

Funding Community-Accountable Safety Initiatives in Winnipeg Public Libraries

Why are the screenings racist?

They disproportionately affect poor and racialized people.

Research tells us that:

- People **most vulnerable to safety threats** will become *more* vulnerable because of screening
- Screening is **discriminatory** to Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, LGBTQ2S+ people, refugees, disabled people, and other protected groups
- Minoritized people will **self-select away** from accessing library because of the expectation of harassment, triggering effects, and assumption they will be turned away.

Under suspicion: Issues raised by indigenous peoples | ontario human rights commission. (n.d.). https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/under-suspicion-issues-raised-indigenous-peoples

Tator, C., Henry, F., Smith, C., & Brown, M. (2006). Racial Profiling in Canada: Challenging the Myth of" a Few Bad Apples". University of Toronto Press.

Library Usership Suffers

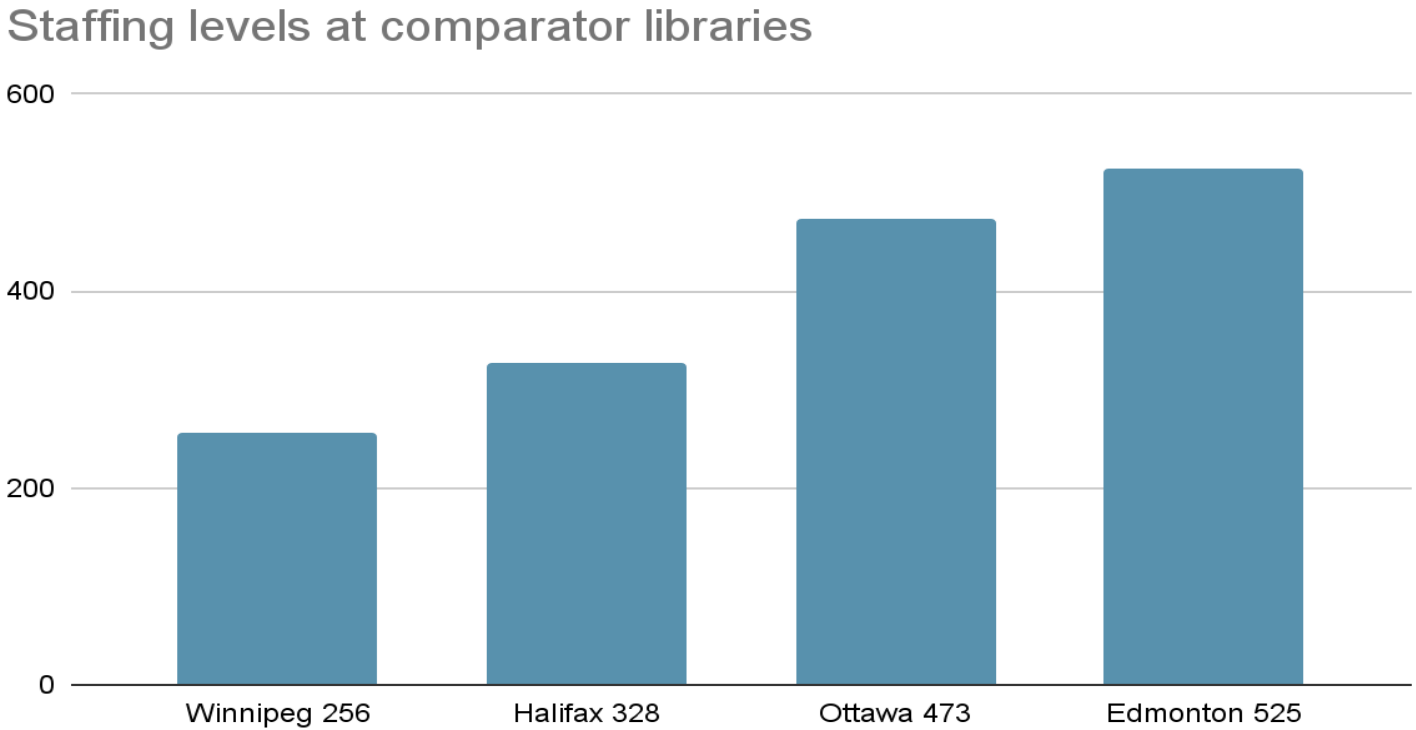
- In 2019, we saw 30% drop in gate-counts
- In 2023, gate counts are already down
- Threat to the core mission of public libraries

Kaplan, S. J. (2020). Homeless patrons utilize the library for more than shelter but public library services are not designed with them in mind. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, *15*(4), 174–175. https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip29805

Every urban library in Canada is facing similar challenges.

