

Grow Gather Guide

2024 Annual
Report



Introduction

2024 was a year for Yellowhead Regional Library to **Grow, Gather** and **Guide**.

These three words form the theme of this year's annual report and reflect YRL's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan direction: **YRL is a Verb**. They capture how we support member libraries by growing resources and skills, gathering insights and collaboration, and guiding effective service and growth.

Behind the scenes, YRL staff enhanced day-to-day member library operations through advice, support, technology, and policy guidance. This helped local library staff build skills and deliver efficient, responsive service grounded in best practices and community needs.

Strategic direction from the YRL Board continued to shape our work. In 2024, the Board approved several new policies that strengthened governance and long-term sustainability. These actions reinforce our commitment to intellectual freedom, equity and access, advocating for professional and independent public library service across Alberta.

Together, these efforts reflect a deep commitment to strong public and school libraries and the communities they serve. As we look ahead, YRL remains a reliable, responsive partner, living the spirit of **Grow. Gather. Guide**. every step of the way.





Grow

In 2024, YRL supported member libraries in growing access to collections and resources and growing community impact, key priorities outlined in our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan. We invested in cataloguing improvements, delivered focused training, and supported programming that reflected local needs. These efforts helped libraries grow where it counts: in their services, staff, and relationships with the people they serve.

Growing Access to Collections and Resources

- ➔ Transitioned our larger member public libraries to OCLC WorldShare, improving cataloging speed and helping libraries circulate timely, community-relevant materials to patrons faster.
- ➔ Established team item sorting procedures at headquarters, improving delivery times between libraries and ensuring patrons received their holds quickly.
- ➔ Introduced new cataloging standards to support the growth of Library of Things collections, allowing member libraries to expand core collections and give patrons access to more creative, non-traditional items.
- ➔ Launched two new databases, ComicsPlus and The Athletic, helping public libraries meet community demand for diverse, accessible online resources.

Growing Community Impact

- ➔ Improved the delivery of monthly usage statistics, giving public libraries clearer insights into local needs and helping them adapt services to better support their communities.
- ➔ Launched seven new kits, enabling public and school libraries to deliver creative, cost-effective programs that reflect community interests and expand access to informal learning opportunities.

Gather

In 2024, YRL focused on gathering and sharing knowledge, relationships and support, and gathering tools to stay connected, priorities that align with our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan. We responded to thousands of staff inquiries, on-boarded new managers, and shared tools, resources and ideas to help libraries solve problems, stay connected and deliver high-quality service. These efforts helped libraries gather the knowledge, connections and tools they need to collaborate, adapt and deliver consistent, high-quality services to their communities.

Gathering and Sharing Knowledge, Relationships and Support

- ➔ Shared over **190 intranet resources**, including 17 new public library documents and a new 11-page school library hub, giving staff access to up-to-date tools that support efficient, community-focused service.
- ➔ Fulfilled **23 curriculum support requests** and **37 material selection projects** for school libraries, sourcing 169 borrowed items and hundreds of new acquisitions at reduced cost.
- ➔ Strengthened our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by welcoming an **Indigenous Initiatives Librarian** to help build respectful relationships with First Nations in our region, including Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and Paul First Nation.
- ➔ On-boarded **eight new managers** across five public libraries, supported by updated orientation resources to promote confident leadership transitions.

Gathering Tools to Stay Connected

- ➔ Installed **60 new wireless access points** at member public libraries, to improve service continuity, internet reliability, and patron access to online resources.
- ➔ Improved meeting and training spaces at YRL headquarters with **new, comprehensive audiovisual equipment** to support virtual board meetings, staff development and planning, making it easier for library staff and trustees to connect, learn and collaborate.



Guide

In 2024, YRL supported member libraries in **guiding technology and systems improvements**, and **guiding library governance**, both of which are core priorities in our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan. YRL also worked on internal policies and procedures to **guide organizational strength and culture**. Through targeted consulting, infrastructure improvements and policy development, we helped libraries operate with greater stability, transparency and strategic focus.

Guiding Technology and Systems Improvements

- ➔ Implemented a **reboot-to-restore software solution** to protect public access computers and user privacy.
- ➔ Introduced **cybersecurity awareness training** to member public libraries, allowing library staff to mitigate cyber risks and protect patron data.

Guiding Library Governance

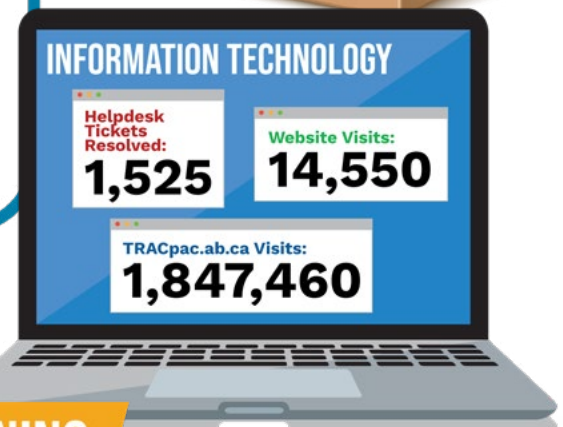
- ➔ Conducted **26 outreach visits and/or presentations to municipal councils and library boards, and school division boards** to strengthen partnerships and share information on YRL services.
- ➔ Participated in and distributed the **provincial 2023-24 System Salary Wages and Compensation Report** to provide public libraries with accurate data for decision-making.

Guiding Organizational Strength and Culture

- ➔ Introduced new human resources policies to support our commitment to a healthy work environment, including a **Disconnect from Work** policy and a **Reduced Scent** policy.
- ➔ Introduced new policies on **Information Technology, Use of Artificial Intelligence**, and **Video Camera Surveillance**, and a new bylaw on **Public Attendance and Presentation at Board Meetings** to support transparency, security, and alignment with governance best practices.
- ➔ Updated the **Collection Development Policy** to reinforce YRL's commitment to intellectual freedom and guide collection development support that helps libraries build relevant, balanced collections that serve diverse community needs.

A Year in Review

By the Numbers



INDIGENOUS SERVICES



Program and Initiative Hours



In-library or Community Programs



Conclusion

As libraries continue to evolve, YRL remains committed to responsive, forward-thinking support that helps member libraries thrive. Grounded in our 2023–2025 Strategic Plan and guided by the belief that YRL is a Verb, we will continue to grow capacity, gather insight, and guide sustainable service. With this plan now in its final year, we've already begun shaping our next strategic direction—ensuring that our work continues to meet the needs of libraries and the communities they serve, now and into the future.

Yellowhead Regional Library

Mailing Address

Box 4270, Spruce Grove, AB T7X 3B4

Building Location

433 King Street, Spruce Grove, AB T7X 2C6

Phone

780-962-2003

Toll-free

1-877-962-2003

yrl.ab.ca