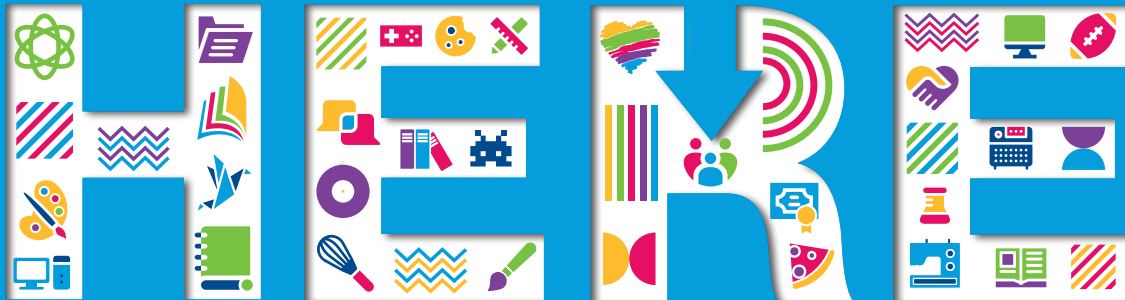


Learning Starts



EDMONTON PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Message from the BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

In 2025, the Edmonton Public Library (EPL) experienced a remarkable chapter, shaped by growth and a continued commitment to serving our community. Feedback from our most recent customer survey reflects what we see every day in our branches: across all 21 locations, 98% of customers agree that staff provide exceptional service.

One of the major milestones this year was the expansion of the Heritage Valley Branch. After years of planning and with City Council's support, this busy branch moved into a larger space, allowing us to better serve one of Edmonton's fastest-growing communities.

In 2025, we reaffirmed our commitment to equitable access to information during the municipal election by providing Edmontonians with reliable resources to support informed civic participation. We also launched a citywide campaign to raise awareness about intellectual freedom and freedom of expression, emphasizing their vital role in a healthy democracy.

Across our branches, we continued to expand how we support learning at every stage of life. From helping children build strong literacy foundations to bridging the digital divide across generations, welcoming newcomers, and supporting young adults as they explore education and career pathways, EPL continues to open doors to knowledge, skills, and opportunity for its customers.

The stories in this report show how learning comes to life through EPL's programs, collections, and spaces. From using the bonding power of music as a tool for early literacy, to unique summer learning experiences developed in our Makerspaces for children from underserved communities, the Library helps people discover their strengths and build their potential at every age.

Together, these stories also affirm the Library's essential role as a place of inspiration and hope. Through inclusive programs, community partnerships, and outreach, EPL supports people across our city. We help those facing barriers navigate complex systems. We create welcoming spaces where everyone can feel seen and supported. We bring people together, not only around resources and information, but around one another.

We are proud of our staff and deeply grateful for the support of our Board of Trustees, City Council, volunteers, and partners. We are also continually inspired by the customers who bring energy and purpose to our branches each day, and by the donors whose generosity strengthens our work year after year.

Together, we are shaping a future where learning is within reach for all.

Shawna Vogel
Chair, EPL Board of Trustees

Pilar Martinez
Chief Executive Officer, EPL



Best Place to LEARN

Throughout 2025, EPL brought people of all ages together to share knowledge, experiences, and ideas. For children and families, in particular, the Library provides a vital space beyond the home that helps shape identity and builds a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

That foundation begins early. When children develop a love of learning and reading, they are more likely to succeed in school, find future employment, earn higher incomes, and live healthier, happier lives. In support of early learning, EPL delivered 9,480 Welcome Baby kits to parents during their baby's two-month immunization appointments at local Public Health Centres, the Enoch Health Centre, and Neonatal Intensive Care Units in area hospitals.

Learning also thrives through shared experiences. In 2025, seasonal programs brought families together for fun and discovery. During Spring Break, EPL delivered 126 programs to 2,575 customers across all locations, ranging from cooking workshops to puppet shows, magic performances, and Indigenous art-making. Summer Reading Fest also saw strong engagement, with over 22,500 registrants logging nearly 190,000 hours of reading, and close to 10,000 participants taking part in 434 staff-led art-making programs.