Only Winnipeg chooses racist and exclusionary barriers.

Evidence-based Safety Strategies - staffing



MacKenzie, K. (2021). Public libraries help patrons of color to bridge the digital divide, but barriers remain. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, *16*(4), 138–140. https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip30035

Evidence-based Safety Strategies - Welcome & Community

- Creating welcome
  - Coffee
  - Elders
  - Decolonization strategy
- Partnering with Community
  - Advisory groups
  - Making space for service provision
- Designing the Physical Space
  - Sightlines

Williment, K, Jones-Grant, T., & Somers, D. (2011) From Project to Branch Integration and Sustainability: Community-Led Work at Halifax Public Library. Public Libraries, 50(2).
Marshall, K., & Knoch, J. (2018). Serving socially vulnerable populations at the Edmonton Public Library. Voices: Topics in Canadian Librarianship, 2(1), 16–17.
Albrecht, S. (2015). Library security: Better communication, safer facilities. Chicago: ALA Editions.

Evidence-based Safety Strategies - In-house Security and Training

- In House Security
  - Ability to train & focus on building connections
  - Making these good jobs where the Security staff are also invested in the accessible, open mission of the Library
- Providing training
  - De-escalation, anti-racism, naloxone administration, harm reduction

Miller-Nesbitt, A. (2022). The causes and consequences of low morale amongst public librarians. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, *17*(4), 167–169. https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip30219

Rasmussen, Madison. “Making Libraries a Safe Space for Communities and the Library Staff Who Serve Them.” *Pathways to Resilience*, 5 Aug. 2022, https://pathways-us.org/2022/08/05/making-libraries-a-safe-space-for-communities-and-the-library-staff-who-serve-them/

Winnipeg’s Success Stories

Community Safety Hosts

- Innovative program based on Fearless R2W consultations
- Security training + training in de-escalation, anti-racism, Indigenous approaches to kinship and welcome
- Relationship-based de-escalation and community building
- Poverty Reduction Strategy

Community Connections Space

- Opened in April 2022
- 13,000 visits in 7 months
- Key piece of de-escalation and welcome strategy

Granular Budget Requests 2023

1. Community Connections Space
    a. Dedicated Librarian
    b. Dedicated Library Assistant
    c. Dedicated Social Worker
    d. 3 FTEs to cover evenings and weekends from existing staff
    e. Consumables (Coffee, granola bars, etc)
    f. TOTAL: $520,000
2. Community Safety Hosts
    a. 4 Community Safety Hosts working all Millennium Hours
        i. Total: $478,000

For every hour of interim special duty policing coverage at Millennium, we could instead pay for all of these services.

2 Special Duty Police $150/hr

4 Safety Hosts @$32/hour=

Librarian $36/hr

2 Crisis Workers@ $36/hr

Library Assistant @24/hr



TWO COPS
ON "SPECIAL DUTY"

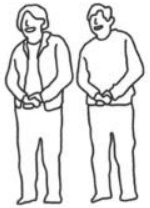
$150 ×2

PLUS PENSIONABLE OVERTIME

$300 / hr

ONE LIBRARIAN $36

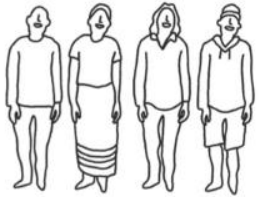
ONE LIBRARY ASSISTANT $24



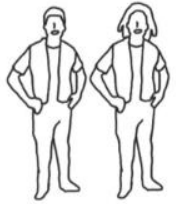
GRANOLA BARS + COFFEE $20



FOUR COMMUNITY SAFETY HOSTS $32 ×4



TWO CRISIS WORKERS $36 × 2



$300 / hr