

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

CUMBERLAND PUBLIC
LIBRARIES
P.O BOX 220
AMHERST, NS
B4H 3Z2



PHOTO COURTESY OF MUNICIPALITY OF CUMBERLAND

OUR LIBRARY BOARD

April 2025 - March 2026

Councillor Terry McManaman
Town of Amherst

Councillor Angela McCormick
Municipality of Cumberland

Councillor Carla Black (Treasurer)
Town of Oxford

Kim Ford
(Chair April 2025 - March 2026)
Community Member

Mark Joseph
Provincial Appointee (Appointed March 2026)

David Beattie
Provincial Appointee (Appointed March 2026)



Library Board Members (From left to right): Terry McManaman, Angela McCormick, Carla Black, and Kim Ford.

Missing from photo: Mark Joseph and David Beattie.

MESSAGE FROM LIBRARY BOARD CHAIR

Over the past two years, I have come to see the Library more clearly than ever as a social imperative. It is far more than a place to borrow books—it is a place where people find connection, opportunity, and belonging.

Every day, the Library brings people together. It is where newcomers build confidence and community, where children discover the joy of reading, where young people explore their potential, where seniors find companionship, and where neighbours connect across generations and experiences. It is one of the few public institutions where everyone is welcome, and where access to knowledge, technology, culture, and community is available to all.

The Library is, in many ways, a reflection of the society we aspire to build inclusive, equitable, resilient, and filled with possibility. Its value cannot be measured solely by circulation statistics or program attendance, but by the lives it enriches, the barriers it removes, and the stronger communities it helps create.

As we look ahead, my hope is that citizens, governments, businesses, and community partners continue to invest in the Library and the essential role it plays in civic life. Cumberland Public Libraries is more than a public service—it is a cornerstone of our community and a catalyst for opportunity. It continues to evolve, reaching people where they are, responding to changing needs, and creating spaces where everyone can learn, connect, and thrive.

The future of our Library is one we build together. With continued collaboration, advocacy, and support, Cumberland Public Libraries will remain a vibrant and essential institution for generations to come.

COUNCILLOR ANGELA MCCORMICK
ACTING LIBRARY BOARD CHAIR

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

What does a library mean to the community? This past year, we've asked that question and received pretty amazing answers, many of which we've been sharing on social media. The overarching themes have been around books, safe spaces, free spaces, welcoming and helpful staff, and access to essential services. The responses have been overwhelmingly positive (there was even a bit of artwork in there).

However, public libraries in Nova Scotia are struggling and Cumberland Public Libraries is no exception. Static funding since 2020 despite years of rising inflation and operating costs have brought us to a point where the reduction of services and hours is inevitable. Without sustainable funding the many things you love about your library can't exist.

Despite the ongoing financial crisis, library staff are still doing an exceptional job at connecting the community with what they need. In the past year we've helped people connect with services, learn how to use technology, find a great read, and make friends in their community.

We continue to look for ways to raise money to ensure that the library remains a place that people can go to find what they need.

You can help by telling government officials that a community needs a library. We are not just a building with books, but an organization that is funded and can offer the social infrastructure needed in modern civilization.

DENISE COREY
LIBRARY DIRECTOR



OUR TEAM

April 2025 - March 2026

Headquarters and Amherst Branch Staff:

Library Director - Denise Corey
Deputy Library Director - Chantelle Taylor
Community Engagement Librarian - Charlotte Gallivan
Systems Manager - Steve Weatherbee
Administrative Assistant / Bookkeeper - Francis Ikpekhia
Library Assistant - Adam Davies
Interlibrary Loans Coordinator - Vanessa Sawatzky
Youth Services Library Assistant - Julie Allison-Savage
Library Clerk - Lisa Strathearn
Community Technology Trainer - Grace Belliveau-Perry
Borrow by Mail Clerk - Dianna Lawless
Library Clerk - Rhi Arlow
Branch Library Assistant - Kieran Neale
Shipping Receiving Clerk/Delivery Driver - Aldon Brewer
Summer Students - Avery Brown, Isabelle Ettinger, and Zoe Smith

Branch Staff:

Advocate Harbour - Leslie Allen and Gisele Thériault
Oxford - Patrick Allaby, Jil Bona, and Leslie Allen
Parrsboro - Amber Allard and Cindy Walker
Pugwash - Archan Knotz, Marsha Amanova, Jil Bona, and Marney Simmons
River Hebert - Henri Etta Stevens
Springhill - Cathy Canning, Candy Grant, Melissa Gauthier, and Allicia Payne

Get social with us!



