

OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY

2025

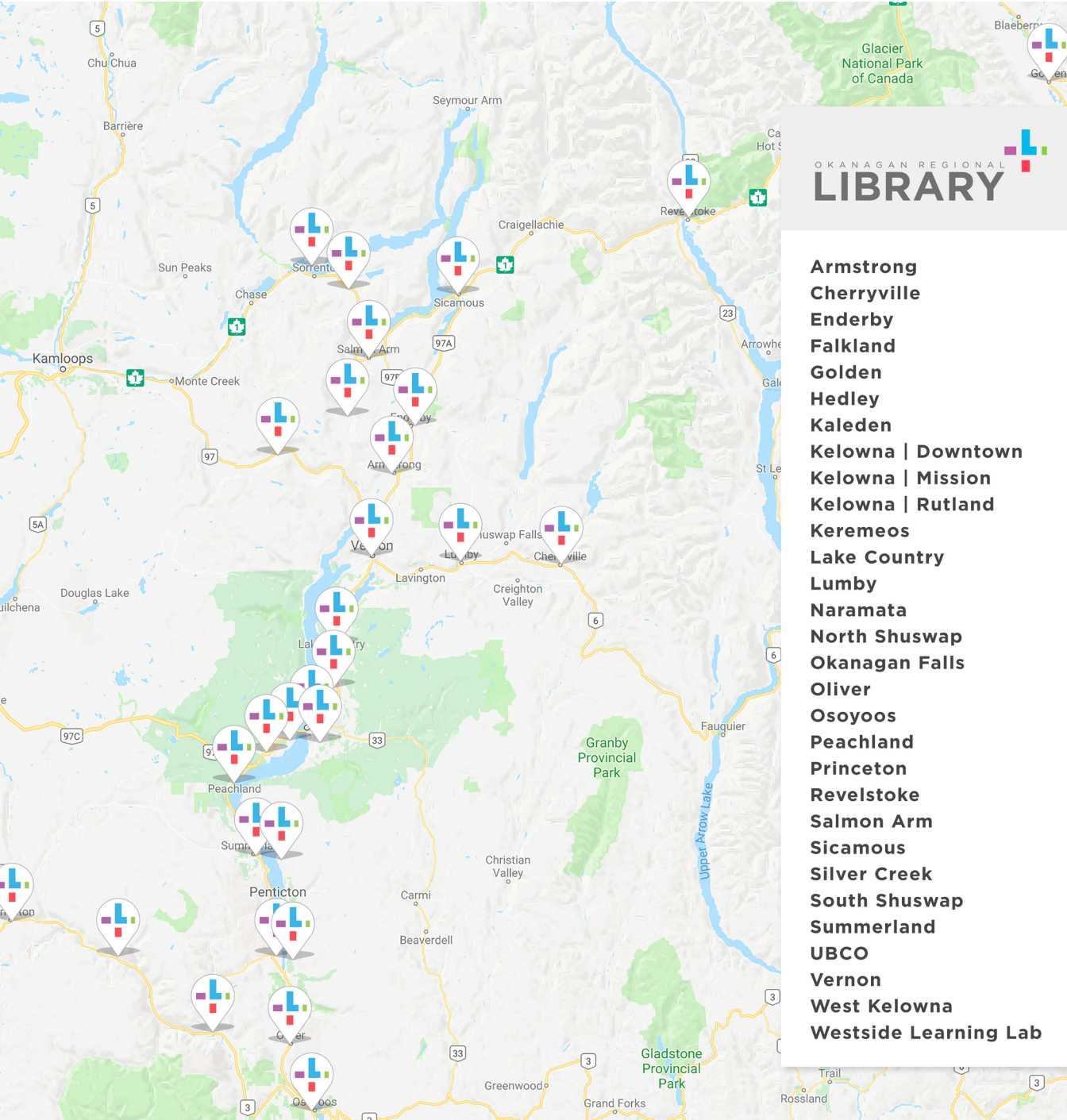
Annual Report



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A Message from the CEO

It is an honour to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the Okanagan Regional Library, and to work alongside a dedicated Board of Trustees, staff, and community partners who share a commitment to public library service. Each year offers an opportunity to reflect on the reach and relevance of this work, and 2025 was marked by meaningful progress across the system.

This year focused on stabilization and system-building, with an emphasis on strengthening the foundations that support consistent, high-quality library service across our branches.

Investments in staff training, operational systems, and facilities improvements reflect a deliberate effort to build capacity and ensure we meet growing demand for library services. As communities change, so do expectations, and our work continues to respond in practical, measurable ways.

Throughout the year, I visited each branch and community served by the ORL and presented to every member council. These

conversations reinforced the importance of our relationships with local governments and communities. They shape priorities, inform decisions, and help ensure each branch reflects the needs of the people it serves.

