Revised Proposal for

Increasing the Provincial Operating Grant to Ontario Public Libraries

Presented to

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
November 14, 2012

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Proposal to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for Increasing the Provincial Operating Grant to Ontario Public Libraries

November 14, 2012
(This is an update of a previous proposal dated January 23, 2012. The earlier proposal was based on 2006 Census and CPI figures. This update is based on 2011 Census and CPI figures.)

Introduction
For the past three years the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (the Federation) has had several discussions with staff of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (the Ministry) and Minister Michael Chan regarding the need to increase the Province's public library operating grants (PLOGs). PLOGs have not changed since the late 1990's when they were cut by almost 40%. On average, less than 5% of public library operating budgets is currently funded by the province. Moreover, there is significant disparity in the way the provincial government allocates its current support to public libraries, ranging from $0.49 per resident in communities such as Vaughan to $26.63 per resident in some cottage country communities.

Public libraries must rely increasingly on municipal funding to support their operations, resulting in significant variation in service levels across the province. Efforts to narrow the gap between provincial and local funding would help mitigate the effects of location, as well as fulfill the mandate of the Public Libraries Act, designed to ensure equitable access to services regardless of where residents reside. The funding envelope for PLOGs not only needs a major increase, its distribution formula also needs an overhaul.

While the province has allocated some additional funding to the library sector in recent years, all but pay equity has been one-time and targeted, and not necessarily for purposes that meet local priorities. For example, the Ministry recently allocated $1.9 million that was divided among 385 public library systems as Capacity Building Grants. However, those grants were one-time, were not per capita based, and imposed a funding cap for one library. As a result, those grants were not equitable or sustainable and they perpetuated the inequities of an outdated per household model.

Ontario's public libraries need sustainable ongoing funding in order to properly plan and deliver services that support the priorities of the provincial government such as economic development, employment, early literacy development, integration of new Canadians, efficient government services and cultural vitality. Increasing PLOGs provides the current government with an excellent opportunity to fix a problematic situation created by the Harris government.

The funding model that the Federation proposes is fair and equitable. It is per capita based, but also recognizes the special needs of rural and northern libraries with area supplements. The concepts behind the Federation's proposal are supported by 100% of its membership.

Regardless of what the Ministry decides for PLOG adjustments, the Federation requests that it be consulted in the week preceding the date of the announcement of the Ministry's decision regarding the 2013 PLOG. The Federation can help ensure that the Ministry's decision optimizes acceptance by all public libraries.

Recommendation
The Federation is recommending to the Ministry the following funding proposal:

Increase the total funding envelope for PLOGs from its current $18.7 million (that has remained frozen for 15 years) to $50.9 million (based on 2011 census, CPI figures 1995-2011, while restoring the 40% cuts to the grants in 1996), to be phased in over 5 years.

This proposal is recommended with the following key conditions:
- Year 1 funding is announced as an ongoing sustainable increase, not one-time.
- The Ministry declares its commitment to implementing the remaining four years.

Details of the Federation's PLOG Request
The Federation's proposal is for an increase in the funding envelope of approximately $6.4 million per year over 5 years.

Anticipated Year of Introduction	Per Capita Amount for all libraries	AREA SUPPLEMENTS				Federation's PLOG COST
		Southern Urban Libraries	Southern Rural Libraries	Northern Urban Libraries	Northern Rural Libraries	
Year 1: 2013	$1.81	$0	$3,000	$3,000	$6,000	$25.2M
Year 2: 2014	$2.31	$0	$3,900	$3,900	$7,800	$31.5M
Year 3: 2015	$2.79	$0	$4,800	$4,800	$9,600	$38.0M
Year 4: 2016	$3.27	$0	$5,700	$5,700	$11,400	$44.5M
Year 5: 2017	$3.74	$0	$6,600	$6,600	$13,200	$50.9M

A spreadsheet accompanies this document that shows the impact of the proposed funding model on each of the 387 current recipients of provincial operating grants.

