

Submission for the 2019 Federal Budget

Submitted by: The Canadian Federation of Library Associations

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Invest \$50 million over the next 5 years to support a targeted library upgrade investment fund that will expand information access to vulnerable groups.
2. Increase federal support to \$30 million over the next 5 years for accessible formats of works that will improve information access to Canadians with perceptual disabilities.
3. Invest \$1 million over the next 5 years to support the Canada Post book rate, which allows for transportation of shared materials at a manageable cost to libraries.
4. Invest \$5 million over 5 years to support training of Indigenous professionals with funding for Scholarships and Internships; funding for integrating Indigenous knowledge education into professional and technical programs for new and current library and information professionals; and provide funding for education on Indigenous knowledge and cultural protocols and their integration into library services and new programs that will protect and preserve indigenous knowledge in meaningful ways.

BACKGROUND

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) is the national voice of Canada's library associations. Our purpose is to advance library excellence in Canada, champion library values and the value of libraries and influence national and international public policy impacting libraries and their communities.

Canada's competitiveness depends not only on creating the appropriate environment for businesses to thrive, but also on ensuring everyone can take advantage of new opportunities in the knowledge-based economy. Access to information, tools, and services that unlock creativity and empower progress is vital and Canada's libraries are leading the way toward that goal.

Canada's libraries share the mission of preserving and disseminating Canada's knowledge and heritage—a crucial component of an innovative, productive and forward-looking country. Canada's high rates of educational attainment, literacy and numeracy, and widely available access to the Internet, among other advantages, have supported our competitiveness for decades. However, it is important to note that these benefits are not felt equitably in all communities across Canada. Our country will be more competitive over the coming years if we prioritize access to information, programs and services at Canada's libraries, which serve communities directly in building human capital, enabling progress, and closing persistent inequality gaps.

Our institutions have been able to provide support to many, but we still cannot provide support to all. The following priorities for the 2019 federal budget support that aim.

Support for a targeted library investment fund

Libraries are spaces that work toward universal access. Whether old or new, libraries are cornerstones for a democratic society whose collections and services support personal and community needs and provide a communal space for discussion and exploration. They are centres of knowledge where Canadian culture is discovered, used, and shared in all manner of formats so that people with diverse needs can access a wide range of information. Libraries have balanced the costs of new technologies and growing collections with the need to provide more community-oriented programming, while promoting the values of curiosity and literacy that make Canada a well-educated and productive country. Beyond simply providing access to resources, libraries make it possible for individuals and groups to meet and interact, they are places where ideas are born and opportunities are seized. This is especially true for

vulnerable populations, for whom libraries can serve as community anchors.¹ Libraries are important spaces for teaching basic digital skills to vulnerable groups that may not otherwise have access to resources and provide access to information resources vital to improving their lives, but also to find other resources, employment and connect with the community.²

Libraries nurture potential in the communities they serve and so it is troubling that library facilities across Canada are deteriorating and many are at risk of falling into disrepair. Library systems and branches that were founded decades ago continue to serve the needs of growing populations that have much higher expectations for collections, services, and access to new technologies. This means that as budgets tighten and obligations increase, capital maintenance is regularly deferred. In Ontario alone, the capital infrastructure obligation stood at \$1.4 billion in 2011.³ Supporting infrastructure upgrades for libraries will also support Canada's research and innovation agenda.

CFLA-FCAB is calling on the federal government **to invest \$50 million in a targeted Library Upgrade Investment Fund, which will allow libraries of all types, in all communities, expand information access to vulnerable groups that seek to use services and resources available at Canada's libraries.**

INCREASED FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR ACCESSIBLE FORMATS OF WORKS FOR THE BENEFIT OF CANADIANS WITH PERCEPTUAL DISABILITIES

CFLA-FCAB has been supportive of the government's approach to empowering persons with disabilities, particularly those with perceptual disabilities, to take part fully in our society and the Canadian economy. Our members have been encouraged by the government's commitment to introduce federal accessibility legislation, but they also understand that the *Accessible Canada Act* is limited to addressing accessibility barriers in areas that fall under federal jurisdiction.

Canada's library community recognizes that access—to knowledge, information, services and culture—lies at the core of our mission and overlaps with pillars of Canadian competitiveness. Beyond the benefits to Canadian individuals with disabilities, any effort to improve accessibility and further empower this integral group will have substantial benefits for all Canadians through increased inclusion and productivity.

¹ Abbas, J.M.; Moxley, D.P. *Envisioning Libraries as Collaborative Community Anchors for Social Service Provision to Vulnerable Populations*. Practice: Social Work in Action.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09503153.2015.1135891>. Accessed July 10, 2018.

² Brimacombe, K. "Public Libraries and the Homeless" in *The Information Policy Blog*.

