SOUTH ALGONQUIN PUBLIC LIBRARY (SAPL)
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD
March 19th, 2024 Madawaska Library
AGENDA

Land Acknowledgement:

Call to Order

1. **Approval of Agenda**
2. **Approval of Minutes: February 20th 2024**
3. **Report of the Chairperson:**
4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
   - 4.1. **Community Resource Centre Partnership:** March 2nd children's program attendance:
     March 23rd **children's program:** Cynthia will offer board games & printed activities. (strategic alignment: community outreach, programming)
   - 4.2. **Community Seed Library:** Seed library has been replenished and is now available. (strategic alignment: programming)
   - 4.3. **Community Survey:** I will redesign as I begin working through VOLT.
   - 4.4. **Annual Survey:** work continues.
   - 4.5. **OLS Internet Connectivity:** 2023 funding has been received $540. This reimbursement grant covers 100% of the Madawaska Branch internet costs.

5. **New Business:**
   - **5.1. Valuing Ontario Public Libraries Toolkit(VOLT):** Executive Summary
   - 5.2. **Board Assemblies 2024:** Spring meeting April 24th, 5:30 – 7:00 pm
   - **5.3. Budget Cuts:**
   - **5.4. Commonwell LEAF Grant:**

6. **Reports**
   - **6.1. Finance:**
   - **6.2. Librarian's Reports:**
   - **6.3. Council Report:**
7. **Governance**
   - 7.1. **Policy:** Sarah Ennor's report
   - 7.2. **Strategic Planning/Strategic Doing:**
8. **Programming:** (strategic alignment: community outreach, programming)
   - 8.1. **School visits:** Bi-weekly, three classes
   - 8.2. **Daycare Visits:** bi-weekly
   - 8.3. **Code Club Canada:** Continues bi-weekly
   - 8.4. **Brenda Missen:** Tuesday, April 2nd, 7 pm. Hosted at Whitney Branch
   - 8.5. **Adam Shoalts:** on hold until budget approval.
   - 8.6. **Linda Hutsell Manning:** Will be visiting our area and is available Sept 4th - Sept 6th for a book talk. She has offered to do a reading for a minimum honorarium that our budget will allow. She has two new books, that she would like to share.

   Oct 2023 Finding Moufette, picture book, Pandamonium Publishers, Hamilton, ON "A headstrong cat lost in a Christmas Eve snowstorm."
   March 2024 Heads I Win Tails you Lose, novella, AOS Publishers, QC "A woman escapes an impossible marriage. Surreal and feminist"
9. **Correspondence:**
10. **Any Other Business**
11. **In-Camera / Out-of-Camera**
12. **Next meeting: April 16th, 2024 7pm**
13. **Adjournment**

Township of South Algonquin Public Library
Minutes of the Meeting Held
February 20th, 2024 @ 7:00 PM
Whitney Branch

Attendees: Vicki Forward, Elaine Hare, Sarah Ennor, Rose Jessup, and Councillor Laurie Siydock. **Staff:** Charlene Alexander **Regrets:** Cynthia Haskin, Jeff Bowman

Land Acknowledgement: Elaine Hare

We gather on the ancestral lands of the Algonquin people, a people with a rich history, and a deep connection to the land we now inhabit. For countless generations, the Algonquin people have nurtured and protected these lands, lakes, and rivers, living in harmony with the rhythms of nature, and passing down their knowledge, traditions, and wisdom from one generation to the next. May this acknowledgment serve as a reminder of the interconnectedness of all creatures and inspire us to cultivate a spirit of gratitude for the land on which we stand.

Call to Order: 7:05 pm

1 **Motion # 2024-05**
Moved by – Elaine Hare Seconded by – Rose Jessup /To approve the agenda/Carried

2 **Motion # 2024-06**
Moved by – Elaine Hare Seconded by – Sarah Ennor /To approve the minutes of **January 16th, 2024** as amended/ Carried

3 **Report of the Chair:** I have been reviewing the banking statements sent to me each month by Jennifer.

