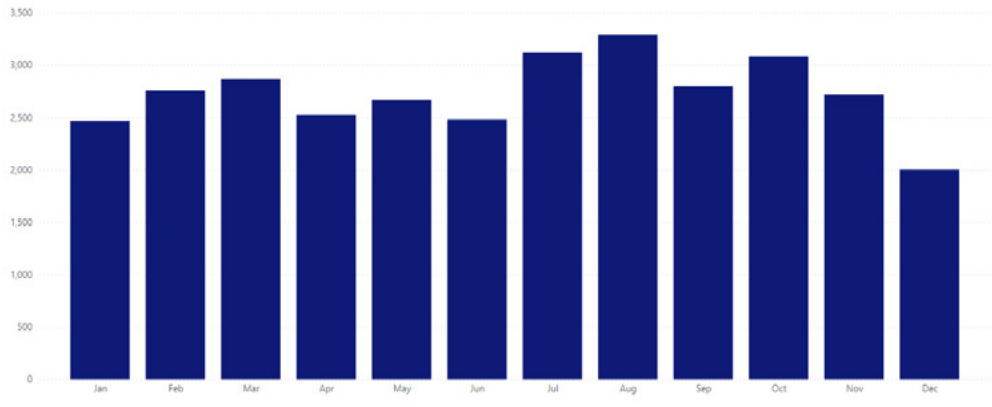
PHYSICAL CIRCULATION: MONTHLY TRENDING



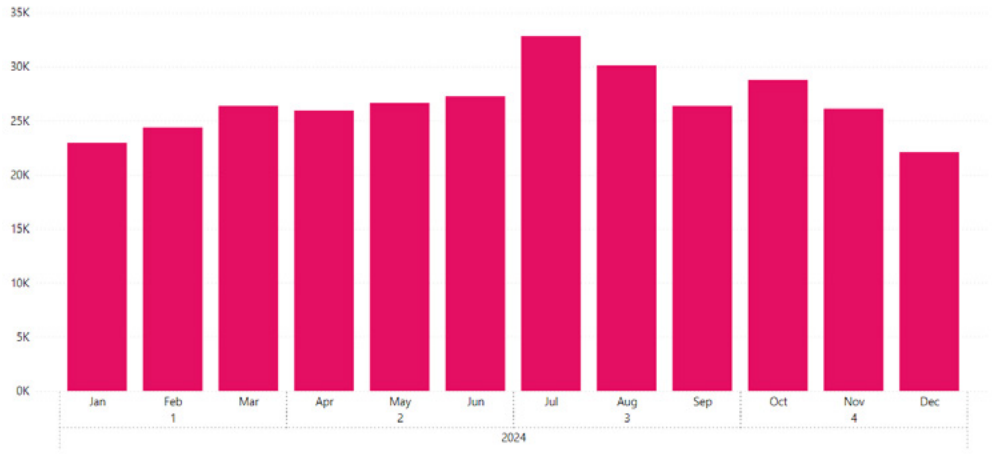
CIRCULATION METRICS OVERVIEW



OVERALL PUBLIC COMPUTER USAGE



IN-PERSON VISITS



AVERAGE VISITS BY DAY AND HOUR

Hour	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
12:00:00 AM	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1:00:00 AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2:00:00 AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3:00:00 AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4:00:00 AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5:00:00 AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6:00:00 AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7:00:00 AM	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
8:00:00 AM	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
9:00:00 AM	2	3	3	1	2	1	1
10:00:00 AM	98	117	114	114	113	161	88
11:00:00 AM	69	92	80	78	87	123	81
12:00:00 PM	73	88	93	101	88	112	99
1:00:00 PM	89	98	94	97	97	129	158
2:00:00 PM	79	102	93	113	92	129	139
3:00:00 PM	91	115	100	104	97	132	117
4:00:00 PM	81	106	99	93	92	102	88
5:00:00 PM	65	89	84	77	66	61	4
6:00:00 PM	63	79	75	72	4	4	1
7:00:00 PM	43	54	54	51	0	1	1
8:00:00 PM	21	28	29	26	1	2	1
9:00:00 PM	3	4	5	4	2	2	2
10:00:00 PM	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
11:00:00 PM	1	3	1	2	1	1	1