<https://bclainfopolicycommittee.wordpress.com/2012/04/30/public-libraries-and-the-homeless/>. Accessed July 10, 2018.

³ Federation of Ontario Public Libraries; *Capital Needs Analysis*. <http://fopl.ca/media/2013/06/Capital-Needs-Analysis-Final-Report-19DEC2011.pdf>. Accessed July 10, 2018.

In 1993, a national forum was held that outlined the need for library guidelines for serving people with disabilities. As a result, *Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities* was drafted. As recognized by the World Health Organization, these guidelines also acknowledge that the number of people with disabilities is increasing due to population growth, medical advances and the aging process and that the prevalence of disability increases steadily with age. This document was most recently updated in 2016.

Removing barriers is a crucial step. A fantastic example of this is Canada's accession to the Marrakesh Treaty. Our country became the twentieth nation to accede to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Work for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. This measure represents a well-intentioned removal of a barrier, but it also demonstrates the need for additional support. While some funds have been made available to create alternate format published materials for the 3 million Canadians who are print disabled, many institutions face financial limitations in pursuit of this goal. The objective of the treaty and this legislation are nonetheless very noble.

Libraries across Canada have been motivated to address accessibility issues for decades, but many lack the resources to implement plans that will reduce barriers. **As such, we call on the federal government to increase support to \$30 million over the next 5 years for accessible formats of works that will improve information access to Canadians with perceptual disabilities.** By providing funding to create alternative formats of works, the government will be directly improving access to information for Canadians and thereby increasing our international competitiveness as a result.

SUPPORT FOR THE ACT TO AMEND THE CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT (LIBRARY MATERIALS)

Libraries of all formats depend on the ability to grow networks between institutions to encourage borrowing and maximize the impact of their collections. One of the most valuable tools in this pursuit has been the Library Rate provided through the library-administered Canadian Library Materials Service. This service is accessible to recognized public libraries, university libraries, or other libraries maintained by non-profit organizations or associations that are for public use in Canada.

In 2017 Canada Post imposed severe restrictions on Libraries ability to create accounts in the Electronic Shipping Tool. All Libraries doing volumes of less than 5,000 items are no longer able to create accounts that enable monthly invoicing, creating barriers for a vast majority of libraries.

At the same time, Canada Post announced that it would be increasing its rates for shipping library materials by a weighted average of 5%. Libraries The Library Rate has offered significant relief, but regular increases and the reduction in services has limited

the ability of libraries to share materials—a function that lies at the heart of their mandate.

CFLA-FCAB recommends the federal government to invest \$1 million over the next 5 years to support the Canada Post book rate and the Canadian Library Materials Service.

SUPPORT FOR TRAINING INDIGENOUS PROFESSIONALS AND INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN LIBRARY SERVICES TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Much of the historical, cultural, linguistic and material knowledge of Indigenous peoples' has been held by libraries, archives, museums, and records centres. Indigenous knowledge should be preserved and protected in a variety of media for use by current and future generations in a respectful and sensitive manner. Consulting Indigenous communities with respect for proper protocols to access and care for their culturally sensitive records is paramount to this goal. By providing support for Indigenous people with scholarships for education and Internship opportunities to train in library services, whether at the graduate (MLIS) or undergraduate level and for education on Indigenous knowledge and cultural protocols within the library and information community in collaboration with Indigenous groups, this measure will help the federal government to act on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action #7, which urges the government to develop a joint strategy to “eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Canadians.” This process will have implications for copyright policies but will inevitably create opportunities for employment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples at library and archival facilities across Canada.

Recommendation No. 7 of the CFLA-FCAB Truth and Reconciliation Report notes libraries have a role to “Enhance opportunities for Indigenous library, archival and information professionals as well as the inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies in the Canadian library and archives profession through culturally appropriate pedagogy, recruitment practices, professional and continuing education and cross-cultural training in collaboration with local Indigenous stakeholders and partners.”⁴ Indigenous people should be provided support to train as professionals in all areas that control the interpretation and preservation of their tradition, history, language and arts.⁵

⁴Camille Callison, “Indigenous Peoples' New Canoe,” in *Aboriginal and Visible Minority Librarians: Oral Histories from Canada*, ed. Deborah Lee and Mahalakshmi Kumaran (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 144.

⁵<http://cfla-fcab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Truth-and-Reconciliation-Committee-Report-and-Recommendations.pdf>. Accessed July 10, 2018.

It is crucial for Indigenous communities to be involved in the process and educating other members of the community to access their cultural artefacts and knowledge is vital. Support for training Indigenous professionals in library services and archival methods will equip them to retrieve and store information and materials for the community's use and enjoyment.

CFLA-FCAB recommends that the federal government invest to support Indigenous knowledge and protocols education in library services that will result in respectful protection and preservation of all types of Indigenous knowledge.