The ORL also continued to strengthen its role within the broader library community. Hosting the Canadian Urban Libraries Council and contributing to professional dialogue through the British Columbia Library

Association reflect a commitment to shared learning and

continuous improvement. This exchange supports a system that remains informed, adaptable, and responsive.

This year marks the final full year of service for the current Board of Trustees. I extend my sincere thanks for their continued support and leadership. Their guidance has helped advance key priorities, including investments that expand staffing capacity and support service levels that align with increasing community use.

As this report outlines, the ORL continues to provide essential public value across the region. Libraries contribute to quality of life in ways that are often quiet but significant. They offer trusted spaces where community members can access information without barriers, build a shared sense of belonging, and find practical support for learning.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this work and look ahead with confidence to the continued growth and impact of the ORL.

Danielle Hubbard
Chief Executive Officer
Okanagan Regional Library

Board Chair Introduction

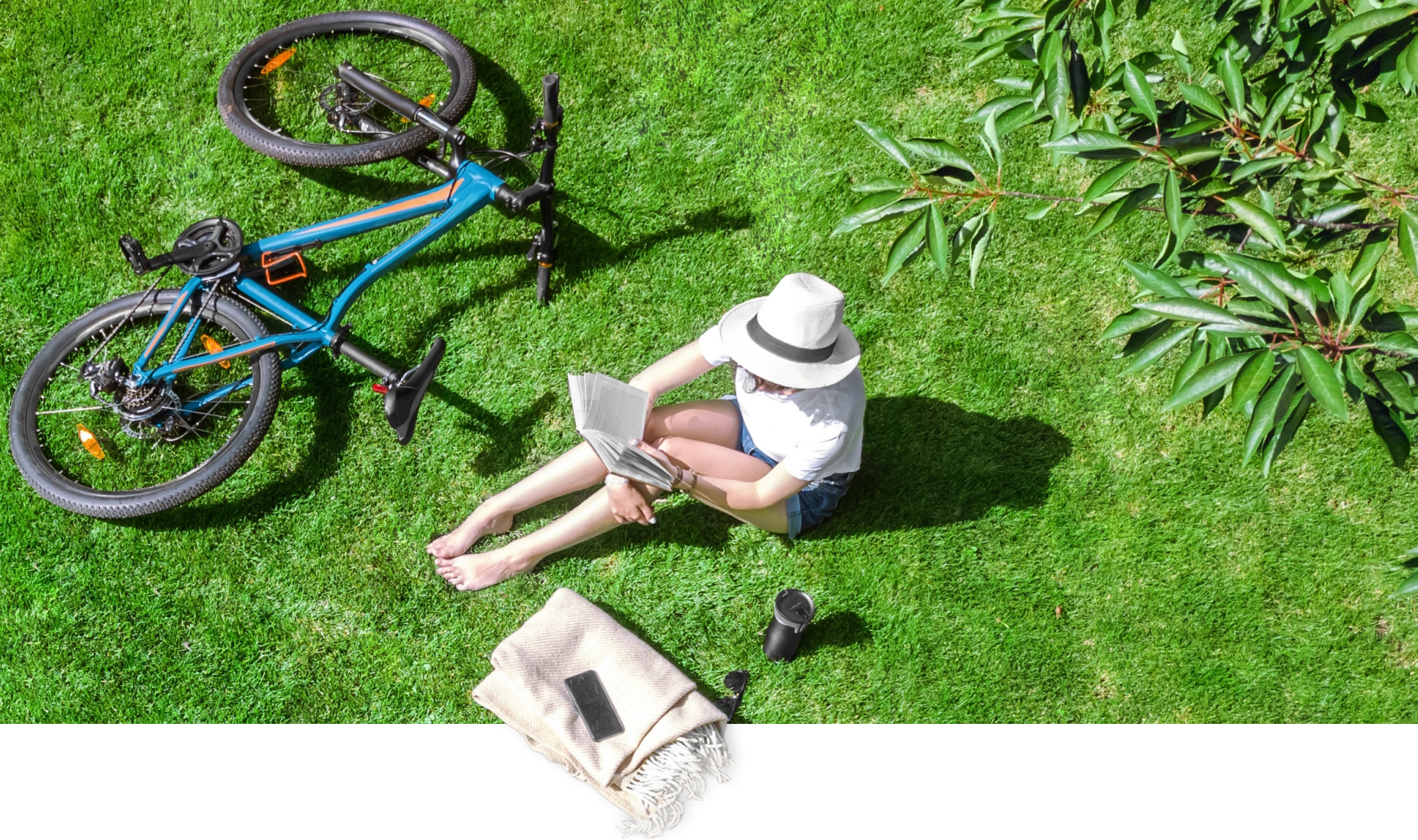
Serving as Board Chair of the Okanagan Regional Library offers a unique perspective on how a shared public service connects communities across a diverse and growing region. The role of the Board is to provide governance, accountability, and long-term strategic oversight in support of sustainable library service. In 2025, this work included ongoing attention to financial stewardship, policy development, and organizational planning as the ORL continued implementing priorities identified in its Strategic Plan.

