



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

**Written Submission for the Finance Canada Budget
Consultations in Advance of the 2023 Federal Budget**

Submitted by:

Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques.

Submitted to:

The Standing Committee on Finance
Comité permanent des finances

Summary of Recommendations

1. CFLA-FCAB recommends that the Government of Canada introduce legislation to ensure that Canada's libraries and users have access on reasonable terms to e-content from multinational publishers.
2. CFLA-FCAB recommends that the government commit to \$200 million over the next four years to help implement efficient and cost-effective green infrastructure in vital community hubs from coast to coast to coast. Investment in a targeted library upgrade investment fund supports the circular economy and Canada's Federal Sustainable Development Strategies.
3. CFLA-FCAB recommends that the Government of Canada provide \$25 million over three years starting on 2022-23 to LAC to support the digitization of millions of documents related to the federal Indian Day School System, which will ensure survivors and all Canadians have meaningful access to them.
4. CFLA-FCAB recommends increased support for Indigenous libraries and Indigenous library workers, including:
 - a. Investments of funding to support scholarships, training and paid internships for Indigenous librarians and library technicians.
 - b. Sustained multi-year funding for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and libraries for improved access to records, particularly related to residential schools and other aspects of Indigenous experiences

LIBRARIES IN CANADA

Canada's libraries are, almost exclusively, publicly funded institutions. Whether supported by municipal governments, or as part of educational institutions, they receive public funds to operate.

Over the long-term, libraries help more Canadians access the information and support they need to lead fuller lives, make new discoveries, and better understand the world they live in. Libraries' mission of universal access to knowledge products and information underpins a commitment to equity that makes it possible for Canadians from all socio-economic backgrounds to thrive.

For Canada's long-term recovery from the pandemic, libraries will continue to play an important role in communities and on campuses as centres for sharing knowledge. Many will also play an increasingly important role of providing services to people who continue to face economic hardship as a result of the pandemic. As people who are unemployed or underemployed take a pathway to education and training, research libraries will be critical to their journey.

Canada's libraries also have a role to play in advancing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The pursuit of knowledge and truth are core to our identity and are necessary preconditions to walking the path of reconciliation.

We look forward to supporting Canadians and call on the government to support us in the mission we share.

SUPPORT FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ONLINE MATERIALS

Libraries provide greater equity in access to knowledge and tools. Libraries purchase a significant proportion on content licenses for digital materials that are crucial to education, research and personal fulfillment that all Canadians benefit from.

In addition to affordable broadband access, online materials such as e-books and audio books are crucial materials for libraries in all communities to deliver. These digital materials are particularly beneficial for rural and remote communities where household access may be weak. We believe access to online materials and resources through public institutions is fundamental to personal growth and economic success in Canada and must be a consideration in our national response.

Unfortunately, multinational publishers continue to limit libraries' access to e-content. Where these publishers do make e-content available, it is often significantly more expensive than physical copies. For example, Canadian author Louise Penny's book, *A Better Man*, is available to libraries for \$22 in hardcover, for \$60 in eBook, and \$81.50 in eAudio. The \$60 eBook cost allows the book to be checked out electronically 52 times or for two years – whichever happens first. A paper edition would be expected to last three to four years at just over a third of the cost.

Included in the groups impacted by these barriers, post-secondary students are one of the most significantly impacted. As costs continue to rise across Canada and students continue to struggle to afford basic necessities (food, rent, transportation), let alone rising tuition costs, unnecessary burdens present a very real risk to the success of the next generation. Accessing the e-content that is needed to succeed in their studies should be the least of students' worries.

Now more than ever, public and institutional libraries should be able to provide accessible e-content to users. While Canadian publishers have ensured that e-content is made available to public libraries, multinational publishers have created significant barriers for library users. Despite changing circumstances during the pandemic, these publishers have failed to make any effort that would ease access to vital information through e-content.

Libraries in the United States have experienced similar problems with multinational publishers. As a result, legislation was passed in the New York and Maryland state legislatures to ensure library access to e-content. Both the New York and the Maryland laws "require publishers who offer to license e-books to the public" to also offer those e-books to libraries on "reasonable" terms. The bill's summary states that the law is designed to ensure that "widely accepted and effective industry practices remain in place while prohibiting harmful practices that discriminate against libraries and harm library patrons."¹

¹ <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/86637-new-york-legislature-passes-library-e-book-bill.html>.

CFLA-FCAB is calling on the federal government and the Minister of Canadian Heritage to introduce legislation that would ensure public and institutional libraries and their users have access on reasonable terms to e-content from multinational publishers.

