



Newfoundland & Labrador
Public Libraries

Standardized Programming Service Delivery Standards

Working Group

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Executive Summary

A working group was initiated to address Service Delivery Recommendation C of the *Organizational and Service Review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Library System* (47). Background research concluded that quality programming adds significant value to a public library and to the community at large. Research of program policy in other library systems indicated that many systems have removed minimum requirements which were once in place and quality programming is developed based on individual community's needs and interests.

The report makes 8 recommendations:

1. Adopt program policy statement.
2. Adopt active and passive program categories.
3. Adopt minimum offerings for program types using population based library categories.
4. Include program planning time in staff hours.
5. Initiate and support a Program Team to guide and develop quality programming in the organization.
6. Introduce a provincial Program and Outreach Coordinator to the organization.
7. Increase opportunities for professional development and training.
8. Provide dedicated funding at the division level for program resources and materials.

Internal Review

Service Delivery Recommendation C of the *Organizational and Service Review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Library System* was approached by first reviewing current Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB) program policies (47). The working group reviewed the variety of programming currently offered across public libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador and staff were randomly selected for an interview (see Appendix A). The group researched what was happening in other library systems across Canada and evaluated the needs of library patrons. The *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries* was reflected on as a guiding principle throughout this process.

The review of the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board library program policies found that the Board does not have a guiding policy on library programming. The Board does have an operational policy, *Library Programs 4.200*, outlining the requirements for registration/sign-up and the requirements for program offerings which are based on staff hours. Because of this quantity based approach, PILRB has a culture of programming that is staff-centric not patron-centric. The *Organizational and Service Review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Library System* reported “[e]xisting programs vary in quality and offerings are largely dependent on the level of motivation of individual front-line staff, rather than patron requirements” (46).

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The PILRB Annual Reports over the past five years confirm a 24% growth in library programs across the organization.

Table One: Program and participant numbers over the past five years.

Year	Number of Programs	Participants
2016-2017	14,157	126,049
2015-2016	13,679	116,722
2014-2015	12,263	112,078
2013-2014	11,247	107,492
2012-2013	11,393	106,753

Forty-five Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries (NLPL) staff representing Library Assistants, Library Technicians and Professional Librarians provided feedback about library programming (see Appendix A) responding to the following questions:

- What is working? Program successes?
- What is not working? Program challenges?
- What do you think of the organization's library programs policy (minimum program offering)?
- Are you provided adequate resources to offer quality programs?
- How much time do you have to plan/prepare for a program? Is it adequate?
- Staff training: What we are doing now, is it enough/timely? What do you need?

The *Organizational and Service Review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Library System* reported "...there is often personal time and personal out-of-pocket expenses incurred by staff in order to ensure that programs are delivered to an appropriate level of quality" (47). Staff echoed similar concerns. When responding, staff feedback identified lack of resources, inadequate program preparation time, limited professional development and training and lack of collaboration as major challenges to offering quality programming. Respondents described lacking program resources and materials such as storytime kits, program kits, resource books, and adequate disposable resources. Insufficient planning time and program guidance were reported as challenges to meeting the program needs of all Patrons.

Staff identified the need for ongoing professional development and training which reflect emerging program trends and best practices. The *Organizational and Service Review* reported "[t]raining and funding levels are not sufficient to support program development and delivery" (46).

Feedback from staff recognized collaboration as essential for successful quality programming including collaboration with the Information Management division. Patrons expect their reading, research, information, technology, and life-long learning needs to be met, both through physical and digital resources. Most Patrons are tech savvy and active social media users. As such, they expect their library needs and desired services to be met both in person and online and on multiple technology devices.

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Review Program Policy in other Library Systems

The *Organizational and Service Review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Library System* reported “[q]uality programming is a key factor in attracting patrons to public libraries and provides opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate and grow in a public library setting” (45). In December 2013, the Martin Prosperity Institute of Ontario, was commissioned by the Toronto Public Library to conduct the first Canadian study to measure the library’s economic impact on Toronto, *So Much More: Impact of Toronto Public Library on the City of Toronto*. All areas of the Toronto Public Library were examined including programming. The study determined that “[i]n 2012, 769,534 Toronto residents attended programs, resulting in an economic benefit of \$26.4 million to the city of Toronto” (14). The Toronto Public Library Strategic Plan continues to strengthen and add to their programming by ensuring “[l]ibrary programs enable self-directed learning and skills development to support Torontonians through all life’s stages and journeys” (9).

