

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



The ORL provides for learning, innovation, creativity and a connected community.



2020 - A year like no other! Library service in a pandemic

2020 was the year that none of us anticipated. The year began normally enough by building upon our progress and strengths of the last few years - additional technology, anticipated new services, serving more people through doing more programming in our communities, and taking additional steps toward the finishing off of the renewal of our strategic plan to help guide direction for the next generation of library services.

And then came early March.

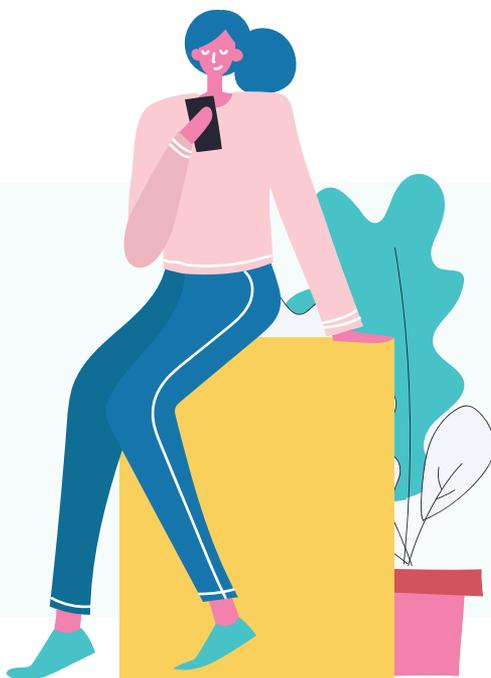
Suddenly, without preplanning or a roadmap to guide us everything changed literally overnight. We moved from inviting everybody into our buildings to connect and enjoy our programs and services, to closing our doors and ceasing the sharing of physical resources to all staff and the public. We had to pivot all staff to being trained and enabled to work from home. Everybody had to learn how to connect virtually through Microsoft teams and other similar tools like Zoom. Our service delivery moved to solely on-line means such as borrowing of e-materials, signing up on-line for library cards, creating chat and telephone help lines, and developing and delivering new virtual programming.

In the midst of high anxiety, and a total throwing out the window of normal routines and methods, staff and library leaders at all levels showed tremendous creativity and their deep passion for trying to serve our communities and meet their most basic needs. This included identifying and addressing community needs by repurposing some library I-pads for the hospice so that those in their last days were able to connect to family and friends, setting up some older computers for a homeless shelter so that they could access needed on-line government and other services, and partnering our makerspace staff with UBCO to use our 3D printers to manufacture facemasks needed for front-line medical workers.

By May, we were able to start to bring limited numbers of our staff back into our facilities with carefully developed site specific risk assessments, training, new protocols such as spacing and cleaning, and safety equipment such as plexi-barriers, gloves, masks, and hand

sanitizer. We were able to restart our circulation of physical materials through beginning processes for curbside pickup of holds, reopening of book returns, and restarting of our ILS circulation system and truck deliveries. By July we were moving to browse and borrow service and a return to regular open hours (though limiting building capacity and still having no branch in-person programming or seating, and minimal public computers with restricted time limits) which we continued throughout the rest of the year. As more was learned about the virus transmission, requirements like quarantining of returned materials were discontinued while face-mask wearing by staff and public became mandatory. By later in the year, our circulation of physical resources was back to 80 to 90% of pre-pandemic levels even though we had fewer in-person visits and no in-person programs to draw people through our doors.

Our staff reported that even though our services and programming were restricted due to public health measures users, continued to express how much they missed full services. Patrons shared how happy they were how happy they were to be able to once again have access to our staff and materials which they valued as being even more necessary during these times.



While the pandemic continues into 2021, we all look forward to the day when we can once again pivot to welcoming the community back into our buildings and offering the diverse array of in-person programming that our communities appreciate.

The pandemic of 2020 has revealed several things and likely permanently changed other things.

- It has demonstrated anew that we have dedicated and talented staff that are at the heart of our services.
- It has shown us that our communities need their library and the services we offer for daily living and good mental health.
- It has also allowed many in our communities to discover how the library has changed over the past years and revealed to them the value and diversity of virtual resources and programming that can be accessed by all citizens 24 hours a day seven days a week.
- We expect to have many new users post pandemic and we are continuing to see new methods of service and new attitudes for how we can serve our communities even better in the years to come.

