

CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Mission: Empower community by connecting Calgarians to ideas and experiences, inspiration and insight.

Vision: Potentials realized

One Calgary Line of Service: Library Services

Registered Charity

2023 City Investment

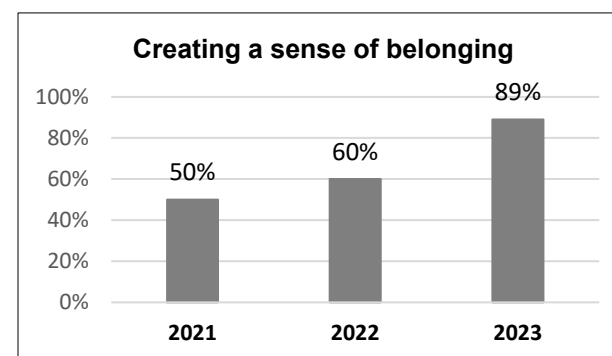
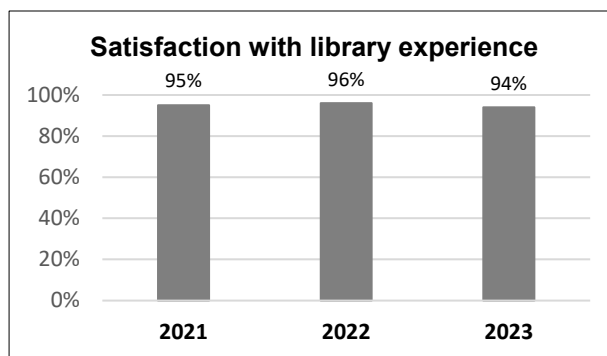
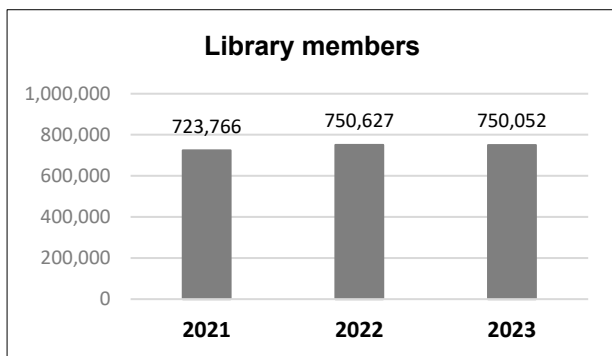
Operating Grant: \$56,365,407

Operating Grant: \$1,010,130 (one time)

Capital Grant: \$3,723,307

City owned asset

2023 Results



The story behind the numbers

- Membership numbers maintained the high level first reached in 2022.
- With high level of satisfaction with the library experience maintained, the Library understands and effectively responds to the evolving needs and circumstances of Calgarians.
- Users highly regard the Library’s effectiveness in helping to create a sense of belonging.

Benchmarks

As a member of the Municipal Benchmarking Network Canada, the Library focuses on measures related to membership, visitation and total library use. As a per cent of population or per capita, the Library leads in each of these areas. The Calgary Public Library is testing membership tactics to maintain high-membership levels is an example of using the comparative data to support continuous improvement.

Looking ahead: 2024 highlights

- Scale up operations (as outlined in 2023-2026 Strategic Plan) to open four new locations in the coming years.
- Expand outreach and community engagement in the communities of Skyview and Walden.
- To address the increase in safety and securing incidents, focus on new partnerships increased collaboration and additional resources to expand staff training, enhance existing safety tools and increase security staff capacity.
- Continue advocacy efforts to create awareness and supports for the literacy gap in Alberta.



**CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
2023 Civic Partner Annual Report**

Civic Partner Name: Calgary Public Library Board
Legal Structure: Legislated Body, Libraries Act (Alberta)
Fiscal Year End: December 31
Manage/operate a City-owned asset: Yes

Mission/Mandate: The Calgary Public Library’s vision, mission, and values speak to the Library’s role as a community hub where everyone belongs. Our vision is “Potentials Realized,” and our mission is to “empower community by connecting you to ideas and experiences, inspiration, and insight”. Rooted in our values of Equity, Curiosity, and Collaboration, the Library is committed to removing barriers and increasing access to information in all its forms to support a successful future for Calgary. Literacy and learning live within each of our 21 libraries, and we continue to grow our reach and impact each day.

1. What 3-5 key results did your organization achieve in 2023 that contributed to:

a) one or more Council Strategic Directions- economic resilience, social resilience, climate resilience?

The Library Services service line directly impacts all Council Strategic Directions. Calgary Public Library provides over 500,000 square feet of public library space across Calgary. These highly accessible and welcoming spaces utilize facility improvement with sustainability in mind and provide refuge from extreme weather. Our active physical and digital environments encourage shared space and increased understanding amongst community members of all backgrounds and experiences. Our ability to connect community members to a wide range of programming, resources, and supports helps everyone to realize their potential and build a successful and equitable future for all Calgarians.

Key results in 2023 that reflect these achievements include:

- 750,052 active members
- 148,234 new members
- 56% of Calgarians are active Library members
- 17 million circulations (5.5 million digital | 11.5 million physical)
- 6.7 million in-person visits
- 2.4 million Wi-Fi sessions
- 794,334 computer and Chromebook sessions
- 14,581 programs delivered
- 2.4 million print jobs completed
- 90 community meeting rooms booked 84,608 times
- Over 114,000 online program participants
- 93,732 free online learning courses taken
- 1,727 computers borrowed

b) Your own organization’s strategy?

With our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan to guide us, the Library is preparing to scale up operations and open four new locations in the coming years. At the end of 2023, the Library had its highest circulation in over 110 years, over 750,000 members, and we continue to show the undeniable relevance and impact of libraries.

Over 24,600 people attended Love Your Library Day on October 14 last year. This annual event encourages locations to welcome their communities to discover what is new at their Library, provides a chance for staff to thank our members, and invites the public to share their love for their local library. This event is an important reminder of the value and impact of public library service for Calgarians. However, that impact is not limited to just one day.

As we prepare to open more libraries and expand to serve a growing population, it is important to reflect on a Library capital project that changed the profile of our city.

In November 2023, Central Library celebrated its fifth birthday. The downtown location has welcomed over 5 million visits since opening and has become a landmark and popular attraction for Calgary, as well as an inspiring international example of the evolution of library service and space design. The location is more than just an architectural showpiece – it is a busy and well-used library. In five years of operation, Central Library has hosted 13,853 public programs with an attendance of 275,119 people, had its meeting rooms booked more than 76,000 times, and its computers have been used over 731,000 times.

2. Performance measures help demonstrate the return on The City’s investment in a partner’s operations, and support continuous improvement for Partners. What performance measures reflect your organization’s impact in 2023?

	Performance Measure Name	2021 results	2022 results	2023 results	How does this measure reflect your organization’s impact?
How much did you do?	Attendance at Children’s Programs	66,162	120,346	329,390	Early literacy programs and learning improve school readiness, one of the leading indicators of success later in life.
	Attendance at Adult Programs	25,373	49,909	30,936	
	Library Visits	2,247,318	4,935,304	6,743,371	Program delivery, outreach, and visitation all increased compared to the previous year. Visitation in particular increased by 37% compared to 2022.
How well did you do it?	Satisfaction with Library Experience	95%	96%	94%	Continuing high levels of satisfaction indicate that the Library understands and effectively responds to evolving needs and circumstances. Membership levels reached an all-time high in 2023.
	Library Members	723,766	750,627	750,052	
How are Calgarians better off?	Creating a sense of belonging	50%	60%	89%	Users highly regard the Library’s effectiveness in helping to create a sense of belonging in the community and a sense of making progress on personal growth goals (percentage of favourable responses). Values decreased throughout the pandemic, highlighting the social impacts experienced by many. These measures have been steadily increasing over recent years and are the highest they have been since 2019.
	Achieving personal growth	51%	62%	75%	

3. Are there any additional stories or information you wanted to share beyond performance measures that demonstrate the impact of your organization's programs or services?