Similarly, in 2017 the Edmonton Public Library (EPL) worked with *Nordicity* to conduct a study entitled *The Economic and Socio-cultural Impact of Edmonton Public Library*. The study determined that \$6.4 million was generated annually from participation in EPL outreach and in-library programs. The study further emphasizes the impact of literacy-focused programs on early literacy skills as well as improving academic performance of high school students by providing homework support and research instruction to name a few. Programs focused on digital literacy have helped Edmonton residents develop their technology skills therefore preparing them for school-readiness and job-readiness. Approximately \$2.6 million on average annually between 2012 and 2014 was derived from residents’ participation in programs that range from early literacy to career assistance.

In researching various public library systems and public libraries’ programming policies across Canada, there was no indication of minimum requirements for program offerings. Program policies indicated library programs were developed based on individual community’s needs and interests.

At Halifax Public Libraries (HPL), the Program Development Manager reported that prior to 1996, there were strict guidelines and standards for specific numbers of programs. Relaxing these standards and working from demographics allowed the branches to take the library out of the building, create more outreach opportunities, and meet unique community needs. Another purpose of moving away from minimal requirements was to focus on the unique demographics of communities, available hours of opening, staff numbers, and program trends. HPL program policy states programs are developed to respond to emerging community interests as well as to sustain demonstrated interests and demand.

The Prince Edward Island Public Library Service have a similar approach. They report that the quantity of programs offered at each library will be determined by library managers based on factors including community needs and interest and library open hours.

When reviewing other library systems in Canada it became clear that programming policy statements emphasize quality over quantity. New Brunswick Public Libraries primarily develop library programs

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locally based on community profiles and in response to community interests and needs. Likewise, at Manitoba Municipal and Regional Public Library programs are planned and evaluated for adults, young adults and children, with consideration for community demographics (age, ethnicity, education and income levels), availability of programming from other organizations in the community and local needs and interests. At Vancouver Public Library programs are developed to respond to community interests and to sustain demonstrated interests and demands.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Provincial Information and Resources Library Board adopt the following guiding policy statement:

Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries provide programming which is inclusive, diverse, and responsive to the needs and interests of the community; foster community partnerships and promote local culture; encourage a love of reading, lifelong learning and supports all forms of literacy; generate a broader interest in the library while promoting the library collections, resources, and services.

Recommendation 2: Provincial Information and Library Resources Board adopt the following program categories and focus on developing quality programs based on individual library's community needs and interests:

Active library programming is a traditional library program which takes place on a set date and time and, if available, in a program room/area. Active library programs are often planned, organized, and led by staff. Some active programs, such as storytime or book clubs, are offered on a recurring basis. Active library programming can also include programs which display the talents or skills of individual staff. For example, staff may be certified or trained in a specific area such as yoga and can therefore lead a class on yoga. Active library programming can be community-lead whereby staff initiate a relationship with an outside community organization to lead a program specific to their specialty such as financial management or health awareness sessions. Other examples of active library programming include drop-in seasonal event, technology classes, local history lectures, cultural and heritage events, author visits, arts and crafts, knitting circles, MakerSpace, writing groups, and trivia nights.

Passive library programming is a way to engage patrons in activity at the library without direct involvement from staff. It is simple and efficient, often cost-effective, and can run during open hours. Passive programming can be well-planned or spontaneous and it requires minimal to no supervision from library staff. Passive library programming provides an opportunity for those branches who do not have the time or resources to prepare active programs on a regular basis to meet their programming requirements and still offer quality service to patrons. Examples of passive library programming include activity sheets, voting for favourite Newfoundland and Labrador books, drop-in Lego Floor Play, find the character in the library, thematic and/or interactive book displays, and games night.

