

The department can provide the following statement. We recognize that our public libraries are affected by increasing costs and growing demand for library services. We are committed to working with public library leaders to find solutions that will best support sustainable and affordable core library services.

The Province has provided an annual regional library operating grant for several decades. Library funding is shared between the province, municipalities and regional library boards based on a revised funding model implemented in 2020-21. Funding to libraries increased by \$2.1 million in 2020-21 and a new \$500,000 development fund was established, which included Cumberland Public Libraries.

Currently, the Province provides \$16.5 million in operational funding annually to public libraries. For this current fiscal year, 2023-24, libraries received an additional \$500,000 to assist with increasing operational pressures. They also received \$200,000 for supporting women's health and \$300,000 in project funding. Specifically, Cumberland Public Libraries received \$775,400 in operating funds from the Province for 2023-24. Public libraries manage their own budgets, including wages for staff, and determine the level of service they are able to provide. The Province is reviewing the annual operating formula which expires on March 31, 2025.