Advocacy and Fundraising Committee
Monday, March 9, 2026
6:00 PM

AGENDA

This meeting will be hosted electronically.

Members of the public may attend by
calling 1.647.558.0588 and entering meeting ID 879 6481 0109 followed by #.

Please note: Recording of this meeting by anyone in attendance,
and regardless of format, is strictly prohibited.

1. Call to order
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Disclosure of Interest
4. Minutes of previous meetings
    a. December 8, 2025 (Attachment 4-A)
5. Advocacy and Fundraising Documents
    a. Advocacy Work Plan 2026 (Attachment 5-A)
    b. Fund Development Work Plan 2026 (Attachment 5-B)
6. Advocacy and Fundraising Discussion and Deliverables
    a. CPL Case for Support Report (Attachment 6-A)
    b. Ontario Library Association & Federation of Ontario Public Libraries 2026-27 Pre-Budget Submission (Attachment 6-B)
    c. Council Communications
7. New Business
8. Next meeting - Monday, June 8, 2026 at 6 PM
9. Adjournment

Attachment 4-A

Advocacy and Fundraising Committee
Monday, December 8, 2025
6:00 PM

MINUTES

Present: Laura Brady (Committee Chair); Scott Goodison; Domenic Maggi; Tony Maxwell

Staff: Colleen Lipp – CEO | Chief Librarian; Jill Jambor – Manager, Communications and Cultural Development; Roop Sandhu, Director, Corporate Services and Projects

This meeting was conducted electronically.

1. **The Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM**
2. **Apologies for non-attendance:** None.
3. **Approval of the Agenda**
   Motion: That the Caledon Public Library Advocacy and Fundraising Committee approve the agenda as amended
   Moved: Tony Maxwell **Seconded:** Scott Goodison
   Carried.
4. **Disclosure of pecuniary interest:** None
5. **Notes and minutes of previous meetings.**
   a. **October 15, 2025**
      Motion: That the Caledon Public Library Advocacy and Fundraising Committee receive the minutes of the meeting held on October 15, 2025.
      Moved: Tony Maxwell **Seconded:** Scott Goodison
      Carried.
6. **Items arising from the Minutes:** None
7. **Advocacy and Fundraising Documents**
   a. **Advocacy Work Plan**
      The CEO/Chief Librarian provided an overview of the work completed to date and the planned advocacy efforts for the year ahead. These include the completion and presentation of the 2025 Annual Report and updated Valuing Ontario Library Toolkit (VOLT) calculations. The municipal election will also prompt communications to all candidates as well as efforts to encourage a diverse pool of applicants to the new term of the Board.

Motion: That the Caledon Public Library Advocacy and Fundraising Committee receive the 2025-26 Advocacy Work Plan

Moved: Scott Goodison **Seconded:** Tony Maxwell

Carried.

b. Fund Development Work Plan

The Manager, Communications and Cultural Development highlighted fundraising efforts planned for the coming year. These included the development of a case for support, monthly and legacy gifts, grant opportunities and donor recognition. The recent cancellation of the fundraising concert, considerations for future events and the feasibility of sponsorships and large capital campaigns were also discussed.

Motion: That the Caledon Public Library Advocacy and Fundraising Committee receive the 2025-26 Fund Development Work Plan

Moved: Tony Maxwell **Seconded:** Domenic Maggi

Carried.

8. Advocacy and Fundraising Opportunities for Discussion

a. 2026 Budget Debrief

Advocacy efforts in support of the Library's 2026 budget process were discussed, including a review of a document tracking related correspondence and meetings. Topics of discussion also included the implication of this advocacy on municipal relationships and opportunities for acknowledging and sustaining community support. The impact of the 2026 municipal election on the 2027 budget was also considered.

9. New Business:

The following items of new business were discussed:

a. Opportunities for promotion and advocacy on a planned community television program - The Nine

b. Communication to the Dufferin Caledon MP regarding the cancellation of the library book postage rate as proposed by Bill C-15

c. A request from the Mayor's Office for a meeting with the Board Chair in early January 2026

10. Next meeting – Monday, March 9, 2026, 6 PM

11. Adjournment

Motion: That the meeting adjourn.

