

# Libraries on the Front Lines



**Danielle Hubbard**

*Okanagan Regional Library*  
CEO

The slide features a black background with decorative elements: a light blue bar at the top left, a light green bar at the top center, and a vertical red bar on the left side.

**January 2, 2024**

**History**

**Types**

**Locations**

**Homeless Academy**

**Arete**

**Mental Health First Aid**

**Hiring**

**Naloxone**

**Working Alone**

**Community Partners**

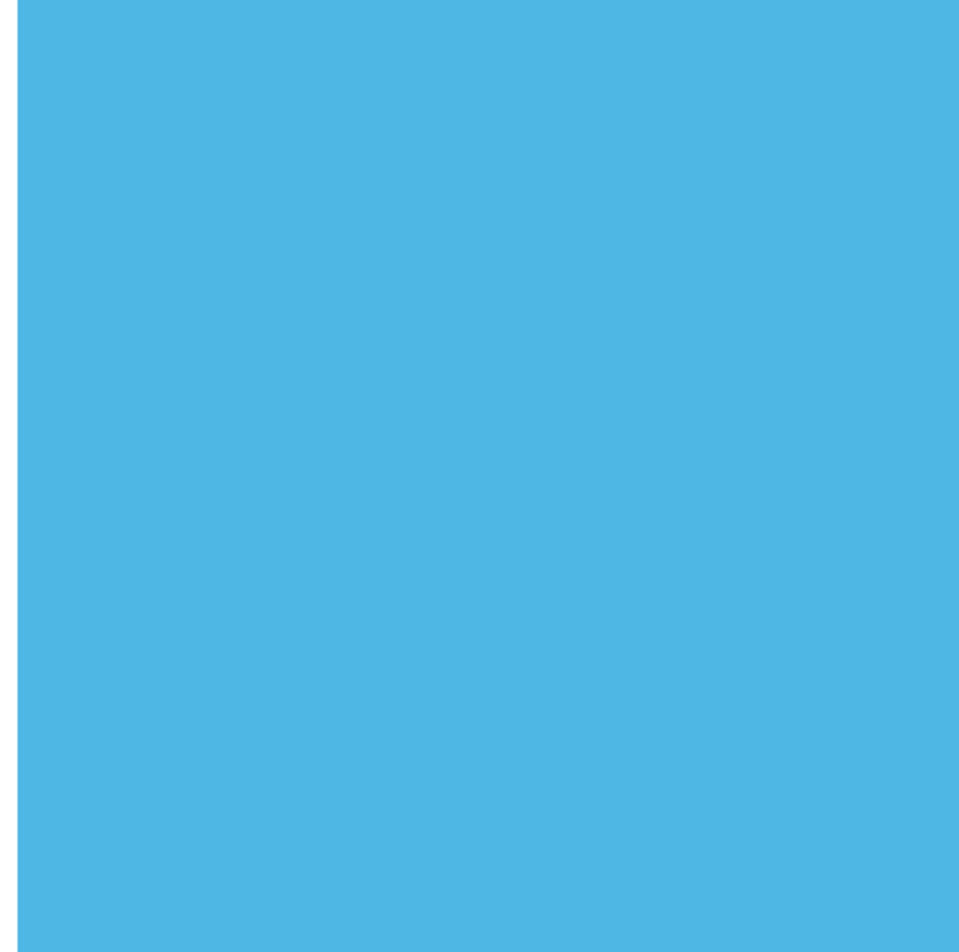
**Peer Navigators**

**Community Reliance**



# **Impact on Staff**

## **Community feedback**



**January 23, 2025**

**April 7, 2025**

**May 2, 2025**

**May 16, 2025**

**August 25, 2025**



# Questions?

**Danielle Hubbard**

*Okanagan Regional Library*  
*CEO*

[dhubbard@orl.bc.ca](mailto:dhubbard@orl.bc.ca)