This year, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Personnel, Finance, and Policy & Planning committees for the considerable time and expertise they contribute. I was also honoured to participate in provincial funding advocacy at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), helping highlight the important role libraries play in communities throughout the province.

Tasha Da Silva
Chair, Board of Trustees
Okanagan Regional Library



Community Impact



Supporting Regional Needs

Public libraries are often described through their services, but their broader value lies in their role as civic infrastructure—shared spaces that support learning, cultural enrichment, and meaningful participation in public life. ORL branches serve as flexible, multi-purpose spaces that accommodate a wide range of activities, from independent study and technological exploration to creative programming and civic engagement.



“At the Kelowna Downtown Branch alone, more than 215,000 visits were recorded”

In 2025, the Okanagan Regional Library’s thirty branches continued to serve as vital community spaces for learning, connecting, and exploring across a region defined by geographic diversity and sustained population growth. The importance of ORL branches to their communities is reflected in the volume and range of activity they support. At the Kelowna Downtown Branch alone, more than 215,000 visits were recorded, and 1,287 programs welcomed nearly 30,000 participants.

The incredible scale of community use informs both system-wide initiatives and local service improvements. Expanded hours improved access for working families and students, while renovated and reconfigured spaces created more flexible environments for study, collaboration, and programming. At the individual level, staff supported patrons in practical ways, from navigating digital tools to preserving personal and community histories through digitization technology.



NEW LIBRARY MEMBERS

Community engagement took on a playful edge in autumn through the ORL’s annual library card drive. Framed around a retro-inspired “Monster Reader” radio campaign, the initiative invited residents to embrace their reading habits with humour and curiosity, using playful messaging that echoed classic infomercials. Beneath

the creative approach was a clear goal: to connect more people with library services. The campaign saw strong participation, with new library card registrations increasing by 26% compared with the previous year, contributing to an overall 5.81% increase in active card holders, rising from 119,447 in 2024 to 126,385 in 2025.

Bringing Families Together

Programs for children and families remained a consistent and valued part of library life in 2025. Through our popular Story Time and related Youth Services programs, children are introduced to books, language, and play in ways that build foundational literacy skills while encouraging a positive relationship with reading from an early age. Regularly scheduled sessions provide consistency for families and create opportunities for children to interact with peers, developing social and participation skills that support school readiness.

For many families, the benefits of Youth Services programming extend beyond the time spent in the library. In survey results, caregivers described learning something new to share with their child, feeling more confident helping their child learn at home, and finding themselves singing, reading, talking, writing, or playing more often together. Respondents also reported increased awareness of library resources and services, suggesting that early-years

programming serves as an entry point into broader library use. Just as importantly, these free and accessible programs provide opportunities for informal community connection, with children engaging one another through play and movement, and caregivers meeting others at similar stages of parenting.

Survey feedback points to both the value and growing demand for these programs. Families highlighted the energy and engagement of staff, the balance of stories and interactive elements, and the importance of socializing with neighbours. Many also expressed a desire for additional sessions, expanded scheduling options, and programming for a wider range of ages. Together, these responses reflect the role of family programming as both a core service and an area of continued growth within the ORL.



SUMMER READING CLUB

Early literacy programming remains central to library service. Summer Reading Club builds on this foundation, encouraging children to make reading part of their daily routines while strengthening their connection to the library. In 2025, 7,602 children participated in Summer Reading Club.

The scale of the ORL's Youth Services summer programming was substantial. ORL branches delivered 654 Summer Reading Club programs, welcoming a total of 30,114 participants. Survey responses point to meaningful

engagement: 95% of children reported learning something new, enjoying reading more, and reading more often, while many families indicated that their use of library services increased as a result of the program.

Together, these results highlight the ORL's continuing success in making reading visible, engaging, and rewarding for children and families. They reinforce the library's role not only as a place to access books, but as an active partner in supporting literacy development, childhood curiosity, and social engagement.

Circulation and Collections

Library collections continued to see strong use in 2025, with total circulation reaching more than 2.07 million items. This level of activity reflects the ongoing role of the ORL as a reliable and widely used resource in our communities. While formats and reading habits continue to evolve, the consistent use of collections across categories highlights the library's ability to meet a broad range of needs, from leisure reading and research to entertainment and skill development.

Core adult collections remained central to circulation activity.

