

# Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

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## Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Public Library Boards Send Message to Ministry of Culture**

Toronto, ON, July 13, 2005: When faced with serious cuts to the Ministry of Culture's funding of public library initiatives and services, CEOs and Board Chairs of Ontario's public libraries responded quickly and in force to a survey issued by the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries. Based on the responses of public libraries serving more than 8.3 million Ontario residents, the Federation is sending a strong message to Minister Meilleur.

The Federation asked public library leaders to identify the three provincially-funded services of greatest value to their communities. Overwhelmingly libraries cited Interlibrary Loan and its supporting Courier service as the #1 and #2 Priority Services respectively. These services are crucial to the timely delivery of information and resources to the people of Ontario, irrespective of their geographic location.

90% of responding libraries chose Interlibrary Loan as one of their top three choices, and 62% chose Courier service as one of their top three choices. This underscores the long-established tradition of collaboration and shared resources among Ontario's public libraries. Training programs for staff is the #3 priority service, followed by Information, Advice and Planning Assistance, confirming the importance of provincially funded training and management support for small public libraries in Ontario.

Other Ministry programs scheduled for funding reductions are the Library Connectivity Fund and the Library Strategic Development Fund, yet the Library Connectivity Funding has proved critical to the implementation of public internet access and delivery of important electronic information, especially in small and rural communities. 84% of recipient libraries serve communities of fewer than 30,000 residents.

The Library Strategic Develop Fund provides public libraries with significant seed money to leverage other public and private sector funds for new and innovative services. Such innovation is important to our communities in this time of rapid technological, social and economic change and constrained local funding.

As centres of life-long learning and cultural development, public libraries support community and economic development, cultural identity and quality of life across Ontario. Jane Horrocks, Federation Board Chair has requested a meeting with the Minister to review other survey findings regarding public library priorities for provincial funding support, and says "the Federation, an organization for Ontario's public libraries formed earlier this year, looks forward to working with the Minister to champion exemplary library service for Ontario residents of all ages in today's information-based economy."

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