

From: Deputy Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage <DM_CCH@novascotia.ca>
Sent: January 31, 2019 7:10 PM
To: Greg Herrett <GHerrett@amherst.ca>
Cc: mchase@cumberlandcounty.ns.ca; Walker, Rhonda M <Rhonda.Walker@novascotia.ca>;
denise.corey@cumberlandpubliclibraries.ca
Subject: New Library Funding Model

Dear Mr. Herrett,

Historically, Nova Scotia's public libraries have been funded using a per capita model. In 2011, due to concerns about population changes in some library regions, the population figures that were utilized to determine funding were frozen based on the 2009 estimated population levels and have remained so until now. As you can appreciate, this has caused concern in all library regions as it has benefited some library regions and not others. The proposed model seeks to address this imbalance while also factoring in many of the concerns and opportunities raised by Chief Librarians and Boards.

Given the provincial scope of public libraries, there is no way to exclude population as a factor in the new model. As such, the population figures utilized have been updated to reflect 2017 estimated population levels. The difference in the amount of funding increase that each region would receive is, primarily, a reflection of each regions' population fluctuation.

We understand that a model that is purely population-based would likely lead to further issues in the future. To address this, we engaged with the library community to develop a new funding formula that would meet the needs of the public libraries while limiting the funding concerns that exist in the current per capita model. The formula that was developed was applied across all library regions. We did elect to maintain French Language grants for Eastern Counties Regional Library Board (ECRL) and Western Counties Regional Library Board (WCRL), and an equity grant (based on population density) for ECRL.

I am happy to say that, with the proposed model and provincial increase to the base funding, we have achieved a scenario that will benefit all library regions. No region will be losing money. Additionally, with the creation of a new, dedicated provincial grant funding program (\$500,000), libraries will have access to funds to support innovation and unique regional needs. We will be working with CORL and LBANS to design the fund. It is important to note that access to the Provincial Culture Innovation Fund will also remain intact.

We understand that the model will need to be adjusted over time. As such, a review of the formula will be conducted every five years. Additionally, we will be working collaboratively with library boards and others to develop common measures and accountability metrics to ensure we are reporting consistently on the great work of our libraries across the province. If there are significant concerns that need to be addressed, be assured that we will be working with the libraries to ensure that our libraries are vibrant now, and into the future.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that all Nova Scotians receive equitable access to public libraries and the benefits they provide our communities.

We are confident this model reflects the many discussions held over the past few years concerning the challenges faced by the library system. We further thank the members of LBANS—many of whom represent municipalities, and CORL for their diligence in the development of this model.

We welcome your comments. We look forward to you joining our meeting next week.

Sincerely,

Tracey Taweel
Deputy Minister
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