4 Business Arising From the Minutes

4.3 Festival of Outdoor Rinks: This event has been canceled.

5 New Business:

5.3 Compliments received in Madawaska: Our Library offers more than their Library in Hamilton.

5.4 Community Resource Centre: On March 2nd, we will be hosting a one-hour children's program in conjunction with a CRC Toy Bus program(Madawaska Hall) at the Madawaska branch. Brendia will plan and present the program and Elaine Hare has volunteered to assist. (strategic alignment: volunteer engagement, community outreach, programming)

5.5 Community Seed Library: Seeds and seed envelopes have been ordered. We are planning to have the 2024 seed library available by late February. (strategic alignment: programming)

5.6 Canada Reads 2024: All shortlisted titles are available at both branches. (strategic alignment: programming)

5.7 Community Survey: The 2024 draft survey was reviewed, and suggestions were made to be taken into consideration.

6 **Finance:** The cost for two smart TVs has been added to the 2024 budget. Internet connectivity funding will arrive by the end of the month.

4 **Council Report:** Spoke to Joe Florent regarding internet changes in Madawaska. He explained that an extender was added to the internet service to provide better WIFI connections in the hall and at the rink. Attend

5 Policy:

6 Next Meeting March 19th, 2024 @ 7:00 PM Madawaska

7 **Motion # 2024-07**
Moved by – Elaine Hare Seconded by – Sarah Ennor /To adjourn 8:13 pm Carried

Township of South Algonquin Libraries Monthly Stats

March 2024

		Whitney		Madawaska	
		January	February	January	February
Head Count		110	121	69	95
School visits		50	30		
combined total		160	151		
Circulation		483	488	68	161
Activity Kits (includes Park passes)		2	4	0	0
Device		2	5	0	0
Computer users		17	24	3	5
Inter Library Loans		13	4	5	0
New Members		0	3	1	1
Print/fax/copy		9	13	0	2
Reference/Reader's Advisory		16	19	0	0
Tech/media/software support		5	7	0	1
minutes spent on above requests		105	85	0	7
In Library Use		20	38	4	6
Program headcount		50	30	0	0
Over drive users		20	22	0	0
Overdrive circulation		235	284	0	0
non members users		5	2	0	13

Whitney February people stats: Wednesday's 64 - Thursday's 70 - Saturday's - 17

Madawaska Febuary people stats: Tuesday's 23 - Thursday's - 39 Saturday's - 33

The Commonwell's Learning and Engagement Accelerator Fund (L.E.A.F.) supports projects that grow capacity and resiliency in communities across Ontario. Specifically, L.E.A.F. supports programs and facilities that re-energize learning and engagement within communities.

Each chosen project will receive dollar amounts ranging from $10,000 to $50,000 depending on the amount requested in the application process. Up to $350,000 will be awarded under the 2023 program.
To be eligible for a L.E.A.F. grant, the project must:

- Be located in Ontario.
- Have a goal related to learning in the community including programming and upgrades to the places the community gathers to learn.
- Be either fully funded by L.E.A.F., have secured any additional funding required and/or have a plan to obtain the additional funding within 6 months.
- Have a leadership team established prior to funds being distributed.
- Have support from the property owner or other relevant stakeholders for the location the project will take place
- Be a publicly accessible resource.
- Not be owned by an individual or business – Not for profit organizations and charities are eligible.
- Be submitted to the L.E.A.F. website by completing the full application form by the submission deadline of November 10, 2023.
- Must be submitted by a person who is of the age of majority.
- Projects must be completed within 2 years of funding received. If projects are not completed funds may be returned or a proposal to redeploy the funding within the community may be considered.
- Projects previously funded by L.E.A.F. are not eligible to receive funding again. New projects from the same organization are eligible. Projects previously submitted but not selected are also eligible.