Moved: Scott Goodison **Seconded:** Domenic Maggi

Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM

Attachment 5-A

ADVOCACY WORKPLAN 2026

March 9, 2026

MONTH	OPPORTUNITIES	ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES	DESIRED OUTCOMES
January 2026	✓ OLA Super Conference and OLBA Bootcamp	✓ Conference attendance and participation in relevant development and networking opportunities ✓ Invite key stakeholder/partner to attend OLA as guest of CPL	✓ Demonstration of library outcomes and benefits to residents ✓ Access to broader library sector, networking and information gathering
February 2026	✓ CPL featured on Rogers' The Nine		✓ Increased community awareness of library services
March 2026 • Advocacy and Fundraising Committee Meeting	• Annual Report 2026 to Board	• Council acknowledgement of CPL Innovation Award	• Annual report endorsed by Board • Increased Council awareness of library innovation and partnerships
April 2026	• Revised Valuing Ontario Library Toolkit (VOLT) calculations to Board • Mayor to attend April Board meeting	• Presentation of annual report to Council (Presentation 1 of 4) • Media Release	• Annual report shared with community and Council • Increased awareness of library services and community value
May 2026		• Presentation of VOLT results to Council (Presentation 2 of 4) • Media Release	• Council awareness of library's value and economic impact
June 2026 • Advocacy and Fundraising	• Preparations for municipal election • Caledon Day • 2027 Budget Planning	• Creation of information packages for all municipal candidates • Library Board and Staff representation at events	• Improved clarity regarding the budget process

Committee Meeting			
July 2026			
August 2026	• 2027 Budget – timing to be confirmed • Engagement with all municipal candidates	• 2027 Budget to Finance Committee and Full Board • Delivery of information packages and branch visits scheduled with candidates	• Fiscally responsible budget that supports innovation and growth • A Board who is engaged within the budget process and visibly supportive of proposal
September 2026 • Advocacy and Fundraising Committee Meeting	• Town of Caledon Golf Tournament • Continued candidate engagement • Creation of Board Legacy Document	• Love your Library declaration submitted to Town Hall	• Strengthening of relationships with Town staff and Council • An elected Council that is already well versed in the libraries services and value
October 2026	• Recruitment of New Board Members • CPL Love Your Library Month • Ontario Public Library Week	• Review trustee job description and posting • Related correspondence to Council as a means of informing Council's appointments. • Seek Mayoral proclamation in support of Love your Library month • Raising of flag in support of Love Your Library Month	• A diverse board that reflects the community we serve through a variety of skill sets and experiences
November 2026	• Appointment and orientation of new Council • Engagement of applicants to the new term of the Board	• CEO/Chief Librarian, along with Board representative, if possible, to participate in orientation of new Council (Presentation 3 of 4) • Consider delegation to Council as a means of informing Council of Board's governance and PLA • Board Panel discussions to inform applicants to new term	• Council understanding of and appreciation for the roles and responsibilities of the Board under the terms of the PLA

December 2026/January 2027 • Advocacy and Fundraising Committee Meeting	• 2027 Budget Advocacy • Year End Review – CPL Accomplishments	• Year in review presentation to Council with a focus on outcomes and user testimonials (Presentation 4 of 4)	• Demonstration of library outcomes and benefits to residents • Adequate municipal funding to realize the library's strategic priorities and actions

Attachment 5-B

CPL Fund Development Work Plan 2026

Updated March 9, 2026

Goal

Support Caledon Public Library's strategic priorities through fundraising and stewardship efforts that also celebrate CPL's values and the positive impact it has on the Caledon Community.

Objectives

1) Develop catalogue and case for support to reach target donor groups including new Board and Council members and mid- to major-level donors as part of the municipal election in 2026.
2) Launch new fundraising merchandise items that align with CPL's values and new brand identity to strengthen relationships with CPL's existing supporters, active Library users, and community champions and drive higher merchandise sales.
    a) Promote sales aligned with significant milestones throughout the year including the end of the school year, Love Your Library Month, Giving Tuesday, and the winter holiday season.
3) Develop and execute a coordinated calendar of fundraising campaigns that align with key giving periods and organizational priorities to strengthen annual and seasonal fundraising campaigns. This will include:
    a) "Love Your Library Month" fundraising campaign (Oct 2025 & Oct 2026)
    b) Giving Tuesday campaign (Dec 2025)
    c) Seasonal book dedication promotions (Nov–Dec 2025; May–Jun 2026; Nov–Dec 2026)
    d) Monthly giving campaign (Fall 2026)
    e) Coordinate with the Friends of Caledon Public Library to run successful book sales throughout the year and investigate possibility of a 50/50 sale

