



ALBERTA
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Office of the Minister
MLA, Edmonton - South West

AR101295

Dear Public Library Community,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me, along with the Honourable Tanya Fir, Minister of Economic Development, Tourism and Trade, and our Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, on June 1, 2020, at the Town Hall for Public Libraries.

Being the Minister responsible for supporting public library services is very important to me and I am always happy to speak with public libraries. My family and I are avid public library users and we know how important libraries are to communities.

It is heartening to know that since March 15, 2020, Albertans have doubled their use of library e-content and online learning courses while libraries have used technologies, such as Zoom and Facebook, to offer programs on everything from book clubs to ballroom dancing. It is also encouraging to know approximately 18,500 Albertans signed up for a new library card since March 15, and will now enjoy all the resources and services the public library network has to offer as we reopen.

During the pandemic, libraries have been working hard to serve and connect with patrons, even while physical locations remained closed. As you are aware, to support those efforts, this spring the provincial government provided 50 per cent of the budgeted 2020/21 public library operating grant to your boards while foregoing the application process. The second installment of the operating grant is intended to be made available in the fall.

With the province now engaged in Stage Two of the provincial relaunch, I know many of you have questions about keeping your patrons safe as libraries reopen. I also know, from your questions on the Town Hall and from our conversations, you are excited to offer again public computer usage, job-seeking support, materials to support at-home schooling, and new reading materials to your patrons. Together we will find a balance to provide high quality services and keep our communities healthy.

In support of this, I have attached several documents for your reference including answers to questions that were posed, but were not addressed due to time constraints, a "Frequently Asked Questions" document, and a "Checklist for Re-Opening."


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We have also heard your concerns about personal protective equipment and I am pleased to share that public libraries will be eligible for masks through the second phase of "Masks for Albertans" program. My staff are currently working with your regional library systems and large urban libraries to get every library in Alberta masks, should they require them. These masks can be used by your patrons in the library so you can offer more services and can be picked up by Albertans who need masks for personal use. The masks should be arriving in mid-to-late July and we are pleased to be working with you to provide this important service.

Please feel free to contact Diana Davidson, Director of the Public Library Services Branch, at diana.davidson@gov.ab.ca for any further information or support you may need as you reopen your libraries.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future and wish you all the best as you continue to serve your communities.

Yours very truly,



Kaycee Madu, QC
Minister

Attachments:

1. Public Library Pandemic Response Follow-up to June 1 Town Hall meeting
2. Public Library Pandemic Response - Relaunch Strategy FAQ
3. Checklist for Resuming Public Library Service - Worksheet

cc: Diana Davidson
Director, Public Library Services Branch