Program Guidelines:

- Recipients will be selected based upon The Commonwell's assessment of the applications. Applications will be judged based on:
  - Ability to communicate impact of project on learning and engagement in the community
  - Ability to demonstrate project viability
  - Demonstrated need for funding
  - Community support garnered on L.E.A.F website and through social shares
  - Recipients will be selected at the sole discretion of The Commonwell.
- Recipients must display signage and/or alternate agreed upon recognition at the site of the project noting that it received support from The Commonwell L.E.A.F.
- If an opening event takes place The Commonwell will be invited to attend.
- Recipients agree to complete regular check-ins with The Commonwell (6 Month intervals) in the 3 years following a L.E.A.F. Grant
- Recipients will be notified by phone no later than December 1, 2023.
- Projects that are not selected will be notified by email no later than December 11, 2023.
- Recipients will be announced publicly on The Commonwell's Facebook page, Instagram Account and the L.E.A.F. website. Recipients will also be publicized through press releases and media outlets – Timing for public announcements will be at The Commonwell's discretion.
- Each project may only be submitted once during the program year

thecommonwell.ca

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THE COMMONWELL
MUTUAL INSURANCE GROUP

RULES AND REGULATIONS

The 2023 L.E.A.F. grant program begins Tuesday, September 5th, 2023 and closes for submissions on Monday November 10th, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. Community Support remains open until November 17th, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. The program is sponsored by The Commonwell Mutual Insurance. No purchase is necessary to submit an application to the program. Entry of a submission into the program constitutes acceptance of the terms, conditions and provisions set forth below.

1. HOW TO SUBMIT A PROJECT

1.1 Eligible projects may be entered into the Program for consideration as follows:

(a) Visit **L.E.A.F. WEBSITE** and follow the instructions.

(b) Complete the online application form and be available for follow up questions from the Program Sponsor's adjudication team.

2. GRANT PROVISIONS

2.1 Each recipient will receive a grant equal to or part of the amount requested in the project application to use in the completion of the project as determined by the Program Sponsor.

2.2 The number of recipients is not set, and will be determined at the sole discretion of The Commonwell up to $350,000

2.3 Between November 17th and December 1st 2023, a panel of reviewers selected by the Program Sponsor will review the submissions and any supporting information including community support and will determine the recipients based on their sole discretion. Submissions will be considered based on: ability to communicate impact of project on learning and engagement in the community, ability to demonstrate project viability, demonstrated need for funding, community support garnered on L.E.A.F website and through social shares and any other factors at the discretion of the program sponsor.

2.4 Recipients will be notified no later than December 1st, 2023. Applicants who were not selected will be notified by email, no later than December 11th, 2023.

2.5 To receive any grant, a selected project may be required:

(a) to sign and return a release of liability releasing the Program Sponsor, its affiliates and subsidiaries, advertising and promotional agencies, any judge or judges appointed by the Program Sponsor, and in each case their respective directors, officers, owners, employees, agents, representatives, successors and assigns from any liability in connection with the Program or the acceptance, possession or use of the funds;

(b) to provide regular updates to The Commonwell L.E.A.F. on the status of the project, by completing surveys provided by The Commonwell as often as every 6 months for the 3 years following grant receipt.

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(c) in the event the project has a municipal stakeholder the municipality will be required to submit a letter attesting to their support for the project.

(d) Commit to displaying signage or other recognition of support provided by The Commonwell L.E.A.F.

(e) Invite The Commonwell to participate in any opening ceremony for the project.

(f) Provide a tax receipt, if applicable.

2.6 In order to receive the grant, the requirements contained in subsections 2.5(a) – (f) must be completed and received by the sponsor AND the recipient organization must communicate his/her acceptance of the prize money no later than 5 business days from being notified on December 1st, 2023, being December 8th, 2023. Should the requirements in subsections 2.5(a) – (f) not be completed and no communication of acceptance be given by this deadline, the recipient will forfeit the offer of the grant and the sponsor is entitled, at its sole discretion, to award the grant to another selected applicant, without further notice.