Work Plan

Month	Opportunities/Strategies	Actions	Responsible	Status
October 2025	Create fundraising campaign for "Love Your Library Month"	• Create and promote a campaign "Love your Library and donate" featuring photos of library users looking happy/inspired/hopeful • Include in October eNews	CCD	Complete
	Host Chamber of Commerce Networking event	• Host Chamber of Commerce After5 Networking event as part of Love Your Library Month • Raise awareness and build relationships with local businesses	POUT	Complete
November 2025	Promote book dedications as holiday teacher gifts	• Include book dedications in December eNews • Ask PS staff to promote at service desks • Promote on social media	CCD Staff	Complete
	~~Host candlelight chamber music concert and fundraiser on November 21~~	~~• Host chamber music concert in partnership with Caledon Chamber Concerts upstairs in the Albion Bolton branch~~ ~~• CEO & Chief Librarian or Board Chair to speak at the event emphasizing why the library is proud to help create cultural engagement opportunities, how this ties in with mission, and why it is important for Caledon~~ ~~• Invite Council and media stakeholders~~ ~~• Invite community organizations through IDEA committee~~	CCD CEO & Chief Librarian Board Staff Media Community	Concert cancelled Nov 10
December 2025	Giving Tuesday Campaign	• Leverage hype for Black Friday shopping to encourage charitable giving leading up to Giving Tuesday Dec. 2.	CCD	Complete

Month	Opportunities/Strategies	Actions	Responsible	Status
		• Mention tax receipts to encourage donors to make a donation before year end • Send as part of December eNews on December 1st and promote on social media from November 28 to Dec 2 • Post a thank you on the website and social media stating how much was raised • Send out a thank-you email to all donor contacts stating the amount raised and explaining the impact of the amount (i.e. what can be achieved with the funds raised)		
	~~Highlight the chamber music concert on CPL's website and social media platforms~~	~~• Share about the positive impact of the concert on the community~~ ~~• Highlight the funds raised and other impacts (i.e. how many people and children attended)~~ ~~• If appropriate, email a thank you to Council members for their support~~	CCD	N/A
January 2026	Friends of CPL	• Present CPL 2026 wish list at Jan 5 Friends Executive meeting	CCD, LT	Complete
February 2026	Legacy gifts	• Promote legacy giving leading up to tax time	CCD	Deferred to March; in progress
	Finalize Case for Support	• Review Case for Support with CEO/Chief Librarian and Director CSP • Present to Board Advocacy and Fundraising Committee in March	CCD	Complete
March 2026	Continue updating "Donations & Support" webpage to better communicate why donors should give to the	• Highlight the following: ○ Monthly Giving ○ Dedicating a book or gift ○ Legacy giving	CCD	In progress

Month	Opportunities/Strategies	Actions	Responsible	Status
	library and the many ways they can make a gift	○ Major gifts ○ Corporate sponsorship opportunities		
	Recognize donor support on website	• Create new webpage to recognize donors' contributions and the impact of gifts	CCD	In progress
May 2026	Photo fundraiser	• Host photoshoot fundraiser / pet photo fundraiser • Announce in spring Check It Out • Leverage Mother's Day, end of school year, and Father's Day	CCD	
June 2026	Promote book dedications as end-of-year teacher gifts	• Include in May and June eNews • Create posters and distribute them to all branches for display in poster holders and on community boards • Promote via paid social campaign (optional)	CCD	
July-August 2026	Investigate opportunities for a fundraising event in 2027	• Look into potential events for 2027 including locations	CCD	
September 2026	Launch new merchandise items	• Leverage Culture Days and launch new merchandise items • Create campaign for Love Your Library Month in October	CCD	
October 2026	Love Your Library Month	• Monthly donors campaign on social media and included in Fall 2026 CIO • Include new merchandise in CIO	CCD	
November 2026	Promote book dedications as end-of-year teacher gifts	• Include in November and December eNews • Create posters and distribute them to all branches for display in poster holders and on community boards • Promote via paid social campaign (optional)	CCD	