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libraries



@cumberland_pl



@cumberland_pl

www.cumberlandpubliclibraries.ca



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YEAR IN REVIEW

ADVOCATE REOPENS!

On March 17, our Advocate location was closed unexpectedly due to structural issues.

We were able to continue library service in a limited capacity, with a satellite service once a week at the Advocate Fire Hall. This included a limited collection, some take and make crafts, and holds for patrons to pick up.

While this was happening, the community of Advocate Harbour got to work to fundraise and advocate for a new library space. Because of their tireless efforts, with the help of the Municipality of Cumberland, we were able to open our newly built library

eight months after our unexpected closure. Our grand reopening (pictured above) was held on November 22.

We want to take this time to thank the amazing community of Advocate Harbour, and the Advocate District Development Association. It is because of your hard work and determination that we are able to have this fantastic new space, and continue to provide library service in your community.

PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

This year, we completed a strategic plan! We hired Peak Experiences to help guide us through this process. The goal of this plan is to help us better

serve our communities over the next three years. Peak Experiences conducted multiple information sessions with staff, a community survey, and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis.

From this, five core values were identified: accessibility and inclusivity, welcoming and safe environment, equity and fair treatment, quality and service excellence, and trustworthiness and integrity. As well, a new vision and mission statement for the organization were written.

We are excited to have a plan for our future, and look forward to making the library even better! You can read our strategic plan at:
cumberlandpubliclibraries.ca/about-us/

This strategic plan was made possible by a grant from the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage.

**Scan here to view our
2026-2029 Strategic Plan!**



AN ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY FOR ALL

Accessibility is essential to make the library a place that everyone can learn, connect, and grow. That is why we established a Cumberland specific *Library Accessibility Committee* to continue our work towards being barrier-free by 2030. This group was formed after our original committee, the *Interregional Advisory Committee for Library Accessibility* was disbanded in April 2025.

So far, the committee has met to oversee the library's progress on our 2025 Accessibility Plan, and to provide meaningful contributions to our accessibility work.

This year, we have:

- Published our 2025 Accessibility Plan,
- Established our new Accessibility Committee,
- Completed an accessibility audit on the Springhill Library,
- The Municipality of Cumberland County replaced the ramp at the Springhill Library,
- The Town of Amherst leveled the Seminar Room floor at the Amherst Library.

WELCOMING PEOPLE TO OUR SPACES

The library is a third space; a place you can come to learn something new, connect with your community, find the information you need, and more.

Over the past year, we have welcomed community members, local organizations, government departments, and businesses into our spaces to share with our patrons.

Some of the organizations we have hosted include:

- NS health for vaccination clinics,
- Lilac Place: Resources for Women,
- Ecology Action Centre,
- Service Canada information kiosks,
- Sexual Health Centre for Cumberland County,
- And many more!

Each time we open our doors to organizations, gaps within our communities become smaller. We are so fortunate that these groups have worked with us to address critical issues.

SUPPORT FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

26.5K

COMMUNITY DONATIONS
We have received donations from amazing community members. Their contributions enrich the public library system in Cumberland County by helping us provide new books and programs for our thousands of library visitors each year.

6.2K

LIBRARY FUNDRAISING
Our community continues to support us by engaging with our fundraising initiatives. This year, we hosted knit-a-thons at three of our branches, book sales, and more!

2.6K

FYIDOCTORS SPECIAL FUNDRAISING EFFORTS
FYidoctors Amherst fundraised for us throughout the year. They did so by having book sales, basket draws, colouring contests, and more. Thank you for this amazing support FYi!



PROGRAMS

We hosted a total of **565 programs** attended by **7,284 people**.

Whether you are attending an author reading, book club, a craft program, or March Break, we have something for everyone!