2.7 No interest will be paid on any funds provided.

2.8 Funds will be delivered by December 31st , 2023 via Cheque or Electronic Funds Transfer. The recipient organization must have an account that the funds can be deposited into. This account cannot be a personal bank account.

2.9 Recipients will be announced publicly on the Program Sponsor's Facebook page, Instagram account, and online at: **LEAF WEBSITE**. There may also be announcements through press releases and other media outlets.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 The Program is open only to legal residents of the province of Ontario. The Program is void where prohibited by law.

3.2 All projects must meet the following eligibility requirements:

(a) The project must be located in the province of Ontario.

(b) The project must benefit a large section of the public community.

(c) The project must have a goal related to learning or places where the community comes together to learn.

(d) The project must have a committed team dedicated to completing or implementing the project.

(e) The project must derive its entire funding from L.E.A.F or demonstrate a plan for achieving complete funding within 6 months of grant receipt.

(f) The project must have support from the property owner or other relevant stakeholders for the location the project will take place (i.e. municipality, community organization)

(g) The project must be a publicly accessible resource

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(h) The project may not be owned by an individual or business – not for profit, charity and municipal organizations are eligible

(i) The project must be submitted to the L.E.A.F website by completing the full application form.

4. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

4.1 The submission of a project must be complete. Applications that lack detailed answers will not be processed for consideration. The Commonwell reserves the right to ask for additional details or clarification on the project.

4.2 The submission must be entirely original work of the submitter and must not infringe upon or violate any laws or any third-party rights, including, but not limited to copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret or other proprietary rights and must not lead to any cause of action including libel, defamation, privacy violation, contract breach or tort.

4.3 Any media materials (i.e. video, photos, comments) submitted will grant the Program Sponsor complete and unrestricted use and reproduction rights for any purposes.

4.4 The Program Sponsor will not accept submissions that are offensive to any individual/organization or any that are rude in tone or abusive. Program Sponsors reserve the right to refuse, edit or remove any videos that contain racist, hateful, sexist, abusive, slanderous, pornographic, obscene, insulting, coarse, and/or unintelligible/irrelevant content.

4.5 No submissions will be returned. Please keep a copy of your answers for your own record.

5. COMMUNITY SUPPORT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

5.1 The submission must be entirely original work of the submitter and must not infringe upon or violate any laws or any third-party rights, including, but not limited to copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret or other proprietary rights and must not lead to any cause of action including libel, defamation, privacy violation, contract breach or tort.

5.2 Any media materials (i.e. video, photos, comments) submitted will grant the Program Sponsor complete and unrestricted use and reproduction rights for any purposes.

5.3 The Program Sponsor will not accept submissions that are offensive to any individual/organization or any that are rude in tone or abusive. Program Sponsors reserve the right to refuse, edit or remove any videos that contain racist, hateful, sexist, abusive, slanderous, pornographic, obscene, insulting, coarse, and/or unintelligible/irrelevant content.

5.4 No submissions will be returned.

5.5 Community support submissions will remain open until November 17th, 2023.

6. PRIVACY

6.1 By entering an application or submitting community support, the participant consents to the collection, use and sharing of information about the participant with the Program Sponsor and its agents and representatives for the sole purpose of administering the Program and administering of any award including, but not limited to contacting project team members and stakeholders to confirm project details.

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6.2 By entering an application, the submitters consent to the use and disclosure of his/her name, town location, project details, without compensation, by the Program Sponsor, for the purposes of the disclosure of the identity of grant recipient and for the general promotional purposes of the Program Sponsor in connection with the Program.

6.3 For more information regarding the privacy policy of the Program Sponsor, please review its privacy policy available at thecommonwell.ca.