This year, EPL also continued to empower Edmontonians with the skills they need for everyday life. In collaboration with 27 partner organizations, the Library delivered hundreds of Life Skills classes to over 5,000 customers on many topics, including tax help, health and wellness, cybersecurity, fraud prevention, and home composting. Digital literacy programming continued to grow, with 479 computer and technology classes reaching 2,218 adults, seniors, and newcomers.

Learning is a pathway to confidence and belonging, and this is especially true for newcomers. In 2025, EPL offered 1,228 classes tailored to meeting their needs, including over 900 English Language Learning classes with 8,995 attendees and over 300 form-completion sessions.

Through language classes, cultural events, and partnerships with organizations such as the Métis Child and Family Services Society, the Library also used learning to build understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, creating opportunities for reflection and relationship-building throughout the year.

1,449
 **LIFE SKILLS CLASSES**
 offered to **18,946** participants

 **5,040**
 Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn classes delivered to **103,470** people

 **56,976**
 Ready. Set. Read! books mailed to **4,917** children



A Joyful Beginning

How a Simple Gift Became Part of a Family's Daily Rhythm

For Heather, a first-time parent in Edmonton, the early days of motherhood were filled with equal parts love and exhaustion. Joy often arrived in small, unexpected moments, and one of those moments began with a gift from the Edmonton Public Library.

During her daughter's two-month vaccinations, Heather received EPL's Welcome Baby package, designed to support new families and foster a love of reading from the very start. Inside the tote bag were early literacy tips, a picture book, and a QR code linking to *Sing It, Edmonton!*, an album of original children's songs by local artists.

"At first, the music was just a pleasant surprise," Heather recalls. "But before long, it became part of our daily routine. We start our day by listening to the songs, and recently I've been incorporating one of them into our bedtime routine too."

One afternoon, a playful track called "*Jigalup*" came on. Heather and her partner began dancing and singing along, laughing as they moved around the living room. Then something unexpected happened. Their daughter laughed for the very first time.

Since then, music has become a shared family ritual. Grandparents and relatives join in whenever they visit. "My mother-in-law and sisters-in-law will hold the baby while the family sings and dances together," Heather says. "It always gets her laughing. It's just so fun."

In a world where new parents are often bombarded with information, Heather found EPL's Welcome Baby program to be reassuring. "Having something that's really geared to these early stages feels really nice," she explains.

In these early months of parenting, the songs, stories, and giggles have become a steady source of comfort and connection. They have also deepened Heather's relationship with the Library, introducing her daughter to the sounds and stories that support early literacy.

"The stories a library holds are so special," she says. "Being able to share that with your kids is something truly cool. Thanks to EPL, I have brighter, happier days."





Turning Summer into Opportunity

How EPL Donors Made Hands-On Summer Learning Possible for Children Who Need It Most

Research shows that school-aged children can lose more than a month of learning over the summer. For those already struggling academically, or living in low-income or socially vulnerable households, the impact is even greater. Yet these are the same children who benefit the most from engaging literacy and learning opportunities.

Unfortunately, these children also face the greatest barriers to accessing quality cultural and educational experiences. Summer camps are often cost-prohibitive, and while some low-cost options exist, few provide the full range of supports families need, including transportation, nutrition, and diverse learning experiences.

The Edmonton Public Library (EPL) created *Cook up a Story* to help address that gap. The summer camp is designed for children ages 9 to 11, a group that often falls between traditional day camps and teen programming. Hosted at the Stanley A. Milner Library, the program, offered free of charge, gives campers opportunities to develop skills and discover new, fun ways of learning beyond a traditional classroom through creative writing, cooking, digital exploration, and collaborative projects.

In the summer of 2025, thanks to generous donor support that covered transportation, nutritious lunches and snacks, as well as all program supplies, EPL hosted the first season of *Cook up a Story*. Over seven weeks, 175 children participated. The small group setting allowed staff to

build meaningful relationships and provide individualized support for children with a wide range of skill levels and learning needs.

For most campers, the experience was filled with firsts, from baking cookies to performing in the Muttart Theatre. As a summer programmer, Vicky saw that growth firsthand. “Each week, the kids told us their highlight was learning something new,” she says. “They were so proud of what they created, whether it was a meal they made themselves or something they could show their parents.”