250.878.5685

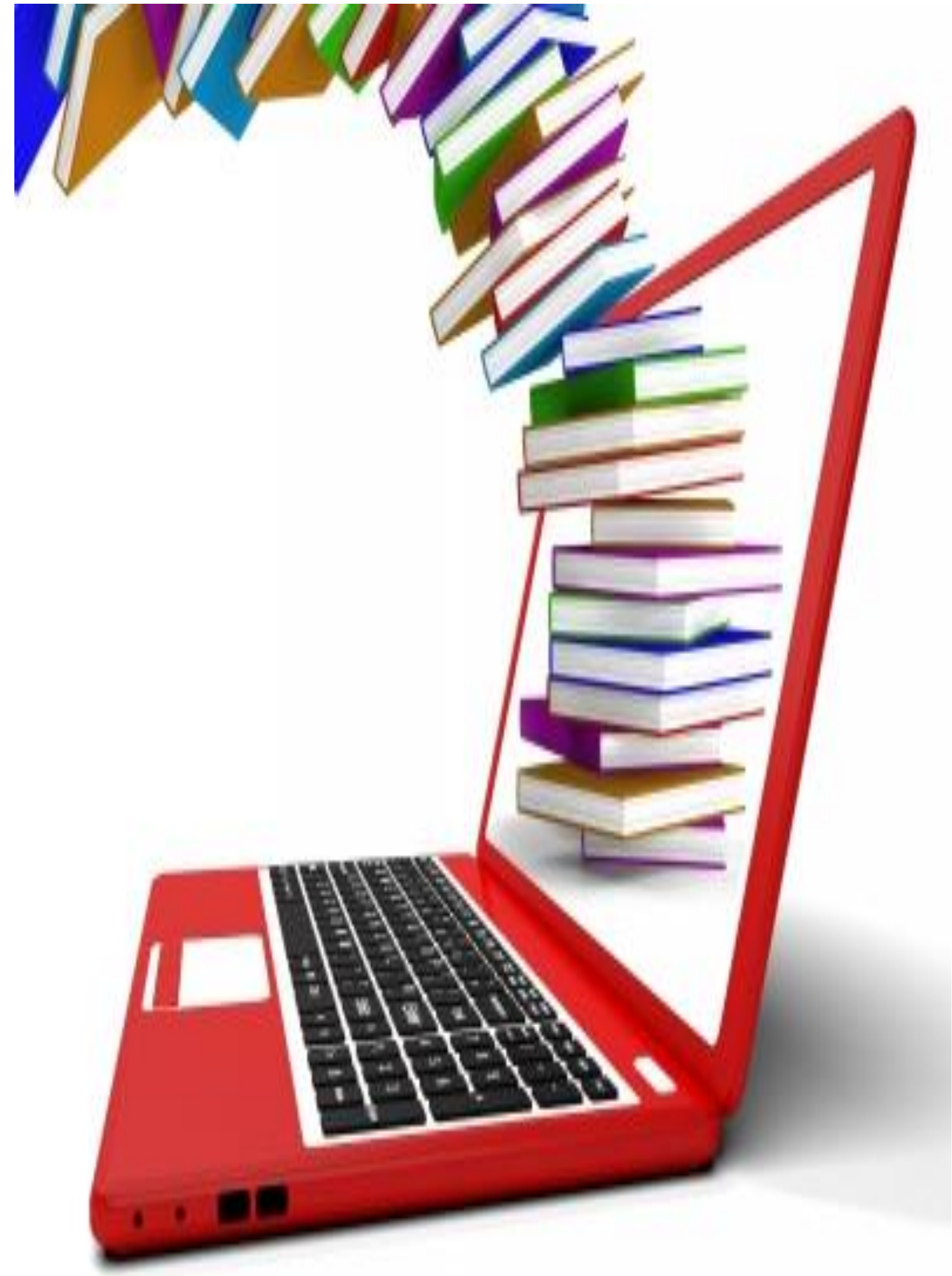
**“Average libraries build  
collections, good libraries build  
services, great libraries  
build communities”**

**–R. David Lankes**

In 2019, the Toronto Public Library conducted an intensive study on the return on investing in public libraries. It was assessed that for every dollar invested in the library, residents received \$5.63 in value; in today's economy, that value is much higher.

Every hour a library is open generates economic benefit for its community.