Adult nonfiction led with 272,693 circulations, followed by adult fiction at 229,022 and mystery titles at 72,072, demonstrating continued interest in both informational materials and popular genres.

Children's collections accounted for a significant share of overall use, with more than 533,000 items circulated across picture books, junior nonfiction, and board books. This demand reinforces the popularity of early literacy programming, with families regularly borrowing materials that support

learning and development.

Beyond print collections, circulation data highlights the library's role as a multi-format access point. Film collections remained popular, with over 100,000 feature films and more than 84,000 additional DVD items circulated. Emerging services such as the Library of Things and Quick Read collections offered additional points of access, supporting practical needs and varied reading preferences.

Volunteers and Community Partnerships

The ORL's work is supported by a network of dedicated volunteers, community advocates, and partner organizations who contribute to the strength and reach of library services. Friends of the Library groups continue to play an important role in supporting branch activities and fundraising efforts, demonstrating strong and ongoing community investment in library spaces and programs.

Partnerships with local organizations further expand

what the library can offer. Throughout the year, the ORL collaborated with groups such as Interior Health, the BC Bat Society, the City of Kelowna, the Kelowna Art Gallery, the Vernon Public Art Gallery, and other regional partners. These collaborations support a wide range of initiatives, including educational programming, environmental awareness, and community events, such as the Exploring STEAM Futures event at UBCO. In Kelowna, partnerships

with organizations such as KCR and Claro brought job fairs and family resource events into the library, connecting hundreds of community members with employment supports and essential services. A pilot outreach initiative with the Ministry of Social Development further expanded access by offering in-library services to individuals who may not otherwise be able to access government offices.



The Work Behind the Service

Operational Foundations

Behind every program, collection, and welcoming library is the coordinated work of staff whose expertise, planning, and care ensure ORL branches run smoothly. In a regional system serving dozens of communities across a large geographic area, this work happens in public and behind the scenes. In 2025, the

ORL focused on a period of stabilization and system-building, strengthening the internal structures that support consistent, high-quality library service.

Key initiatives included the implementation of new HR systems, organization-wide approaches to training and

staff support, and facilities improvements at multiple branches. The launch of a new workforce management system marked an important step in improving payroll, scheduling, and supporting more coordinated operations.

STAFF EXPERTISE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Effective library service depends on staff who are equipped to support a wide range of patron needs. The introduction of a system-wide training plan strengthened the organization's approach to staff development, creating greater consistency and coordination in learning. This work was supported by targeted initiatives, including Leadership Essentials training for

supervisors, ongoing professional development opportunities, and staff participation in conferences and sector learning.

The ORL also contributed to professional knowledge-sharing within the library community by hosting the Children's and Teen Services (CATS) conference. Staff continued to build their expertise through learning

focused on accessibility, truth and reconciliation, community engagement, and emerging technologies. Together, these efforts support a workforce that is adaptable, informed, and responsive to evolving community expectations.

RECRUITING AND SUPPORTING STAFF

Maintaining strong library service across a large regional system requires ongoing investment in recruitment and staffing support. In 2025, the ORL continued efforts to strengthen staffing capacity across branches and administrative teams. New leadership appointments brought additional experience and

expertise to the organization's operational work, supporting the coordination of services across the system. At the branch level, staffing investments helped expand service capacity and ensure that communities continue to receive consistent support when visiting their local library.

SAFETY AND WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENTS

Supporting staff safety and wellbeing is an essential part of maintaining effective library service. As part of a broader focus on stabilization and system-building, the ORL continued to strengthen workplace practices and procedures to ensure safe and supportive environments for staff.

This work included updates to internal policies, improvements to operational procedures, and more consistent approaches to communication between branches and administrative

teams. Staff working in libraries encounter a wide variety of situations each day, from helping children discover books to assisting community members with technology or research. To better support staff in these environments, new Working Alone safety procedures were developed, and a Safety Line monitoring system was pilot tested to strengthen staff safety and response protocols.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Facility improvements throughout the year focused on enhancing usability, accessibility, and flexibility, allowing spaces to better support a range of activities, from quiet study to group programming.

Several branches saw targeted upgrades to core infrastructure and layout. Flooring and interior refreshes were completed in locations including Peachland and Okanagan Falls, improving both durability and the overall experience of the space.

Service areas were also enhanced, with new service desks introduced in Hedley, Naramata,

Keremeos, and Princeton, supporting more efficient and accessible interactions between staff and patrons. In Osoyoos, improvements included updated flooring, refreshed interior finishes, and new children's shelving designed to better support family use of the space.

