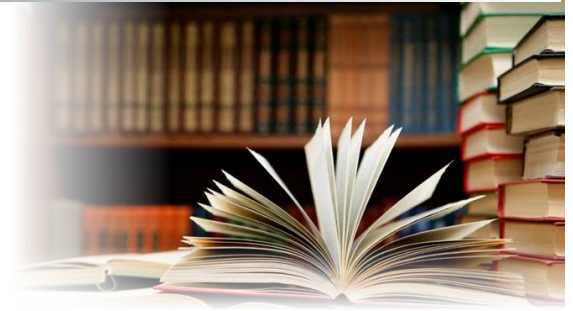


LIBRARY FUNDING BRIEF



BACKGROUND INFO & IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARIES TO MUNICIPALITIES

Funding formula for operational costs: Province 71%, Municipalities 26%, Library boards 3%. In HRM, it is reversed: HRM 71%, province 26%. In reality, additional funding from municipalities and boards has decreased the provincial %. Municipalities also pay capital costs and additional operational costs.

In the past 17 years, there has been one permanent increase to provincial funding in the formula. In 2019, \$2 million was added following a review (\$14.4M to \$16.4M). This represents a 13.9% increase, while inflation rose by approximately 46.8% over the same period.

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A committee reviewed library funding in 2024; recommendations were not released.

Since 2019, additional provincial funding has been provided in irregular and insufficient amounts, most recently \$1.6 million in “bridge funding” in 2025–2026.

In the 2026-2027 provincial budget, funding remained stable at \$16.4M, but “bridge funding” did not continue.

Municipalities have demonstrated a strong and ongoing commitment to supporting libraries and advocating for fair and equitable funding. This is reflected in voluntary, supplementary contributions, as well as formal advocacy efforts. Including five letters submitted to NSFM and at least 22 additional municipalities writing directly to the Province.

Regional CEO/Chief Librarians provided examples of how key libraries are to other provincial services and priorities. Outlined in the draft letter.

URGENCY OF THE ISSUE

Many regional libraries have already implemented significant cuts to hours and services to remain operational (e.g. open 20h a week, closed on Mondays, no evening service).



Many have been drawing heavily on reserves for multiple years, an approach that is not sustainable. Even with increased municipal contributions, without increased provincial funding several libraries remain at risk of closure.

Example: The Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) illustrates these challenges. To mitigate ongoing budget constraints, AVRL has implemented the following cost-saving measures:

- 2015–2024: 25% reduction in total permanent staff
- Elimination of the bookmobile service in 2021
- As of 2024: 50% reduction in programming and elimination of partnerships

Facing a \$600k deficit this year, AVRL made the following requests to municipalities. Despite municipal support, provincial funding is needed to sustain operations.

Municipality	Additional Amount Requested	Amount Granted	% of Request
Annapolis County	\$65,350	\$16,991	26%
Town of Annapolis Royal	\$1,700	\$1,700	100%
Town of Berwick	\$6,500	Unknown	
County of Kings	\$165,800	\$82,900	50%
Town of Kentville ¹	\$21,400	\$21,400	100%
Town of Middleton ²	\$6,150	\$1,600	26%
West Hants ³	\$67,200	\$67,200	100%
Town of Wolfville	\$15,150	\$3,939	26%
Totals	\$351,450	\$195,730	

¹ Pending confirmation

² Contingent on the province providing funding

³ Conditional on their branches staying open. Several municipalities contributed 26%, reflecting their % in the formula.