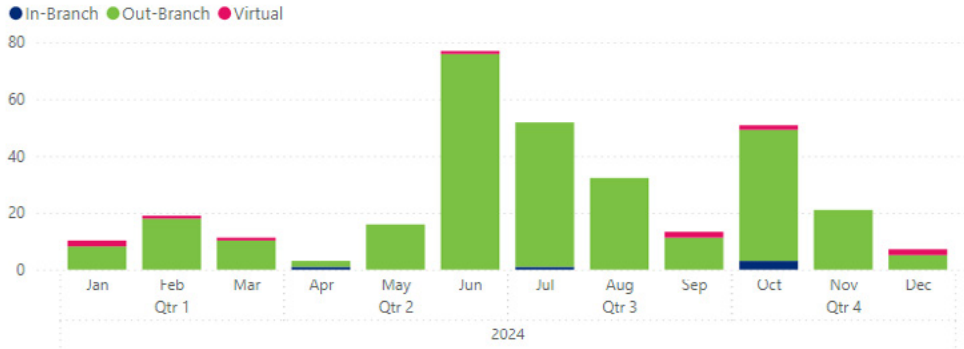
PROGRAMS & EVENTS—OFFERINGS

Month	2024
Jan	96
Feb	109
Mar	109
Apr	96
May	103
Jun	95
Jul	100
Aug	87
Sep	79
Oct	94
Nov	91
Dec	73
Total	1,132

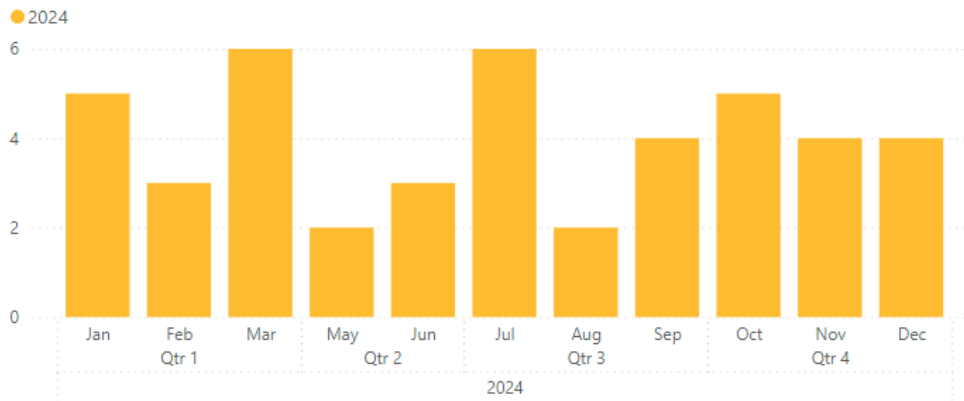
PROGRAMS & EVENTS—ATTENDANCE

Month	2024
Jan	1,800
Feb	2,013
Mar	2,124
Apr	1,821
May	2,045
Jun	1,898
Jul	2,590
Aug	2,152
Sep	1,544
Oct	1,913
Nov	1,861
Dec	1,634
Total	23,395

