



Goal: Lifelong Learning

Vancouverites have equitable access to lifelong learning and development opportunities.

Healthy City Strategy Target

- By 2025: increase participation in lifelong learning by 25 per cent over 2014 levels.

Indicators in this Fact Sheet

- Indicators of Lifelong Learning in Vancouver
- Vancouver as a Learning City
- Vancouver Library Use
- Comparative Library Use
- Lifelong Learning in Canada

Key Findings

- Vancouver aspires to be a **learning city** committed to promoting and enabling lifelong learning among its residents.
- Compare to other cities in Canada, the Vancouver Public Library's spaces, collections and services are **well used** by the community.

Why it Matters

Learning is important throughout our lives. Gaining new skills and knowledge is important for responding to change, including maintaining employability and preparing for later life. Early learning contributes to school readiness and adult learning increases confidence and self-efficacy. Participation in learning and skills development also benefits our communities and our city. Learning in a group setting can enhance social networks and foster understanding of different beliefs, ethnicities and lifestyles. People engaged in lifelong learning are better prepared to participate in civic life and work collaboratively to address common challenges.

Lifelong learning can take place in formal, non-formal or informal settings; the distinction refers to where and how learning takes place:

- Formal learning occurs within institutions established primarily to deliver curriculum-based education and training, leading to recognized certifications and qualifications.
- Non-formal learning occurs in an intentional learning environment, but is not formally recognized. It may be offered by a learning organization, such as an educational institution, a public library, a community organization or a private business. Such learning typically involves workshops, community or web-based courses, seminars, or other structured or unstructured programming.
- Informal learning results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning is often incidental, non-intentional learning.

A commitment to purposefully create a lifelong learning environment has been a focus of policy-makers since the 1990s. Knowledge and information have become central to economic development. But learning is more than this: lifelong learning is a key building block in promoting personal, social and societal well-being.

Including learning in the Healthy City framework ensures that non-formal and informal learning opportunities is a valued contributor to the overall health, prosperity, and resilience of Vancouverites.

About This Fact Sheet

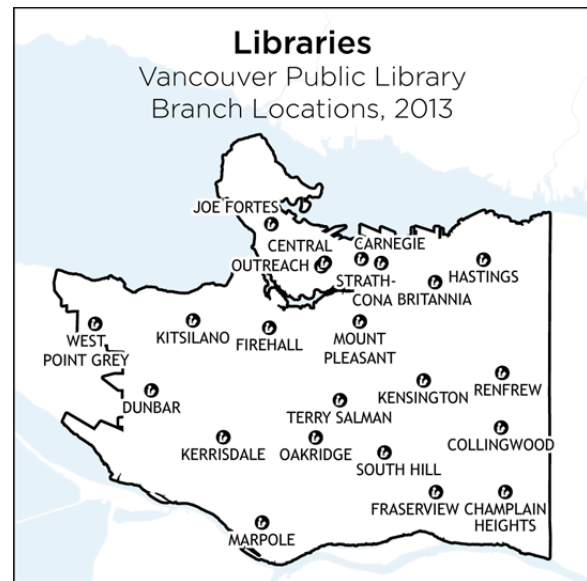
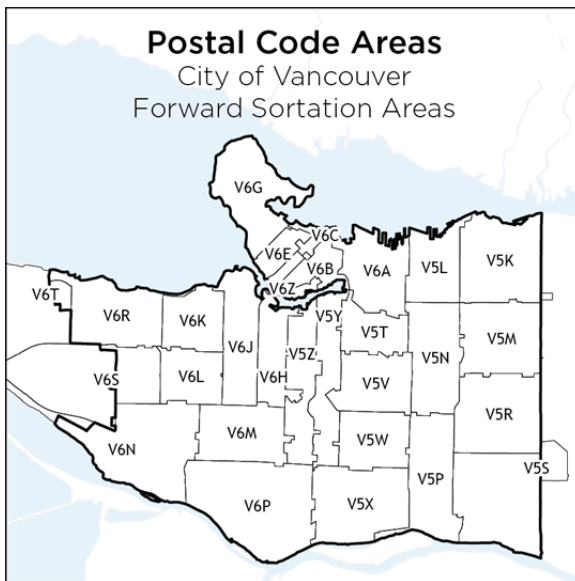
This series reports on social indicators and trends related to the 12 long-term goals of the City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy. More information on the Strategy is available online at vancouver.ca/healthycity4all.

