

The Bruce County Public Library (BCPL) Bookmobile Campaign

Bringing resources to residents through travelling library services

Barriers to Accessibility

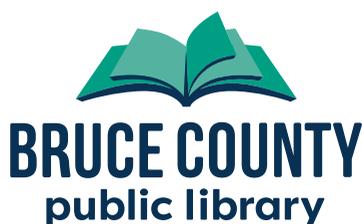
While Bruce County continues to grow into a robust and diverse community, it faces significant challenges in supporting the population that represents that growth.

Geographically remote communities are one challenge faced in Bruce County. Citizens living in these areas may not have physical library branches within walking or short driving distance from their homes, nor do they have public transportation options to take them to the nearest branch location. Rural residents often face the added challenge of having limited or no access to a reliable internet connection.

Additionally, senior members of our population often face safety and mobility challenges. Many have no convenient way of leaving their personal or long-term care home, and if they can walk or drive to the library, doing so in the winter and during crises such as COVID-19 poses a safety risk. This results in further isolation of our senior communities and reduces their ability to access essential library services. Such isolation reduces their opportunity to develop the digital literacy skills critical to staying connected to their families in a supportive learning environment.

The challenge of affordability of high-speed internet and technology devices is also a barrier for many people. As a result, the digital divide between those who have access to and are comfortable using technology, and those who do not, is increasing.

Finally, the library also plays a key role in enhancing school readiness and supporting the literacy and information needs of our population. Considering the disrupted schooling during the current pandemic, education experts expect learning loss will have effect far after the pandemic's end. The library must increase its role in fulfilling reading needs alongside schools to address this challenge.



The Guelph Public Library Bookmobile setting up to provide services to residents in the park.

"When we arrived in Bruce County over 30 years ago, we were very impressed with the undertaking of the distribution of books throughout the county. Meaning that a book asked for in Walkerton and available in Wiarton, could be made available here in short order. That's amazing! We donate to Bruce County Public Library to support this access to materials, bringing information and entertainment to residents throughout the County. This proposed 'Bookmobile' undertaking will embellish library services."

Sirkka and Brodie Hart,
library members

The History of BCPL

BCPL has a history of success in bringing innovative initiatives to life!

Focused on growing our presence across the county, we enhance digital and reading literacy while reducing barriers for people who struggle to access information, social engagement, and entertainment in our region.

Serving 25,218 library card holders and their families in 2019, on average we facilitate the borrowing of 500,000 items annually and enable upwards of 23,000 people to attend over 2,600 library programs each year.

Recently we have expanded our collection to include sensory, athletic, and book club kits for members as well as ukuleles and fishing equipment. We have hosted a Mini Comic-Con® event, a Drag Queen Story Time event, and Business Perks program to improve the inclusivity of the diverse groups we serve.

The team of 70 across 17 branches and Library Headquarters is led by Director Brooke McLean who has a Master of Library and Information Studies degree and over fifteen years of service in library leadership roles.

While pivoting to the delivery of electronic services to county residents in response to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the team has demonstrated further success in change management and innovation.

To continue increasing the number of community members who can meaningfully engage with staff and services, the team is eager to expand opportunities to learn, play, and connect in new and innovative ways.



The original BCPL Bookmobile that will be brought back to deliver books as well as modern technology!

"The Warton Branch Library feels like a second home for us and the staff have come to feel like extended family over the years! They have warmly supported our kids' evolution from early literacy, to an appreciation of stories, and onto a love of reading. We fondly recall many mid-morning songs and books at preschool story time over the years, Mary Jane ever-so-patiently helping our 7-year-old find "just the right" book on the library catalogue, and wonderfully curated storybook selections to pick up when we were not able to come in and browse during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. A bookmobile sounds like a wonderful way to extend the reach of the library and share joyful experiences with even more people."

Dr. Megan Grigg, library member

Open Road Opportunities for Library Services

Literacy, remote communities, senior isolation and mobility, and financial barriers to library and internet access can all be tackled through a mobile library service serving Bruce County. Bruce County communities were surveyed in 2014 about what they wanted to see from libraries. It was clear that services to smaller and remote communities was a significant need, and the idea for a bookmobile was born.