Month	Opportunities/Strategies	Actions	Responsible	Status
December 2026	Giving Tuesday Campaign	• Leverage hype for Black Friday shopping to encourage charitable giving leading up to Giving Tuesday • Mention tax receipts to encourage donors to donate before year end • Send as part of December eNews on December 1st and promote on social media • Post a thank you on the website and social media stating how much was raised • Send out a thank-you email to all donor contacts stating the amount raised and explaining the impact of the amount (i.e. what can be achieved with the funds raised)	CCD	
	Finalize Case for Support as part of new Board Onboarding package	• Communicate the importance of supporting the Library financially	CCD	

Attachment 6-A

Date: March 9, 2026

To: Caledon Public Library Board Advocacy and Fundraising Committee

From: Jill Jambor, Manager, Communications and Cultural Development

Subject: Case for Support Report

Recommendation:

That the Caledon Public Library Board's Advocacy and Fundraising Committee review the CPL Case for Support Report for receipt and approval.

Background

The Case for Support is a comprehensive document that articulates community need, funding priorities, and the impact of philanthropic investment, serving as the foundation for major gift conversations, sponsorships, and grant applications. This differs from a Case Statement, which is a shorter, high-level, donor-focused narrative tool providing the Board and staff with consistent talking points.

Pending feedback and approval, the Case for Support will be finalized and the messaging integrated into future sponsorship packages, grant submissions, and digital fundraising platforms including CPL's website. The Case for Support will serve as a key tool in support of the 2026 Fund Development Work Plan and in future fundraising efforts.

Financial Implication

There are no immediate financial implication resulting from the approval of the drafted case for support. However, this document does provide a foundation from which to grow the Library's efforts to secure additional funding, supplementing the Library's tax-funded operational and capital budgets in the years ahead.

Recommended Motion:

That the Caledon Public Library Board's Advocacy and Fundraising Committee receive and approve the Case for Support Report for recommendation to the full Board.

Caledon Public Library: A Case for Support

Your Impact Starts Here

Caledon Public Library (CPL) fuels an informed, inspired, and connected Caledon as a dynamic community hub where people of all ages access technology, build skills, explore ideas, and connect with one another.

As Caledon grows and community needs evolve, philanthropic support is essential to sustain and expand CPL's impact. Investment in the Library strengthens literacy, advances digital inclusion, leads to innovation, and helps create welcoming spaces where everyone belongs.

When you support Caledon Public Library, you invest in possibility:

- In a child discovering the joy of reading,
- In an entrepreneur launching a new idea,
- In a senior staying connected,
- In a community strengthened by knowledge and shared experience.

Your support will supplement the Library's tax-supported budget to secure a future-ready library system that empowers residents today and for generations to come.

Our Story

Caledon Public Library nurtures lifelong learners, champions innovation, and strengthens communities. Guided by this mission, CPL serves a fast-growing population of more than 90,000 residents across seven library branches of varying sizes, located throughout Caledon's vast 700-square-kilometer geography.

With a dedicated team of 78 employees, CPL delivers inclusive spaces, responsive programs, and trusted access to information that reflect the diverse needs of a changing community. Each branch plays a unique role—from neighbourhood gathering places to hubs for learning, creativity, and innovation—while collectively forming a strong, cohesive library system.

Our work is grounded in the following core values:

- **Inclusivity & Equity** – We are a library for all, ensuring barrier-free access to information, services, and programs.
- **Literacy & Lifelong Learning** – We foster continuous growth, discovery, and skill development for all ages.
- **Innovation & Adaptability** – We embrace emerging technologies and forward-thinking service delivery.
- **Community & Collaboration** – We build strong partnerships to meet evolving local needs.
- **Intellectual Freedom & Democracy** – We provide safe spaces for diverse perspectives and open dialogue.
- **Integrity & Accountability** – We practice responsible stewardship through data-driven planning and fiscal sustainability.