Other branches focused on improving flexibility and layout. In Naramata, changes to floor configuration and service areas created a more functional environment, while in Keremeos, the addition of mobile shelving allows for adaptable use of space to support both collections and programming. At the Princeton Branch, updates included enhancements to the teen area and magazine seating, creating a more inviting and usable environment for a broader range of patrons.



TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Technology plays an increasingly important role in library collections and services. The ORL continues to maintain and improve the systems that support both in-branch services and digital access, while developing policies that guide the responsible use of emerging technologies, including the creation of the ORL's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.

Online program registration, digital borrowing platforms, and the library's website all form part of the infrastructure that allows patrons to discover materials, attend events, and access information from anywhere in the region. Digital reading platforms continue to expand accessibility features, supporting patrons who benefit from tools such as adjustable text and dyslexic-friendly fonts.

Behind the scenes, library staff work continuously to maintain these systems, ensuring that they remain reliable, accessible, and easy for patrons to use. As technology continues to evolve, the ORL's investment in digital tools and thoughtful policy development helps ensure that innovation is implemented in ways that are responsible, practical, and aligned with the needs of our communities.

BUILDING AND MANAGING THE COLLECTION

Collection development remains at the heart of library service. Staff continually assess community interests and emerging trends to build collections that reflect the diverse reading and learning needs of patrons. In 2025, nearly 197,000 new items were added to the collection,

including approximately 79,600 physical items and 117,000 digital items, reflecting continued growth in both traditional and digital formats. Each year, tens of thousands of new items expand access to books, films, educational materials, and digital resources. This work includes the ongoing expansion of World Languages items and improvements to cataloguing practices for non-English materials.

In addition to traditional formats, the ORL continues to develop innovative lending collections that broaden borrowing opportunities. The Library of Things collection continues to grow, with new additions such as themed kits like the BatPack Kit offering hands-on opportunities to explore topics such as environmental science. Makerspace enhancements, including the introduction of Glowforge laser cutters, heat presses, and 3D printers, have further expanded access to creative technologies. Together, these evolving collections support learning, curiosity, and practical problem-solving, offering patrons new ways to engage with their library.



Vision and Direction

Guided by the Strategic Plan

The ORL's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan provides a clear framework for decision-making, guiding how the organization invests in services, spaces, and resources. Grounded in a vision of the library as a vital community space for learning, connecting, and exploring, the plan establishes key priorities that shape both day-to-day operations and long-term strategy.

Work throughout the year continued to advance the Strategic Plan's core priorities, including learning and literacy, inclusive community spaces, community partnerships, cultural engagement, and organizational excellence. These priorities are reflected in initiatives that strengthen literacy programming, expand access to services, support welcoming and adaptable spaces, and deepen relationships

with community partners. They also guide internal work focused on improving service delivery, strengthening organizational capacity, and ensuring that the library remains responsive to community needs. Through this approach, the Strategic Plan serves not only as a guiding document, but as an active framework shaping how the library continues to evolve.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Sustaining a regional library system requires careful financial planning and responsible stewardship of public funds. Throughout 2025, the ORL continued to demonstrate strong financial management while investing in services that support community learning and connection.

The Board of Trustees approved the library's financial reports and reviewed the results of the annual audit process, confirming that the organization remains on stable financial footing. Budget planning also continued for future service needs, including staffing, collections, and facility development.

In addition, the ORL Board approved the 2026 budget earlier than usual, reflecting confidence in the library's financial planning and the long-term sustainability of its programs and services.



EXPANDING LIBRARY SPACES

Library buildings are among the most visible expressions of the ORL's commitment to community service. Across the region, branches serve as gathering places where residents can access information, attend programs, and spend time in welcoming public spaces.

In 2025, construction continued on several important branch developments. Work progressed on the new North Shuswap (Scotch Creek) Branch for a

grand opening scheduled for early 2026. Construction also continued on the new branch located within the Parkinson Recreation Centre in Kelowna, a partnership that will integrate library services into a major community recreation hub. Planning also began for a future branch in Glenmore, supporting continued population growth

in one of Kelowna's fastest-growing neighbourhoods.



Accessibility and Inclusion

Improving access to library services remained a key area of focus, supported by both practical enhancements and longer-term strategic planning. This work included updating the ORL's *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* to the *Statement of Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility*, aligning the organization with emerging BC Accessibility Standards and supporting the development of its first Accessibility Plan. Guidance from the Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee, made up of staff and community members, helped ensure that this work reflects a range of lived experiences and community perspectives.

A significant milestone was the completion of the *Public*

Library Accessibility Project, developed in partnership with UBC Okanagan's Collaborative and Experimental Ethnography Lab. This initiative produced practical tools, including accessibility workbooks, organizational assessments, and a language guide designed to support more accessible service delivery.