**How do public libraries drive economic growth and development?**



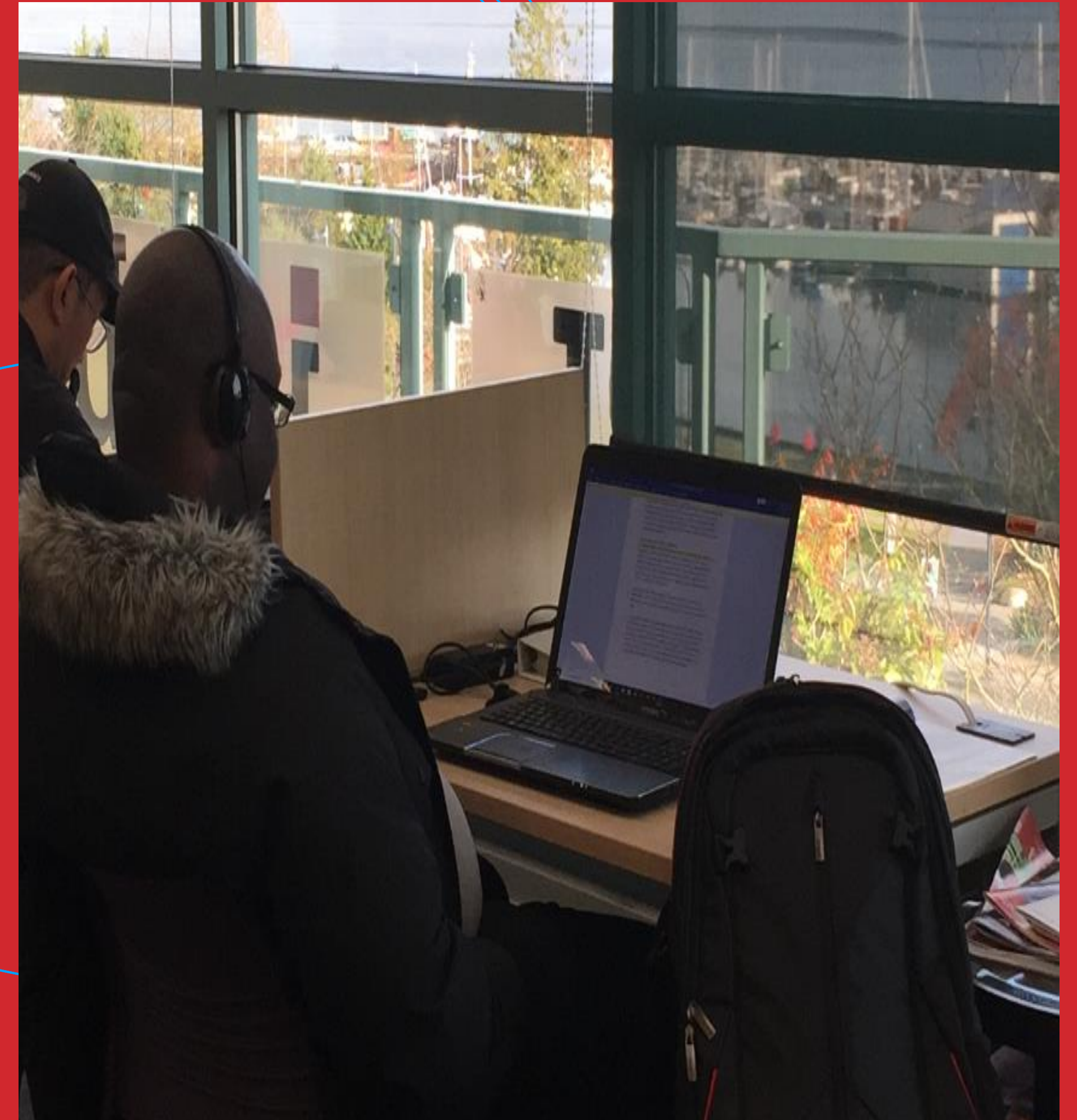


We provide space and resources for people to work, meet and study. Our free public computers, scanning, staff support and affordable printing enable people to pursue their professional and educational goals.





