

Impact Evaluation

Stakeholder Summary



*Your Guide to the Calgary Public Library Model
For Measuring Social & Economic Value*



CALGARY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Building the best public library in the world



CITY OF CALGARY
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Distribution

Bill Ptacek, CEO Calgary Public Library

Hello everyone,

At the Calgary Public Library, we are building not only a great New Central Library, but also a great new library system. Just as the New Central Library will be a cornerstone of downtown Calgary's development, the Calgary Public Library will play a key role in community building for Calgary's growing neighbourhoods.

The Calgary Public Library is far more than a series of buildings and a collection of resources: it is a gathering place, a community connector and an organization that can support, inspire and shape Calgarians now and in the future. The Library has played a vital role in the lives of Calgarians for over a hundred years, and that role continues to evolve as our city grows and becomes more diverse. The Library can be a catalyst of economic growth and positive social change; it can inspire and support Calgarians in all facets and stages of their lives. We're working hard to make the Library even more relevant to the people it serves.

We don't expect you to take our word for it. Over the next few years, we are embarking on an innovative system of Impact Evaluation that will demonstrate the positive and lasting contributions made by the Library to the social and economic growth of our city and the well-being of its citizens. This evaluation model will be your way of holding us accountable and making sure that we continue to evolve as Calgary does. It will allow us to meet our strategic directions of strengthening communities, bringing the Library into more people's lives, and making a difference in the lives of all Calgarians. And if our efforts don't meet those goals, we will know and will look for new ways to reach them. Impact Evaluation is our way to ensure that we continue to serve Calgarians in a manner that supports their personal and professional lives. We aim for far more than being a great library system: our goal is to become a part of the very fabric of Calgary for this and future generations.

We are proud to serve Calgarians. Adopting this new Impact Evaluation model will help us to build the best library system in the world, never losing sight of the citizens we serve and the importance of working together to build strong communities and one of the best cities in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Ptacek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Ptacek

Your Guide to Impact Evaluation at the Library

What is Impact Evaluation?

Impact Evaluation is a methodology that seeks to take a closer look at the results of an intervention in order to assess whether the resulting change can be directly attributed to a specific program, service or policy change. It is a way of assessing whether programs and services have made the lasting, positive difference they were intended to make, or whether they had unintended consequences—positive or otherwise. This is achieved by comparing the observed outcomes of a particular intervention with an estimate of what would have happened in the absence of a particular program or service. The information gleaned from Impact Evaluation can be invaluable in helping an organization assess its current impact, implement any necessary changes and to help shape its future direction.

At the Calgary Public Library, our evaluations will focus on two key areas: social impact and economic impact. By combining primary data from both these areas into our evaluation framework we will produce a fuller picture of the contributions the Library makes to the well-being of individuals, families, communities and the city alike.

What is Social Impact?

Calgary Public Library defines social impact as the direct effect of a program, activity or service on the social fabric of a community, and on the well-being of the individuals & families within that community.

What is Economic Impact?

Calgary Public Library defines economic impact as the direct effect of a program, activity or service on the financial well-being of individuals, society and the state, in terms of economic factors such as salaries, savings and GDP.



Why has the Calgary Public Library adopted this methodology?

Simply stated, the Calgary Public Library is using Impact Evaluation to help us better understand the true value of our programs and services, and whether they benefit our patrons in the way that they were designed to. It allows us to continually improve our programs and services in order to ensure that we are relevant and beneficial to the communities we serve. Impact Evaluation is not a destination, but rather a continuous journey to improving what we do. It's a lens that allows us to look more objectively at the ways we serve Calgarians. The Calgary Public Library is committed to Impact Evaluation as a process designed to help us get where our strategic direction said we would go and to analyze the effectiveness of the programs and services we have implemented to help shape the Library of the future.

How can impact evaluation benefit our patrons, our communities and our city?

At the Calgary Public Library, we are using Impact Evaluation to examine the lasting change that occurs in our patrons' lives as a result of specific programs or services. We are keenly interested in the cumulative impact those changes have on our patrons, the communities in which they live, and our city as a whole. Adopting this methodology will allow the Calgary Public Library to ensure that what we do, who we do it for, and how well we do it are all strategically aligned. A commitment to Impact Evaluation will allow the Library to strengthen neighbourhoods in a growing city, bring the Library into more people's lives and focus on the services that make a real and lasting difference in the lives of Calgarians.