237
SRC participants



1,905.75
Hours of reading
completed

Authors we have hosted this year:

- Richard Dittami,
- Christopher Murphy,
- Leslie Crewe,
- and Jill MacLean.



SUMMER READING CLUB 2025

Our SRC officially launched on June 23, with kickoff parties across the County.

Following our launch, we held **92 free programs** for all ages to enjoy. Programs we hosted this summer included: Adventures in Aus-obots, The Great Library Race, Domino Derby, Chalk the Walk, and more. 237 kids and teens signed up for the SRC, and read for approximately 1,905.75 hours.

WHAT DOES THE LIBRARY MEAN TO YOU?

We asked the community this simple question. The responses we received were something special! Thank you to everyone who has shared their library story.

"Some of my earliest memories are of going to the library with my mother. Then it was going by myself (at a very young age) to pick up her books and my own. When I didn't have the money to buy books; the library always allowed me to read for free. It's been my access to education and pleasure. I would be lost without it."

"I've been going to the library since childhood, as I lived right across the street from it. I love looking at all the different books, a peaceful feeling comes over me when I walk in."

"...I love bookstores, but they're often too expensive. It's such a blessing to know that I can order it from the library's province-wide service and enjoy it at no cost. Thank you CPL staff!"

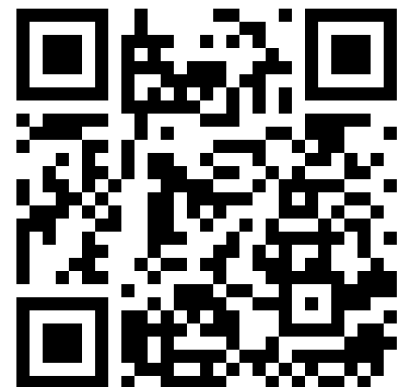
"Watching my dad bring home books week after week, studying and learning into his 80s makes me so happy and proud. Dad's excellent wellbeing can be attributed to his strength and character but your library is an integral part of the work he does..."

"A meeting place full of great information"

"It's the last free place where people can go to sit and read, enjoy community and access programs and resources. It's a place where youth can fall in love with reading and make new friends."

"The library means the world to me. I get to read all the books I want and I don't pay a cent to do it. All the newest books, books by my favourite authors, and biographies. I'm a senior and "Books by Mail" make my day when they are in my mailbox."

Scan here to share your library story!



2025-2026 NUMBERS



Increase of 18.5% from
2024/25.

