



# Electronic Resources Operational Policy for Public Library Services Branch

May 2022

This operational policy and other related plans and guidelines are governed by the principles set out in the *Public Library Network Policy*.

## Network Policy Statement

The Government of Alberta has established and sustains a network known as the Alberta Public Library Network that connects Alberta's public libraries to enable access to public library resources and services for Albertans. The network is coordinated and supported by Alberta Municipal Affairs through Public Library Services Branch (PLSB).

## Statement of Purpose

Electronic resources such as ebooks, databases and web-based tools support public library service. Library boards acquire electronic resources individually, in response to local needs. Other electronic resources are acquired at the provincial level and provided through the Public Library Network. This multi-tiered acquisition model allows local autonomy and decision making while also enabling efficiencies of scale and support of provincial objectives.

The Alberta Public Library Network aims to provide equitable access to a broad range of resources for all Albertans, as determined by Government of Alberta priorities.

This operational policy establishes principles and guidelines for the effective selection of e-resources for the provincial e-resource suite.

## Policy

The Government of Alberta aims to create a centralized acquisition model for delivery of electronic resources where appropriate.

1. The Government of Alberta will acquire electronic resources and deliver them via the Public Library Network when some or all of the following conditions are met:
  - a) Provincial licensing is more economical than local licensing, i.e., a provincial licence can be acquired at a lower cost than equivalent local licencing.
  - b) There is a widespread provincial need for the type of content in question, e.g. many local library board Plans of Service identify a library service which is supported by the content.
  - c) The electronic resource supports a provincial initiative or priority, e.g. a priority identified in a Government of Alberta strategic plan.
  - d) The electronic resource is of high quality.
  - e) The electronic resource is advantageously priced.
  - f) Budget and other resources are available to make acquisition possible.
  - g) The resource is an end-user product.
  - h) The vendor/product has been selected through the approved Government of Alberta procurement process.
2. Provincial econtent is subject to change and resources may be discontinued. The Government of Alberta will strive to provide notice of any discontinuations or changes such that libraries can budget for local acquisition if desired.
3. The efficiencies and advantages of provincial electronic resources do not necessarily apply to physical resources. Provincial collections of physical resources are not addressed by this policy.
4. The collection of e-resources acquired by the Government of Alberta and delivered via the Public Library Network will be known as the Provincial E-resource Suite.

## Roles and Responsibilities

1. Local library boards have primary responsibility for acquiring and providing library resources, including electronic resources, in response to local needs.
2. System library boards have a role in acquiring and providing library resources including electronic resources in response to system member needs.
3. The Government of Alberta has a role in providing electronic resources in response to provincial needs, where provincial acquisition is efficient, effective or otherwise appropriate.
4. The Government of Alberta has a responsibility to consider both Government of Alberta priorities and stakeholder feedback when selecting electronic resources.
5. The Government of Alberta provides the provincial e-resource suite in partnership with Network Participants to facilitate access to the resources.
6. The provincial e-resource suite will be made available to all Albertans through the Alberta Public Library Network.
7. Network Participants are responsible to make the e-resources freely available to local users
8. For the purposes of this policy, Public Library Network Operational Partners are identified as follows:
  - a. City of Calgary Library Board
  - b. City of Edmonton Library Board
  - c. City of Red Deer Library Board
  - d. City of St. Albert Library Board
  - e. RM of Wood Buffalo Library Board
  - f. Strathcona County Library Board
  - g. Chinook Arch Library Board
  - h. Marigold Library Board
  - i. Northern Lights Library Board
  - j. Parkland Library Board
  - k. Peace Library Board
  - l. Shortgrass Library Board
  - m. Yellowhead Library Board
9. Network Operational Partners are responsible to facilitate technological or administrative permissions to ensure Network Participants and end users have access to the e-resources (e.g., sign a terms of service agreement, upload provided MARC records into library catalogue, etc.)

## Definitions

End user: An Alberta public library cardholder who accesses the electronic resource.

Electronic resource (e-resource)(s): Digital resources, such as ebooks, databases, and web-based tools.

Provincial E-resource Suite: The collection of electronic resources made available to support the goals of the Public Library Network via PLSB.

Vendor: an organization that provides an e-resource or e-resource platform for the Government of Alberta. This relationship is established via Request for Proposal (RFP) when the vendor becomes the successful proponent in the RFP process.

## Operational Guidelines

1. PLSB consults Network Participants and examines Government of Alberta strategic priorities when evaluating the purchase of e-resources.
2. PLSB will aim to give one year's notice when discontinuing a service.
3. PLSB conducts ongoing evaluation of e-resources to determine relevancy.