Social Impact

**I see libraries
and librarians
as frontline soldiers
in the war against
illiteracy and the
lack of imagination.**

Neil Gaiman



What impact does the Library have on Calgary?

- ◆ Calgary Public Library believes that public libraries are essential to building strong, vibrant communities.
- ◆ We believe that the Library has the ability to reduce state spending by supporting the vulnerable members of our population when they need us most.
- ◆ We believe our programs help individuals to increase their earnings, improve their careers, start new businesses and change their world for the better.
- ◆ We believe that our services to children and families are helping to build a generation of intelligent, resilient individuals who will lead Calgary into an even brighter future.
- ◆ We believe that we help newcomers to Canada to settle in Calgary and support them as they work towards a better future.
- ◆ We believe that Calgary is a more creative, more vibrant, and more artistic city as a result of the Library's presence.
- ◆ We believe that by supporting Calgarians as they strive to achieve their goals and dreams we contribute to the economic fabric and GDP of the city.
- ◆ We believe that the Library is a catalyst for social innovation and enterprise.

And we believe that we can prove it.

Economic Impact

Did You Know?

Creativity and culture are worth **4%** of the GDP

There are **70,000** Calgarian families living in poverty

Poverty-related crime costs Alberta at least **\$29 million** per year

Low literacy costs Calgary **\$93 million** per year in support services

3,000 high school students fail to complete, costing **\$16,000** each per year

ESL learners can earn **\$25,000** more per year just by improving their English

New small businesses contribute an average of **\$400,000** to the GDP

Learning to code can add **\$10,000** to an average worker's salary

180,000 Calgarians can reduce stress and boost productivity through reading

Decreasing recidivism through supportive programming saves **\$5000** per person

Early literacy interventions can save over **\$80,000** per at-risk child

Boosting essential skills can help Calgarians earn an extra **\$6,000** a year

Each new business creates an average of **4** new jobs

Calgary Public Library believes

that we have a positive impact in all these areas.

A photograph showing a person with long hair, seen from behind, sitting in a green folding chair and reading an open book. They are wearing a dark jacket. The setting appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor public library event, with other people and chairs visible in the background. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting evening or indoor lighting.

**The very existence of libraries
affords the best evidence that we may yet
have hope for the future of man.**

T.S. Eliot

Strategic Directions

At the Calgary Public Library, we are building not only a great New Central Library, but also a great new Library system. Just as the New Central Library will be a cornerstone of downtown Calgary's redevelopment, the Calgary Public Library will play a key role in community building for Calgary's growing neighbourhoods.

Our three *Strategic Directions* and seven *Impact Goals* provide the foundation by which we will not only build a world class Library that provides meaningful benefits for the city it serves, but also a way for us to measure, analyze and report on the positive difference the Library makes to the City of Calgary.

In the coming years, the Calgary Public Library is dedicated to building the best library system in the world, and to developing a robust system of Impact Evaluation that will demonstrate the value and long-term effects that a public library has on the communities and individuals that it serves.

**Strengthen
Neighbourhoods
in a Growing City**

**Community Connection
Community Cohesion**

**Bring the Library
Into More
People's Lives**

**Personal Excellence
Confident Life Choices
Connected To Your World**

**Focus on Services
That
Make a Difference**

**Equitable Opportunity
Strengthen Literacies**

Strengthen Neighbourhoods in a Growing City



At the Calgary Public Library, we believe the best way to build a strong city is to help build strong communities. We play a vital role in helping people to participate fully in their community's social and economic well-being by connecting them to both the State and to each other.

Community connections can occur in many shapes and sizes, whether it's helping out at a local event or volunteering time to coach or referee for a neighbourhood sports team. Not only do these activities make Calgary a better place to live, but they also boost the economy and make our communities safer.

The Library prides itself on creating connections with the people and neighbourhoods that we serve. We are uniquely positioned to support Calgarians at all stages of their lives and are proud of our work providing safe and welcoming environments that promote community cohesion and civic pride.

The Calgary Public Library is embedded into the very fabric of the communities that we serve. We provide public spaces, resources and support to Calgarians who want to make friends, build contacts, and make their community a richer, more vibrant place to be.