Enhancements to collections and services continued to expand access for patrons with diverse needs. This included the development of Braille Discovery Kits, ergonomic equipment, and portable audiobook players, as well as the introduction of sensory kits to support neurodiverse families. Accessible computer stations equipped with specialized keyboards and ergonomic devices were

made available in all branches. Programming and outreach efforts, including the return of ASL Basics, further strengthened inclusive service delivery.

Circulation numbers for accessible and inclusive collections reflect the importance of this work. In 2025, accessible formats such as DAISY materials were circulated more than 5,400 times, while multilingual collections saw nearly 6,000 circulations. These figures point to the essential access these resources provide for patrons using alternative formats or seeking materials in languages other than English. Together, these efforts reflect a more coordinated and intentional approach to accessibility, supporting both immediate needs and long-term service improvement.

Advocacy and Regional Leadership

As one of the largest library systems in Canada, the ORL plays an active role in regional collaboration and advocacy. The library works with municipal partners, provincial organizations, and community groups to strengthen access to information, literacy programs, and cultural resources throughout the region.

This work includes participation in provincial forums such as the Union of BC Municipalities conference, as well as direct engagement with Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs staff. Through these channels, the ORL continues to advocate

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“At the local level, regional engagement remains a key priority”

for increased provincial funding and sustained support for public library services, emphasizing the essential role libraries play in community well-being and access to information.

At the local level, regional engagement remains a key priority. ORL leadership regularly participates in council delegations across member municipalities, building relationships, sharing updates, and ensuring that local priorities are reflected in library planning and service delivery.

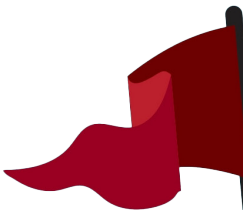
CONTINUING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

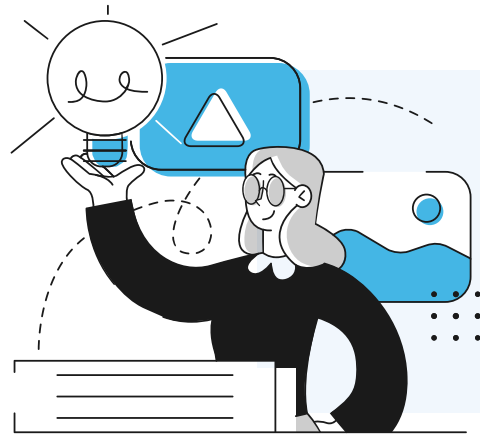
Partnerships with local organizations remain an important part of the library’s future. By working alongside community groups, educational institutions, and public agencies, the ORL can expand the range of programs and resources available to residents.

These collaborations support

a wide range of initiatives, from educational programming and environmental awareness projects to cultural events and community learning opportunities. Partnerships also help the library respond more effectively to local needs by drawing on the expertise and resources of neighbour organizations.

Looking ahead, the ORL will continue to strengthen its partnerships while identifying new opportunities to collaborate. This work will support more responsive services, broaden access to programs and resources, and ensure the library remains closely aligned with the needs of the communities it serves.