For many residents, CPL is their first classroom, their workspace, their innovation lab, and their gathering place.

Why Now?

Caledon is growing and changing with an expected population of 300,000 by 2051. Currently, families are seeking early learning support. Entrepreneurs and job seekers need access to technology and skill development. Seniors value opportunities for connection. Students require flexible study space and digital tools.

At the same time, libraries face increasing pressure to modernize collections, maintain welcoming facilities, expand digital resources, and bridge technology gaps—all while ensuring services remain free and accessible to everyone.

Philanthropic investments allow CPL to:

- Expand collections in physical and digital formats
- Upgrade and maintain accessible, adaptable spaces
- Enhance Makerspaces and emerging technology offerings
- Deliver more innovative programs that reflect community interests
- Extend outreach services to residents facing barriers

Support today ensures the Library can continue to meet demand tomorrow.

Programs and Services That Change Lives

Caledon Public Library delivers high-impact services that benefit residents across every stage of life:

Literacy & Learning - Early literacy programs build foundational reading skills and school readiness. School-age initiatives support academic success. Adult workshops and learning opportunities foster reskilling, creativity, and personal growth.

Makerspaces & Innovation - Hands-on Makerspaces encourage experimentation, creativity, and digital skill development. From new technologies to collaborative problem-solving, these spaces prepare residents for a rapidly evolving world.

Digital Access & Technology - CPL provides access to computers, Wi-Fi, digital collections, and online learning platforms — essential resources for education, employment, and civic participation.

Visiting Library Services - Outreach services bring materials and connection to residents who cannot easily visit a branch, ensuring equitable access for all.

Community Spaces - Library branches offer welcoming environments for study, collaboration, cultural events, and community meetings. Room bookings support nonprofits, entrepreneurs, and local groups.

Community Impact

CPL strengthens Caledon socially, economically, and culturally:

- Children enter school ready to learn.
- Teens and adults build digital and workforce skills.

- Seniors remain engaged and connected.
- Newcomers and families find trusted information and welcoming spaces.
- Entrepreneurs and small businesses access resources that support growth.

Libraries are among the most trusted public institutions. As a champion of intellectual freedom, CPL plays a vital role in advancing equity, supporting democracy, and fostering belonging in our community.

Every dollar invested multiplies in community benefit. For every dollar invested, CPL delivers $3.31 in economic value. *

*Insert footnote: CPL measured its value using the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT) developed by the Ontario Library Service and the NORDIK Institute. CPL evaluated key domains including education, economic development, social inclusion and well-being, and culture, calculating a social return on investment (SROI) of 330.52%. Read the full report (pages 46-50).

Funding Priorities

Philanthropic support will advance strategic priorities aligned with community needs:

- Expanded and diverse collections (print media, digital titles and resources, musical instruments, specialized equipment, and more)
- Technology enhancements and Makerspace equipment
- Facility improvements and accessibility upgrades
- Innovative program development and outreach initiatives

A detailed funding framework ensures transparency, measurable outcomes, and responsible stewardship. Each funded initiative is supported by clear objectives, defined timelines, and performance indicators aligned with CPL's strategic priorities. Donors can expect regular reporting on progress and impact, including how funds are allocated, outcomes achieved, and lessons learned. This disciplined approach ensures every contribution is used effectively, responsibly, and in ways that deliver meaningful, lasting benefit to the Caledon community.

Ways to Give

Donors can support Caledon Public Library through:

- One-time or recurring gifts
- Sponsorship of programs or spaces
- Naming opportunities
- Legacy and planned giving

Beyond sponsorships, CPL offers customized partnership opportunities for individuals, families, corporations, and foundations seeking deeper engagement. While sponsorships typically provide recognition tied to a specific program, event, or space, partnerships are collaborative and strategic—aligning your philanthropic goals with long-term library priorities such as literacy advancement, digital

inclusion, innovation, or community outreach. Partners may choose to support multi-year initiatives, capacity-building efforts, or transformational projects that create sustained community impact.

We look forward to designing meaningful opportunities that reflect your values and maximize your impact in Caledon.

Recognition & Stewardship

CPL is committed to meaningful donor recognition and ongoing engagement. Supporters receive impact updates, acknowledgement opportunities, and the assurance that their investment is advancing measurable community outcomes.

