

Summary of the Evaluation of the Public Programming component of the Community Outreach and Support Program (2016-2021)



Program Description

Public programming¹ is a key component of the Community Outreach and Support Program. This program was introduced on April 1, 2018, following Library and Archives Canada's (LAC) adoption of a new Departmental Results Framework. Public programming helps disseminate the LAC collection through exhibitions, public events, loans and partnerships with Canadian and international institutions. It includes activities organized exclusively by LAC or with its partners.



Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation examined the following:

- The achievement of short- and medium-term results under the performance measurement strategy;
- To what extent public programming satisfies the interest of users;
- Whether public programming has been an effective means of increasing the LAC collection's visibility; and
- Which best practices could improve LAC's approach in this area?



Scope and Methodology

The evaluation covered a five-year period, from 2016–2017 to 2020–2021. The methodology was based on a mixed approach combining qualitative and quantitative data sources, including a literature and internal document review, interviews with key informants and an analysis of the financial information and performance.



Findings

- There is diverse public programming at LAC. To achieve the expected results, there is a need for better planning and coordination at the organizational level, which would improve selection of partners, activities, target audiences, themes, dissemination channels, including online dissemination in order to reach Canadians in all regions.
- There is a need to update the performance measurement strategy and the associated indicators, to more effectively measure the results and support the decision-making process.
- The lack of a common definition for public programming that would be shared by all internal LAC stakeholders makes it difficult to achieve the expected results and to reach new audiences.
- There is a need to improve LAC's public programming efficiency by establishing clear processes, stable funding mechanism, as well as effective partnerships.
- There exist good practices, including LAC's own successes, that public programming could learn from to increase its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

¹ This evaluation takes into account in-person events only. Virtual events and social media were excluded.



Conclusions

The evaluation concluded that:

1. There is diverse public programming at LAC, but it needs more planning and coordination at the organizational level to meet short- and medium-term performance objectives;
2. There is a need to define and establish a public programming strategy for LAC, based on a corporate communications plan, and clearly identifying the objectives, target audiences, means and an adequate governance structure for greater relevance and effectiveness;
3. There is a need to update the performance measurement strategy to take into account the nature and diversity of the activities and facilitate the monitoring of the achievement of short- and medium-term results; and
4. There is a need to explore the possibilities offered by public-private partnerships, digital technologies and social media to reach Canadians.



Recommendations

In the interest of continuous improvement, program management should:

1. Establish an organizational strategy that will define what LAC's Public programming consist of, its objectives, the target audiences and the means of dissemination in support of LAC's mandate. This strategy should be based on a departmental communications plan.
2. Establish a mechanism for planning and coordinating the implementation of public programming activities at the corporate level for greater efficiency, consistency and relevance for users.
3. Update the Performance Measurement Strategy for the Community Outreach and Support Program, to take into account the nature and diversity of Public Programming activities and facilitate the monitoring of the achievement of the expected short- and medium-term results.

Management response

Program management agreed with all the recommendations and developed an action plan that included targeted actions and a timeline for implementation. The action plan can be found in Appendix A of the evaluation report.