

## **Q&A for Public Library MLA Receptions**

### **Q. What is the event?**

A. The idea is to hold a reception thanking the province for its support to libraries, in libraries across BC, on the same day.

### **Q. Why are we holding these events?**

A. We are concerned after reading the papers and other indicators that the provincial grants to public libraries are at risk of being eliminated. Our thinking is that it is easier to keep funding than it is to get it back once it's lost. So we are holding receptions in public libraries in every provincial constituency in BC on the same day. The purpose of the event is to thank the Province for its funding and to use that opportunity to educate every MLA on the role and importance of provincial funding.

### **Q. Do we expect media coverage?**

A. Yes, by holding this event at libraries across the province on the same day we hope to garner media attention.

### **Q. How will the media know about these events?**

A. The BCLTA will contact the major and provincial media, but every library should contact their own local, regional and community media. We have created a press release to help you with this. Please see the BCLTA website ([www.bclta.org/mlarec.html](http://www.bclta.org/mlarec.html)) to access the local media press release.

### **Q. Can we hold our reception on another day?**

A. I suppose you could, but this would undermine the impact of holding province-wide events on the same day.

### **Q. What do we do then if we cannot hold an event on the day that has been chosen?**

A. We would strongly suggest that you lend support to a library that can hold a reception on the appointed day and have your officials go to that library instead.

### **Q. Does every library need to hold an event?**

A. No. In fact, we should try to only have one event for an MLA to attend; so libraries will need to coordinate their efforts. If there are several libraries in your area and only one MLA, please contact each other and/or your Federation to coordinate one event.

### **Q. What is the best way to coordinate what we are doing?**

A. BCLTA is taking the lead on this project but has limited staff capacity and is counting on the library federations to assist in organizing within the various geographic regions of the province. Libraries themselves also know who their neighbors are, and they need to get on the phone and talk to one another.

**Q Who should be invited?**

A. We suggest that each library invite its MLA(s). If you have sitting members from both sides of the house you may want to coordinate with another library in your area. Also, mayors, councillors, chairs, and directors from your municipality and/or regional district should be invited to partner in the event. Finally, it is particularly important to invite groups that can advocate on the part of the library and its programs. This may be groups or individuals...

**Q. Are we a concerned that the mayor and council will wonder why this event is aimed at thanking the Province, which funds only 10% of our budgets?**

A. If the provincial grant is lost, the cities will be affected – politicians will see the logic track. Also, in the fall at UBCM the public library community (through BCLTA, BCLA, and ABCPLD) thanks local governments for their contribution to libraries at a special reception. This year's UBCM Library Reception is scheduled for the evening of October 1 in Vancouver.

**Q. How do we go about inviting local MLAs and local elected officials?**

A. BCLTA has created some sample invitations that are available on the website. However, while provincial government folk appreciate receiving a written invitation, we strongly encourage you to also phone your constituency office and City Hall to explain the importance of the event and encourage full participation. A sample telephone script is also available on the website.

**Q. What should we do on the day?**

A. Every library can organize its own agenda but we suggest providing refreshments and offering an official thank you of some kind – this implies speeches and perhaps library tours. We have included a list of suggestions on the website. The event should be fun, but we need to make the point that provincial funding buys cooperative services and leverages significant value to the people of BC.

**Q. Do you have any other suggestions?**

A. Yes, just a few. Alberta has had some recent success with library promotion to politicians. They pointed out to their MLAs the many non-book services that the library provides; this was effective in helping them see how the library has kept up with our changing society. They know that we have books; they don't know about our other services – we need to show them. You may wish to donate a CD, DVD or book to the library in your MLA's name, as a token of appreciation for his or her attendance.

**Q. Is there financial support for this event?**

A. No, there is no central financial support for this event. However, you may have local organizations, like Friends of the Library that would be willing to assist with the cost.

Good luck and have fun!