The impact of the camp extended beyond skill development, helping campers grow into confident creators and collaborators. Watching them engage in hands-on projects like designing custom mandalas reminded Vicky of the many children who don’t have access to experiences that others often take for granted. “It also showed me that meaningful learning doesn’t just happen in classrooms. It happens in kitchens, libraries, and every space where kids feel supported and encouraged to explore and discover.”

Nearly all campers said they wanted to return next year, a clear indicator of the program’s positive impact. Building on this strong response and enthusiasm from the community, EPL is committed to running *Cook up a Story* for years to come. This continued investment will ensure the program grows, inspiring hundreds of young Edmontonians along the way.





The Best Place to **EXPLORE**

In 2025, more than one in three Edmonton households used their EPL card, strengthening the Library's role as the launch point for skill-building, experimentation, and the discovery of new perspectives.

Throughout the year, EPL's Making and Creating spaces continued to be highly popular, reinforcing the Library's role as a place where ideas can grow and come to life. At the Stanley A. Milner Library alone, customers booked studio and makerspace services 5,864 times, using tools such as recording studios, vinyl cutting, sewing, laser cutting, conversion stations, and 3D printing. This access to creative expression expanded system-wide with the rollout of Cricut machines to all branches, bringing hands-on creative technology into every neighbourhood.


Exploration at EPL also means highlighting and amplifying local voices and talent. Through EPL's Capital City Press program, the release of *Anthology Volume 5* showcased Edmonton's diverse creative community and strengthened relationships among writers, musicians, and artists.

Dialogue and the sharing of ideas remained at the heart of EPL's adult programming in 2025. Over 2,500 attendees joined four Forward Thinking Speaker Series events featuring Dr. Shawna Pandya, David Sedaris, Jesse Thistle, and Peter Mansbridge. Additional community partnerships brought bold voices to Edmonton, including Zita Cobb, Yann Martel, and Margaret Atwood, inviting Edmontonians to think differently and imagine new possibilities for the world around them.

This celebration of free thinking extended into the community through a citywide intellectual freedom awareness campaign featuring origami birds folded from the pages of banned books. Each bird served as a reminder of the fragility of free thought and the value of unrestricted access to knowledge, inviting the community to read, explore, and let ideas take flight.



127,997
attendees
to EPL's outreach
classes & events

12.3 
Million
items were borrowed
from EPL in 2025

Over **2500**
people attended the
FORWARD THINKING
SPEAKER SERIES





The Freedom to Think

Protecting Open Access to Ideas and Informed Participation

On a cold December evening, more than 2,000 people gathered at the Edmonton Convention Centre to hear from Margaret Atwood, one of Canada’s most influential authors. She had added a last-minute stop in Edmonton as part of her Book of Lives tour to show solidarity with independent bookstores and libraries championing intellectual freedom, with a portion of ticket sales supporting the Edmonton Public Library (EPL).

The energy in the room was unmistakable. As Atwood spoke, her words resonated far beyond the literary community. Her visit came during a year marked by division and heightened debate in Alberta, particularly around access to books in schools and the provincial government’s influence over school library collections.

Atwood emphasized intellectual freedom as both a legal and a human right, describing public libraries as sanctuaries where knowledge and imagination are preserved and made accessible to all. “Libraries protect the right to question facts and opinions that some might prefer to bury,” she said.

EPL takes that responsibility seriously. Throughout 2025, the Library has served as a bridge between people and ideas, guided by a simple but powerful principle: without choice, there is no freedom, and EPL stands firmly for everyone’s right to explore every topic, idea, and opinion without censorship.

That same commitment extends naturally to civic engagement. During the 2025 Edmonton municipal election, EPL brought people together, amplified diverse perspectives, and fostered open, respectful dialogue. A mayoral forum hosted by the Library drew more than 1,300 questions submitted ahead of the event, and over 13,000 Edmontonians viewed the recording before election day, demonstrating a strong appetite for participation in civic conversations.

Protecting intellectual freedom and democracy requires collective action. Individuals can make a difference in meaningful ways, whether by getting a library card, attending events or engaging with EPL’s collections. We invite you to visit intellectualfreedom.ca to show your support and join the movement.