Together, we can ensure that Caledon Public Library remains a welcoming, innovative, and essential cornerstone of our community—today and for generations to come.

We invite you to be part of the story.

Attachment 6-B

Supporting Ontario's Public Libraries to Empower Local Communities

Ontario Library Association & Federation of Ontario Public Libraries 2026-27 Pre-Budget Submission

Public libraries are critical to communities across Ontario and essential to thriving local economies and economic growth.

- Public libraries are Ontario's farthest-reaching, most cost-effective public resource. They are engines of innovation, entrepreneurship, and local economic development in communities of all sizes.
- Millions of Ontarians rely on local public libraries in their communities: to work, to learn, to connect to community and government services, and to find or train for a job.
- Despite this, many individuals and families across the province are unable to access the local public library resources they need.
- In urban centres, rural and northern communities alike, public library budgets are overstretched – and the situation is getting worse, especially in the face of increasing mental health and addiction challenges across the province.
- The combined impact of inflation on public library and municipal budgets, as well as these growing social and economic challenges in communities, continue to create significant challenges for Ontario's public libraries.

Building on Ontario's Investment in Public Libraries

The Ontario Government, working with Ontario's public library sector, has taken important steps to support public libraries.

- $1.25 million in enhanced, ongoing provincial funding to support the operations and staffing of First Nations Public Libraries on reserve.
- More than $4.3 million invested through the Internet Connectivity Grant to provide free, reliable internet at public libraries in small, rural, and First Nation communities, with an additional $78,000 in 2025 to fully reimburse **all** First Nation Public Libraries for public internet access costs.
- $4.8 million investment to install or upgrade high-speed broadband internet at over 100 public libraries across Ontario.

Priorities Overview

- Working with all levels of government, develop a **province-wide strategy** to address the growing crises of **mental health challenges, addiction, and homelessness** to **alleviate its impacts** on public libraries.
- Provide critical e-learning support and fair access to modern, digital resources for all Ontario public libraries through **the creation of an Ontario Digital Public Library,** leveraging the province's significant purchasing power to give all Ontarians access to a universal set of high- quality e-learning & online resources through their local public library.
- **Increase provincial operating funding for Ontario's public libraries** to address critical shared priorities and community needs.
- Building upon the enhanced funding committed in the 2024 Ontario Budget, **develop a sustainable funding model for public libraries on reserve** to ensure that these important local hubs are fully funded and viable.

Recommended Priorities

Working with all levels of government, develop a province-wide strategy to address the growing crises of mental health challenges, addiction, and homelessness to alleviate its impacts on public libraries.

- All Ontario communities are experiencing the impacts of Canada's mental health, addiction and housing crisis first-hand.
- Every day, libraries open their doors to everyone—families, newcomers, students, job seekers, and increasingly, people with nowhere else to go.
- While public libraries have worked hard to build partnerships and connect community members in crisis to supports, public libraries are at the limit of what they can do on their own.
- Public libraries are not frontline crisis centers, yet they are being forced to take on parts of that role due to gaps in the available supports.
- If housing, mental health, and addiction systems fall short, library workers see the impact. Librarians aren't social workers, but they're showing care and compassion where the system has left a gap.
- Public libraries have had to redirect limited budgets away from their core mandates to provide frontline crisis training for staff, increase security measures, stretching public library budgets to the limit.
- A province-wide strategy is needed to address the intersection of public safety, mental health, and its impact on community infrastructure, with coordinated investments across all levels of government and funding for municipalities to build real crisis response capacity in the community.

Recommended Priority:

- Working with all levels of government, strengthen housing, health, and community supports so people can get help before they end up at the library's front desk.
- *Projected cost:* N/A; projected funding requirements would be based on the identified solution developed by the provincial government in consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders.

Provide critical e-learning support and equitable access to modern, digital resources for all Ontario public libraries through the creation of an Ontario Digital Public Library, leveraging the province's significant purchasing power to give all Ontarians access to a universal set of high-quality e-learning & online resources through their local public library.

