Culture Strategy Update

Ontario Library Association Super Conference

January 31, 2018

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Overview of Presentation

- Provide an overview of 2017 initiatives

- Report on progress related to Culture Strategy commitments on public libraries

- Year Ahead

Improving Library Digital Services Fund

- During the 2017 Budget Talks process, improving digital resources and services in rural, remote and First Nation public libraries was one of the top three ideas selected

- The proposed $1 million fund was increased to $3 million to extend funding to all public libraries

- The investment furthers the Culture Strategy commitment to improve digital services in public libraries

Ministry Programs and Services to Public Libraries

The Ministry has been working to respond to feedback from the sector about grant application processes and the Ontario Public Library Statistics program.

- Enhanced supports for the application process:
  - Hands-on Grants Ontario group training session
  - Video tutorials made available to all public libraries
  - Continued one-on-one support
- Key improvements to the Ontario Public Library Statistics program:
  - User-friendly guides to assist in completing the Annual Survey
  - Shorter section on Holdings
  - New reporting period (Jan- June) starting in 2018, which will make survey results available sooner
  - Access to pre-final data throughout the survey collection period
  - Free customized reports upon request
  - Ongoing inclusion of new survey fields based on input from sector

Ontario Culture Strategy

- Ontario Culture Strategy was released in July 2016

- Strategy sets out a vision, goals and 40 specific actions to guide the government's support for culture over five years

- Key initiatives launched in 2017 include:
  - Indigenous Culture Fund
  - Youth Culture Camps
  - Canadian Books in Ontario Schools Fund
  - WorkInCulture

- In addition, the Ministry has made significant progress on our commitments related to public libraries.

The Ontario Culture Strategy
**Telling our stories, growing our economy**
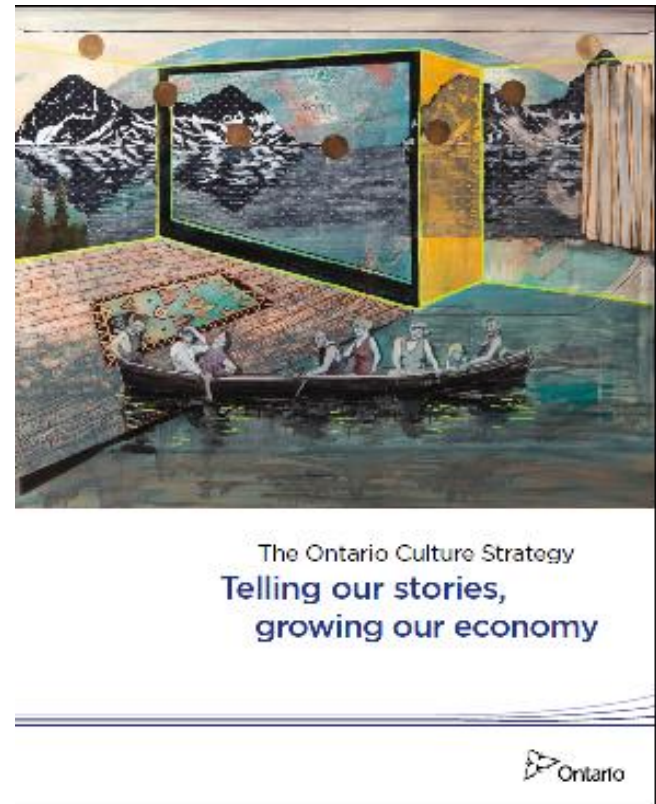
Ontario

Ontario Culture Strategy: Library Actions

Ontario Culture Strategy contains three commitments related to public libraries:

- Work with First Nation public libraries to better understand their unique needs and identify opportunities for responding through improved supports

- Review and update provincial funding programs for public libraries to build the capacity of libraries serving rural and remote communities, improve digital services and support leadership and innovation

- Work with government partners and culture stakeholders to maximize the use of public libraries, museums, galleries and other culture facilities as community hubs and explore opportunities to integrate arts and culture activities and spaces into schools and other community facilities

First Nation Public Library Needs Assessment

- Ministry contracted NVision Insight Group to conduct a Needs Assessment of First Nation public libraries (FNPLs) and identify improved supports

- Engagement included:
  - Two group meetings
  - Phone interviews
  - Online survey of all FNPLs

- Forty of 45 FNPLs participated

- Report was released in fall of 2017

NVision Insight
Group Inc.
YOUR VISION, OUR INSIGHT

ONTARIO FIRST NATION PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Needs Assessment Report

