



ALBERTA
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Edmonton - South West*

April 20, 2020

To all Alberta Libraries,

I want to thank all of Alberta's dedicated library boards and staff for working hard to serve your patrons in new ways while physical libraries are closed. I know many of you are facing hard decisions about budgets, services, and staffing. As the Minister responsible for public library service in Alberta, I also know that our strong network and innovative library service will help us get through this time.

I have heard many inspiring stories of how libraries are going above-and-beyond during the pandemic. I am amazed that there were over 1 million visits to EPL's new virtual programs in one week alone. I applaud the Medicine Hat Public Library for lending Chromebooks and physical books to the day shelter for homeless and vulnerable people. I am also proud that public libraries in Sundre and Olds are using their 3D printers to make personal protective equipment for frontline healthcare staff. These are just a few examples of the wonderful things so many of you are doing to support your communities.

To ensure that our libraries continue to be supported in your great work, I am pleased to announce that I have asked my staff at the Public Library Services Branch to immediately advance 50% of all 2020-2021 public library operating grant amounts. We will pause the requirement for library boards to submit applications and reports to get you this first installment of the annual grant. We want to lighten administrative burdens on library staff right now. We also want to ensure that libraries have funds to continue to serve communities in virtual ways until you can re-open your physical doors.

The second installment of your grant will be available in the fall. Hopefully by then, we will have returned to a version of "business as normal" and can resume our regular processes.

We are also continuing our support for network services – such as e-content (including ebooks and audiobooks), services for people with print disabilities, interlibrary loan supports, and SuperNet connectivity. I encourage you to utilize the great resources we support such as the *Read Alberta Ebooks Project* and *Voices of Amiskwaciy* to bolster your digital offerings.

My staff at Public Library Services Branch will be sending out follow-up information about your operating grant payments shortly and, as always, are happy to answer any of your specific questions.

In the meantime, thank you for all that you do to serve Albertans and make Alberta libraries thrive.

Yours truly,

Hon. Kaycee Madu, QC
Minister of Municipal Affairs

132 Legislature Building, 10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 Canada Telephone 780-427-3744 Fax 780-422-9550