Every day, approximately 20,000 people visit their local library in Calgary. Within these visits are seemingly small moments of service that have the power to transform lives. The Library asks locations to share impact moments in monthly reporting. These stories are then shared across the system and through Library Board Reports. Below are just a few of the impact moments we experienced in 2023:

A young father and his five-year-old son, recent newcomers to Canada, visited the Louise Riley Library for the first time. The father had many questions about the Library and its programs; he was keen to attend career workshops, interview, and résumé help classes anywhere in the city. He wanted language programs for himself and his son and was trying to take notes on his phone as the staff answered his many questions and told him about available programs. The father asked, "Where would we go if we wanted to find a place to connect with people?" Staff explained that they had found that place, that the Library was a gathering place and a great way to connect.

A staff member at Crowfoot made an impact by helping a woman who recently lost her husband use the Library computers to submit her taxes. The staff member used her skills to guide the patron to use our technology to submit her paperwork and print the forms she needed. The patron told staff that without their help and resources, she would never have been able to submit her taxes. She was frightened to come and ask for help and thankful that we were patient and understanding of her lack of computer skills.

One of our regular teen patrons was at the Library photocopying his resume and preparing for his first job interview. A staff member gave him a few pointers for his interview and told him to let them know when he gets the job. The very next day after his interview, he dropped in to share that he landed the job and offer a thank you to staff.

A newcomer mother and daughter have been looking for work for three months. They came to Southwood to print a batch of resumes, and a staff member was assisting with their printing but also told them about the Job Desk. She also suggested the daughter reach out to the Youth Employment Centre, where she received help with resume editing and job hunting. Within a week she had secured her first job in Canada. They were grateful for the useful information they received.

A staff member at Nose Hill Library was helping a community group who were using one of our program rooms for a meeting. The group was extremely grateful for being allowed to use this space. One of them remarked, "This is really the only place left in Calgary that you can use without a cost or obligation. A true gathering place for the community. A beautiful space". The staff member felt it was a profound moment that drove home the importance of accessible spaces for everyone.

4. Does your organization use benchmarks to evaluate and improve performance and operations, and increase your organization's impact?

- a) **Examples of benchmarks:**
- b) **What is your current and targeted performance in comparison to these benchmarks?**

Calgary Public Library participates in the Municipal Benchmarking Network Canada (MBNC). The following measures are from the 2022 MBNC report (the most recent benchmark data available). These measures encompass three main areas: membership, visitation, and total library use. Calgary Public Library leads in each of these measures.

Registered Cardholders (3 year period) as a Percent of Population				
Municipality	Numerator		Denominator	2022 Result
Calgary	750,719		1,343,500	51.99%
Sudbury (Greater)		52,048	166,004	31.35%
Windsor	95,886	231,900		41.35%
Toronto		918,224	3,040,284	30.20%
Hamilton	175,125	592,000		10.20%
Waterloo	19,142	73,380		26.09%
Winnipeg	102,402	783,096		13.08%
National Median				30.20%

Annual In-Person Library Visits per Capita				
Municipality	Numerator		Denominator	2022 Result
Calgary	4,935,304		1,343,500	9.37
Hamilton	1,743,222		592,000	6.36
Toronto	9,566,486		3,040,284	3.15
Sudbury (Greater)	341,424	166,004		2.06
Windsor	354,809	231,900		1.53
Waterloo	89,152	73,380		1.22
Winnipeg	1,673,850	783,096		2.14
National Median				2.14

Annual Library Uses per Capita				
Municipality	Numerator		Denominator	2022 Result
Calgary	38,848,998	1,343,500		28.9
Toronto	80,059,966	3,040,284		26.3
Winnipeg	20,196,308	783,096		25.8
Hamilton	5,896,979	592,000		21.1
Windsor	4,598,202	231,900		19.8
Waterloo	942,998	73,380		12.9
Sudbury (Greater)	1,921,404	166,004		11.6
National Median				21.1

c) How this information is being used to support continuous improvement?

