BC Public Library Partners Backgrounder:
Provincial Public Library Funding in British Columbia

Compiled by Kevin Millsip,
Executive Director, BC Libraries Cooperative

There are 71 public library systems in British Columbia serving 99% of the provincial population. The responsibility for the *Libraries Act* is held by the Ministry of Education and is executed through the Libraries Branch. BC public libraries receiving funding from the province, local and regional governments, and other various grants.

The current annual amount of provincial funding for Public Libraries in BC is $14 million. From that $14million, $2,240,550 is allocated to various partner organizations or library federations which provide services and support for public libraries.

That leaves $11,759,450 of provincial funding to be allocated directly to libraries in BC. This funding is allocated to public libraries on a per capita basis.

Public Library Funding Background:

In fiscal year (FY) 09/10 provincial public library funding was reduced from a total of $17.9M to a total of $13.7M, a 25% reduction from FY08/09;

In FY12/13, the public library budget sub-vote was eliminated from the provincial budget; status quo funding was amalgamated within the Ministry of Education's main sub-vote;

The Government made a small increase in the annual allocation, to $14M which was annually allocated in FY12/13, FY 13/14, FY 14/15, FY15/16, FY16/17, FY17/18, FY18/19 and FY19/20;

Documents distributed at lockup 2016 indicated status quo ($14M annual) funding would be allocated to the public library sector in each of FY16/17, 17/18 and 18/19;

Through to FY19/20, the public library sector has received status quo funding of $14M annually for eight consecutive budgets.

During the 10-year period between 09/10 -19/20, inflation in BC totalled 15.58%. If the provincial Public Library funding high of $17.9M/yr had been maintained and, if annual inflation increases had been added to that funding envelope, annual provincial funding for public libraries would now equal $20,688,820.