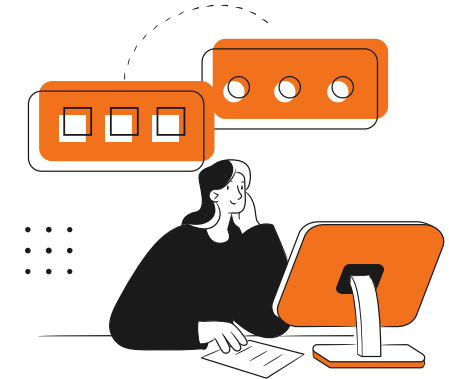


12,811

Total number of
programs offered

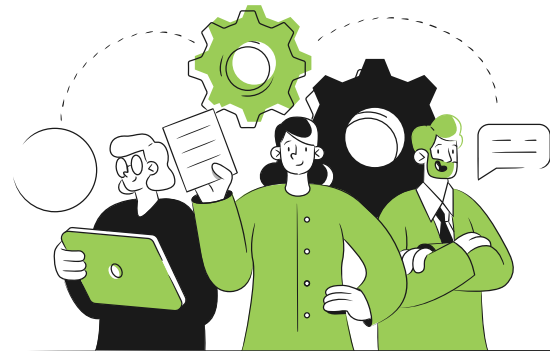
26,470

Niche Academy
tutorials viewed



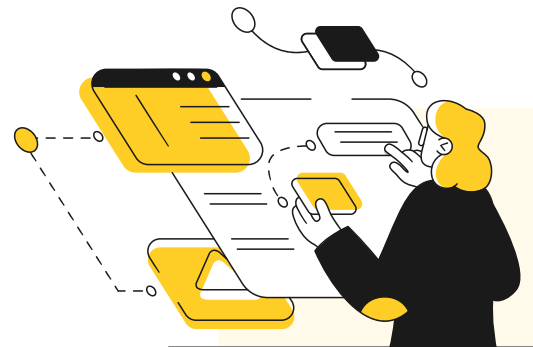
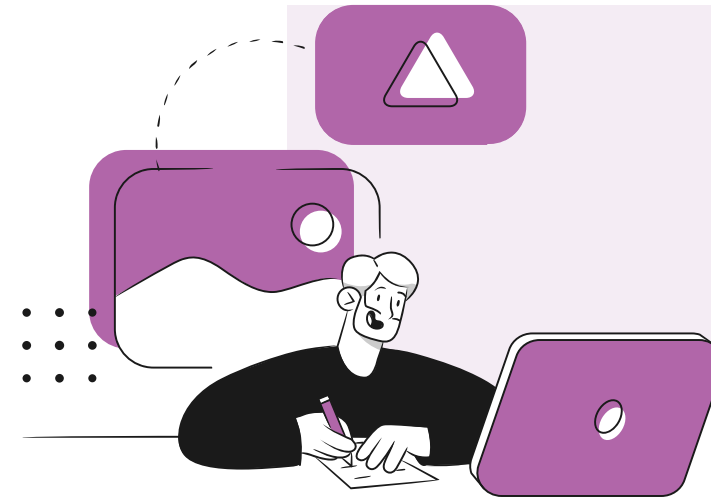
247,621

Total attendance at
ORL Programs



3,806

Hours spent learning
new skills through
LinkedIn Learning



1,341,896

ORL ebooks and e-audio checkouts

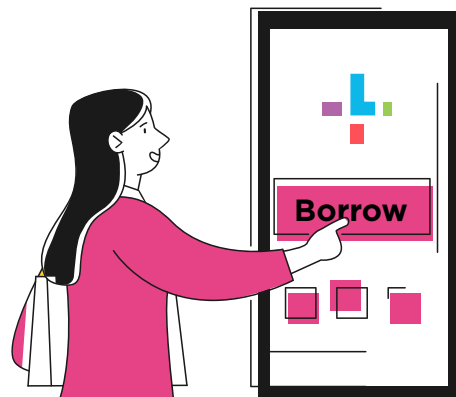
1,479,912

Number of Patrons walked
through our doors



2,102,178

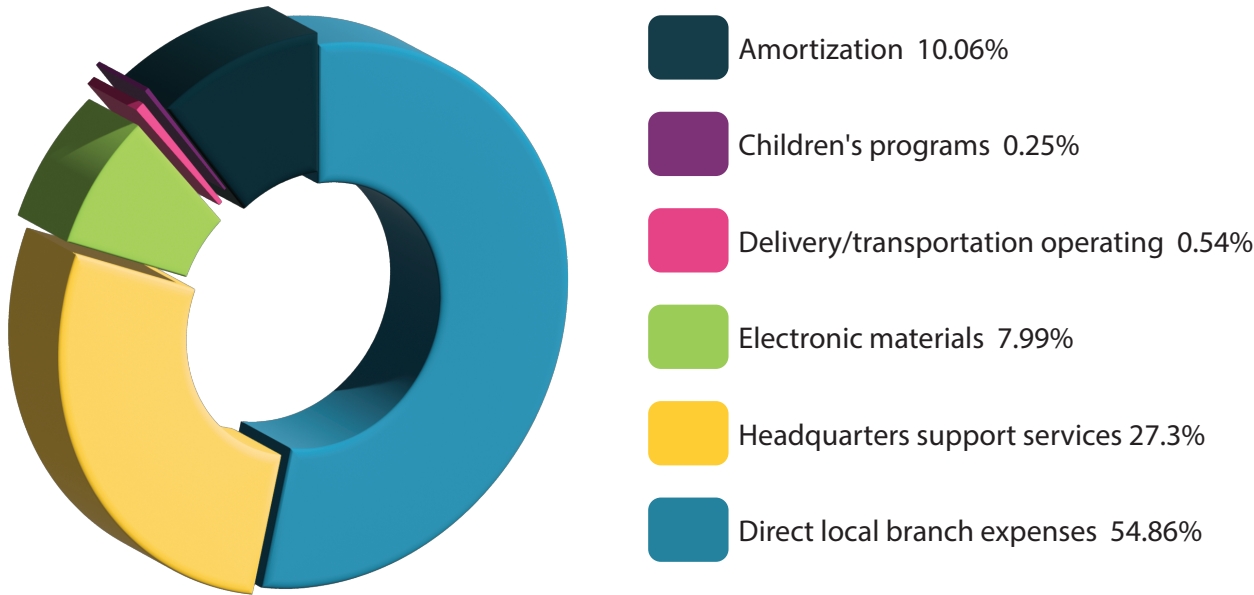
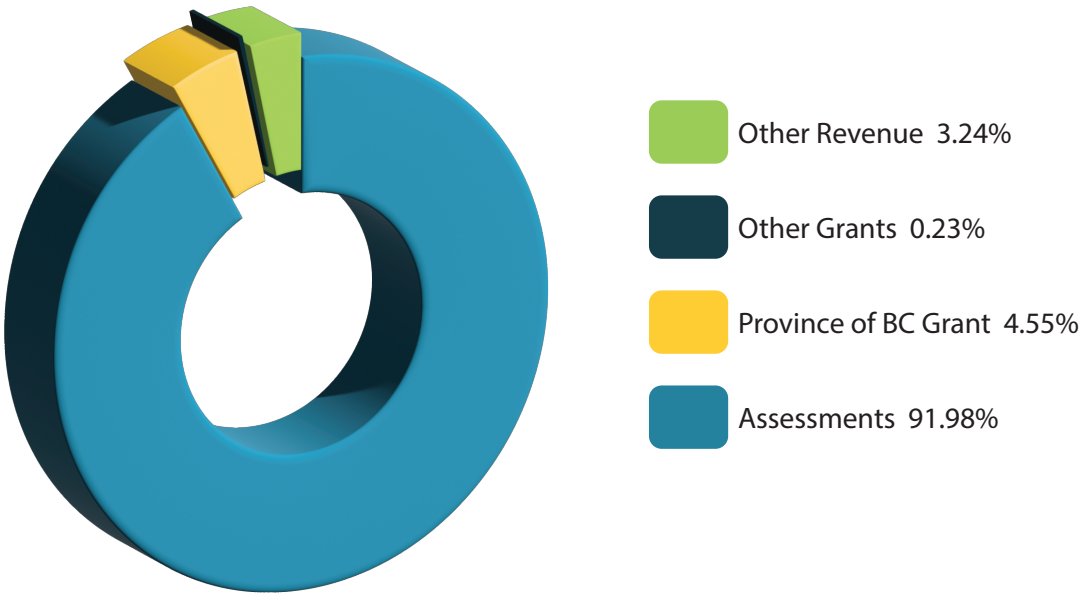
Books, magazines, and other
materials borrowed



