



Public library grant program guidelines

2026/27



Contents

Program Highlights	2
Available Grants	2
Definitions for the Guidelines	4
Grants for Municipal and Intermunicipal Library Boards	5
Operating Grants	5
Boards with a Population of 3,000 or More	5
General Grants	5
Grants for Library System Boards	6
Operating Grants	6
Library Services Grants	6
Establishment Grants	6
General Grants	7
Applying for an Operating Grant for Municipal, Intermunicipal, and System Library Boards	8
Applying for an Operating Grant for Indigenous Library Boards	9
Grant Payments	9
Contact Information.....	9

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 2026 supports this vision by maintaining the operating grant budget at \$33.55 million in 2026/27. Based on the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List and to ensure consistency with other ministry grant programs, operating grant per capita rates are: \$5.60 for municipal, intermunicipal, and on-reserve, on-settlement (OROS) 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, intermunicipal, and OROS 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 2026/27. 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 system boards and three large urban library boards that serve neighbouring Indigenous communities.

Available Grants

A municipal, intermunicipal, and regional system library board is eligible for a grant in these guidelines if it complies with the *Libraries Act* and the regulations under it. First Nations and Metis Settlement library boards must be in good standing with their respective councils to be deemed eligible for provincial funding.

Operating Grants

All municipal, intermunicipal, and library system boards established under the *Libraries Act* can apply for an operating grant. On-reserve and on-settlement library boards established via Band Council Resolution or Settlement council may also apply for an Indigenous 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 are 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.

Establishment Grants

The Minister may make an establishment grant to a library system board upon approving membership of a new municipality, improvement district, Metis Settlement, or school authority within a First Nations reserve on that board. An establishment grant may also be provided to a library system board if it enters a contractual arrangement with a First Nations reserve or its library board for library system services. This one-time funding may be paid pending availability. The grant is to assist with costs associated with bringing new jurisdictions into library systems.

General Grants

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

- to assist with providing library service in First Nations reserve or Metis Settlement;
- 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*; an incorporated society established 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; a First Nations 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 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.
- The amount of money paid to a municipality from a neighbouring municipality by way of a cost-share agreement.

Band or Settlement council(s): the council of a First Nations band or a Metis Settlement.

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.

Public library: means a municipal library that provides public library services under the control and management of a municipal library or an intermunicipal library board, or a library system.

Grants for Municipal and Intermunicipal Library Boards

Operating Grants

A municipal or intermunicipal library board is eligible for a provincial Public Library Operating 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 More

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 operating grant may 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)

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

The operating grant for library system boards is based on the total population of member jurisdictions, including municipalities, improvement districts, and Metis Settlements, in addition to other participating areas (i.e., First Nations reserve) as approved by the Minister. The total population is calculated using the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List.

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 participating jurisdictions of at least \$2.23 per resident.

Operating grants for library system boards are calculated by multiplying the combined member jurisdictional and participating First Nations on-reserve populations (as determined by the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List) by the maximum rate of \$4.75.

If the library system board obtains a combined appropriation of less than \$2.23 per resident, the operating 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.

Library Services Grants

A library system board is eligible for a Library Services Grant on behalf of residents of member jurisdictions that do not have a municipal or intermunicipal library board. To be eligible, 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. Library systems are funded through provincial operating grants to provide administrative services, and as such, library services grants should directly benefit local library boards.

The grant is calculated by multiplying the combined population of the eligible municipalities, improvement districts, Metis Settlements or other areas as approved by the Minister, by the rate of \$5.60 per resident (as per the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List). There is no separate application process, and the grant will be provided along with the library system board's 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, such as a First Nations reserve; 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 population as per the 2019 Municipal Affairs Population List at a rate of \$10.27 per resident.

There is no application process. The establishment grant, if one is to be made, will be calculated and provided to the library system board upon the Minister's approval of the new member.

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.

Applying for an Operating Grant for Municipal, Intermunicipal, and System Library Boards

All grant application forms and templates can be accessed electronically on the [Public Library Services Branch \(PLSB\) website](#) 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, 2026:

1. 2026 Application for Financial Assistance

The 2026 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 the board, and who has been authorized by the board to apply for the grant.

2. 2025 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 in the previous year, please include a copy of the council resolution authorizing the new person or firm as financial reviewer with your grant application.

3. 2026 Library Board Budget

Submission of the library board's 2026 budget is required to evaluate the status of the application and to ensure the municipal appropriation is sufficient for the board to receive the 2026/27 grant. The completed budget should be signed by the board chair with the date the budget was approved by the library board.

4. 2026 Public Library Survey and 2025 Annual Report of Public Libraries in Alberta

This report must be submitted electronically via LibPAS to PLSB by February 28, 2026. More information is available on the [PLSB website](#).

Submitting Grant Applications

Completed grant applications can be emailed to libgrants@gov.ab.ca, or mailed to:

Public Library Services Branch
Alberta Municipal Affairs
17th Floor, Commerce Place
10155 - 102 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 4L4

Attention: Jen Pringle, Public Library Grants

Applying for an Operating Grant for Indigenous Library Boards

The following documents must be submitted to colette.poitras@gov.ab.ca by June 30, 2026:

1. 2025 Statement of Receipts and Disbursements or Financial Review

Indigenous 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.

The Statement of Receipts and Disbursements/financial review must be completed by a third-party person or firm. It cannot be completed by a board member.

2. 2026 Library Board Budget

Submission of the library board's 2025 budget is required to evaluate the status of the application.

3. 2026 Public Library Survey and 2025 Annual Report of Public Libraries in Alberta

This report must be submitted electronically via LibPAS to PLSB by February 28, 2026. More information is available on the [PLSB website](#).

4. Grant Application

Upon submission of the above three documents, the grant application for Indigenous library boards can be requested from colette.poitras@gov.ab.ca.

Grant Payments

All grant payments will be made via electronic funds transfer (EFT). To receive payment, the bank account receiving the funds must be in the legal name of the library board as per Section 3(3) or 3(4) of the *Libraries Act*, or as per the Ministerial Order that established the board. For First Nations and Metis Settlement library boards, the legal name is as per the resolution or bylaw that established the board.

Library boards must follow the prescribed EFT set-up procedure of the Government of Alberta.

Contact Information

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

Jen Pringle, Public Library Grants

Phone: 780-415-0294

Email: jen.pringle@gov.ab.ca

For inquires about the **grant application process**, or to **submit your application**, please contact libgrants@gov.ab.ca.