Calgary Public Library’s high level of use in comparison to our national peers encourages us to reflect on what is working and what may need further attention. Recent examples would include focusing on testing membership retention tactics to maintain high-membership levels, expanding staff training and resources with a focus on capacity and delivering consistent visitor experiences, evaluating system technology infrastructure to reduce service disruption, and building a facility framework to support system planning to meet increasing need.

5. How does your organization address equity, diversity or inclusion, or support racial equity?

Calgary Public Library has a public commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Belonging:

Everyone should be able to realize their potential at Calgary Public Library. Everyone has a right to feel respected, safe, and valued within the Library and community. To ensure that, we must work to eliminate societal barriers and create a welcoming space in our programs, services, internal operations, and institutional culture. We have a responsibility to build and maintain an environment of equity, diversity, belonging, and dignity in all spaces we occupy and in all aspects of our community role. We continue to listen, learn, and act in collaboration with Library staff, volunteers, the City of Calgary, partners, and community.

The Calgary Public Library Board also passed an Equity and Belonging Policy to reinforce the importance of this work at a governance level.

Calgary Public Library values and prioritizes equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility for all. The Library is committed to ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging in library spaces and have fair and equitable access to library services regardless of ancestry, place of origin, race, education, beliefs, race, income or source of income, religious beliefs, family status, marital status, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or physical or mental disabilities.

Calgary Public Library endorses the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Position Statement on Diversity and Inclusion and is a signatory on both the Urban Libraries Council Statement on Race and Social Equity, and the Canadian Urban Libraries Council Statement on Race and Social Equity.

The Library prioritized activation of this commitment and policy through a range of internal and external steps. Internal work included expanding staff development to provide 1,910 hours of training for 606 staff members on topics and issues that supported our organizational commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Belonging. The Library also introduced new training to better support engaging with vulnerable people.

The Library was proud to take part in the Calgary Pride Festival's annual parade in August. This was an important display of support for many Library staff and their families due to negative attention and protests related to Reading with Royalty, our longtime Storytime program with Calgary Pride.

Last June, the Library announced a \$100,000 investment to support the acquisition and development of resources that seek to share and celebrate 2SLGBTQ+ stories, issues, and experiences. This was funded by donors to the Calgary Public Library Foundation. CEO Sarah Meilleur shared at the time: "As libraries across North America see an increase in challenges and criticism of programs, resources, and their support of underrepresented voices in the 2SLGBTQ+ communities, Calgary Public Library wants to actively increase our holdings in this area and invest in the fight against misinformation and intolerance."

The Library continues to provide a wide range of accessible and inclusive programming and services for the community. A few highlights from 2023 include:

- Collaboration with community partners to deliver programming and events rooted in diverse, lived experiences including Black History Month, Lunar New Year, Asian Heritage Month, Pride Month and Week, World Mental Health Day, Metis Week, International Literacy Day, and many, many more.
- The Library developed a strategy and calendar to nurture awareness, consultation, and partnership on opportunities to celebrate a wide range of significant days and events. The living document encourages staff to recognize, celebrate, and honour various days of recognition and significance important to the communities we serve. Activations can include book displays, exhibits, events, content, staff recognition, and more.
- The Newcomers Desk, presented in partnership with Immigrant Services Calgary, Calgary Catholic Immigration Services, and Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, connects recent immigrants to drop-in services from newcomer-serving organizations. Services include assessment and referrals, document translation, language learning, child support, skills training and employment, and more.
- The Library continues to raise awareness in critical dialogue around Human Rights and Holocaust Education through special programs and events, exhibits, virtual tours, storytelling opportunities, and enhanced collections related to human rights.