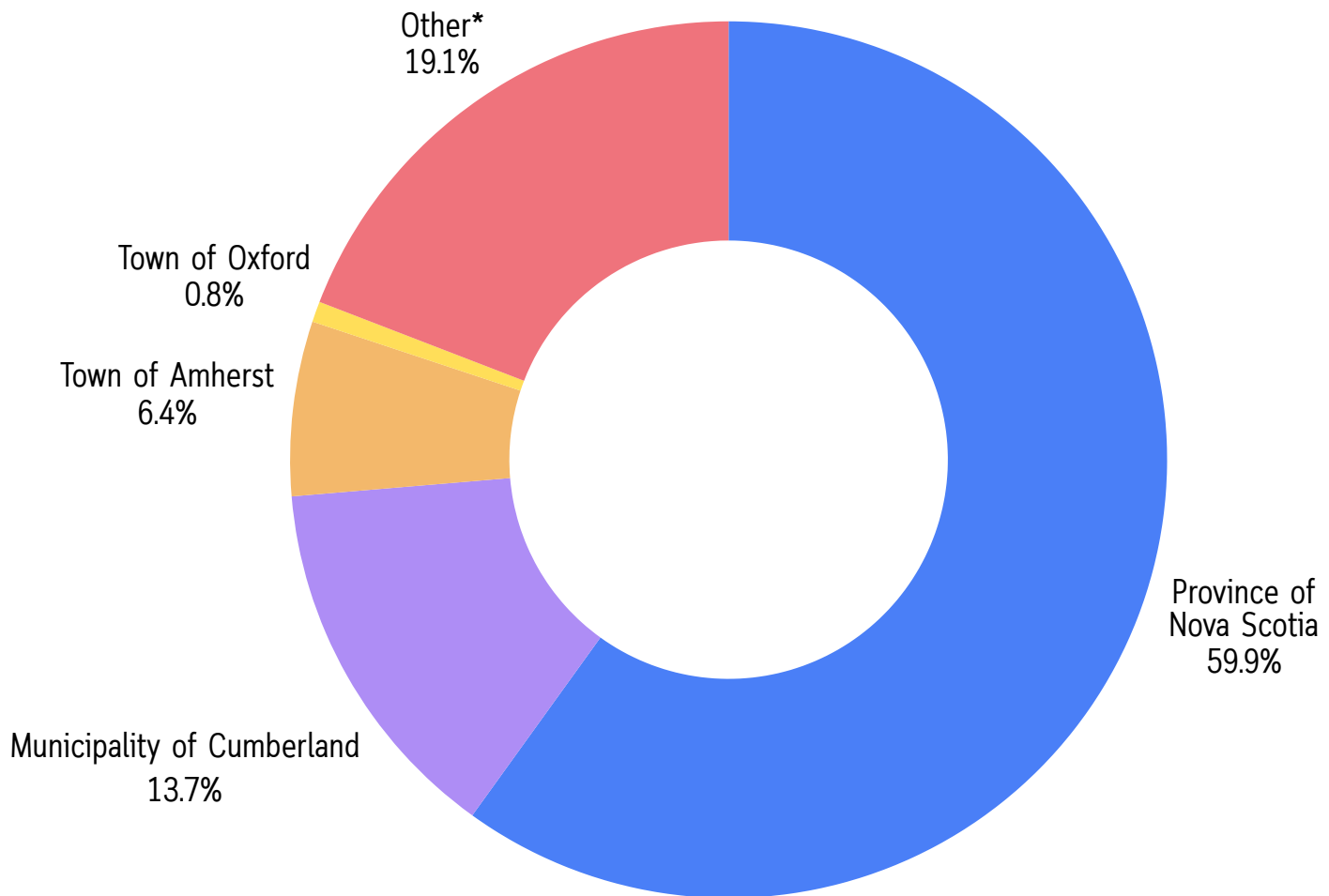


Reduction of 3% from
2024/25.



