



# **Public library grant program guidelines**

2024/25





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## Program Highlights

Public libraries are a key component of Alberta's vibrant municipalities, and the provincial government is committed to maintaining a strong provincewide public library system. Our vision is to create seamless access to library resources and services for all Albertans by facilitating local access and building a provincewide network based on collaboration, innovation, and connectivity.

*Budget 2024* supports this vision by maintaining the operating grant budget at \$33.55 million in 2024/25. Based on the Municipal Affairs 2019 Population List and to ensure consistency with other ministry grant programs, operating grant per capita rates are \$5.60 for municipal and intermunicipal library boards, and \$4.75 for regional library system boards. The base amount of \$9,000 in addition to the per capita funding for municipal and intermunicipal library boards is also maintained to give library boards serving small rural populations more stability in year-to-year funding.

Municipal and system library boards that received the minimum 5 per cent increase from the 2022/23 to 2023/24 Public Library Grants have had their grant amount maintained for 2024/25. Previous to changes made in 2023, regional library systems would see an increase in their grant if new jurisdictions joined because provincial grants to library system boards are based on the combined population served. This practice will continue, except where the regional library system board is already receiving an adjusted 5 per cent increase and where that 5 per cent increase is greater than the population of the new jurisdiction(s) served.

Government also enters into project grants with library associations and publishing organizations, at the Minister's discretion, to enable equitable public library resources for all Albertans. These project grants give libraries access to resources for people with print disabilities and to Alberta-published eBooks and emagazines. These project grants also include on-reserve and on-settlement grants given to six regional library systems and three large urban libraries that serve neighbouring Indigenous communities.

## Available Grants

A public library board is eligible for a grant in these guidelines if it complies with the *Libraries Act* and the regulations under it.

### Operating Grants

All municipal, intermunicipal, and library system boards established under the *Libraries Act* can apply for an operating grant. Operating grants are paid annually to assist library boards with library operation and the provision of public library service, including staffing, utilities, acquisition of resources, and delivery of services.

### Library Services Grants

Library services grants function in lieu of a municipal operating grant if a board serves residents of jurisdictions too small to sustain a municipal library board, such as improvement districts, special areas, and summer villages. They may be paid to eligible municipal or intermunicipal library boards to assist with costs of serving residents of these municipalities if the municipality has contributed funding to the board in the previous year. They may also be provided to a library system board if a municipality is party to a library system agreement, but does not have its own municipal library board, or the municipal library board does not apply for an operating grant.

### Establishment Grants

The Minister may make an establishment grant to a library system board, on approving membership of a new municipality, improvement district, or Metis Settlement on that board. This one-time funding may be paid pending availability. The grant is to assist with costs associated with bringing new member municipalities into library systems.

## **General Grants**

The Minister may make a general grant, provided funding is available, to assist library boards with the following activities:

- to complete, amalgamate, or restructure library systems;
- to assist with restructuring due to municipal reorganization;
- to research, develop, and promote programs dealing with public library services; and
- to assist in resource-sharing through the development of information-sharing networks in Alberta.

The Minister may also make a grant under this category to Alberta organizations and Canadian corporations for research, development, and promotion of programs dealing with public library services.

Applicants for these grants will be required to complete a grant agreement with Alberta Municipal Affairs.

## Definitions for the Guidelines

**Alberta organization:** means a corporation incorporated or continued under the *Companies Act* or the *Business Corporations Act*; a society incorporated under the *Societies Act*; an ordinary or limited partnership formed in Alberta; a limited partnership formed in a jurisdiction, other than Alberta, that is registered under Part 2 of the *Partnership Act*; a municipality; an Indian band located in Alberta; a Metis Settlement; or a board, other than a board as defined in the *Libraries Act*, society, council, committee, or incorporated congregation established pursuant to an enactment.

**Appropriation:** with respect to a municipal library board, intermunicipal library board, or library system board, means the amount of money appropriated for a year by each municipality or by the members of the library system for the operation of the municipal library, intermunicipal library, or library system, minus:

- the amount of any money paid to each municipality or members of the library system by the Government of Canada or the Government of Alberta by way of a grant for library purposes for that year; and
- the amount of any money paid during that year by the municipal library board, intermunicipal library board, or library system board as rent to the municipality or members of the library system.