From Stickers to Songwriting

One Man's Makerspace Journey

Norm Drisdell has always been drawn to creativity. At 67, he has tried his hand at film, music, and spoken word, but what ties everything together is his ability to connect people. Today, much of that connection happens inside the Edmonton Public Library's Makerspace at the Stanley A. Milner Library.

His introduction to the Makerspace was pure chance. "I came in to make stickers," he says with a laugh. "Then I wandered into the music studio and saw the potential right away." With encouragement from staff, Norm became one of the first people certified to use the space. That small decision opened the door to a community he didn't realize he was missing.

The timing could not have been more significant. In the early days of the pandemic, Norm was diagnosed with cancer. He spent long stretches in the mountains with his dog, writing, creating, and reflecting on what mattered most. That period of solitude helped him clarify his priorities and, when he returned to Edmonton, he brought with him a renewed focus on connecting with other creatives.

Since then, the Makerspace has become a hub for Norm's creative life. He organizes open jam sessions where musicians, students, and curious Edmontonians gather to play, record, and experiment. He has helped people cut their first demos and taught others how to navigate the equipment. "People have told me I'm the glue that holds it together and I like that."

That freedom also gave Norm something personal: a return to performing after decades away. Participating in showcases connected to EPL's Musician-in-Residence program reminded him why he creates in the first place. "My motto is healing through creativity and community," says Norm. "Coming out of the pandemic, that's what so many of us needed."

The Makerspace also offers Norm a platform to mentor others. He has welcomed filmmakers, guided students, and supported artists looking to take their work further.

Through it all, Norm keeps showing up to teach, and create alongside others. "Because of the Edmonton Public Library, I found the community of creative people I love playing with."





The Best Place to EXPERIENCE

EPL is committed to being the best place to experience for both our employees and our customers. At the centre of this commitment is a simple belief: exceptional experiences begin with people and grow in environments where everyone feels welcomed and supported.

In 2025, that focus on people shaped how we supported and developed our staff. EPL continued to foster learning and professional growth, with over 597 employees participating in nearly 6,600 hours of instructor-led training across 38 courses. To strengthen collaboration and shared knowledge across the system, all branches also closed for a day to bring staff together for the system-wide One Library, One Day professional development event.

Our teams are the heartbeat of the organization, and their dedication is reflected in the experiences of our customers. In the 2025 customer satisfaction survey, 92% of respondents rated their experience with EPL as excellent, and 98% agreed that our staff provides exceptional service, underscoring the vital role EPL employees play in creating welcoming, meaningful interactions every day.

Investing in our spaces further strengthens these experiences. In 2025, EPL completed renovations at the Sprucewood and Woodcroft Branches, began work on Idylwyld (Bonnie Doon), and relocated the Heritage Valley Branch to a larger location with a dedicated program room and expanded study and seating areas to serve a growing community.

Together, these efforts reflect EPL's commitment to being the best place to experience—where staff and customers, alike, feel welcomed and inspired to learn, explore, and grow.

64,961
New members.
epl.ca

10
Million visits to
epl.ca

5,043,192
walked through the doors of our branches in 2025





A Library Experience Built on Belonging

When a Routine Visit Turned into Something More

They only meant to pop into the Strathcona Branch for a quick visit. A simple stop, the kind Morgan's family makes all the time. The Edmonton Public Library (EPL) has always been part of their life, and her daughter wanted to pick up a book. What they didn't expect was to walk into a room full of families and a drag performer getting ready for Over the Rainbow Storytime.

"My kids looked at me and asked if we could stay for the performance," Morgan recalls. Her children, aged 11 and 12, were older than the typical storytime crowd. "But it didn't matter, they felt like they fit right in." Morgan's family is artsy; they all perform in some way and love cosplay, costumes, fashion, and art. They watch RuPaul's Drag Race together at home, but they had never seen a performer in person. That alone made the moment exciting!

The setup was bright and colourful, with balloons that matched the drag queen's outfit and other small details that showed care and attention. Claudia Hartout greeted her audience warmly; Morgan's kids were instantly starstruck. "They felt like they were meeting a celebrity."

Looking around, Morgan recognized a few queer families she knew, and this made the event feel especially meaningful. "For some families, this might be one of the few chances to see a visibly queer adult celebrated in a safe, public place. That matters."