LIBRARY FINANCES

Sources of Funding



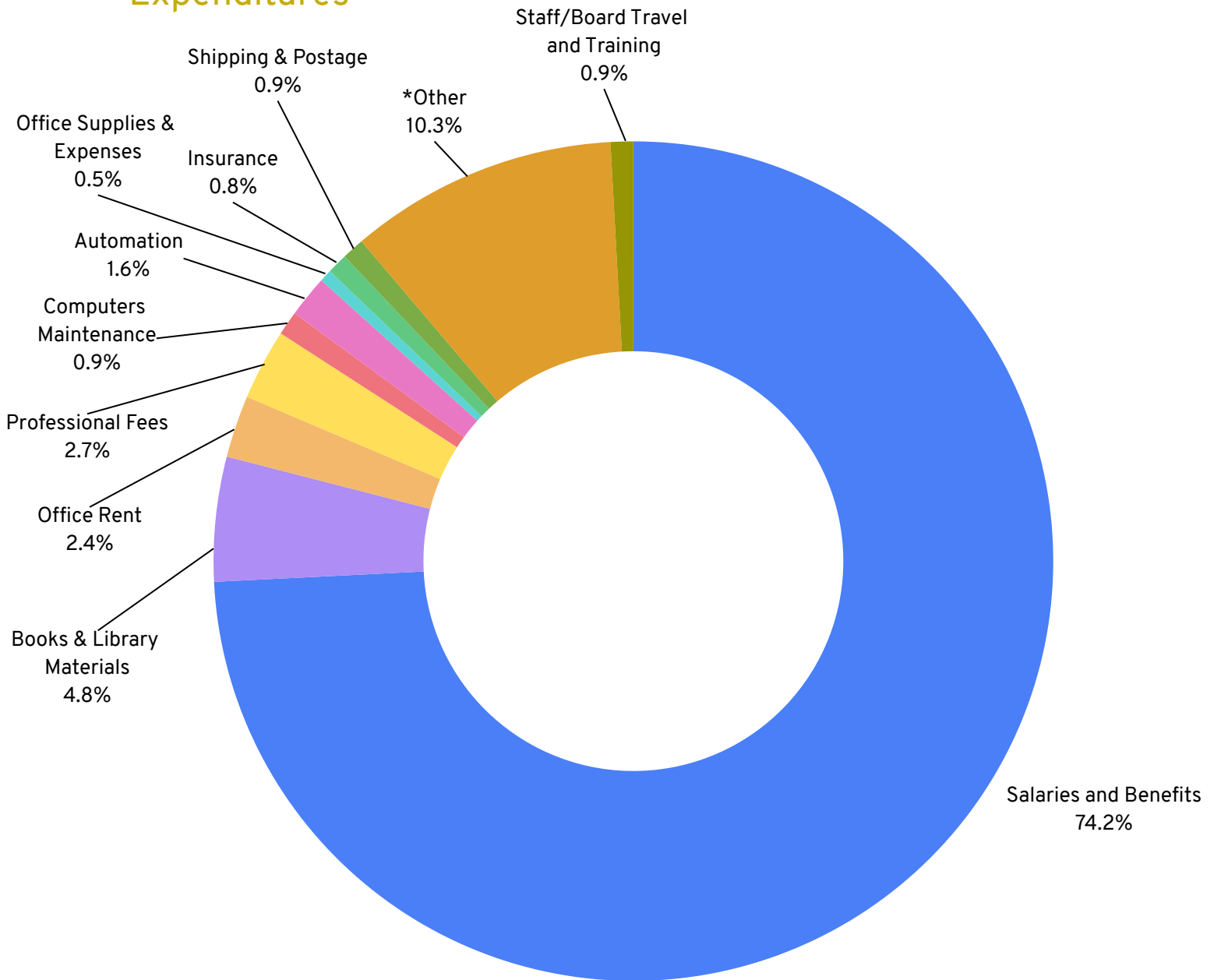
Province of Nova Scotia	\$813,100
Cumberland	\$186,267
Amherst	\$87,299
Oxford	\$10,335
Other*	\$259,644
Subtotal	\$1,356,645

*Other Includes:

- Donations
- Grants
- Fundraising
- Interest
- Fees

LIBRARY FINANCES

Expenditures



Salaries and Benefits	\$1,047,953
Books and Library Materials	\$67,662
Office Rent	\$33,783
Professional Fees	\$38,547
Computers Maintenance	\$13,063
Automation	\$22,747
Office Supplies and Expenses	\$6,698
Insurance	\$11,158
Shipping and Postage	\$12,128
Staff/Board Travel and Training	\$12,297
*Other	\$146,022

*Other Includes:

- Programming
- Vehicle operations
- Advertising
- Amortization

Total Expenditures = \$1,412,058

THANKS!

We wish to thank the individuals, businesses, and organizations who made financial or in-kind contributions to the library during the past year:

Amherst Lions Club

Sally Austin

Lisa Baldwin

Julia Baumann

Joan Cameron

Jean Carr

David Christie

Elizabeth Clinton

Denise Corey

Create Beauty Everyday Foundation

Dale Davis

Nancy Farrell

FYidoctors Amherst

George Godfrey

Peggy Holmes

John Hudson

Wendy Iler

Sally Krueger

Robin Latta

Karen MacDonald

Maggie's Place Cumberland

Jean Matthews

Julie McLellan

Medavie Bluecross

Judith Milner

MNP

Isabelle Mundle

Northumberland Properties

Jeff Price

Lori Quinn

Veronica Richards

Jean Sealy

Delphine Seto

Tantramar Chapter IODE

Patricia Thompson



Maggie's Place
A Resource Centre for Families



MNP



CONTACT INFORMATION

Advocate Harbour Library

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Four Fathers Memorial Library (Amherst)

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Oxford Library

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Parrsboro Library

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Pugwash Library

10182 Durham Street
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River Hebert Library

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Springhill Library

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