CFLA-FCAB recommends the Government of Canada introduce legislation to ensure that Canada's libraries and users have access on reasonable terms to e-content from multinational publishers.

SUPPORT FOR COST-EFFECTIVE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Libraries have been a part of sustainable development long before the term “circular economy” was coined, and as such, Canada's libraries support the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.² As noted in the 2021 progress report, “Modern, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure supports clean economic growth and social inclusion.”³ Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and now rising consumer costs through inflation, have exacerbated social inequalities and make it more difficult for Canadians from all backgrounds to grow and succeed. Libraries are always valuable resources, yet are consistently asked to do more with less.

Many libraries face high costs related to deferred maintenance. The costs associated with fixing older library buildings and the increased costs of service delivery make it harder for institutions to choose investments in new, energy efficient equipment. Older buildings are harder to maintain but government can help by supporting investments in new equipment. By doing so, we can improve health and comfort in libraries for customers, reduce carbon emissions, and lower operating costs for these institutions.

In 2016, there were more than 145 million visits to libraries in Canada and demand is steadily rising as the pandemic continues. If the government intends to proceed with an environmentally friendly recovery, retrofitting existing structures is aligned with that goal and will benefit millions of Canadians. In October 2020, the Canada Infrastructure Bank's Growth Plan included a two billion dollar investment in large-scale building retrofits. This is a step in the right direction towards retrofits broadly but we urge the government to include Canada's libraries in these and future retrofit plans, no matter the size or scale of the library or the community that it serves.

By addressing maintenance gaps and energy costs, operating funds can be redirected to provide Canadians from coast to coast to coast with spaces to grow and learn, while working with the federal government towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the government's expansive climate agenda as announced in *A Healthy Environment and A Healthy Economy* in December 2020.

Investing in library infrastructure will bring real social and economic benefits to the

² Canada's Sustainable Development Strategy. website:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/conservation/sustainability/federal-sustainable-development-strategy.html>.

Report: <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.864480/publication.html>

³ Ibid.

people who need it most. Facilities that were founded decades ago are seeing demands for services and collections exponentially increase while remaining underfunded. Retrofitting Canadian libraries will help in the fight against climate change and help to offer safe, healthy spaces for Canadians to access resources as our society and economy recover.

CFLA-FCAB recommends the next government commit to \$200 million over the next four years to support a targeted library upgrade investment fund.

SUPPORT FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The Prime Minister's mandate to cabinet called upon his ministers to move faster on the path of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. In order to achieve this, the Prime Minister made clear that "reconciliation cannot come without truth" and that the government will continue to invest in this truth.⁴

Call to Action sixty-nine in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report calls upon Library and Archives Canada to recognize the inalienable right for Indigenous peoples' to know the truth regarding human rights violations committed against them in residential schools."

TRC Call to Action sixty-nine also calls on LAC to "ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public" and to "commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools."

It is vital that the documents being released by the LAC to the public are made accessible. Survivors and their families should not be required to travel to a physical location in order to retrieve this information. By digitizing documents related to the federal Indian Day School System, the government will be removing barriers to accessing the truth and allowing for continued access beyond the physical lifespan of these important archives.

For decades, some of Canada's most horrific atrocities have been hidden from the public and survivors of residential schools have carried the weight of significant trauma out of public view. In light of the recent discoveries of unmarked burial grounds across Canada, it is the responsibility of libraries and archives to seek out and make accessible, the truth behind these atrocities.

CFLA-FCAB recommends that the Government of Canada provide \$25 million over three years starting on 2022-23 to LAC to support the digitization of millions of documents related to the federal Indian Day School System, which will ensure survivors and all Canadians have meaningful access to them.

⁴ Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Mandate Letter to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations in the 44th Parliament. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/12/16/minister-crown-indigenous-relations-mandate-letter>.

SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS LIBRARIES AND WORKERS

Part of the journey of reconciliation is to address historical inequities through the promotion of culture and inclusion of Indigenous peoples in all aspects of society.

TRC Call to Action number fourteen states: “The preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.” Canada’s library community believes firmly in the promotion of Indigenous libraries and Indigenous library workers, who are best positioned to preserve Indigenous culture and teachings and promote Truth and Reconciliation efforts across Canada.

Over the last several years, the federal government has made significant investments in efforts to promote equity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. We believe that investments in the Indigenous library community and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation are important steps in furthering our country’s journey towards reconciliation.

CFLA-FCAB recommends increased support for Indigenous libraries and Indigenous library workers, including:

- ***Investments of funding to support scholarships, training and paid internships for Indigenous librarians and library technicians.***
- ***Sustained multi-year funding for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and libraries for improved access to records, particularly related to residential schools and other aspects of Indigenous experiences.***