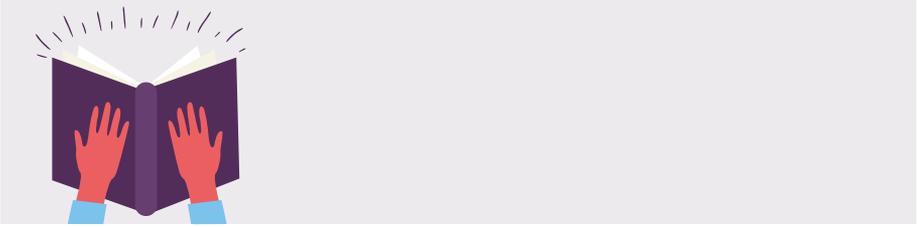
In conclusion we are thankful that we can state that Libraries have been safe spaces in our communities. Through carefully developing and following our protocol and safety measures, there have been no instances of transmission of covid 19 happening within our branches in 2020. Staff and the public can continue to benefit from our services while feeling as safe as possible. Maintaining the safety of our staff and patrons, while still providing as much of the services they need as possible, has been our most critical success of 2020!



Sherry Philpott-Adhikary
Library Board Chair

Don Nettleton
Chief Executive Officer





The Okanagan Regional Library (ORL), is one of the largest public library systems in Canada. The ORL is a Regional Library situated in the southern interior of BC, created in 1936, currently serving just over 400,000 people in a diverse geographic area the size of Ireland. The administration center/ head office is centrally located in Kelowna. The ORL provides service on-line, and via 31 physical branch locations. Our communities include some of the fastest growing urban areas of Canada such as those in the central Okanagan, as well as very rural and sparsely settled regions. Because of our natural beauty, thriving economy, and favorable climate our citizens include an above average percentage of retirees, and a rapidly growing number of college age and young entrepreneurs and families drawn by UBCO and thriving hi tech or other business start-ups particularly in the Central Okanagan.

Each year we deliver millions of service transactions thru providing access to physical and online material, connecting people to the web, providing community space, delivering programs and learning

sessions, offering public use of and training on tech equipment, and referral to other resources and services.

We are governed by a 24 member board entirely comprised of elected councillors, mayors, regional district directors and elected first nation leaders. We have a staff of just under 275 employees totalling approximately 115 FTE. Our direct service points include 30 full service branches ranging in size from just a few hundred square ft to close to 40,000 square feet, one small pocket unstaffed location within UBCO Library, 2 active book deposits run by volunteer organizations, and of course our website.

Our annual operating budget is approximately \$20 million dollars. Approximately 92% of our funding comes from local tax revenues. Provincial grant funding has dropped to only about 5% over the past several years as the base grant funding has been frozen by the province for over a decade. The remainder comes from minor other sources such as fines and lost book charges or room rentals.



VISION

The ORL provides for learning, innovation, creativity and a connected community.

ORL'S 4 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & THEMES

Our library advances learning, creativity, and imagination

Our priority has always been on reading and learning, but technology is changing the way people learn. The library is evolving to reflect that.

Our library is an integral part of life in our diverse communities

Our communities are diverse, but we are stronger together. This Direction is about listening to those in our communities and addressing their unique needs. It is about making ORL a library system that represents the best of working cooperatively combined with the best of providing flexible service responses.

Our library branches are innovative, inviting and reflect their communities

Is the library a bit bland? Maybe. Does it need to be? No! We have the unique opportunity to refresh and reinvent in response to changing needs in our communities. Bring it on.

Our library is focused on customer service, staffed by learners confident in their abilities

ORL staff care about their patrons – we see it every day. We need to make structural changes to enable staff to provide effective services that continue to make a difference in peoples lives.



Library Strategic Direction

The current ORL Strategic Plan was created in 2015 and has guided the Library vision from 2016 to the present. This plan closely aligns to the provincial strategic plan and is focused on our mission, vision and values to connect curious minds by providing for learning, innovation, creativity and a connected community.

The importance and challenge and critical need for this service to our communities was never more apparent than during this past year where our world was turned upside down by COVID-19. The Board and staff had begun work on a new strategic plan which was to have been completed fall 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated setting that aside as all of the ORL energy had to be focused on the constant adaptation to be able to serve our communities amidst the constantly changing environment.