7. LIMITATIONS ON LIABILITY

7.1 The Program Sponsor, its affiliates and subsidiaries, advertising and promotional agencies, any judge or judges appointed by the Program Sponsor, and in each case their respective directors, officers, owners, employees, agents, representatives, successors and assigns, shall not, in circumstances whatsoever be liable for:

(a) any cost, liability, expense, injury, damage or claim of any kind arising in connection with the Program or resulting from acceptance, possession or use of any funds including, without limitation, personal injury, death and property damage, and claims based on publicity rights, defamation or invasion of privacy; or

(b) any incidental, consequential, special or indirect damages, even if they have been advised of the possibility of such damages.

7.2 The Program Sponsor will not be liable for any late, lost, invalid, ineligible, illegible, incomplete, stolen, misdirected submissions.

7.3 The Program Sponsor assumes no responsibility for any problems or technical malfunction of any telephone network, telephone lines, computer online systems, servers, access providers, computer equipment, software or the failure of any application submission to be received by the Program Sponsor.

8. RELEASE

8.1 By submitting and application to the program, each participant releases and holds harmless the Program Sponsor, its affiliates and subsidiaries, advertising and promotional agencies, any judge or judges appointed by the Program Sponsor, and in each case, their respective directors, officers, owners, employees, agents from any and all liability in connection with the Program or resulting from acceptance, possession or use of any grant funding including, without limitation, personal injury, death, and property damage and claims based on publicity rights, defamation or invasion of privacy.

9. GENERAL PROVISIONS

9.1 By submitting an application and/or accepting funds, the participant agrees to be bound by all the terms, conditions, and provisions set out in these Program Rules.

9.2 The Program is subject to all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations.

9.3 All decisions of the Program Sponsor and any application reviewers appointed by the Program Sponsor, with respect to any aspect of the Program shall be final and without appeal.

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9.4 The Program Sponsor accepts no liability whatsoever arising in respect of the participation in the Program by any individual or the awarding or use of any grant funding.

9.5 A maximum of one grant will be provided for each project submission. Past recipient organizations may only apply for support for a different project, not the project originally funded.

9.6 Persons found to be tampering with or abusing any aspect of the Program, as determined in the sole discretion of the Program Sponsor, will have their application disqualified.

9.7 Should circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the Program Sponsor result in the determination by the Program Sponsor, in its sole discretion, that the fairness or integrity of the Program has been materially compromised, the Program Sponsor reserves the right to suspend, delay or terminate the Program and grand funding.

9.8 If the Program Sponsor, in its sole discretion, deem that an insufficient quantity or quality of application submission has been received, the Program Sponsor reserves the right not to provide any grants.

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Spring meeting April 24th 5:30 – 7:00pm https://www.olservice.ca/about#boardassemblies
There are 9 Board Assemblies based on population served to represent Ontario public libraries. All public libraries boards in Ontario are eligible to appoint an official representative to their respective Board Assembly. One Representative from each Board Assembly is elected from their corresponding population-based Board Assembly to serve on the Ontario Library Services Board.

In addition to their role in the Ontario Library Service governance process, Board Assemblies provide library board members with opportunities to share information and hear how other boards deal with issues, like the ones you face, in governing a public library. They offer suggestions and support for board training and serve as a communication link between the Ontario Library Service and local boards.

Board Assemblies will meet virtually twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring.