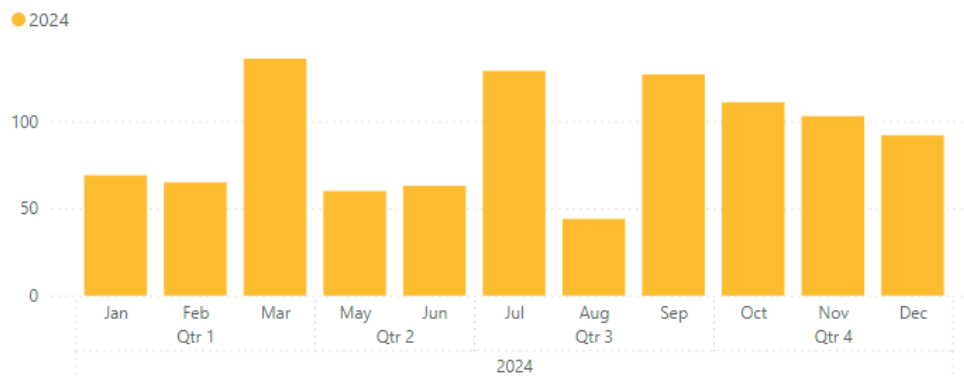
OUTREACH CLASSES & EVENTS—OFFERINGS



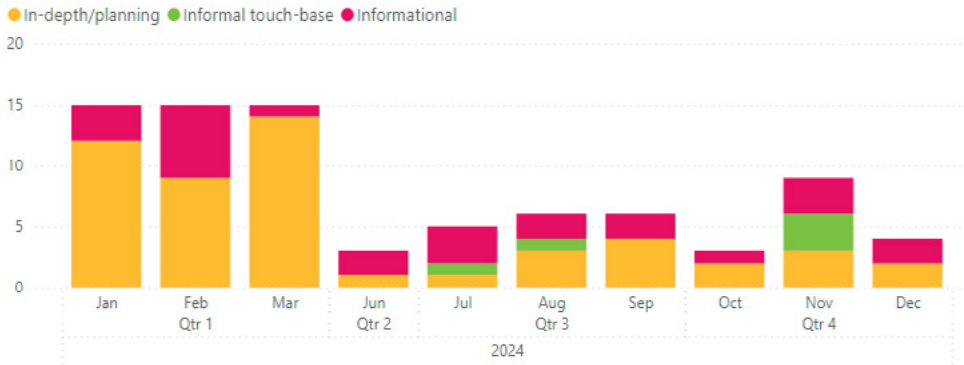
OUTREACH TOURS—OFFERINGS



OUTREACH TOURS—ATTENDANCE



OUTREACH MEETINGS



RELATIONSHIPS

Please use this format for all community relationships:

ORGANIZATION NAME	PRIMARY CONTACT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name & Position • Email/Phone number 	RELATIONSHIP DESCRIPTION <p>1–2 sentences describing what it looks like</p>
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CURRENT RELATIONSHIP

AGA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Smith / Public Programs and Outreach Coordinator • sample@email.com • 780-123-4567 	Have participated with an information table at the AGA annual Comic & Zine event. Connect CCA with AGA for discussions of programs. John Smith has left AGA, their replacement is Anny Adams; need to reestablish contact.
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POTENTIAL RELATIONSHIP

YMCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Doe / Program Supervisor • sample@email.com • 780-123-4567 	The YMCA is very active in our catchment. Because they are busy and understaffed we have been unable to connect but I believe that there might be room to collaborate on a program here.
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PAST RELATIONSHIP

COMMUNITY LEAGUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Abrams / Office Administrator • sample@email.com • 780-123-4567 	We used to do an outreach at the community league, but the number of attendees suddenly dropped off. There is no longer a big enough group to justify the visit.
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BRANCH ASSESSMENT SUCCESSSES

Please identify each success with a heading followed by a description of the success. Use the following format:

Offers to Requests Agencies in ABB's catchment have mentioned a significant challenge for ABB has been the fluctuations in the Community Librarian position, which has hampered ABB's relationships with some agencies in the community. Many groups that were or are housed in the Abbottsfield Mall have commented that working with the Library has been more difficult since the Library moved out of the mall in 2010. Having a single, full-time Community Librarian has had positive results with staff at many agencies and over the year that Mark has been in the Community Librarian position, there has been a shift from the Library offering services to specific requests being made by agencies. Many groups have also adjusted to our new location by for example, switching from visiting the Library for story time to having a Library Assistant visit them.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS & GAPS

Please identify each need/gap with a heading, followed by a description of the need/gap.