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Recommendation 3: Provincial Information and Library Resources Board adopt the following suggested minimum program offerings using population based library categories:

Table Two: Suggested Minimum Program Offerings

Population	Category	Suggested Minimum Program Offerings
50,000 and above	Central (Main)	4 active programs weekly and 2 passive programs weekly (208 active and 104 passive annually)
20,000 - 49,999	Urban	3 active programs weekly and 2 passive programs weekly (156 active and 104 passive annually)
6,000 - 19,999	Middle	2 active programs weekly and 1 passive programs weekly (104 active and 52 passive annually)
3,000 - 5,999	Neighbourhood	1 active program weekly and 1 passive program weekly (52 of each annually)
< 2,999	Rural	1 active program biweekly and 1 passive program per month (26 active and 12 passive annually)

Recommendation 4: Provincial and Information Library Resources Board dedicate minimum staff hours to program planning using population based categories.

When interviewing Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries staff, lack of program planning time was repeatedly reported as a challenge when preparing for quality programming. Staff admitted to making program preparations after hours and at home. Staff require dedicated time to plan and prepare for quality programming. Planning time should not be included in hours of opening but must be included in staff hours. Suggestions for minimum staff hours dedicated to program planning using population based library categories are:

Table Three: Minimum Staff Hours for Program Planning

Population	Category	Minimum Staff Hours for Program Planning
50,000 and above	Central (Main)	4 hours per week
20,000 - 49,999	Urban	3 hours per week
6,000 - 19,999	Middle	2 hours per week
3,000 - 5,999	Neighbourhood	1 hour per week
< 2,999	Rural	1 hour per week

Recommendation 5: Provincial Information and Library Resources Board initiate and support a Program Team to guide and develop quality programming.

A Program Team is essential to guide and direct all staff in the development of quality programming. A Program Team, led by a Program Coordinator, would ensure the strategic program goals of the organization were met and ensure consistency across the organization. The Program Team would consist of the four Regional Librarians, Newfoundland and Labrador Librarian, and Children's Librarian. It is essential that the work of the Program Team is supported by the Information Management division.

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Recommendation 6: Provincial Information and Library Resources Board introduce into the organization a provincial Program and Outreach Coordinator.

A Program and Outreach Coordinator would guide and lead the Program Team ensuring strategic program goals are met and quality programming is offered across the organization. This professional librarian position would outreach and coordinate with other provincial organizations to promote library program opportunities.

Recommendation 7: Provincial Information Library Resources Board increase opportunities for professional development and training.

The *Organizational and Service Review* reported “[t]raining and funding levels are not sufficient to support program development and delivery” (46). In recent years professional development and training have been minimal and inconsistent. It is essential that staff at all levels receive annual opportunities for professional development and training where best practices and emerging program trends are presented.

Recommendation 8: Provincial Information Library and Resources Board create a separate capital budget at the division level for program resources and materials. The suggested minimum for said budget is \$10, 000 per division.

Quality programming require resources and materials. These are not office supplies. Staff should not be responsible for the purchase of program supplies nor should the purchase of resources for library programming be contingent on the local library board funding. It is the responsibility of the PILRB to provide these resources. At a minimum, the working group suggests a budget of \$10, 000 is required for each division to support quality programming.

Appendix A

Table Four: NLPL Staff Feedback to Interview Questions

What is working? Program Successes	
Single-staff Library	Multi-staff Library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive programming (puzzles, games) • Storytime every week – well attended • Bringing people in from community to present/teach their skills • Author readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our team works well together • We make do with what we have and we get creative • We each have our strengths • Content of program • We cover all demographics • Community members interested in presenting information • Patrons are demanding programs
What is not working? Program Challenges	
Single-staff Library	Multi-staff Library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No parent support/not bringing kids in • Age restriction of kids attending library by themselves • School-based library schedule programs mostly during school hours • Trying to get the juvenile age involved • Challenges depend on individual community • Accessing resources in a rural community can be a challenge. No Dollar Store! • Coming up with ideas that attract community • Only being able to show NFB movies • Getting older kids in (no programming available for older kids other than TD SRC) • Limited hours – limited staff hours • Not enough time to plan • I serve 3 communities so kids from there have to rely on parents bringing them in. • Aging population • Funding • Hosting program when library is open • Lack of networking within the system. • Balancing all the daily tasks with trying to do programming • Competition with other community programs (FRC), especially in small communities • Size of library is challenging for large group. • Quality programming should be valued over Quantity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning time - planning during working hours while on floor • Funding • Marketing • Space • Developing ideas to a high quality • Staff hours • Materials for programs • Program room being booked by outside organizations/space