Account # / Description	Last Year Budget	Last Year Actual	Variance	Proposed Budget
15-3300 - Fees - Library	100.00	700.00	600.00	
Account Class Totals:	100.00	700.00	600.00	
16-6100-0540 - Library Licences & Permits	200.00	101.76	98.24	102.00
16-6100-0590 - Library Books	7,000.00	3,718.71	3,281.29	6000
16-6100-0600 - Library Repairs To Building	2,000.00	522.03	1,477.97	2000.00
16-6100-0610 - Library Repairs To Equipment	400.00	0.00	400.00	400.00
16-6100-0640 - Library Insurance	2,260.00	2,259.49	0.51	2260.00
16-6100-0650 - Library Heating	2,000.00	900.26	1,099.74	1900.00
16-6100-0660 - Library Hydro	3,000.00	1,813.48	1,186.52	3000.00
16-6100-0670 - Library Cleaning	200.00	46.37	153.63	200.00
16-6100-0690 - Library Rental/Lease Agreement	1,000.00	776.12	223.88	1000.00
16-6100-0700 - Library Advertising	500.00	76.32	423.68	500.00
16-6100-0710 - Library Travel	900.00	0.00	900.00	600.00
16-6100-0730 - Library Conferences/Training	250.00	116.88	133.12	250.00
16-6100-0800 - Library Telephone	2,800.00	1,747.89	1,052.11	2800.00
16-6100-0810 - Library Office Expense-Postage	250.00	47.18	202.82	250.00
16-6100-0820 - Library Supplies	4,000.00	4,832.95	(832.95)	3500.00
16-6100-0940 - Library Capital Expenditure	8,500.00	7,526.08	973.92	0
16-6100-0960 - Library Conditional Grant Expense	3,320.00	3,098.83	221.17	
Account Class Totals:	38,580.00	27,584.35	10,995.65	
Net Surplus (Deficit):	(38,480.00)	(26,884.35)	11,595.65	

Warning: 2023 has not been closed. Last Year Actual and Variance may change.

Accounts Printed: 18

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Executive Summary

VALUING ONTARIO LIBRARIES TOOLKIT

ONTARIO LIBRARY SERVICE
Stronger libraries. Stronger communities.

Ontario

Algoma UNIVERSITY

Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge
NORDIK INSTITUTE

Executive Summary

The toolkit is a step-by-step guide for taking information that you already regularly collect and organizing it into these two components to create a report or information sheets that can be used to share the public library's impact with a wider audience.

The Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT) is designed to help you measure and demonstrate the value made by your local public library.

The purpose is ultimately to help you share these contributions with your community's councils, decisionmakers, and stakeholders, reflecting the unique realities of the areas you serve. In doing so, you may use it to advocate for more (or sustained) investment in, or commitment to, the work of the public library in your community.

The *Library Value Report* that you can create with this toolkit is made up of two main components: A community profile and the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value calculations.

1. **The community profile**: This section has two parts: a) an overview of the community providing the background and context in which the library is located, and b) a narrative based on the public's stories of their experience with the public library and the integral role it plays in the community. The community profile here is intended to provide an overview of your library's impact in the community.
2. **The SROI value calculations**: SROI is a way to calculate the impact of an organization in dollar figures. It reflects the dollar value of benefit that is created for each dollar that is invested in the public library by local councils. The calculations have eight parts (including an introduction tab) that you can use to calculate the SROI for all public library services or for identifying the benefits produced in an individual area, such as the benefits produced by library spaces.

The toolkit is a step-by-step guide for taking information that you already regularly collect and organizing it into these two components to create a report or information sheets that can be used to share the public library's impact with a wider audience.

In the toolkit, you will also find additional instructions on how best to gather more data if you wish to add more detail to your Library Value Report, however you already have access to all the information you need to complete the toolkit.

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR VALUING ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The framework for this toolkit builds on previous work that created a toolkit for Northern Ontario libraries to demonstrate their Social Return on Investment. Building on the success of this toolkit and demand for a provincially applicable tool, this new framework was developed with the direction of the Ontario Library Service and a volunteer steering committee whose members were selected from a diverse range of public libraries across the province. Consultations were also coordinated by the OLS with public library CEOs and staff in September 2022, including seven focus groups based on the size of communities served, one dedicated to First Nation Public Libraries, and one dedicated to public libraries serving Francophone-majority communities.