Social research is always imprecise and uncertain. Collaboration, replication and information sharing are crucial to building a more complete and rigorous picture of health and well-being in Vancouver. Readers are encouraged to provide feedback, ask questions and to engage in exploring and interpreting the information presented here.

Areas of Study

Information in this fact sheet is presented for a number of different geographies. Comparisons between library systems are based on each library's service area: some are municipal libraries while others are regional. Population statistics for the City of Vancouver adapted from Statistics Canada's Census of Population are for the Vancouver census subdivision, which excludes the University of British Columbia and the Musqueam community on the Fraser River.

Within the City of Vancouver, some demographic data are presented by postal code forward sortation area (FSA). As illustrated in the map below left, some FSAs extend into the City of Burnaby or the UBC endowment lands.



The map above right illustrates the locations of the 22 branches of the Vancouver Public Library.

Engaging with Data Sources

Sources used are noted in each section of this fact sheet. Key online resources include:

- The Vancouver Public Library maintains an extensive open data catalogue at www.vpl.ca/opendata.
- The Vancouver Public Library publishes detailed annual and operating reports
- The Canadian Urban Libraries Council provides extensive statistics and research into the state of libraries in Canada at www.culc.ca.

Indicators of Lifelong Learning in Vancouver

For the purposes of the Healthy City Strategy, three basic indicators of lifelong learning will be used to measure progress: access to the internet; reading for general pleasure or interest; and participation in a lifelong learning event or program. Below is a snapshot of the best baseline data currently available; more robust baselines will be developed as the Strategy is implemented.

Access to the Internet

Access to the Internet is critical for community and economic participation. Internet access provides opportunities for learning, employment, and engagement in civic, social and cultural activities. Public access to the Internet is available in shared community spaces, such as public libraries. While this is an important service, the ultimate aspiration is that all Vancouver residents have access to the Internet at home.

This measure attempts to capture the number of Vancouverites who have access to the Internet at home, as well as capture those who are accessing the Internet through public library Internet services:

- **Approximately 84 per cent of Vancouver residents have Internet access at home** as of 2012, according to Environics Analytics.
- 43,381 Vancouverites used the Internet at a Vancouver Public Library location in 2013. A further 20,383 used free public wi-fi offered by the library.

Reading for General Pleasure or Interest

Research has consistently linked the importance of reading for pleasure or general interest to increased critical thinking, academic achievement, the development of empathy and awareness, and the maintenance of reading literacy levels. The Vancouver Public Library offers free access to reading material for all Vancouver residents. This ensures that no one has to choose between spending money on a book and other priorities, such as healthy groceries and medicine.

This measure attempts to capture reading for pleasure or general interest across the population.

- As of 2013, **82 per cent of Canadians read for pleasure as often as or more often than they did last year**. Books are the overwhelmingly preferred medium, with 70 per cent of readers preferring books to magazines, newspapers, and blogs, according to the National Reading Campaign/Environics Research Group.
- There are 1.96 million items available for people to borrow from the Vancouver Public Library.

Participation in a Lifelong Learning Event or Program

Vancouver education institutions and community organizations collectively offer a range of free and fee-based formal and non-formal learning programs or events. These span a range of disciplines, audiences, and formats. For example, in 2013, the Vancouver Public Library alone delivered **8,144 free programs and events with over 235,000 attendees**, including:

- 6,305 children's programs reaching 194,117 children and their caregivers;
- 308 teen programs reaching more than 4,400 teens; and
- 1,531 programs for adults reaching 39,184 participants.

Many other learning opportunities are offered by community groups and associations. However impressive the range of offerings may be, understanding who is and is not participating in learning programs is critical information to understanding access and inclusion in Vancouver's learning ecosystem. Further research will take place in 2014 and beyond to understand this baseline.

Vancouver as a Learning City

The Vancouver Learning City (VLC) is a collaboration of Vancouver learning providers, each of whom is committed to providing high quality and relevant formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities to Vancouverites. Recognizing the importance of collaboration, this group seeks to find opportunities to leverage each other's infrastructure and learning assets to enhance the whole community's awareness of, access to, and engagement with lifelong learning opportunities.

