



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

Libraries support budget initiatives to improve accessibility, provide new resources for Canadians with print disabilities, and support Indigenous languages

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The Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) is applauding the federal government's commitment to invest in equitable library access. CFLA-FCAB had called on the government to make targeted investments that will help libraries provide books in formats that are fully accessible for all Canadians. Measures announced March 19th will help Canada's library community achieve the long-term goal of universal access to knowledge.

"Canadians with print disabilities currently have access to less than 10% of published works and Indigenous communities have less than 5%. This has placed the print disabled community at a disadvantage for far too long," said Alix-Rae Stefanko, Chair of CFLA-FCAB and a youth services librarian at Winnipeg Public Library. "We are very pleased that the government has committed to supporting the production and delivery of accessible formats, this is an important step to creating an inclusive publishing environment in Canada."

The Budget announced \$3 million in the current fiscal year would be given to the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) to produce new accessible reading materials to be made available at Canada's public libraries. It also committed to a strategy that will support the production and distribution of accessible reading materials through publishing incentives. Canada's independent publishing industry will receive \$22.8 million over 5 years to increase production of accessible books for persons with print disabilities.

"We were also pleased to see government's support for preserving, promoting, and revitalizing Indigenous languages." added Stefanko "The role of libraries and archives is critical to moving this forward."

Much of the historical, cultural, linguistic and material knowledge of Indigenous peoples' has been held by libraries, archives, museums, and records centres. Indigenous knowledge should be preserved and protected in a variety of media for use by current and future generations in a respectful and sensitive manner. Consulting Indigenous communities with respect for proper protocols to access and care for

culturally sensitive records is paramount to this goal. By providing support for Indigenous people with scholarships for education and Internship opportunities to train in library services or archival methods, the Government will help support “opportunities for Indigenous library, archival and information professionals as well as the inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies in the Canadian library and archives profession through culturally appropriate pedagogy, recruitment practices, professional and continuing education and cross-cultural training in collaboration with local Indigenous stakeholders and partners.”¹

The CFLA-FCAB looks forward to working with its members and government to ensure the \$333.7 million invested over the next five years to preserve, promote and revitalize Indigenous languages addresses these needs.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération Canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) is the national voice of Canada's library associations. Our purpose is to advance library excellence in Canada, champion library values and the value of libraries and influence national and international public policy impacting libraries and their communities.

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¹Camille Callison, “Indigenous Peoples’ New Canoe,” in *Aboriginal and Visible Minority Librarians: Oral Histories from Canada*, ed. Deborah Lee and Mahalakshmi Kumaran (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 144.