

Ontario Library Service Informal Library Chat
Summary Notes
August 19, 2021 10am ET (9am CT)

OLS Updates

- **OLS Virtual Conference**
 - o [Registration is now open](#) for the 2021 Ontario Library Service Virtual Conference. This year's theme is Now What?! Re-thinking Your Library. The conference will be taking place on Tuesday, September 21 from 10am-4pm ET.
 - o [Lightning Talks Call for Proposals](#): We invite Ontario public library staff and board members to submit a brief (3 sentences) description for the lightning talk session on the future of the library. We welcome submissions on any aspect or topic on the future direction of library services. We are seeking lightning talk proposals that focus on trends that you envision we'll be seeing more of in the future, rather than on what you did during COVID-19. The deadline for submissions is Friday, August 27, 2021.
 - o Visit the [conference website](#) for a complete program and for more information on the Lightning Talks Call for Proposals.
- **Public Library Operating Grant, Pay Equity Grant, and First Nation Salary Supplement application**
 - o The application deadline for the Public Library Operating Grant, Pay Equity Grant and First Nation Salary Supplement is **Thursday, September 23 at 5pm**.
 - o Every library CEO should have received an e-mail from Ministry staff, with the background information. The application is completed in [Transfer Payment Ontario](#) (TPON).
 - o Visit the '[Funding and Grants](#)' section of the OLS website for more information, including who to contact for help, and a list of FAQs about the application process.
- **Ontario Library Association Strategic Planning Survey**
 - o The Ontario Library Association has embarked on a process to develop a new strategic plan for 2021 to 2024. OLA is requesting input from the library community [through a survey](#) to help determine the strategic direction of the organization.
- **Ryerson University Radio Station – Story on the importance of libraries**
 - o The Ryerson University radio station is working on a story about the important role libraries have played during the pandemic. Here is a summary of the project and invitation to contribute:

“During the pandemic, reading has kept me sane. Libraries have been a bright spot. As accessible spaces, Ontario libraries faced a challenge to support their communities and they adapted well to do so. This began with a virtual shift and additional services. This includes bookmobiles, calling senior patrons to check on their well-being, supporting food banks, rolling out vaccines by age and helping book appointments, some libraries went fine free to ensure more access to materials and Wi-Fi access was extended. For anyone who believed a library was just a closet for books, their importance was reminded. Several Ontario libraries reached milestones with more than one million digital downloads.

I want to know more about how libraries made this shift. I want to know about the

process to change the services. What was the conversation? What services were deemed crucial, how were new services added and how did it change the role as a librarian, or as a library volunteer?

Thank you so much for your assistance. I appreciate it.

I can be reached at samina.sultana93@gmail.com. Please reply when you can. Thank you for taking the time to read my email.”

COVID-19 Snapshot of Library Services

- Those in attendance were polled on current service levels for their libraries, including hours, in-person service, computer use, community space use, in-person programming, screening procedures, and more.
- See the [COVID-19 Snapshot of Library Services](#) document for the poll results, as well as results from previous Informal Library Chat polls.

Discussion Topics

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 30

- The federal government has added a new statutory holiday under the Canada Labour code, for those working in federally regulated workplaces. Thursday, September 30, 2021 will be the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This date corresponds with Orange Shirt Day.
- Question posed: How many libraries are planning to close on September 30
- Responses:
 - o Some libraries have decided to remain open and plan to recognize the day through take-away kits, displays, programming, reflection, etc.
 - o Some libraries are aligning their decision to stay open or close with that of the municipality
 - o Some libraries have decided to approach the day in a way similar to Remembrance Day, where staff can choose to take the day off or recognize the day in their own way

Handling board conflict/uncomfortable situations at board meetings

- Question posed: How to handle board conflict and/or uncomfortable situations at board meetings
- Suggestions included establishing a board Code of Conduct. The Ontario Library Service has developed a [sample policy on the Purpose and Duties of the Board](#), which includes the Board Code of Conduct. This sample policy and sample board code of conduct can be adapted to suit local needs.

In-person programming within the library building

- Question posed: How many libraries are offering in-person programming within the library building
- Responses:
 - o Some libraries are offering in-person programming within the building, but limiting the number of people who can attend the program (examples included a knitting and crochet group with 4 participants, or children’s crafts with 5 participants)

COVID-19 Vaccines/Vaccination status of staff

- Question posed: Have any libraries received direction from their municipality on vaccine requirements for staff
- Responses:
 - o No libraries have received direction of this type from their municipality
 - o CEOs in attendance indicated that they are not currently asking for staff vaccination status for various reasons
 - o It was noted that policies/mandates are changing quickly across the province, including the [City of Toronto mandating that all employees be vaccinated by the end of October](#).

Time limits for access to the building

- Question posed: Are libraries setting limits for the amount of time a person can spend in the library building
- Responses:
 - o One library indicated their facility is a designated cooling (and warming) centre, and therefore not setting time limits
 - o Some libraries are managing capacity to allow for physical distancing within the building
 - o Some have a limit in place (e.g. 30 minutes) but only enforce it if someone is waiting
 - o Some have not experienced capacity issues to date and have therefore not had to implement limits

COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits for libraries

- Question posed: Where to obtain COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits
- Responses:
 - o Local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade
 - o This page of the Government of Ontario website includes more information about rapid tests, and where to obtain them: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/get-free-rapid-tests>

Patron screening for programs – active vs. passive screening

- Question posed: Are libraries doing active screening for in-person library programs/events
- Responses:
 - o Some libraries are asking screening questions at the time of registration
 - o Some are asking questions at registration and also asking for confirmation at the event

Furniture – Replacing cloth furniture

- Question posed: Are there any grants that would help cover the costs of cloth furniture replacement (to replace with furniture that is easier to clean)
- Responses:
 - o [Kimberley Foundation's Communities Matter Library Support Grant](#) – Deadline for applications is October 15, 2021
 - o [Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund](#) – Deadline for applications is December 8, 2021 at 5pm

The next Informal Library Chat is scheduled for **Thursday, September 2, 2021 at 2pm ET (1pm CT)**.
Connection details will be provided via the "All Ontario CEO listserv".