Morgan believes this sense of belonging is part of what makes the Library so special. Growing up in the eighties, she remembers it as a place where everyone was welcome, and she still feels that way to this day. "You see every kind of person there," says Morgan. "People reading, warming up or studying. The Library belongs to everyone."

What Morgan and her kids originally intended to be a quick visit, to grab a book, became one of those serendipitous moments that led to an experience of inclusion, generating bigger conversations at home about gender, self-expression, and art. "The Library made it feel easy," says Morgan. "I'm glad we walked in when we did."





Finding a Way Forward

How One Conversation at the Library Changed Everything

Paul used to ride the bus at night just to stay warm. On the worst days, he moved between shelters or slept outside. He had nowhere to go. Four years without a home had worn him down. “No life for me,” Paul said. “I would wake up early—no sleep—my life was gone.” He didn’t know how much longer he could keep going.

This is where Edmonton Public Library’s (EPL) Outreach Social Worker team comes in. Based at the Stanley A. Milner Library, the team helps people who often have nowhere else to turn. Recognizing a need to make downtown safer, EPL launched this groundbreaking program in 2011. The program offers outreach to Edmontonians who might never walk into a social service office but trust the Library as a welcoming and safe space. Today, registered social workers assist some of EPL’s most vulnerable customers with housing, health care, identification, income, and essential paperwork, guiding them through complex systems that are difficult to navigate alone.

Someone at Hope Mission told Paul, “Go to the Library.” He walked into the Stanley A. Milner Library on his birthday, and met Hilary; one of three social workers, whom he now calls his sister, his star, his hero.

They connected right away, and Paul quickly came to trust her. He had no ID, no bank account, no income, no housing and no way to move forward. Old child maintenance orders blocked everything. Hilary helped him overcome each barrier, one step at a time. They met with judges, tax specialists, doctors and psychologists. Paul worked hard and never gave up on himself. He showed up for every meeting, week after week, asking “What’s next?”

For Hilary, this work is a calling. “My goal for the people I work with is always the same: to help them have a life of dignity, a warm place to live, and a stable income.” She sees part of her role as holding hope when her clients struggle to hold it for themselves. She also describes the work as a privilege. “To walk alongside them and witness their strength and their journey while they navigate complex systems that can feel daunting and heavy. It is my honour to do this work and to be trusted.”

Within 11 months of that first meeting, Paul held the keys to his own home, a subsidized seniors’ apartment. “It feels like heaven,” he says. “There’s nothing like having a home.”

The bond between Paul and Hilary is strong—you can see it in the way they look at each other. As he prepares to celebrate one year of living in his own place, Paul still visits the Library regularly and never misses the chance to connect with Hilary, the outreach social worker who stayed with him throughout it all and helped him believe a different life was possible.





From Staff Experience to Community Experience

Investing in the People Who Serve Our Customers

Every few years, the Library closes all its branches for a day of professional development. EPL's One Library, One Day is a dedicated opportunity for staff to step back from daily service and focus on learning and developing their skills to better support the evolving needs of our communities.

At its core, EPL strives to create an environment where barriers are removed for staff and customers, and this professional development day is part of that promise. When EPLers have the space to learn, reflect, and listen to new voices and ideas, the whole system grows stronger.

On May 14, 2025, over 500 employees from across EPL's 21 branches filled the halls of the Fantasyland Hotel & Conference Centre. This year's theme, Diversity and Perspectives, encouraged staff to look both inward and outward.

Keynote speaker Tina Varughese, a human-connection expert and bestselling author, opened the day with a talk about authenticity and belonging. From there, staff moved

through sessions led by internal and external speakers covering a range of topics, including the newcomer to Canada experience, harm reduction, emotional resilience, and the power of dialogue. "The breakout sessions reminded me that every customer carries a story I may not see at first," said one participant.

Between sessions, EPL's value of One Library, One Staff showed up in small moments, such as sharing lunch, catching up between breakout sessions, and participating in an epic, organization-wide, rock-paper-scissors game. These social interactions matter because they build trust and make teams stronger. And strong teams serve customers better.

Branches reopened the next morning, and staff returned to the community feeling replenished and energized. As one attendee noted, creating meaningful experiences for EPL's customers starts with supporting the people who serve them every day.





