

Types of Public Libraries in BC

(As defined in the Library Act of 1994)

Municipal Libraries are established under part 2 of the Library Act, following the passage of a municipal bylaw. They are supported primarily by municipal revenues, as well as provincial grants. The Board is made up of 5 to 13 members, consisting of a member of Council, who serves a one year, renewable term and other non-council members who are residents or electors (and not municipal or library employees) appointed by Council to serve renewable, two-year terms for a maximum 8 year term.

Regional Library Districts are established under Part 3 of the Library Act following a written agreement or plebiscite; regional library districts are tax-requisitioning authorities comprised of municipalities which represent rural areas. The Board is made up of one representative from each constituent municipality or regional district appointed by the municipal council or regional district board. Voting on budgets is based on a formula. The three regional library districts, Fraser Valley, Okanagan and Vancouver Island, serve 59 municipalities with more than one-third of British Columbia's population.

Public Library Associations are governed by Part 4 of the Library Act. They receive no direct tax support and operate on grants and fundraising; the association may charge membership fees but not restrict library use to members. No new Public Library Associations are allowed. Membership is open to all residents of the locality served by the library, although members must be 18 years of age or older to vote or hold office. The Board comprises 5 to 9 members of the Association elected by the members to serve a one or two year term (maximum 8 consecutive years). Municipal councils and/or regional district boards providing a grant may appoint a representative to the Board.

Federated Public Library Systems are established under Part 5, Section 49 of the Library Act. A federated public library system is an organization of library boards providing common services. The federated board is made up of representatives of participating library boards, which retain responsibility for local services and support. Federations are being encouraged by the province. The first example, InterLINK, represents seventeen Lower Mainland, Sunshine Coast and Fraser Valley library boards.

Integrated Public Library System is an organization of regional districts or a regional district, that provides and maintains a library system. No new Integrated Public Library Systems will be established. Those already established are governed by Part 6, Section 60 of the Library Act There are two integrated libraries: the Cariboo Regional District Library System and Thompson-Nicola Regional District Library System. The British Columbia Public Library Statistics (published annually by the Public Library Services Branch and available online at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pls/#statistics) includes an index of all public libraries in the province sorted by "type