The VLC partners seek to foster a learning culture in Vancouver through: sharing experiences in learning provision; connecting resources and activities to support learning; collaborating on new learning initiatives; promoting lifelong learning; and engaging with organizations who support residents and neighbourhoods as they shape Vancouver's learning environment.

VLC's current organizing partners are: the Vancouver Public Library, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, Vancouver Board of Education, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Langara College, the City of Vancouver, Mozilla Foundation, and Ashoka Canada, as well as several individual community members who have long contributed to the learning fabric of Vancouver, British Columbia, and Canada.

An example of an upcoming initiative is the Vancouver Learning Guide, hosted online at vancouverlearningcity.ca. This guide is a unified, web-based program guide that identifies all free non-formal learning opportunities available to Vancouver residents through public or community institutions, organizations, businesses, or community-based collaborative efforts. Expected in May 2015, VPL's new digital media Inspiration Lab will provide free access to creative digital technology for Vancouverites who do not have access, who have access but do not know how to use the technology, or who know how to use it but need help leveraging these skills. By partnering with experts and mentors in the field, VPL will leverage public and private investment in support of both community creative expression and digital literacy skills development.

Data Sources

More information is available at the Vancouver Learning City website, vancouverlearningcity.ca.

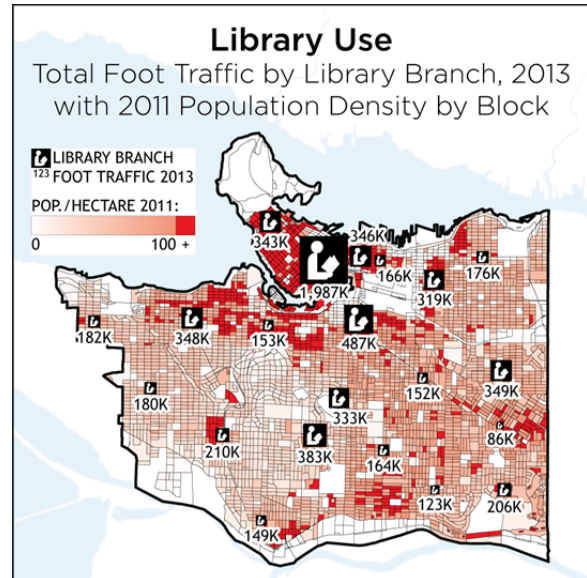
Indicator: Vancouver Library Use

Library use can be measured by foot traffic, material circulation, program attendance and Internet use. Since people access libraries in different ways, it is important to review a variety of measures.

Vancouver Public Library - Foot Traffic

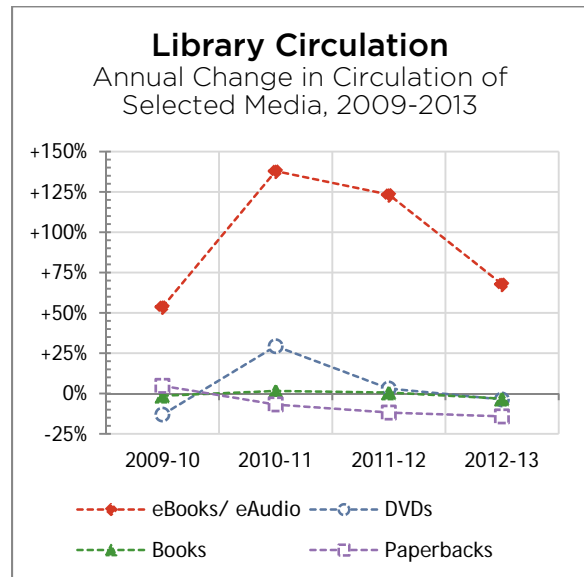
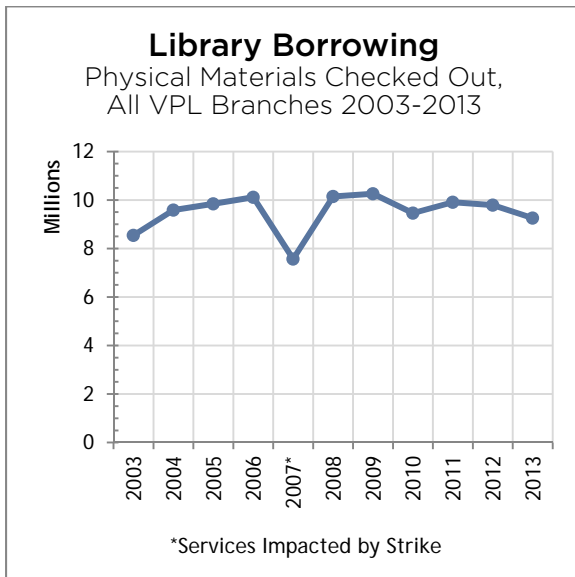
The map at right illustrates the number of visits to library branches in 2013. Foot traffic is likely an underrepresentation of in-person total use, and is subject to some forms of error, such as staff foot traffic. The overall picture is that the Central Library is the busiest in the system, with almost 2 million visits in 2013. Among the neighbourhood branches, Mount Pleasant and Oakridge had the most foot traffic in 2013, while Collingwood and Fraserview had the least.