For the past 6-8 years, the focus of the ORL has been shifting. Because of limited funding, the previous focus had been limited to offering a large and diverse floating collection of materials through our branches, as well as the provision of some children's programming like story time and summer reading club. Over the past number of years, the library has broadened its focus to include a wide range of adult programming, as well as introducing technical literacy

programming and training, and additional partnerships. As part of these broader thrusts, several maker spaces were created in a few branches, with some portable technical equipment available for the rest of the system. These additional programs and technology, as well as expanded services, have largely been funded by internally having to reallocate almost \$1 million dollars of resources. This happened by reducing traditional services in some areas to fund growing communities and new initiatives. The Library was also able to get some important donations for some of the equipment. A lot of staff training and hiring focused on helping develop staff with a passion for new technology and services has happened. This has helped the ORL to expand its focus and pivot to meet the changing needs of its communities. The primary business of the ORL remains the provision and circulation of physical and on-line resources which has generally totalled between 3 -3.5 million circulations per year.

The circulation of physical items has been gradually decreasing by a few percentage points per year, while digital circulation and usage has been rapidly increasing to more than offset the loss of the physical. Obviously, the ability to access digital resources was increasingly critical during the enforced isolation and partial lockdown periods of 2020.

The ORL has also been renovating its branches and adjusting its physical locations, moving some collections

online and using the freed up or redesigned spaces for programming and a place for the community to meet and enjoy. The Library is one of the few remaining public spaces open to all in the community regardless of their socioeconomic or other situations. Branches are now seen as inviting and vibrant community spaces as opposed to the traditional image of carefully monitored quiet study rooms warehousing books.



STEAM @ the Library - How to Make Reverse Videos that Defy Gravity

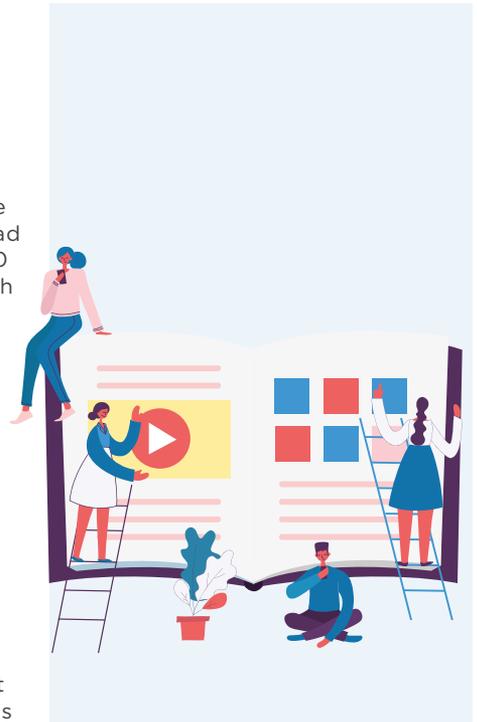


COVID-19 impact on ORL

The Library was expecting 2020 to continue to build on these same thrusts and expansions and this did happen for the first two months of the year. However, in early March everything that had been normal and expected ceased. Overnight, the library shut down all branches, and all staff were pivoted to working from home.

This was a massive undertaking, which was only possible because of the significant advances in technology and infrastructure that the library had implemented over the past couple of years. One of the critical tools necessary was Microsoft Teams, which allowed staff spread all over the southern interior to work from any location where they could get internet service and hold video meetings, share files and resources, and access all of the ORL system. The technological backbone for this had only been completed in early 2020 and most staff were unfamiliar with it. Necessity required everybody to pivot, leap in, and learn on the job. ORL librarian teams pivoted to assisting other staff, and then supporting and creating virtual programs and resources for the public. This included launching an e-card for the public to self register for service to access our collections, and creating virtual programming. Purchasing of materials switched primarily to digital formats from physical for several months to help build up these in demand collections. Most support staff and functions such as

payroll, accounting, cataloguing, and senior administration including completing the annual audit work also had to happen from home or remote locations.



FULL PERIOD OF TOTAL BRANCH CLOSURE TO THE PUBLIC

All ORL branches were closed to the public with a few hours notice at the end of day Monday March 16, 2020. The Library pivoted efforts to serving online via the website. As mentioned above, this included rolling out online library card registration, developing and staffing an online chat and phone service, creating virtual programs such as storytime and online bookclubs, as well as switching a significant amount of materials purchasing to focus on digital resources like e-books and e-audiobooks. A small number of staff were laid off, but the Library was able to keep most frontline staff gainfully employed supporting the digital efforts and with significant and long overdue staff development and training. This will greatly increase the skills of staff as they serve the public post covid19.