Based on a review of recent research developments and these two layers of stakeholder input, the framework presented here represents public libraries as cultural and social infrastructure that create individual, organizational, and community benefit in seven key domains: Education, Culture, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Entertainment and Leisure, Economic Development, Civic Engagement, and Space. Each of these domains has a unique part and tab in the SROI value calculations spreadsheet.

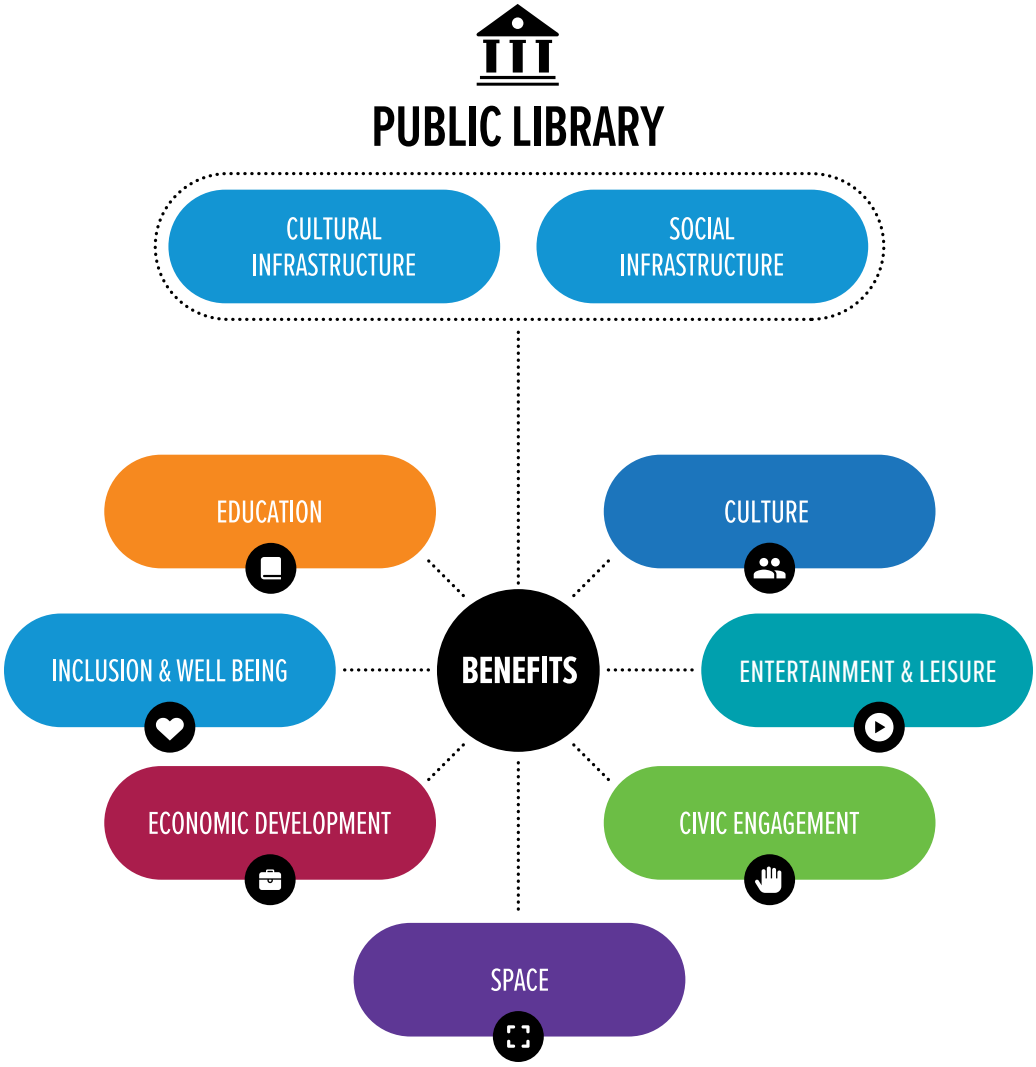


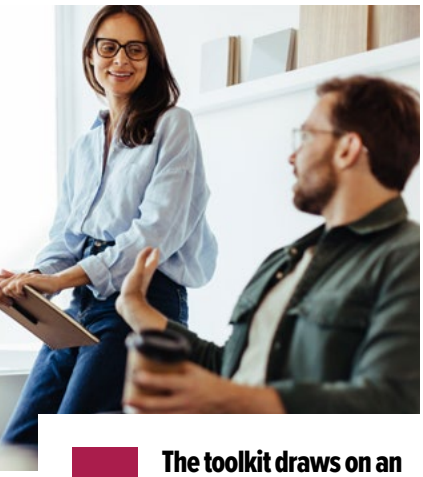
Figure 1.1

Introduction

This toolkit provides several ways for you to take the information that you regularly collect for your library and use it to demonstrate the impact it has in your community.

To provide a holistic reflection of the public library's impact that is rooted in data, the toolkit highlights seven different areas of impact, called "domains," that reflect the diverse influences public libraries have in their communities. These are: Education, Culture, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Entertainment and Leisure, Economic Development, Civic Engagement, and Space.

The toolkit draws on an approach called Social Return on Investment (SROI), which is a way to calculate the value in dollars of goods and services that are typically offered free of charge. It reflects the dollar value of benefit that is created for each dollar that is invested in the public library by local councils. Each of the domains listed above has 3 indicators that use your existing data to generate a dollar value for the unique impacts the public library performs in each domain.



The toolkit draws on an approach called Social Return on Investment (SROI), which is a way to calculate the value in dollars of goods and services that are typically offered free of charge.

The toolkit allows you to create:

- A *Library Value Report* specific to your public library that provides a community profile highlighting the stories of patrons about how the library has impacted their lives, and a calculation of your library's Social Return on Investment.
  - You also have the option of creating the community profile or the SROI value calculations independent from the *Library Value Report*.
- Printable *Information Sheets* that allow you to single out the benefit that your library creates in a specific domain, such as education, or economic development.