**Canadian corporation:** a corporation or society incorporated or continued in a jurisdiction in Canada, other than Alberta.

**Municipal council(s):** the council of a municipality that established a municipal library board, or in respect to intermunicipal library boards, the participating municipal councils that are party to the intermunicipal agreement as per the *Libraries Act*.

**Per resident:** means the per resident share of the appropriation. In respect of a municipal library board, the appropriation provided by the number of residents of the municipality that established the board; in respect of an intermunicipal library board, the appropriation for the intermunicipal library board divided by the number of residents of the participating municipalities; and in respect of a library system, the appropriation for the library system board divided by the number of residents of the members of the library system.

# Grants for Municipal & Intermunicipal Library Boards

## Operating Grants

A municipal or intermunicipal library board is eligible for this grant if it is in compliance with the Libraries Act, Libraries Regulation, and Ministerial Grants Regulation. The library board must also receive an appropriation from its municipal council(s) of at least \$2 per resident based on the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List.

Each municipal and intermunicipal library board is allotted base funding of \$9,000 plus a per resident rate of \$5.60 based on the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List.

## Boards with a population of 3,000 or over

To receive the maximum grant, the library board must receive a local appropriation from its municipal council(s) of **at least \$3.52** per resident based on the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List for the operation of the library or the provision of public library service (minus any amounts returned to the municipality for rent payments). If the board receives a lower appropriation, the provincial grant will be prorated at a lower level using a formula of 1:1.575.

Calculating the grant:

Municipal Appropriation	Formula	Provincial grant per resident
\$2.00 (minimum appropriation)	Multiply by 1.575	\$3.15
\$3.00	Multiply by 1.575	\$4.72
\$3.52 or more	Multiply by 1.575	\$5.60 (maximum)

## Library Services Grants

A municipal or intermunicipal library board is eligible for a Library Services grant if it received funding from an improvement district, special area, or summer village in the previous year. A grant under this section may be used only to provide library services to libraries in the improvement district, special area, or summer village.

The maximum is 1.575 times the funding received in the previous year to a maximum of \$5.60 per resident.

A municipal or intermunicipal library board is not eligible for a Library Services grant if the improvement district, special area, or summer village is a member of a library system and the library system board is receiving the library services grant.

## General Grants

A municipal or intermunicipal library board may apply for a general grant to assist with activities that are supported under this grant category. Applications for general grants will be considered as funding allows and will be subject to a grant agreement.

# Grants for Library System Boards

## Operating Grants

A library system board is eligible for this grant if it is in compliance with the *Libraries Act*, Libraries Regulation, and Ministerial Grants Regulation. The board must also receive a combined municipal appropriation of at least \$1 per resident of the participating municipalities. To receive the maximum operating grant, a library system board must obtain a local appropriation from its municipalities of at least \$2.23 per resident.

Operating grants for library system boards are calculated by multiplying the combined municipal membership (as determined by the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List) by the maximum rate of \$4.75. If the board obtains a combined local appropriation of less than \$2.23 per resident, then the grant will be prorated at a lower level using a formula of 2.1:1. For example, an appropriation of \$2 per resident would generate a grant of \$4.20 ( $2 \times 2.1 = \$4.20$ ) per resident rather than the maximum grant per resident of \$4.75.

A library system board operating grant is based on the total population of participating member municipalities, improvement districts, Metis Settlements, and other areas as approved by the Minister. A rural municipality may become a party to a library system agreement on behalf of part of its municipality and the number of residents is determined in a manner satisfactory to the Minister using the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List.

## Library Services Grants

A library system board is eligible for a Library Services grant on behalf of residents of member municipalities that do not have a municipal or intermunicipal library board, or when the municipal or intermunicipal library board does not apply for a grant. The library system board must receive a minimum appropriation of \$3 per resident of the member municipalities, improvement districts, Metis Settlements, or other areas as approved by the Minister.

A grant under this section may be used only to provide library services to libraries within the library system.

This grant is calculated by multiplying the eligible 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List to a maximum of \$5.60 per resident. **There is no separate application process and the grant will be calculated and included with the operating grant.**

## Establishment Grants

The Minister may make an establishment grant to a library system board to assist in the establishment or completion of a library system.

