



Canadian Federation of Library Associations  
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

**Written Submission for the Finance Canada Budget  
Consultations in Advance of the 2024 Federal Budget**

Submitted by:

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

## Recommendations

1. Introduce legislation to ensure that Canada's libraries and users have access on reasonable terms to e-content from multinational publishers.
2. Commit \$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. Increase 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)

**RECOMMENDATION 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.**

Libraries are key vehicles of equity, providing access to knowledge and tools for the public that fuel learning and long-term success. Audio and e- books provided by libraries make reading more accessible, and libraries across the country are hubs of internet access for those who may not otherwise have access. 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, e-content is not made easily accessible in public nor institutional libraries. Virtual copies of text are significantly more expensive than physical copies, but are a much more sustainable option, and makes this content more accessible. The pandemic highlighted the impacts of social connection, internet connectivity, and in-person learning, or a lack thereof, all things which libraries help to provide for all. In the midst of health, mental health, and financial stressors, libraries provide critical resources that help to mitigate their impacts yet are chronically underfunded.

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. CFLA-FCAB is calling on the federal government and the Minister of Canadian Heritage to introduce legislation that would ensure libraries and their users have access on reasonable –that is, affordable and easily implementable– terms to e-content from multinational publishers, in order to provide accessible resources to Canadians.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:****Commit to \$200 million over the next four years to implement sustainable infrastructure upgrades in targeted community hubs across the country.**

Libraries have been a part of sustainable development long before the term “circular economy” was coined<sup>1</sup>, and have only increased in importance with climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic which have exacerbated social inequities and barriers to success. Facilities that were founded decades ago are seeing demands for services and collections exponentially increase while remaining underfunded. Libraries are invaluable resources, yet are consistently asked to do more with less.

Libraries face high costs to maintain older buildings, let alone upgrade them to be more resilient, sustainable, and cost-efficient in the long-run. 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.

CFLA is calling on the federal government to invest in targeted, sustainable infrastructure upgrades to make libraries healthy, accessible, and valuable for the public, reduce carbon emissions, and lower their operating costs. Canada Infrastructure Bank's October 2022 Growth Plan included a two billion dollar investment in large-scale building retrofits, marking a step in the right direction towards sustainable infrastructure. Investing in library infrastructure will bring real social and economic benefits to the people who need it most – 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Canada's Sustainable Development Strategy. website:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/conservation/sustainability/federal-sustainable-development-strategy.html>. Last accessed July 24, 2019.

Report: [http://www.fsds-sfdd.ca/downloads/FSDS\\_2019-2022.pdf](http://www.fsds-sfdd.ca/downloads/FSDS_2019-2022.pdf) Last accessed July 9, 2020.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:****Increase support for Indigenous libraries and Indigenous library workers.**

Indigenous communities have been historically underserved in Canada, and Indigenous library workers are no exception. It is important that the Government of Canada work to empower and support Indigenous libraries and library workers through adequate investments and sustained funding.

Investments should be made to support scholarships, training, and paid internships for Indigenous librarians and library technicians. This will foster greater diversity, representation, and inclusion within the library profession by providing greater opportunities to Indigenous communities. In improving access to the library profession, we can empower Indigenous individuals to access education and professional development, and ensure that their unique perspectives and cultural knowledge are integrated into library services. This inclusive approach will enrich library collections, programming, and community engagement, promoting a more equitable and respectful representation of Indigenous cultures and histories within the broader society. These investments will support the training and engagement of Indigenous librarians, archivists, and researchers, empowering them to lead efforts in preserving and presenting their communities' stories with the respect and sensitivity they deserve.

It is equally as important that sustained, multi-year funding be allocated for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous libraries. This funding will be critical for improving access to key records, particularly those related to residential schools and other aspects of Indigenous experiences. By securing long-term funding, we can prioritize the comprehensive documentation and dissemination of Indigenous experiences. This investment will enable the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to continue its vital work in truth-telling, healing, and reconciliation, while Indigenous libraries can expand their collections and services, fostering greater awareness and understanding of Indigenous culture and heritage.

## **ABOUT CFLA-FCAB**

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA-FCAB) is the united, national voice of Canada's library community. Canadian libraries have the common mission of preserving and disseminating Canada's knowledge and heritage—a crucial component of an innovative, productive and forward-looking country. Our members also provide free access to the information and resources that many Canadians—especially those who face socioeconomic barriers—need to maximize their personal development and wellbeing and their contributions to the economy. As the national voice of Canada's library communities, CFLA-FCAB will work 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.