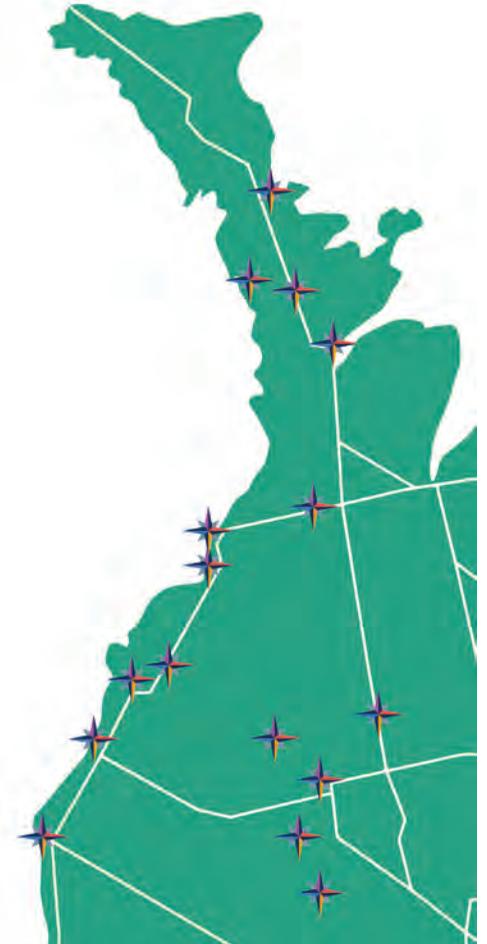
By securing and modifying a vehicle that will deliver scheduled visits and programs across the county, BCPL will provide connectivity (both digital and social!) to those underserved community members. Modelled on other bookmobile services in communities like Guelph, by visiting strategic locations and events, users will have a meeting place that enables them to develop relationships, build on common interests, and enhance their literacy and lives. Imagine senior home residents outside in the sunshine learning how to talk with their grandchildren on an iPad while local children sit next to them participating in storytelling programming! Bookmobiles foster friendships and create connections through experiences like these, and your financial support can make these experiences possible.

Bookmobile Project Details

We will bring the Bookmobile to where people are! Seniors' homes like Trillium Court in Kincardine, events like the Mar Sunday Market in South Bruce and Lucknow's *Music in the Fields*, daycares, arenas, and sports fields are only a few of the locations we *could* visit. Needs-based stops will reach underserved people, such as newcomers or those with language or literacy barriers. The Bookmobile can also present programming at community events, festivals, and other outdoor public gatherings.

Route

The route will be regularly assessed and changed based on priority locations and usage metrics that are gathered during the initial phases of the project. Evaluation criteria will include the anticipated number of users reached, physical considerations (such as a safe place to stop and washroom facilities), and proximity to existing library services.



Potential Bookmobile Stops

"I am a senior and I live on the Peninsula in a rural area. I don't have internet and I can't print. Just today, I needed a computer to DOCU-sign some legal papers. For me, the library is like a central office. Before the pandemic, I visited several times a week. The library also makes available photocopy and printing, and I also remember asking them a while ago to sent a FAX for me. I am particularly thankful that, even during some of the pandemic, I could use one of the 2 library computers they have kept available to the public on a reserve basis. Thank you!"
Sophia Kaszuba, library member

Services

Mobile library service will allow residents to register for a library card, check out and return materials, and participate in programming. As well, the Bookmobile will provide:

- A wi-fi enabled hub
- On-board technology including lendable tech
- Visits to community events
- The opportunity to partner with community organizations

Financials

It is our goal to launch the bookmobile in the spring of 2022. To achieve this goal, we must raise the required funds to make this innovative new service a reality. The estimated cost to purchase, modify, and operate the bookmobile for the first year is \$153,000+ depending on inflation. After accounting for the \$80,000 already secured through Bruce County Council and smaller fundraising efforts, we aim to raise \$100,000. There will be ongoing sponsorship opportunities annually to pay for future operating costs of the vehicle, and any funds raised not used in the first year will be used towards future operational costs of the Bookmobile program.

Estimated Bookmobile Budget

Capital

Vehicle - For example: customization, exterior wrap, and winter tires	\$105,500.00
Technology - For example: library scanner, receipt printer, laptop, phone, Wi-Fi hub	\$6,500.00

Operating

Reserve Funds	\$32,000.00
Collection	existing budget
Vehicle - For example: fuel costs, insurance, and maintenance	\$7,800.00
Internet	\$1,200.00
TOTAL	\$153,000.00

Community Impact

The bookmobile will reach hundreds of people whose lives will greatly benefit from access to books, entertainment, information, and interaction with their communities. These are people who could otherwise fall through cracks of library service, internet connection, early literacy, and lifelong learning. We will measure our impact based on how the lives of the new people we serve are enhanced, specific ways service has helped them, and what they can do because of our mobile services that they couldn't do before. This will be monitored via regular surveying of people accessing our mobile services.

Celebrating our Donors

Equally as exciting as the impact on community members is the role of donors who come together to make it possible. To celebrate our donors, we will have a donor listing displayed on our bookmobile as it travels throughout the county and donors will be recognized according to their levels of giving. We will also have opportunities to sponsor various components of the bookmobile and provide ride-along tours to top donors so they can see their donations at work! We would be thrilled to discuss how your philanthropic support could make a difference in the lives and literacy of Bruce County residents and look forward to discussing this project with you.

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