A library system board is eligible for an establishment grant if the Minister approves the membership of a new municipality, improvement district, Metis Settlement, or other area; or, if a member of the library system undergoes an increase in population because of the annexation of land from a municipality, improvement district, or special area that was not a member of the library system. The grant may be paid in stages. Establishment grants are calculated using the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List at a rate of \$10.27 per resident.

## General Grants

A library system board may apply for a general grant to assist with the activities that are supported under this grant category. Applications for general grants will be considered as funding allows and subject to a grant agreement.



# Grants for Community Library Boards

## Operating Grants

Operating grants for community library boards are based on the board's previous year's expenditure minus any grants provided by the Government of Canada or the Government of Alberta for the operation of the library or any funding provided by an improvement district or municipal library board.

If the board's expenditures are greater than its revenues from grant sources, the Minister may make a grant the greater of:

- a. \$1,000; or
- b. 1.5 times the expenditure, up to a maximum of \$3.00 per resident.

## Library Services Grants

A community library board is eligible for this grant if it receives financial assistance from an improvement district, special area, or summer village in the previous year.

# Grants for Federation Boards

## Operating Grants

The Minister may make a grant to a federation board, with the amount of grant determined by the Minister.

# Applying for an Operating Grant

All grant application forms and templates can be accessed electronically on the [Public Library Services Branch \(PLSB\) website \(www.albertalibraries.ca\)](http://www.albertalibraries.ca) or by contacting PLSB by phone or email (see Contact Information at the end of this document).

**The following three documents must be submitted to the PLSB via mail or email by June 15, 2024:**

## 1. 2024 Application for Financial Assistance

The 2024 application form must be completed by a library board member or library staff member authorized by the board to receive and disburse funds on behalf of said board, and who has been authorized by the board to apply for the grant.

## 2. 2023 Statement of Receipts and Disbursements or Financial Review

Municipal and intermunicipal library boards may use the provided Statement of Receipts and Disbursements template for their financial review or submit the financial review in the format provided by the financial reviewer.

For municipal and intermunicipal library boards, the Statement of Receipts and Disbursements/financial review must be completed by a person or firm considered acceptable by municipal council, as per the *Libraries Act*.

If the financial reviewer is not the same as the previous year, please include a copy of the council resolution authorizing the new person or firm as financial reviewer with your grant application.

These reports are reviewed to ensure the board received the 2023/24 Operating Grant and to confirm the municipal appropriation.

## 3. 2024 Library Board Budget

Submission of the library board's 2024 budget is required to evaluate the status of the application and to ensure that the local appropriation is sufficient for the board to receive the 2024/25 grant. The completed budget should be signed by the board chair with the date the budget was approved by the library board.

## Submitting Grant Applications

Completed grant applications can be emailed to [libgrants@gov.ab.ca](mailto:libgrants@gov.ab.ca) or mailed to:

Public Library Services Branch  
Alberta Municipal Affairs  
17th Floor, Commerce Place  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4  
Attention: Jen Pringle, Public Library Grants

## 2024 Public Library Survey and 2023 Annual Report of Public Libraries in Alberta

This report must be submitted electronically via LibPAS to the PLSB by February 28, 2024. More information is available on the PLSB website.

## 2024 Public Library Survey

The 2024 Public Library Survey gathers current public library contact information along with information about board members, meeting dates, service points, library hours, and plan of service. This information is for the provincial directory of public libraries, to produce mailing lists and to determine compliance with provincial library legislation.

## 2023 Annual Report of Public Libraries in Alberta

The 2023 Annual Report of Public Libraries captures information about public library activity from January 1 to December 31, 2023. This report documents the service activity of public library boards in Alberta and provides information on performance. Data on specific performance measures is collected to produce Public Library Statistics for the Province of Alberta.

## Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the **Public Library Grant Program Guidelines**, please contact:

Jen Pringle, Public Library Grants  
Public Library Services Branch  
Alberta Municipal Affairs  
17<sup>th</sup> Floor, Commerce Place  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4

Phone: 780-415-0294

Email: [jen.pringle@gov.ab.ca](mailto:jen.pringle@gov.ab.ca)

For inquiries about the **grant application process**, or to **submit your application**, please contact ministry staff at [libgrants@gov.ab.ca](mailto:libgrants@gov.ab.ca).