

Executive Director's 2022 AGM Report

Report to: The FOPL Board and Members
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: April 17, 2023

Recommendation

1. **THAT the FOPL board and members receive this report as information.**

Report

Executive Director's Report for the Annual General Meeting 2023

It is my privilege to present the Executive Director's Report for the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) for the year 2022. Over the past year, FOPL has been actively engaged in various activities and initiatives to support our member libraries and advance our advocacy efforts. We have transitioned from recovery mode in 2021 to focusing on capacity development and membership engagement, while continuing to prioritize advocacy as a crucial part of our work.

Advocacy remains our main priority and we have been actively building relationships with appointed members of government. In February 2022, FOPL and the Ontario Library Association (OLA) had a meeting with Deputy Minister Sarah Harrison and Assistant Deputy Minister (MHSTCI) Katherine Kelly to discuss our priorities and concerns. These proved to be critical meetings as we have developed our relationship with the MTCS throughout the provincial elections and into 2022.

Our Government Relations priorities culminated shortly thereafter in the formal submission of our budget ask to the Ministry of Finance in February 2022. Our budget asks have remained consistent, and we have requested for the maintenance of critical provincial funding for Ontario's public libraries at current levels, working with municipalities and the Federal government to prevent unsustainable cuts to public library funding. We have also emphasized the need to implement a sustainable funding model for public libraries on reserve in partnership with First Nations Public Library leaders, and enhance the existing direct provincial funding support for public libraries on reserve to fund library operations and ensure a living income for frontline library staff in these communities. Additionally, we requested for critical e-learning support and fair access to modern, digital resources for all Ontario public libraries through the creation of an Ontario Digital



Public Library, leveraging the province's significant purchasing power to give all Ontarians access to a common core of high-quality e-learning and online resources.

In addition to our budget submission, FOPL and OLA were invited to participate in the Pre-Budget Consultations with the Minister of Finance. We attended the Windsor area session and had the opportunity to speak to the Minister, highlighting our three main priorities and providing local context of how Windsor Public Library and Bkejwanong First Nations Public Library have supported their communities before and during the pandemic. We also assisted in coordinating deputations from many of our library members to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, with representation from all over Ontario.

Our advocacy efforts were met with extremely positive results, with three out of four major parties endorsing and supporting our budget asks leading up to the provincial election in June 2022. This success is a direct result of the collective efforts of FOPL Admin, Board, and Members through meetings, emails, letters, and deputations. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this great success! Immediately afterward FOPL and members embarked on an engagement campaign to reach out and meet with newly elected or returning officials, inviting them into our libraries and planning meet and greet sessions.

Membership engagement has been a key focus for FOPL in 2022. We have implemented a bi-annual Caucus meeting, where members can connect, share ideas, and collaborate on common issues and initiatives. These Caucus meetings have been well-received and have provided valuable opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing among our members. We have also launched an info series of webinars, exclusive to FOPL members, covering various topics of interest, such as advocacy strategies, funding opportunities, and best practices in library management. We are also proud to share that FOPL has joined The National Indigenous Knowledge and Language Alliance (NIKLA), as we continue to seek out avenues for allyship and support for First Nations communities and libraries.

Looking ahead, FOPL will continue to prioritize advocacy efforts, building relationships with government stakeholders, and engaging in strategic partnerships to further advance the interests of Ontario's public libraries. We will continue to work towards our budget asks, including maintaining critical provincial funding for public libraries, advocating for sustainable funding models for First Nations libraries, and creating an Ontario Digital Public Library to ensure fair access to modern digital resources for all Ontarians.

2022 has been a year of transformation and development for FOPL. We have made significant progress in our advocacy efforts, building relationships with government stakeholders, and engaging in strategic partnerships. Our budget asks have been submitted, and we have received endorsements and commitments from major



parties, reflecting the impact of our collective efforts. We have also focused on supporting our members through professional development, networking opportunities, and advocacy support.

Thank you to the Ontario library community and our members for your ongoing support of FOPL. Our efforts have a very real impact on creating a sustainable future for our public libraries. I am excited to see what we can accomplish next.

Kind Regards,

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Executive Director

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