Areas of Impact

Community Connection

Calgary Public Library can help:

Decrease social isolation

Promote feelings of community connection

Instill a sense of pride for the community

Provide opportunities for community groups to set up and prosper

Connect people with shared interests and hobbies

Community Cohesion

Calgary Public Library can help:

Increase a sense of agency

Patrons achieve personal success

Build understanding of diversity

Act as a catalyst for change

Boost enjoyment of life

Increase a sense of belonging

Bridge the divide

Encourage activism

Did You Know?

By helping the most vulnerable members of society to build support networks within their community, we could make State savings of over **\$25,000** per person per year.

Bring the Library Into More People's Lives

Personal Excellence

Calgary Public Library can help:

Improve childhood reading

Develop a love of reading

Support lifelong learning

Improve lives and careers

Promote cultural appreciation

Growth in social intelligence

Confident Life Choices

Calgary Public Library can help:

Nurture intellectual curiosity

Promote confidence in decisions

Decrease feelings of ennui

Connect learning with fulfillment

Open eyes to opportunity

Find and analyze information

Connected To Your World

Calgary Public Library can help:

Increase altruism

Develop voice and agency

Grow civic engagement

Take ownership of community

People take action

Build connections

Did You Know?

Every budding entrepreneur who uses resources at the Calgary Public Library to launch their new business contributes an average of **\$153,000** in disposable income to the local economy.

Areas of Impact



At the Calgary Public Library, we believe that inspiration can be found throughout our collections and is soaked into the very fabric of our buildings. We can never be sure which book or piece of music will spark the imagination of a specific patron, but we know how magical it is when we see it happen.

The Library is the foundation of a progressive society, and is dedicated to helping all Calgarians to become the best possible version of themselves. We believe that with the right tools and the right support, anyone can change the world for the better.

We believe that information is power, and that without free access to information there is no such thing as democracy. We promote civic engagement, encourage individuals to take ownership of their community and help people to find their voice on the issues that mean the most to them.

Focus on Services That Make A Difference



At the Calgary Public Library we are proud to be open to everyone in the community who wishes to use our services. At the very core of our beliefs is the certainty that every Calgarian deserves the opportunity to pursue their goals and ambitions.

However, we also know that sometimes people need extra support, extra help or extra encouragement in order to achieve the things that they are capable of. The Library believes it is our role to dedicate time, effort and resources to those requiring a little extra help to get on the path to their dreams.

The Library is also proud to provide information and support to businesses and individuals who believe in leveraging social enterprise to address inequity within our city. We believe that by working together with both non-profits and industry alike, we have the opportunity to support all Calgarians to become the best they can possibly be.

Areas of Impact

Equity of Opportunity

Calgary Public Library can help:

People overcome barriers to their success

Develop a sense of self-worth

Provide information about services, support and aid

Vulnerable individuals to fully participate in city life

Act as a catalyst for personal growth

Encourage Calgarians to dream

Strengthen Literacies

Calgary Public Library can help:

Improve essential workplace skills

Encourage a love of learning

Increase confidence

Patrons develop information & critical literacy skills

Provide access to information, entertainment and creative expression

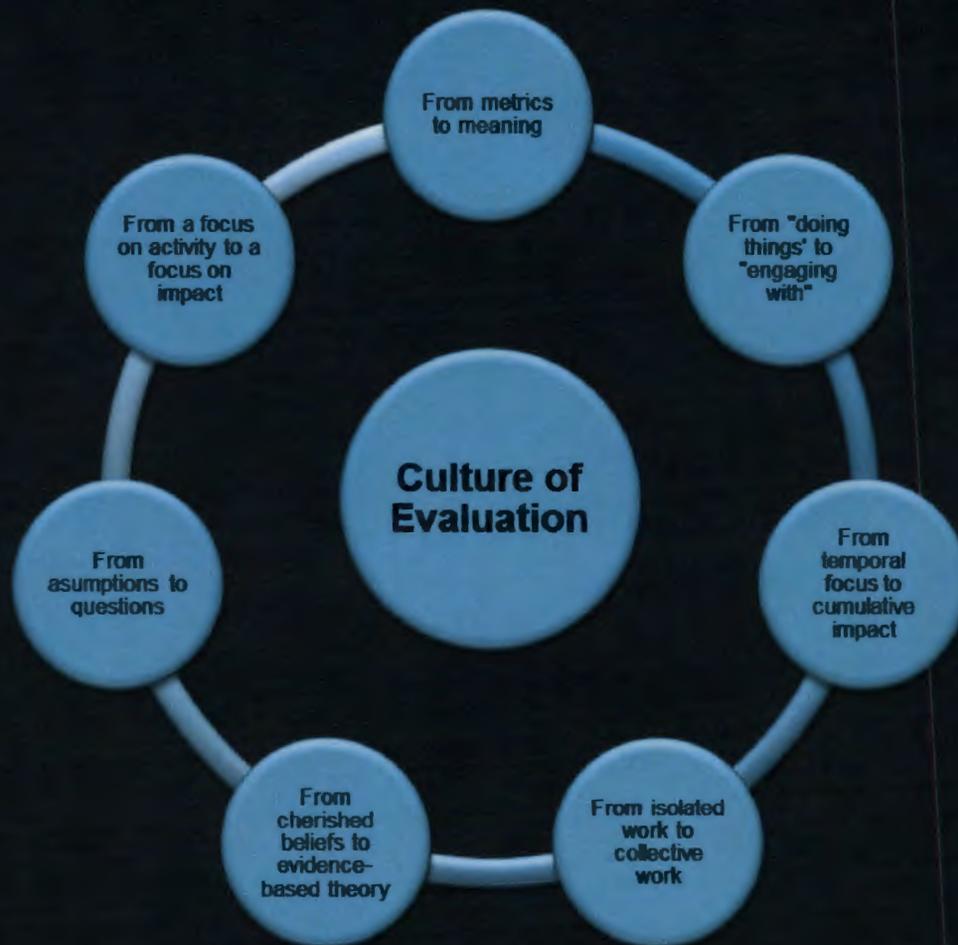
Build a fully literate city

Did You Know?

There are over 200,000 low literacy adults in Calgary, and every one of them has the potential to increase their yearly earnings by **\$10,000** just by improving their essential skills.

Finding Evidence

“What if evaluation could help us see better, think better, focus better and grow our leaders and our organizations better?”



Steve Patty, Ph.D. 2013

The Library's Planning & Research Department is responsible for all aspects of data collection, collation, storage and analysis. Ultimately, it's our job to make sure that the programs and services we offer are beneficial and impactful for the people of Calgary. It's our objective to make sure that the Library responds to emerging trends, fiscal changes and global events in a manner that supports this city and its citizens while never wavering from our goal of being the greatest library system in the world.

The Library uses the data gathered and subsequent research to *improve* and develop our programs and services to ensure that they are high quality, relevant and effective. Over the next strategic planning cycle, we will be using this data to *prove* the ways in which the Library contributes to the social and economic well-being of Calgary, whether through increased GDP, lower healthcare costs or increased levels of entrepreneurship.

How is this done?

The Planning & Research Department has adopted a multi-year cycle approach to the impact evaluation framework in order to identify and set priorities, track targets and respond to emergent issues. This approach will allow us to continually improve programs and services for our patrons, connect short-term and long-term goals and assess progress made towards achieving our vision. Continuous data collection and analysis, community consultations, and associated research will ultimately result in programs and services that are *responsive, efficient, innovative* and firmly *embedded* in the communities that we serve.

**When I got
my library card,
that's when
my life began**

Rita Mae Brown

Reporting Progress

Annual Report

Every year Planning & Research will produce a full report detailing progress towards Library goals, as well as our contribution towards city targets.

Strategic Cycle

Following the Library's strategic planning cycle, this report will focus on the evidence gathered to prove the long term social and economic impact of the library on the City of Calgary and its residents

Project Reviews

Much of the data being gathered by Planning & Research will be collected through longitudinal studies, focus groups and extensive qualitative research. Projects related to specific areas of strategic focus will be reported on as they are completed

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Contact Us



For more information about Impact Evaluation at the Calgary Public Library, or about our plans for measuring progress against the Strategic Plan, please contact the Planning & Research Department at the following address:

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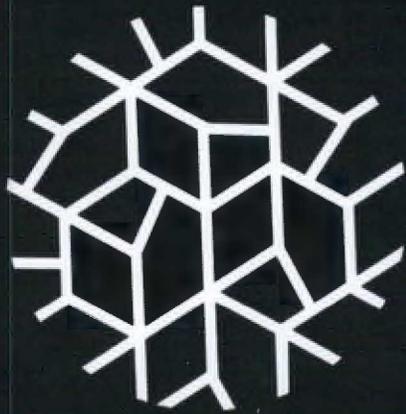
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