126,385

Active cardholders

Expenses by Object	2025	2025	2024
	Budget \$	Actual \$	Actual \$
Advertising and marketing	136,678	154,377	122,171
Amortization		2,455,337	2,356,411
Association dues and memberships	21,601	24,321	15,772
Board and committee expenses	21,367	12,005	10,684
Board strategic planning		5,000	8,390
Book binding and mending			2,180
Collection agency	3,000	(1,937)	1
Communications	83,175	86,347	92,646
Computer maintenance and telecommunications	673,255	836,826	799,785
Electronic materials	1,736,176	1,949,556	1,694,323
Insurance	65,644	76,286	67,110
Interest, bank charges and foreign exchange	15,861	17,849	13,710
Long term debt interest	973,991	656,200	511,260
Maintenance and utilities	2,044,415	2,446,480	2,552,258
Penticton library contract	49,778	45,320	44,220
Postage and freight	69,393	41,065	45,824
Professional fees	43,304	103,387	139,347
Programs	167,161	135,202	123,255
Rent	1,787,534	1,728,274	1,744,598
Staff development	290,118	180,823	259,938
Supplies	191,656	240,793	539,741
Transportation	157,891	182,107	178,914
Wages and benefits	12,393,169	13,028,035	11,954,111



Need Help? Contact Us!

Visit us at your nearest ORL library,

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

ORL LIBRARY BRANCHES

Armstrong	250.546.8311	Osoyoos	250.495.7637
Cherryville	250.547.9776	Peachland	250.767.9111
Enderby	250.838.6488	Princeton	250.295.6495
Falkland	250.379.2705	Revelstoke	250.837.5095
Golden	250.344.6516	Rutland	250.765.8165
Hedley	250.292.8259	Salmon Arm	250.832.6161
Kaleden	250.497.8066	Sicamous	250.836.4845
Kelowna	250.762.2800	Silver Creek	250.832.4719
Keremeos	250.499.2313	South Shuswap	250.675.4818
Lake Country	250.766.3141	Summerland	250.494.5591
Lumby	250.547.9528	UBC-O	N/A
Mission	250.764.2254	Vernon	250.542.7610
Naramata	250.496.5679	Westbank	250.768.4369
North Shuswap	250.955.8198	Westside Learning Lab	778.755.6235
Okanagan Falls	250.497.5886	Administration	250.860.4033
Oliver	250.498.2242		

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