CELEBRATING OUR SUPPORTERS: The Heart of EPL

In 2025, nearly 300 volunteers generously donated over 5,500 hours of their time, energy, and expertise to EPL. From supporting our events to assisting customers with form completion tasks and sharing their passion for reading and technology with elementary students, their contributions are invaluable.

Behind every hour donated is a personal story. One of our volunteers shares her meaningful experience with EPL and how it deepened her relationship with the Library and the community.

Finding Purpose in an Unexpected Place

By Irum Khan – EPL Volunteer

As unbelievable as it may sound, last year, I unintentionally made my six-year-old daughter my career advisor—and what wisdom she endowed! I had been operating like a single parent for most of the month. I remember discussing with her a job I was considering in local politics.

My little one passionately said, “Mom, don’t work in politics!” I laughed. “But I am happy with politics.” She looked at me with earnest eyes and replied, “Mom, you’ll be happy now, but sad in the end. Work in a library instead.”

Amazed and amused at the same time, I quipped, “Listen, I like meeting new people.”

However, her words lingered in my mind. Over time, I began to see the sincerity in them. So, I decided to give it a try and applied for a volunteer position with the Edmonton Public Library.

When Claudio, a librarian at the Stanley A. Milner Branch, expressed his willingness to accommodate me, I immediately said yes. As a journalist, I can never resist the prospect of meeting new people and an opportunity for engaging conversation—even if it means helping them complete tricky and tedious forms. Besides, Claudio’s warm and grounded presence made it easy for me to say yes.

Happily, I began my volunteer work. My first clients were an elderly Chinese couple who needed help navigating the U.S. immigration process. Initially daunted by the complexity of the task, I relied on my sheer determination to assist them—and from then on, they kept returning for their scheduled visits, which made it easy for me to support them.

My next client came not only for help but also for healing. In response to my simple question, “How can I help?” she began to pour out her story to me. Her tears helped wash away years of suppressed disappointment, and with every subsequent visit, she began to rediscover her confidence.

In my short time as a volunteer, I saw how people’s needs—and their ways of facing them—varied so deeply. The love and trust they placed in me were ineffable. The Library became a space where I could connect with others unconditionally, solely to help. And in those moments, I realized that those who can offer help should feel a little more grateful for the privilege of being able to do so.

Claudio once encouraged me to reach out to people. In doing that, I found myself reaching inward, discovering a sense of purpose I had not expected to find in a library.



IMPACT in Action

How EPL Ignites Learning and Connects Communities

Every day, people across Edmonton turn to EPL to read, learn, and come together. The Library is a welcoming and trusted presence in neighbourhoods throughout the city.

In 2025, a national social impact study on urban public libraries in Canada* and EPL's own customer satisfaction survey** confirmed the Edmonton Public Library's role as essential public infrastructure that anchors the community.

EPL's impact extends well beyond its programs and collections. The Library supports early literacy and school success, opens doors to lifelong learning and new opportunities, and creates spaces where relationships can grow for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Here's a glimpse into EPL's impact on our city.

* EPL participated in the Canadian Urban Libraries Council's (CULC) Social Impact Study at two levels – contributing to a nationwide survey as well as a local survey specific to Edmonton. EPL survey results included 891 users and 120 non-users.

** EPL conducts a Customer Satisfaction Survey every 2-3 years to better understand customer demographics, usage patterns and perceptions of our services, spaces and programs. The 2025 Customer Satisfaction Survey generated 1,560 responses.



97% agree that EPL provides access to diverse collections that represent a broad range of viewpoints

EPL Satisfaction Survey



98% agreed that EPL staff provide exceptional customer service

EPL Satisfaction Survey



98% agreed EPL fosters a love of reading in children

EPL Satisfaction Survey



84% of EPL users recognize libraries as critical for childhood literacy

CULC Social Impact Study



95% agreed that EPL provides spaces that encourage expression of diverse thoughts, ideas, and opinions

EPL Satisfaction Survey



92% of those who access early literacy programs agree EPL is Edmonton's best place to support early reading development

EPL Satisfaction Survey

86% of EPL users agree libraries help discover broader knowledge than they would on their own