Use the following format:

Indigenous Services

The ABB catchment has a high number of Indigenous Peoples in the area; however, we currently only have a few classes or services geared towards this group. We celebrate National Aboriginal Day in June and have visits with Mother Earth & Me Aboriginal Head Starts. We have a limited relationship with Red Road Healing Society, which is the only agency that explicitly provides services for Indigenous Peoples following the closure of Partners for Kids and Youth. ABB will be hosting Cree language classes beginning in Fall 2013 and this may help build relationships with Indigenous Peoples in the community and lead to other classes or services in the future.

CONNECTING WORK PLANS WITH OUR COMMUNITY PROFILES – THE GOAL

Community Profiles developed are used as an analysis tool to develop Work Plans. Think in terms of future directions, as well as challenges and gaps when reading the Profile. Look at successes and failures, and at our current relationships in order to guide our Plans. What is fruitful, what is not? Use the Community Profile and the Business Plan to inform the Work Plan.

APPENDIX IV

Community Librarian Transition Report

INTRODUCTION

Write a note of welcome. Additional documents that will assist you in your work are:

- Community Profile

COMMUNITY LIBRARIAN JOB DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

BRANCH-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide any information about the in-branch responsibilities of the Community Librarian, including responsibilities within the Leadership Team.

SYSTEM-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide any information about the system-wide teams and/or initiatives that the Community Librarian is involved in.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide information about the relationships, outreach activities, programs and services the Community Librarian is currently involved with.

FIRST MONTH PRIORITIES

Include details about top priorities for the first month:

- Who to contact and contact information, who to meet with, projects that need attention, etc.

ONGOING OR EMERGING PROJECTS

Include details about branch initiatives, Business Plan initiatives, ongoing or emerging projects, upcoming priorities, etc.



COMMUNITY-LED TOOLKIT TEAM
PILAR MARTINEZ, CHAIR

Executive Director, Public Services

MONA BACON

Government Librarian, Information Services

LYNNE LACOMBE

Community Librarian, Highlands and Sprucewood branches

HEATHER SENTES

Community Librarian, Woodcroft Branch

MELANIE ST-ONGE

Community Librarian, Idylwyld Branch

LINDA GARVIN

Manager, Mill Woods Branch

REVISED BY 2016
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Director, Branch Services and Community Engagement

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Community Librarian, Capilano Branch

MIKE EATON

Community Librarian, Jasper Place Branch

LAURA FERNANDES

Community Librarian, Abbottsfield Branch

KATIE TURZANSKY

Manager, Sprucewood Branch

LAURA YOUNG

Community Librarian, epl2GO Literacy Van

COMMUNITY PROFILES AD HOC TEAM
ADRIENNE CANTY, CHAIR

Manager, Research & Assessment (Project)

MONA BACON

Government Librarian, Information Services

MASHA RIBICH

Community Librarian, Abbottsfield Branch

ROBERT SHORTREED

Manager, Londonderry Branch

TIINA PAYSON

Manager, Woodcroft Branch

TINA THOMAS

Director, Marketing & Communications

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Senior Marketing Consultant,
Marketing & Communications

SUSAN THOMPSON

Administrative Assistant, Public Services

REVISED BY 2025
COMMUNITY-LED TEAM

Thank you to everyone who participated in the update to this toolkit!

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Chief Executive Officer

MADELINE GORMLEY

Director, Branch Services and Community Engagement

VICTORIA REAP

Associate Manager, Stanley A. Milner Branch

KATIE TURZANSKY

Manager, Whitemud Branch

MO AMIN

Manager, Clareview Branch

JULIANNE SKINNER,

Community Librarian, Calder Branch



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