October 2017
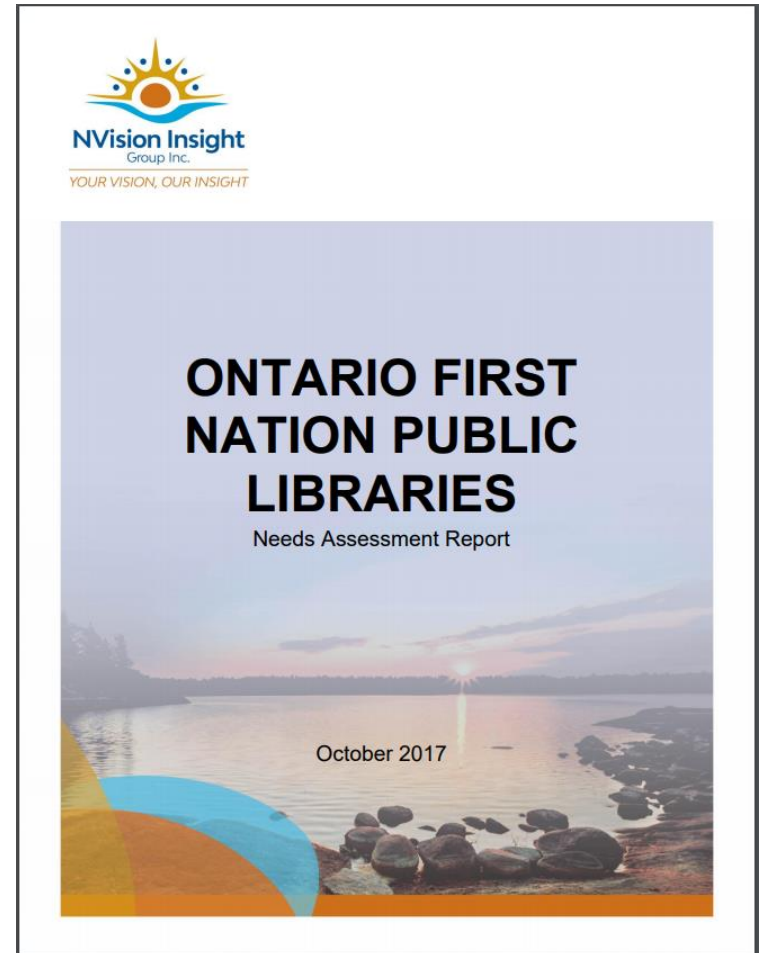
First Nation Public Library Needs Assessment: Key Findings

- FNPLs reported that they are vital community hubs which support:

    - Community literacy

    - First Nation-specific and Indigenous resources

    - Literacy and reading among children and youth

- FNPLs view themselves as positioned to play a role in supporting language and culture preservation and revitalization in First Nation communities

- Supports and funding to FNPLs do not always recognize and/or address the distinct identities and needs in First Nation communities and the unique role of FNPLs

- FNPLs face additional barriers related to:

    - Lack of funding and inadequate salary support

    - Location and infrastructure

    - Training

    - Collections and technology

First Nation Public Library Needs Assessment: Recommendations

- Improve funding structures, formulas and supports

- Support the preservation and revitalization of First Nation languages and cultural resources and programming

- Improve coordination and advocacy

- Streamline and simplify reporting processes and expand eligible expenses

Public Libraries Funding Review

- In 2017, Ministry consulted with the sector through roundtable discussions and a survey of all public libraries.

- Roundtable discussions and survey focused on:

    - Leadership and Innovation

    - Community Hubs

    - Digital Services

    - Standards

    - Performance Measurement

- The Ministry heard key challenges and opportunities facing the library sector as well as overall priorities.

Sector Feedback: Key Points

- Public libraries are driven by community needs, have embraced their role as community hubs and are continuously innovating to enhance services

- Through digital services, public libraries support a wide range of needs, including those related to digital inclusion and lifelong learning. Connectivity continues to be a challenge in a number of rural, remote and First Nation communities and libraries

- Smaller libraries commonly cited low funding and low staffing levels as impacting their capacity to innovate and provide digital services

- Sector split on whether standards should be linked to funding

- The public library sector is very collaborative and open to working with provincial ministries