These tools offer different ways of speaking to a wide range of stakeholders about the value created by the public library, whether they be board members, councillors, First Nation or municipal administrators, or different segments of the public.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries are critical cultural and social infrastructure for the cities, towns, First Nations, and regions they serve. They are integral for building personal, entrepreneurial, and social capacity through access to information, programming, and the opportunities they offer for community engagement. Their physical locations serve as gathering places for people of all ages to engage in lifelong learning, access local and global resources, experience and explore new horizons, meet other people and renew old friendships. Public libraries are places that spark change, increase understanding, and strengthen resolve. Interaction with others, in-person or virtually, fosters networks of informed engagement to better inform peoples' decision-making. They provide a 'level playing field' by providing equitable access to resources and encouraging interaction across all social groups. Where other spaces force us into defined roles of consumer, client, employee, or student, public

libraries are a space for unqualified humanity, where nothing is expected of us other than our respect for one another. In serving this holistic role, public libraries are the backbone of our communities. The purpose of this toolkit is to address the challenge of how to tangibly value an inherently intangible, human-based service, and to help you share and represent this value to your community's councils, decisionmakers, and stakeholders.

Background Context

In 2016 the **Ontario Library Service - North** contracted NORDIK Institute to develop a similar toolkit to illustrate the value of public libraries in Northern Ontario, a vast geographic and culturally and linguistically diverse region of Ontario. Since its publication, the **Ontario Library Service** has consolidated into a province-wide organization and in 2021 requested NORDIK Institute undertake the development of a new toolkit to support public libraries across Ontario in communicating their value and measuring their individual Social Return on Investment. The new toolkit will continue to be updated in each of the next two years (2024-2025), responding to changes in our local realities and offering Ontario's public libraries the opportunity to shape future iterations of the toolkit.

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