6. How is your organization advancing Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation? (For example addressing specific calls to action in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) report or [The City's White Goose Flying Report](#))

The Calgary Public Library is committed to forging a path of Truth and Reconciliation as outlined in the Library's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan by working together with community to learn, share, and develop innovative programs and services. The Library's continuing work in Indigenous Services is a key example of how a sense of belonging, community empowerment, empathy building, and personal meaning can be built through relationships, collaboration, and inclusion.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report includes 94 Calls to Action. Call to Action 69 specifically asks libraries to reexamine their commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and commit more resources to sharing the true history of Indigenous peoples with our communities.

The City's White Goose Flying Report asks the Library to inspire stories, and work with community partners to coordinate and collaborate on exhibits and programming about the true history and legacy of Indian residential schools in and around Calgary.

With these responsibilities in mind, here are a few highlights of important work completed in 2023:

- A wide range of year-round programming that shared and celebrated Indigenous experiences, voices, and culture including community programming for Red Dress Day, National Indigenous History Month, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and more.
- In the fall, Central Library was honoured to host The Witness Blanket, a large-scale art installation created by master carver Carey Newman or Hayalthkin'game (Ha-yalth-kingeme). This symbol of resilience and Reconciliation was brought to Calgary through a new partnership with the Human Rights Museum of Canada.
- Caretakers of the Land is the Library's virtual school program that helps to extend and support classroom learning about Indigenous history and culture. This program is quickly becoming a trusted and valuable learning resource for schools across Alberta. Over 23,750 students from 942 classes attended a Caretakers of the Land event last school year.
- The Library is honoured to work with Elders and Knowledge Keepers from Treaty 7 through our Elders' Guidance Circle, a program that allows community members to connect and learn from Elders. Relationships with our Elders has been a critical component of our work and we cannot be successful without their knowledge and support. In May, the Library formally renamed the space at Central Library where the Elders' Guidance Circle meets as the Children's Lodge, a name approved and gifted by the Elders, and confirmed through ceremony. In the Children's Lodge, individuals, small groups, and students, can meet with Elders to explore topics relating to culture, history, and reconciliation.
- The Library is also proud to be one of six Western organizations who form a Circle of Relatives supporting the Elders Knowledge Circle Society with the Elder Story Project.
- Indigenous Placemaking – permanent art installations featuring the work of Indigenous artist with a connection to Treaty 7 and surrounding areas – are now located at eight locations in the system.
- The Library invested in Land Acknowledgement plaques for all locations and worksite. These bronze plaques featured the artwork of Madison Tailfeather and were developed by Library's internal Truth and Reconciliation Stewardship Group who worked in consultation with the Elders' Guidance Circle members.
- Powwow Trail 101 Program was a new program this year that was developed to create awareness of the powwow trail for non-Indigenous visitors and nurture respect for cultural traditions. Five community libraries (Signal, Forest Lawn, Giuffre, Southwood, and Crowfoot) hosted the program and Indigenous dancers and drummers were invited to showcase their style of dance while Elders and community leaders shared information on protocols of powwow and encouraged attendees to visit a nearby powwow.

RESOURCES

7. Please estimate how The City’s operating funding was allocated in 2023.

63%	Staff compensation, development, and training
10%	Collection materials and services
14%	General operating
10%	Building and equipment
3%	Occupancy costs

8. Did volunteers support your operations in 2023? (including board and committee members)

How many volunteers?	2,402
Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	48,002

9. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2023, or have any client or participant feedback that you want to highlight?

CEO Sarah Meilleur was selected as a recipient of the Alberta Municipalities | Strength in Members Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal in recognition of her years of community service and leadership.