We encourage and enable lifelong learning with educational programs, literacy resources & exam proctoring.





**We are a bridge to the digital world  
&**

**provide opportunities for critical  
thinking & expression**





The tech support and databases we offer facilitate growth and capacity in local businesses and workers. They enable people to complete government forms, taxes and other online requirements that lead to increased financial and social stability.





Every hour a library is open generates economic benefit for its community. As one respondent to our library survey stated “People need library resources now more than ever. Libraries are vital to creating an equitable opportunity for everyone to better their lives.





## Four Key Interrelated Capacities for Community Resilience

### 1. Economic

- sufficient quantities of the material resources upon which the community depends, as well as equitable access to and distribution thereof

### 2. Social

- 

### 3. Information & Communication

- the systems and infrastructure that enable “the creation of common meanings and understandings and the provision of opportunities for members to articulate needs, views, and attitudes” (Norris, et al. 2008)

### 4. Collective Competence

- the methods that a community uses to collectively make decisions and then structurally aid and empower its members to effectively act on those decisions, individually or collectively

In order to be resilient, each capacity draws on one or more of the following dynamic resources:

- robustness
- redundancy
- rapidity

Norris, F. H., Stevens, S. P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K. F., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2008). Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness. *American journal of community psychology*, 41, 127-150.

# Social

**Capital:** one of four types (along with economic, cultural, and symbolic) that collectively determine social life trajectories... resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Bourdieu, 1985), “in general, ... social relationships, networks, and connections between people” (Fletcher, et al., 2020)

**Cohesion:** “the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper... they freely choose to form partnerships and have a reasonable chance of realizing goals, because others are willing to co-operate and share the fruits of their endeavours equitably” (Stanley, 2003)

**Infrastructure:** “physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact”, ... “the physical conditions that determine whether social capital develops” (Klinenberg, 2018)

<sup>11</sup>[...] public libraries are ideal locations for resilience hubs because they provide a variety of informational, educational, social, and personal services."

Ciriaco T.G.M., Wong, S.D. (2022). Review of resilience hubs and associated transportation needs. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 16, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2022.100697>.

## Useful Features

- public access
- geographic distribution
- building & landscape
- power & water systems
- information & communications
- services & programming
- trust

Canada

### How a public library helped my family cope with the effects of climate change

As a low-income kid, I could take refuge from extreme temperatures without having to spend money

A

[Carol Eugene Park](#) • for CBC First Person •

4''J

Posted: Nov 07, 2021 7:00 AM PST | Last Updated: November 7, 2021

Vancouver OTES Community • [Join](#)

• July 9, 2024 • 0

Pro tip to beat the heat. Public Libraries in our city are air conditioned.

0 0 45

6 comments 4 shares



# Canada's National Adaptation Strategy

Building Resilient Communities  
and a Strong Economy

"Shared understanding can help us work together to improve our collective resilience to climate change.

## Knowledge & Understanding

Objective 3: Everyone in Canada is informed about climate risks and vulnerabilities.

Available **information is accessible, easy to understand, and designed for different audiences."**







