

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

-a resource for Manitobans

Submitted by
Manitoba Libraries Branch



Municipalities are constantly juggling priorities and budgets to provide the best services to the most people. The list of demands in municipalities is often challenging and includes topics as varied as:

- education
- business development
- immigration
- maintaining/increasing population numbers
- infrastructure

Partnering with the province's public library system can provide affordable resources to help your council, community groups, local organizations and agencies better manage policies and projects in these areas. The provincial public library system provides books, newspapers, videos, magazines, DVDs and CDs in a variety of languages and formats. It also provides programs for all ages, provincial and national book sharing, high-speed Internet, residential access to e-books, audio books and training through how-to manuals.

ESTABLISHING LIBRARY SERVICES

By joining an existing library service in a region, municipalities provide opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy partnerships, support for the local school system, recreation, business development, immigration groups and more. Libraries are about sustainable community development.

In order to formally establish public library service, municipalities pass by-laws, sign agreements, and appoint council and citizen representatives to the regional library board. Following provincial approval of the municipal documents, libraries become eligible for provincial establishment, operating and technology grants to complement funding provided through municipalities.

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RECIPROCAL BORROWING AGREEMENTS

In addition to directly establishing library services, municipalities can offer enhanced services to their citizens by entering into reciprocal agreements with existing systems. Regional library systems can add value to the service by providing remote communities (or wards) with access to neighbouring public libraries through reciprocal borrowing agreements.

These agreements are signed between local public library boards across the province. They allow their members free, in-person access to neighbouring public library systems, greatly expanding their information options and enhancing the value of the library’s resources.

Some reciprocal borrowing agreements include the exchange of financial resources between library systems. For example, Flin Flon and The Pas’ agreement states that The Pas Regional Library shares the municipal and provincial library funds they receive from the RM of Kelsey with the Flin Flon Public Library. Minnedosa and Rapid City libraries have had a reciprocal borrowing agreement since 1974. In exchange for free, in-person access for members, the two libraries share their new and unique materials to expand the service they provide their users.

Disparities in municipal funding can affect access to library services. Open negotiations between library boards and municipalities can usually result in mutually beneficial solutions.

For more information about setting up or expanding your local library services, contact:

Trevor Surgenor, Director, Public Library Services, 1-204-726-6864 or toll free in Manitoba 1-888-349-1384. 

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