Calgary Public Library received the American Library Association 2023 John Cotton Dana Award. This prestigious award for excellence in library public relations was awarded to the Library’s “This ad is for” campaign that drew from internal and third-party data sources to understand membership behaviour during the pandemic to help understand how to bring people back to locations and reengage with library services.

OverDrive, a worldwide distributor of eBooks, audiobooks, online magazines and streaming video titles, listed Calgary Public Library as one of the Top 25 Public Libraries for Digital Checkouts – International.

10. How did your organization address climate change in 2023, for example, operational or program changes that reduced greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), air/water pollution, or waste that aligned with [The City’s Climate Change Program](#) including Council’s Climate Emergency Declaration?

All facility renovations are evaluated for green initiative improvements, including conversion to LED lighting, low flow plumbing fixtures, energy efficient claddings and windows, and more. The Library also maintains a waste management program for all facilities, including compost and recycling. All decommissioned technology is managed through an extensive and secure electronics recycling program to reduce hazardous waste.

The Library currently operates in 7 locations that are Green-certified or are in Green-certified multi-use buildings. Notably, except Cental Library downtown, these certified buildings are suburban. Replacing the oldest, and least efficient library buildings in the inner city remains a capital priority for the Library.

The Library also works with community partners to provide public awareness and information sessions, including workshops on food waste, recycling, environmental concerns, and more.

11. Are there any projects, initiatives or plans for 2024 that you want to briefly highlight?

Calgary Public Library is ready to grow and serve more people than ever before. With our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan to guide us, the Library is preparing to scale up operations and open four new locations in the coming years. This is occurring as more people move to our city, with an estimated 62 new Calgarians each day. To support this growth, the Library is furthering work in three areas:

- Scaling Up Our System: ensuring our people, spaces, and services are ready for the future.

- Better Business: looking at our resources, operations, and capacity to be efficient and effective.
- Technology and Innovation: creating strong technology foundations for great service and investing in service innovation.

A few key projects to support this work include expanding outreach and community engagement in Skyview and Walden to prepare for future locations, launching a new Outreach Strategy that focuses on reaching more newcomers and adults in our growing city, in addition to continued outreach to children and youth, and building a digital equity plan that reflects the unique needs for Calgarians and builds digital inclusion for our communities.

Public libraries across North America are experiencing an increase in the frequency and intensity of safety and security incidents in our spaces that require additional investment to address. Calgary Public Library has experienced a rapid increase in safety and security incidents in recent years, including drug incidents and medical distress calls. The most significant increases are at our inner-city locations, specifically Central Library. New partnerships, increased collaboration, and additional resources will help the Library to expand staff training, enhance existing safety tools and increase security staff capacity.

The Library will also continue advocacy efforts to create awareness and supports for the concerning literacy gap in Alberta. The Library was a key partner in the Left Unread campaign to raise awareness on growing literacy gaps in Alberta. The CanadaWest Foundation’s *The Case for Literacy in Alberta* report provided concerning information on the growing need for literacy supports and intervention in Alberta, noting that 45% of working-age Albertans do not have the literacy skills required to perform most jobs in today’s economy reliably and consistently. Working with partners such as Vibrant Communities Calgary, United Way of Calgary, and others, the Library will continue to be a foundational partner in literacy for our community.

THE FOLLOWING SECTION IS FOR CIVIC PARTNERS MANAGING CITY-OWNED ASSETS

12. CAPITAL PROJECTS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Asset: The Library is the steward of 19 City-owned buildings, including 18 community libraries and the Central Library.

a) How did you use The City’s capital funding in 2023?

Project	City Funding (2023)	Benefit (service improvement, efficiency, improved condition)
Fish Creek Library Lifecycle	1.6M	Service improvement, Improved Condition
Furniture Lifecycle	0.3M	Service improvement, Improved Condition
Vehicles Lifecycle	0.1M	Service improvement, Improved Condition
IT Network/End-User Equipment Lifecycle	0.6M	Service improvement, Efficiency, Improved Condition