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What do you think of the organization's library programs policy (minimum program offering)?	
Single-staff Library	Multi-staff Library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum standards can be met with the exception of YA. • I have no issue meeting the minimum standard. • Programs need to reflect the community and patrons. • What works in one community and in one library may not work in another. • I can meet minimum standards but I don't have ideas for programming for adults and teens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to see more flexibility in requirements which takes into consideration library's individual needs and the needs of their community. • The needs and expectations are clearly stated. • We find it difficult to meet the requirements while also running our library efficiently and effectively.
Are you given the proper resources?	
Single-staff Library	Multi-staff Library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, I buy my own finger puppets • Depends on the branch and local board. • I've worked in a small and med-sized branch and each board was quite different in their funding. • In the past - no. But in recent years I think we have. • The ECRR materials were helpful. • Have to borrow tech. equipment from outside organizations, i.e. projectors & screens • Local board is helpful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, but we often purchase supplies ourselves & get reimbursed • Would be nice to have more resources, i.e. felt, beads, readily available & funded through Division Office. • More resources would be helpful • Buy with own money • No, not when it comes to budget for supplies and training. • Depends on how supportive and active each local board is.
How much time do staff have to plan/prepare program? Is it enough?	
Single-staff Library	Multi-staff Library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 1 hour of planning - sometimes interrupted. • Two hours a week for story time. Making crafts takes up a lot of time. • A successful program requires time to plan. Finding the time to plan is very challenging and many staff report the majority of their planning time happens when they are home/off work. • A successful program requires work. It doesn't just happen because someone sends you an email about it. • Staff felt their programs were successful because they themselves were creative and/or crafty not because of any specific training they received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an hour or so for staff to plan. • More planning time is needed - definitely. • With more staff we could designate planning time within the schedule.

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Staff training: What are we doing now - is it enough/timely? What do you need?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More technology training • More eBook training • Not given clear direction on what programming is • Someone designated for social media/graphics for promos • More technology training • Rely on handouts for eLibrary - more eLibrary training needed. • More opportunities to share or an area to share ideas-networking • Already developed programs (similar to storytime kits)
Other program comments/concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current minimum standards for programs • More flexibility in required programming • IT involvement and response to province wide initiatives: Continued, ongoing, responsive commitment from the IT department to assist in province wide programs which rely on technology services to enhance community connection and participation in large scale programming. • Would still like to see a target number of programs that libraries are supposed to reach • There should be no minimum standards. Branches should offer the number of programs they think are necessary to meet the community's needs. However, there should be a target goal in place. • There should be planning of programs for all not just setting up speakers or running book clubs which require little/no planning. • Minimum standards are necessary to hold people accountable; otherwise staff would not do it. • Would like to see move towards standardization of children's programs -set descriptions and times offered throughout the year • Need to develop a brand for children's promo materials and programs • Collection of children's books in small branches needs to be addressed - the selection is limited and sometimes outdated • There are many great programs happening at libraries of all sizes. Programs are essential as it gets people in the door! • Teens are a challenging demographic. It is difficult to know exactly what to offer this group. • Seniors, although quite possibly the largest demographic in many of our communities, are being underserved. • We need to put the same effort into senior programming as we do into early literacy. • It is very challenging to work on the circulation desk and host a program at the sometime. Something will suffer when you have to stop or leave your program to check out a book for a patron. Does HQ realize this? • Staff sharing of ideas and programs is essential (eg: the sharing emails from division)

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