CULC Social Impact Study



91% of EPL library users say libraries are among a city's most valuable resources

CULC Social Impact Study



94% say EPL is a place where I feel I belong

EPL Satisfaction Survey

95% agree EPL is an important part of their local community



EPL Satisfaction Survey

92% of participants in EPL's digital literacy programs agreed it is Edmonton's leading place for building digital and technology skills



CULC Social Impact Study

85% of EPL users agree that public libraries help level the playing field for people of different backgrounds

CULC Social Impact Study

91% of those who accessed life skills programs agreed that EPL is the best place in Edmonton for developing life skills

EPL Satisfaction Survey

Gratitude REPORT



EPL depends on the generosity of our customers, staff, and community partners to deliver programs that make a meaningful difference in our city.

In 2025, their support raised more than \$1.5 million, helping enrich our city through early literacy, technology access, and unique experiences like the Cook up a Story summer camp.

Among the many supporters of early literacy, two donors made a special impact in 2025, helping even more young Edmontonians gain access to books and develop a lifelong love of reading. We are grateful for the opportunity to share their story.

Building Early Literacy, One Picture Book at a Time

Gift Brings Thousands of Picture Books to Children Across Edmonton

Vonnie and Leon Zupan believe in the power of a good book to spark moments that can shape a child's life—and that a love of reading is one of the greatest gifts we can offer the next generation. Through a generous \$70,000 gift to the Edmonton Public Library, the Zupans are helping lay the foundation for lifelong learning, one delightful page at a time.

Their gift will add 3,740 picture books to children's collections across all city libraries—books meant to be discovered, loved, and taken home. Circulating an average of 35 times each, these stories will reach more than 130,000 children every year.

The Edmonton philanthropists have a deep personal connection to libraries as places of discovery, belonging, and opportunity, and are long-time supporters of EPL as a leader in early literacy and as a welcoming civic space that helps families and communities thrive and feel connected.

Reading has always been a cornerstone for Vonnie and Leon, creating moments and memories that shaped their own learning and interests. It has helped forge strong bonds with their three children and now four grandchildren, who are all avid readers.

Picture books are the critical starting place—serving as mirrors that help young children see, celebrate, and learn about themselves, and as windows that invite curiosity and open paths of discovery.

EPL's commitment to child-led discovery means picture books in the expanded collection will be displayed cover-out and within easy reach of small hands. From experience, the Zupans know that when a young child discovers an image or topic that captivates them, it can be a turning point. "My hope is that each book in a child's hands unlocks a new level of inspiration, intelligence, and inquisitiveness," says Leon. He remembers a childhood picture book his father read to him—Martin Krpan, a beautifully illustrated Slovene folk tale that drew him into a larger world of heroes, conflict, courage, and hope. "It was a very special experience to share my father's culture and history with him," he says.

As Edmonton grows, Vonnie is excited by the opportunity to provide more children with early literacy tools, shared reading experiences, and habits essential for lifelong learning and success. Research shows that reading one picture book a day with a child exposes them to 1.4 million more words over five years than children who are not read to—a gap the Zupans hope to help close.

As a teacher and a parent, Vonnie has seen the transformation as children match words to pictures and begin to understand how language works. "It's such a joy to watch them sound out a word," she says. "Their eyes just light up."

"I hope this project is a step in the journey of making every child feel welcome in our city through moments like these," adds Leon. "What better success could there be than needing to replace a book because it's been read so many times?"

Ways to Give

Every donation, big or small, makes a difference

- ♥ One-time gifts
- ♥ Monthly donations
- ♥ Legacy giving
- ♥ Gift of life insurance
- ♥ Honour and memorial gifts
- ♥ Book & library material donations

Learn more at epl.ca/give.

To contact us about giving, reach out to give@epl.ca or (587) 588-9034.