As Covid19 health guidelines were clarified by the province, the Library worked with staff and Worksafe BC to create safety plans for reopening 31 locations, and to source and purchase the necessary supplies such as plexi shields, cleaning products, masks, and gloves which were all initially in short supply. Physical spaces were adjusted to make them Covid19 safe by creating space for social distancing through moving collections, eliminating most public seating, spacing out public computers, creating signage, and spacing out staff work areas. The Library also shifted for almost 7 months to quarantining all returned books and materials which required a lot of space and effort. The ORL also increased cleaning and trained staff in the constantly changing necessary protocols.



Christmas Puppet Show with Ardie

GRADUAL REOPENING AND REINSTATING OF SERVICES

The Libraries were finally able to restart some provision of physical material circulation with the introduction of curbside holds pickup by early June.

This took a massive effort to get safety plans, training, and protocol in place and restarting internal support and delivery systems. Hours of public service were still significantly reduced in most locations.

By late July our branches were able to transition to Browse and Borrow service which allowed the public back into our buildings with limited stay which the public greatly appreciated. Over the next month open hours were extended to what they had been prior to Covid19. However, in-house seating and in-person programming within our buildings was not possible the remainder of 2020 which greatly impacted the traffic to our buildings and reduced the programming services we were able to offer to those that were on-line. In spite of this, by the later part of the year, our volume of physical circulation of items had returned to over 90% of the level that it was at for the same month the year before. E-material circulation had also increased during our closure period and stayed at higher levels than the previous year even after we were reopened.

The statistics on the following page clearly demonstrate the significant impact that Covid19 had on the usage of our resources and system compared to two years prior.

The actual impact on services is not as bad as might be anticipated considering:

That only 2 months were normal service,

2.5 months were totally closed to physical service, and

Another almost 2 months only allowed holds placing and pickup at the door

No regular in-person programming has been allowed since March 16

The public have been encouraged to quickly enter and get materials and leave

For covid19 safety the number of public computers has been reduced and seating removed for most of the year

Data	2020	2018	Change
Total number of programs offered*	2,363	6,644	-64% **
Total attendance at ORL programs*	35,636	145,742	-76% ***
Number of adult programs**	1,134	3,274	-65%
ORL eBooks & eAudio Checkouts	858,496	519,567	65%
Books, magazines & other materials borrowed	1,628,760	2,796,537	-42%
Hours spent learning new languages through Rosetta Stone	1,540	740	108%
Hours spent learning new skills through Lynda.com	4,145	2,799	48%
Number of devices connecting to ORL wifi	296,271	n/a ****	n/a ****
Number of Patrons walked through our doors	632,224	1,622,850	-61%
PressReader Articles Read	946,538	620,143	53%
Active Cardholders	102,172	106,003	-4%
Number of ORL Public Use Computers	358	250	43%
Patrons visited our website	2,141,267	2,303,332	-7%
Terabytes of wireless data traffic	36	57	-37%



OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR ORL IN 2020 EVEN WITH COVID-19

Even in the midst of COVID-19 the ORL was able to complete some significant projects.

Golden Library closed for a few weeks while they repainted and all the flooring in the buildings was replaced.



Oliver Library branch relocated to a slightly larger location which was conveniently located in a shopping mall.

Doing both of these in the midst of a pandemic was challenging but the public greatly appreciate the improved spaces.

The ORL hired a new position to increase services to the shut-in and those with visual or other special challenges with print.

USE OF PROVINCIAL ONE-TIME TECHNOLOGY GRANT

The special one-time technology grant from the Province is also allowing the ORL to replace the routers and other hardware in many of our branches that are at end of life, throttling bandwidth and speed for users in these locations.

This will allow the Library, using the same contracted services, to more than double the speed and bandwidth for users of library equipment and of wi-fi. This will enable additional programs and equipment to run and users to have a less frustrating and quicker experience.

Address connectivity issues in Golden branch which had a very poor connectivity to the web. This grant funds fibre being pulled to the Library and will cover the additional costs for this service for the next three years. In addition to normal branch services this location had recently added a maker space and this proper internet connection will allow that equipment to function as it should.