Sector Feedback: Overall Priorities
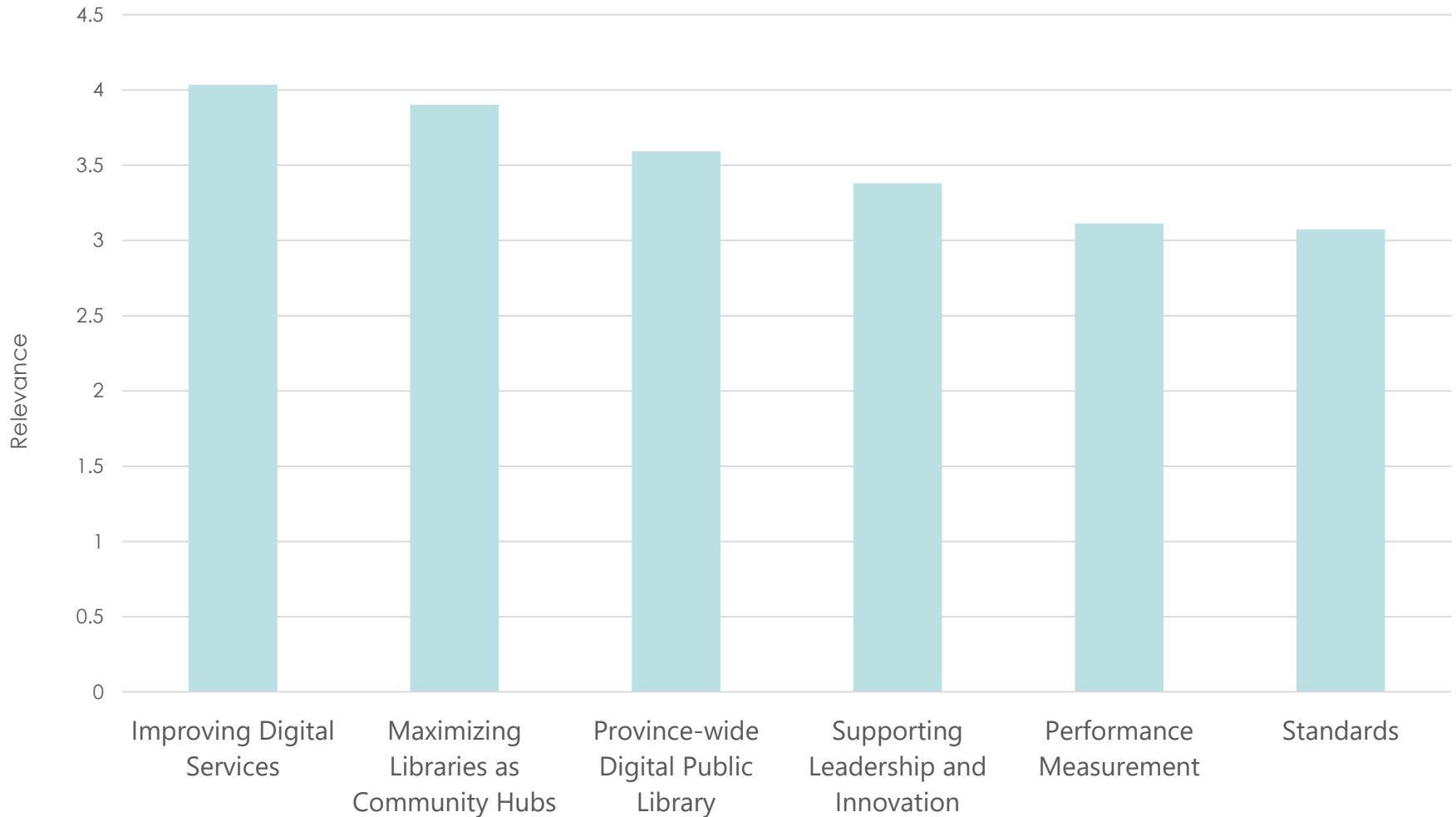
Sector Feedback: Key Recommendations

- Update operating grants to public libraries, ensuring that the needs of libraries serving rural, remote and First Nation public libraries are recognized

- Prioritize broadband access for rural, remote and First Nation communities and libraries

- Address barriers to accessing available training and networking opportunities

- Support collaboration among libraries and with the provincial government

- Provide province-wide access to a core suite of digital resources and sustainable, ongoing funding for digital services

- Provide capital funding to public libraries to update their spaces

Digital Public Library Feasibility Study

- To improve access to digital services, Ministry is exploring the feasibility of a publicly accessible, province-wide Digital Public Library (DPL)

- Ministry engaged Shore Consulting Group to develop a feasibility report on the development and implementation of a province-wide DPL

- Potential services could include:

  - A core suite of digital resources and e-content (e-books, music, video, etc.)

  - Shared ILS

  - A repository of digital content from local libraries and other culture stakeholders

  - Information about the events, programs and services at public libraries

Digital Public Library Feasibility Study: Sector Feedback

- High level of support for a province-wide DPL

- Potential benefits identified:

  - Increased access to digital services in rural, remote and First Nation communities

  - Cost savings for individual libraries

  - Access to a broader range of resources (e.g. multilingual content)

  - Streamlined access to resources for community members

  - Promotion of local libraries and community events across Ontario

- Considerations and recommendations:

  - DPL should augment, not replace, existing public library services

  - Digital services are limited by broadband capacity in some communities

  - Build on existing services and sector expertise

  - Sustainable funding would be required

Year Ahead

- Work towards developing options for updating provincial support to the sector going forward. This work is being informed by:

    - First Nation Public Library Needs Assessment

    - Digital Public Library Feasibility Study

    - Sector Feedback

    - Ongoing collaboration with other provincial ministries