- Ontario's public libraries are essential to equitable, reliable access to broadband internet and computers. They are especially vital for many First Nation, rural and northern communities where at home connectivity is limited, and for hundreds of thousands of Ontarians that cannot afford in-home internet services.
- The Ontario Government has already recognized the crucial importance of public libraries to broadband connectivity and equity of access:
  - in *Building a Digital Ontario*, making a $4.8 million investment to install or upgrade broadband connectivity at more than 100 public libraries across the province; and
  - in October 2025, the Ontario Government invested an additional $78,000 to the *Internet Connectivity Grant* enabling up to 155 eligible public libraries that serve communities of 20,000 or less to be fully reimbursed for the costs of providing publicly accessible internet access.

- Building on that critical foundation, it is the right time to take the next step to empower Ontarians with the online resources they need to succeed – no matter where they live in Ontario.

- In particular, people rely on local public libraries for access to digital and online resources, which contribute to student success and life-long learning, as well as towards entrepreneurship and job readiness. These include:
  - in-depth job and career skills training;
  - language learning;
  - live tutoring and homework help;
  - health information; and
  - resources to support vulnerable residents, such as seniors and adults living with developmental disabilities.

A proposed Ontario Digital Public Library would provide a core suite of highly impactful digital resources accessible by every Ontarian through their local public library. While the specific resource set will depend on the outcome of competitive negotiations with vendors, potential resources could include:

- **Live Tutoring;** resources are available that provide a powerful suite of live tutoring, skills development and test preparation tools for learners of all ages, with a focus on K-12.

- **Job Skill Development and Training;** some libraries already subscribe to databases that include an ever-expanding catalogue of virtual courses and learning modules for career, creative, digital skills development and certifications.

- **Language Learning;** these apps have become increasingly popular, providing highly personalized and comprehensive language learning capabilities for dozens of global languages.

- However, **these resources are expensive, especially when purchased on a individual, library-by-library basis** – and a diverse set of the highest impact resources is well beyond the means of an individual or family to afford. Many public libraries in Ontario, particularly in smaller and First Nation communities, struggle to pay for or are unable to afford these high-quality resources.

- People living in communities of less than 5,000 have access to less than a third of the online resources as those living in Toronto – despite accessing them twice as often per capita as people in large urban communities.

Recommended Priority:

- By following the well-established approach used in Alberta and Saskatchewan and leveraging volume purchasing through an annual provincial investment, as well as existing public library infrastructure, the Ontario Digital Public Library could provide a universal set of the highest-impact digital resources to every public library – and every Ontarian – **at an overall cost savings of up to 40%** when compared to library-by-library subscription.

- Addressing this digital divide – through both broadband connectivity and the high-impact resources to match – is how public libraries are at the forefront of fulfilling Ontario's vision of an economy where every individual and community can contribute and compete.

- *Projected cost:* $10 million - $20 million / annually.

Critical Digital Resources are Out-of-Reach for Many Ontarians and Public Libraries

- According to the 2024 Annual Survey of Public Libraries, only 138 of our 363 library systems are able to afford subscriptions to five (5) or more databases.

- Meanwhile, 71 public libraries reported having zero (0) database subscriptions; majority of which are public libraries on reserve.

How Would an Ontario Digital Public Library Work?

- Based on an annual provincial investment, Ontario's public library sector would work closely with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming and agency partners to determine the appropriate mix of resources to deliver the greatest impact across the province.
- The designated delivery partner – such as the Ontario Library Service or another identified entity – would negotiate to secure province-wide access to a universal set of resources.
- Access to these resources will ideally be connected directly through local public library websites, providing a seamless experience for local users.
- Ontarians will be able to access the complete resource set either in-person at their local library, from home, or through their personal devices wherever they are.
- For those public libraries without an online presence, the Ontario Digital Public Library will maintain a direct online portal to provide access.

Increase provincial funding for Ontario's public libraries to address critical shared priorities and community needs.