RASER VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

The Playground™

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LIBRARY  
OF THINGS

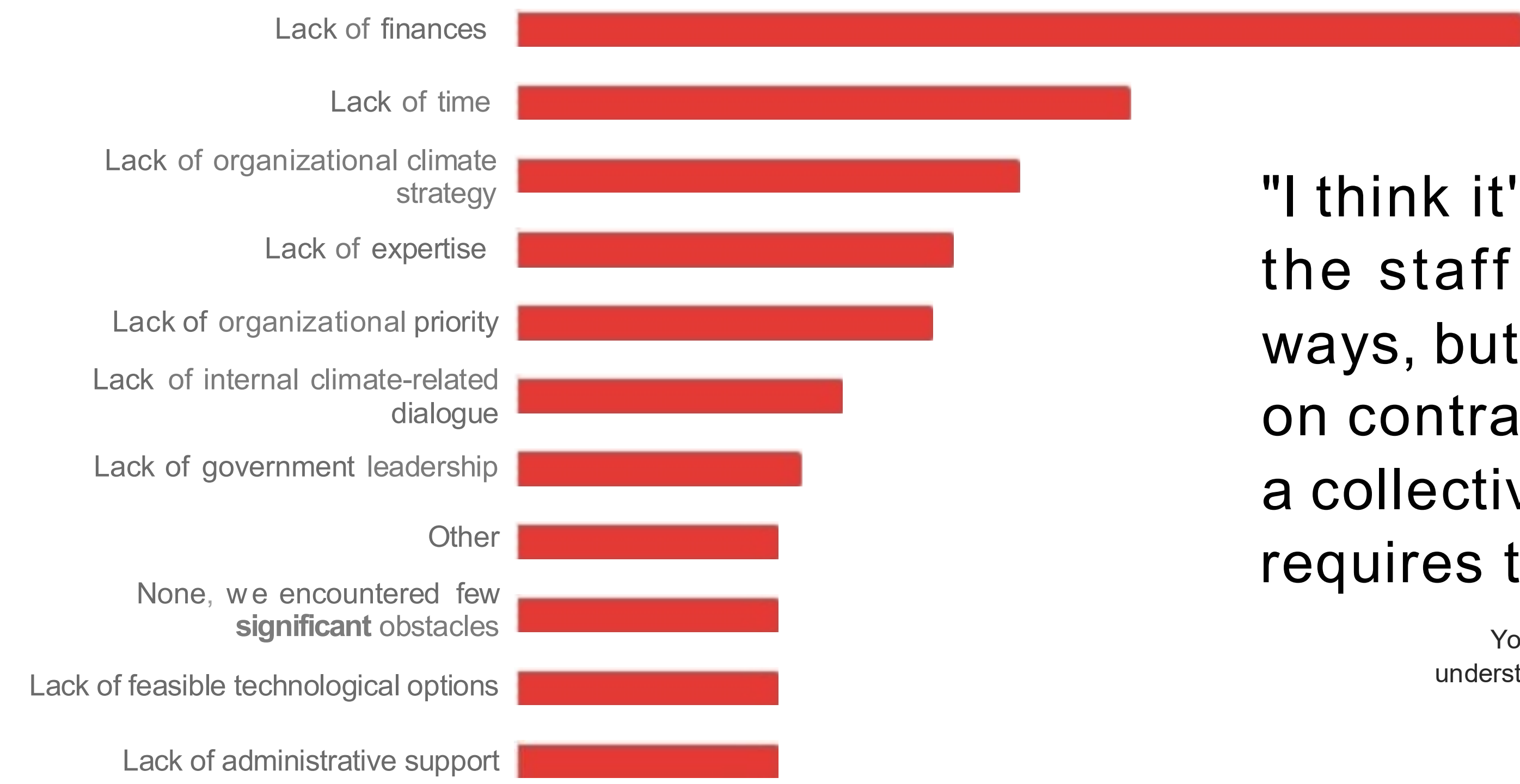


Thompson-Nicola Regional Library



THE  
THING6ERY

Has your organization encountered any obstacles adapting to climate impacts?



"I think it's difficult to - I mean, you have to fund the staff are very giving and altruistic in many ways, but at the same time that you know, they are on contract, and you have to abide by the terms of a collective agreement that, you know, rightly requires that they get paid for their work as well."

Yoon, L., Belotti, G., Stern, R., White, K., Mohajeri, A., Zhou, A., ... & Buse, C. (2025). To cool or not to cool: understanding and improving cooling centre use in metro Vancouver through community-based participatory action research. *Environmental Research: Health*. 3(1), 015011.

- Lack of community buy-in
- Lack of staff support
- Risks to public perception

"Resiliency planners [...] must be mindful to not overwhelm library staff [...] librarians have been consistently asked to perform more without additional resources and have been tasked with providing services they often are not trained for."

Laurian, L., Doyle, E., Vamanu, I., & Logsdon, K. (2025). Libraries are resilience hubs: Evidence from the midwest. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 91(1), 58-71.

[dan.hackborn@ubc.ca](mailto:dan.hackborn@ubc.ca)

**Contact Info:**



BCLA Climate Action Committee