Westside Learning Lab

358

public use computers
system wide

43% INCREASE SINCE 2018

4,145

hours spent learning new
skills though Lynda.com

48% INCREASE SINCE 2018



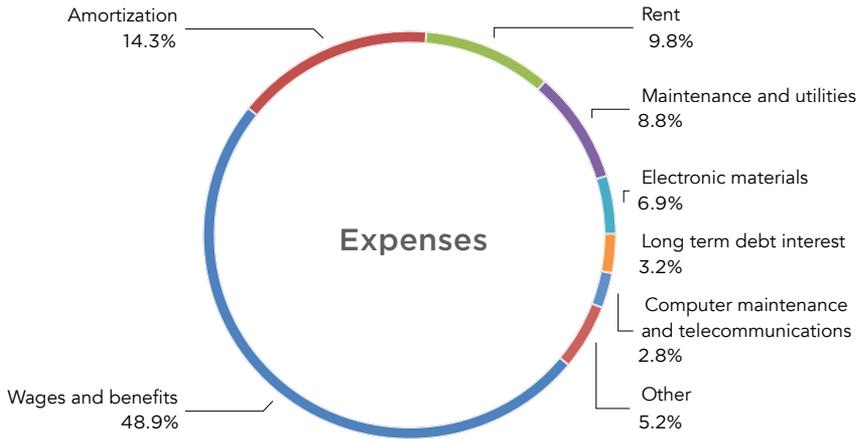
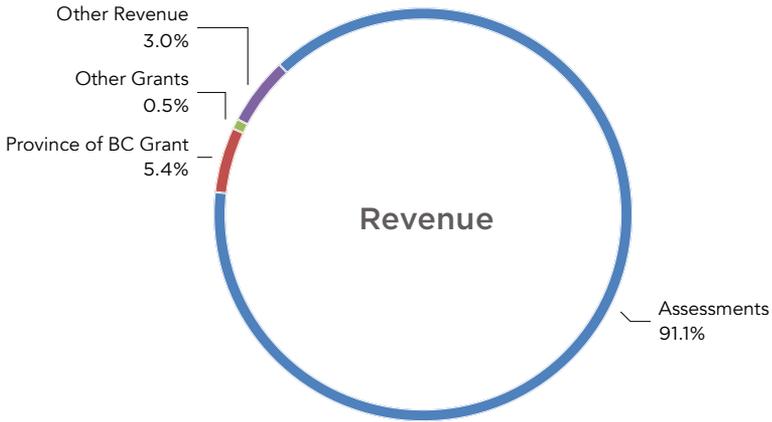
Okanagan Regional Library District

For the year ended December 31	2020	2020	2019
	Actual	Budget	Actual
Revenue			
Assessments	\$ 18,331,660	\$ 18,331,441	\$ 17,401,763
Province of British Columbia grant	1,085,840	1,008,000	1,008,382
Other grant revenue	93,601	55,500	151,019
Other revenue	600,913	458,088	1,045,796
	20,112,014	19,853,029	19,606,960

Expenses

	2020	2020	2019
	Actual	Budget	Actual
Advertising and marketing	\$ 65,007	\$ 49,475	\$ 61,668
Amortization	2,670,105	-	3,012,540
Association dues and memberships	20,147	19,380	16,824
Board and committee expenses	3,533	20,141	12,766
Board strategic planning	1,407	300,000	
Book binding and mending	4,473	21,250	3,522
Computer maintenance and telecommunications	523,807	498,000	549,576
Electronic materials	1,286,938	829,500	885,934
Insurance	57,369	55,363	53,676
Interest, bank charges and foreign exchange	12,275	11,500	15,311
Long term debt interest	592,500	592,500	592,500
Maintenance and utilities	1,638,844	1,767,655	1,715,678
Penticton library contract	46,090	46,000	46,530
Postage and freight	31,006	60,200	53,320
Professional fees	106,073	97,489	72,238
Programs	76,376	80,631	120,989
Rent	1,831,708	1,836,500	1,952,188
Staff development	177,777	236,184	242,093
Sundry	6,222	176,747	-
Supplies	297,373	187,578	157,205
Telephone	29,150	25,000	25,463
Transportation	98,552	136,668	120,906
Wages and benefits	9,108,724	9,943,251	9,613,450
	\$ 18,625,455	\$ 16,989,012	\$ 19,327,851





Need Help? Contact Us!

Visit us at your nearest ORL library,

www.orl.bc.ca/hours-locations or email us at info@orl.bc.ca

Call the toll-free eBook Help Line: 1-855-853-2665

31 ORL LIBRARY BRANCHES

Armstrong

Cherryville

Enderby

Falkland

Golden

Hedley

Kaleden

Kelowna

Keremeos

Lake Country

Lumby

Mission

Naramata

North Shuswap

Okanagan Falls

Oliver

Osoyoos

Oyama

Peachland

Princeton

Revelstoke

Rutland

Salmon Arm

Sicamous

Silver Creek

South Shuswap

Summerland

UBC-O

Vernon

Westbank

Westside Learning Lab

Administration

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