♥ - Current and Past EPL Staff

♥ - Current and Past Trustees

\$100,000 - \$499,999

Larry & Louise Charach
Edmonton Community
Foundation

\$25,000 - \$99,999

Grant Ericksen & Donna
Ludvigsen

Friends of EPL

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Edmonton Community
Foundation

Leon & Vonnie Zupan

\$10,000 - \$24,999

The Benz Boost Fund

Ann Campbell

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CSU52

Enbridge

EPCOR

Library Bound

Mehta & Zeschuk Family

The Family of
Stanley A. Milner

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Community Foundation

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Electro Equinology Fund at
Edmonton Community
Foundation

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Community Foundation

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Learning Resources
Endowment Fund at
Edmonton Community
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 Authors Who Write Difficult
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 Julie Goulet
 Kangah Kim
 Larry Macdonell
 Laura Young
 Laurette Miller
 Liam Brown &
 Benjamin Brown
 Marg Stewart
 Meijia LI
 Michèle & Kent Brubaker
 Mrs. Chandler
 My Mom, Linda, who shared
 her love of cooking with all!
 My parents anniversary
 Ongoing Indigenous
 Programming & Ongoing
 Community Safety/Resiliency

Our children Amanda-Lynn
 & Christopher and our
 grandkids Alexandra,
 Ethan & Jackson
 Peggy Looby
 Robert Campbell
 Robin
 Sixto Borbon
 Stuart Gilroy
 Susanna Pagliuso ♥
 Teddy Aune
 Vicky Mah ♥
 Vicky Varga ♥
 Wayne & Irene Pettapiece





COLLECTIONS and SERVICES

	2025	Change	2024
In-Person Visits	5,043,192	1%	5,013,409
Website Visits	10,589,983	-7%	11,418,618
Total Visits	15,633,175		16,432,027
Adult	1,756,439	-9%	1,930,105
Juvenile (includes Teen)	2,125,728	-2%	2,159,686
Renewals	1,660,202	30%	1,275,834
Other Checkouts	692		3,362
Total Physical Circulation	5,543,061	3%	5,368,987
e-Books (includes eComics)	1,587,878	-3%	1,643,168
eNewspapers & Magazines	2,027,967	23%	1,644,078
eAudiobooks	1,242,949	1%	1,230,564
eVideos	342,056	19%	287,696
eMusic	125,478	40%	89,688
eLearning Programs	632,274	1%	624,058
Databases	804,921	6%	760,906
Total eUsage	6,763,523	8%	6,280,158
Total Items Borrowed	12,306,584	6%	11,649,145

	2025	Change	2024
In-House Computer Usage (Hours)	592,078	-5%	624,348
Questions Answered	1,257,522	0%	1,255,721
Outreach Service Encounters with Clients	2,432	11%	2,182
Physical Items Purchased (Print and Non-Print)	216,707	22%	177,071
Physical Collections	1,079,960	3%	1,051,644
Digital Collections	6,138,367	-1%	6,199,151
Total Physical & Digital Collections	7,218,327	0%	7,250,795
In-Person Classes & Events presented	14,918	2%	14,592
In-Person Classes & Events Attendance	229,147	1%	227,344
Online Live Classes & Events Presented	566	7%	531
Views of Online Live Classes & Events	5,466	-23%	7,077
Online Recorded Classes & Events Presented	1,085	7%	1,014
Views of Online Recorded Classes & Events	283,657	17%	241,861
New Memberships	64,961	-3%	67,053
Active Memberships	298,724	1%	296,251
Number of Branches	21	0%	21

Statement of REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

Revenue	2025	2024
City of Edmonton	57,504,721	55,004,322
Provincial Government	5,651,803	5,651,803
Funding for Capital Projects ¹	12,414,600	8,120,942
Fines and Charges	121,518	114,510
Other ²	3,270,686	3,550,514
Total Revenue	78,963,328	72,442,091
Expenditures		
Salaries, Wages and Benefits	46,228,094	44,719,067
Books and Library Materials ³	9,684,272	8,956,301
Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment	6,089,315	1,931,187
Building Operations	5,368,835	4,664,806
Utilities and Other	4,489,578	4,139,355
Material Goods and Supplies	2,663,821	3,021,860
Services	2,774,292	2,979,152
Carryforwards	556,213	577,391
Total Expenditures	77,854,420	70,989,119
Revenue in Excess of Expenditures	1,108,908	1,452,972

¹ Includes capital funding from grants and contributions

² Includes room rentals, leases, interest earned, donations, photocopying, and proceeds from sale of capital assets

³ Includes salaries, wages, and benefits for Collection, Management and Access staff