- Public libraries in Ontario have received no increase in provincial funding support (Provincial Libraries Operating Grant, or PLOG) in over 25 years, during which time the value of the province's investment in public libraries has decreased by over 60%.
- Although over 90% of public library funding is provided by the local municipal government, provincial operating funding provides critical stability to public library budgets.
- Libraries have adapted and maximized the impact of every dollar despite inflation, substantial changes in technology, and the increasing importance of libraries as a vital community hub and public resource.
- Across Ontario – in communities of all sizes – these **budget pressures are reaching a tipping point.**
- Public libraries are the focal point of municipalities across Ontario; critical to social cohesion and community building. As a result, they find themselves on the front lines of many of the most critical challenges facing our communities, including homelessness, mental health and addictions, newcomer integration, re-skilling in a changing economy, and overcoming the digital divide.

Recommended Priority:

- Ontario's public libraries are proposing a targeted investment in additional operating funding for public libraries **to specifically address critical areas of shared community and provincial priority,** including:
  - Supporting economic recovery through job training and skills development;
  - Providing services and resources to assist with high-needs members of the community such as seniors, newcomers, working families and all vulnerable members;
  - Supporting early literacy and K-12 success;
  - Addressing the community impacts of mental health and addictions.
- This investment, which would be in addition to and separate from existing provincial operating funding under the PLOG, would be shared across hundreds of Ontario libraries to provide predictable, flexible funding for local public libraries to respond to these critical areas of focus based on the needs of the people and the local communities they serve.
- This funding could be utilized to support ongoing operations, programming, resources, or front-line staffing specifically targeted to the four identified priority areas based on community need.

- The proposed level of investment corresponds to a restoration of the present value of the Ontario Government's support for Ontario's public libraries, addressing the impact of inflation, rising costs and other pressures over more than two decades.

- In conjunction with this investment, the Ontario Government and Ontario's public libraries would work alongside municipalities to ensure that this critical investment builds upon and enhances existing municipal support for public library budgets.

- *Projected cost:* $25 million / annually.

Building upon the enhanced funding committed in the 2024 Ontario Budget, develop a sustainable funding model for public libraries on reserve to ensure that these important local hubs are fully funded and viable.

- Public libraries on reserve serve as an accessible gathering place and information sharing resource for First Nations communities. They are deeply important to maintaining a sense of community and to minimizing social isolation, many of which are remote or face systemic social and economic challenges.

- Furthermore, public libraries on reserve perform a unique role in the preservation of their communities' memory, archiving photos and historical information, and in revitalizing First Nations languages through cultural resources, language learning programming, storytelling events, and craft groups.

- Public libraries on reserve are chronically under-funded. The municipal tax revenue used to support most public libraries does not exist for public libraries in First Nation communities.

- There is little to no funding available for collections, programming and technology resources. Librarians rely on one-time grants or donations to develop their collections, and many librarians contribute personally to purchase programming supplies and food.

- Many public libraries on reserve operate with only one staff person who is expected to perform many functions. Public libraries on reserve need additional funding to provide staff with a living wage and to increase staffing levels so that they can meet their communities' needs for library programs and services.

- Of the 133 First Nations communities in Ontario, only 37 have public libraries. The number has steadily dropped in recent years and the pandemic has only made this situation worse, with four public libraries on reserve closing their doors due to inadequate funding over the past 20 months.

- In recognition of the significant financial barriers faced by First Nations Public Libraries on reserve, **the Ontario Government made a multi-million-dollar enhancement through the 2024 Ontario Budget** to both the First Nation Salary Supplement and Public Library Operating Grant funding. This investment amounted to $1.25 million in additional, ongoing annual funding.

- This critical investment is a vital first step to restoring stability to First Nations Public Libraries on-reserve.

- There is more important work to be done. Together with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming and First Nations Public Library leaders, this recent investment provides an opportunity to work together on a sustainable funding and operating model to preserve the long-term viability of these important local hubs.

Recommended Priority:

- Work alongside First Nations Public Library leaders towards the design and implementation of a sustainable funding model for public libraries on reserve to ensure that these important local hubs are fully-funded and viable.

- *Projected cost:* N/A; projected funding requirements would be based on the identified model and requirements.

Ontario Library Association / Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) is the oldest continually-operating non-profit library association in Canada, with over 3,500 members comprised of library staff and supporters from public, school, academic, and special libraries.

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) represents 237 public library systems in Ontario, including 37 Public Libraries on Reserves.

Together, OLA & FOPL are committed to ensuring that libraries can continue to play a critical role in the social, education, cultural and economic success of our communities and schools.