- ✓ No library is to receive less than $3,000, $3900, $4800, $5700 and $6,600 in Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively.
- ✓ No library is to receive less than current funding.
- ✓ Pay equity funding should be excluded from these calculations of provincial operating grants and continue to be paid at current rates.
- ✓ The practice of grand-parenting needs to be maintained well into the future. In years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, there are 61, 23, 11, 8 and 6 libraries requiring grant-parenting, amounting to $667,131, $215,977, $126,085, $94,611 and $68,490, respectively.
- ✓ Government should acknowledge the significant role municipalities play in funding Ontario's libraries and encourage municipalities, at a minimum, to maintain current levels of funding.
- ✓ A funding mechanism (such as the one implemented by the Government of Alberta) needs to be developed, which protects against municipal funding claw backs in response to provincial funding increases.
- ✓ Government should provide additional one-time provincial funding to support the increased operating costs that libraries face due to provincial legislation such as AODA.

Assumptions Used in Recommended Funding Model

The proposed funding model incorporates the following assumptions:

- For First Nation libraries, the data source for 2011 population figures was Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Affairs Canada regarding on-reserve registered Indians,
- For all other libraries, the data source for 2011 population figures was Statistics Canada
- The base line for CPI was 1995.
- The 387 provincial operating grant recipients and the individual amounts of their grants correspond to data received from the Ministry directly.
- Designation of northern versus southern libraries matches the territories of Ontario Library Services – North and Southern Ontario Library Services.
- Designation of rural versus urban libraries uses definitions of Statistic Canada.

Comparison of Funding Allocations

Below is a chart that shows a comparison of how funding is allocated to the four geographic segments for the recommended model versus the existing model.

Library Location	Percent of Libraries	Number of Libraries	Percent of Population Served	Population Served	Percent of Funds Allocated to Each Group		Effective Per Capita Funding in Each Group	
					Existing Funding	Proposed Year 5 Funding Model	Existing Funding	Proposed Year 5 Funding Model
Rural + South	32.8%	127	14.0%	1,795,348	19.5%	15.0%	$2.03	$4.24
Urban + North	6.2%	24	4.0%	505,024	5.6%	4.0%	$2.06	$4.05
Rural + North	38.3%	148	1.7%	222,808	3.5%	5.5%	$2.97	$12.51
Urban + South	22.7%	88	80.3%	10,280,679	71.4%	75.5%	$1.30	$3.74

Importance of MTC Funding to Public Library Sector

Today's public libraries are more than just books. They are filled with valuable digital information and equipped with technology that citizens can use free of charge to empower themselves and attain personal goals, often from home on a 24/7 basis. Libraries provide expert service in searching out and finding the information that Ontarians need to be successful in today's dynamic and global economy. The many Ontarians who do not have access to computers or the Internet at home, rely heavily on the public library's computers and other technology to access information and services.

The public library's wide range of services includes those that support:

- small business and entrepreneurs,
- career development and employment,
- literacy development,

- integration of new Canadians, and
- access to information on government and community support programs.

Public libraries are community hubs and are already a trusted component of the public's travel and usage patterns. No other cultural institution sees as wide a range of residents (demographically) as the public library.

The level of municipal funding available to public libraries is too variable to ensure service equity and access to all, regardless of where citizens reside. Public libraries need increased sustainable funding from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport in order to properly plan and deliver services that support provincial priorities. Increases to PLOGs would go toward expanding hours of service, information technology, collections, and special programs. Early in 2011, dozens of public library boards wrote to then Parliamentary Assistant Laura Albanese detailing specifically how an increase in their PLOG would be spent.

Public libraries provide a significant return on investment. Without them Ontario communities are at a major disadvantage in recovering from the current economic recession and growing a knowledge economy.

Overwhelming Support of Public Library Sector
In a formal vote by the Federation's membership during the week of January 10, 2011, 100% of the ballots cast fully supported a proposal based on a fixed per capita formula with area supplements. The proposed 5-year implement plan was approved unanimously by the Federation's Board of Directors on September 21, 2012. The Federation's membership respectfully requests that the recommended funding proposal be duly considered as part of the Ministry's Operating Budget for 2013/14.