In general, some correlation between density and foot traffic is evident, but other factors give rise to the level of use at each library. Comparing foot traffic in 2013 to each library branch's catchment area population shows that the Carnegie and Strathcona, Terry Salman, Britannia and Mount Pleasant branches "outperformed" their catchment areas by the greatest factor, while Collingwood, South Hill and Firehall branches had the smallest ratio of foot traffic to catchment population.



Vancouver Public Library - Circulation

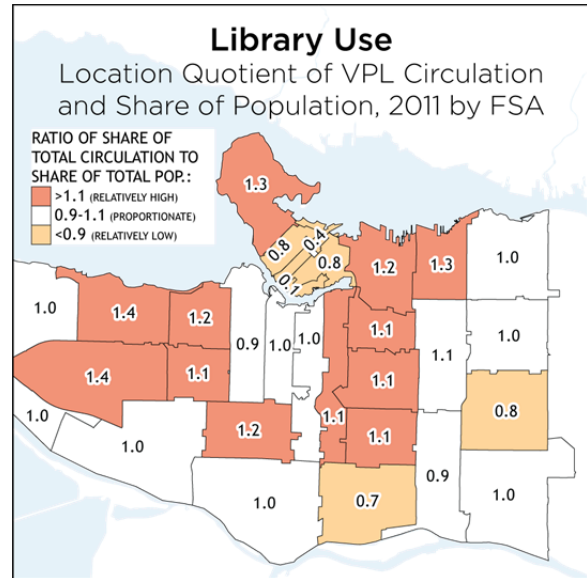
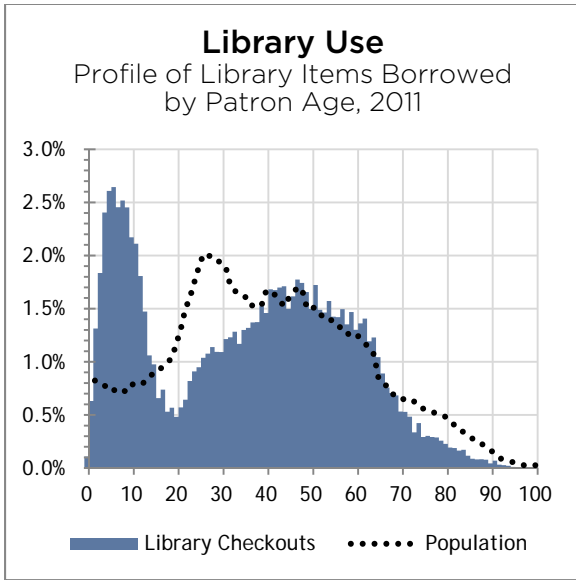
Turning to circulation, the number of physical materials checked out of the library has been relatively steady from 2003 to 2013: about 9.3 million items were checked out in 2013, which averages to almost 30,000 checkouts every day. However, there are shifts in what types of material are being used. Circulation of electronic materials has dramatically increased: the annual change in circulation of electronic books and audio has seen an increase of between 54 and 138 per cent each of the past four years, for a cumulative increase of 1,269 per cent from 2009 to 2013.



Social Indicators and Trends 2014: Lifelong Learning

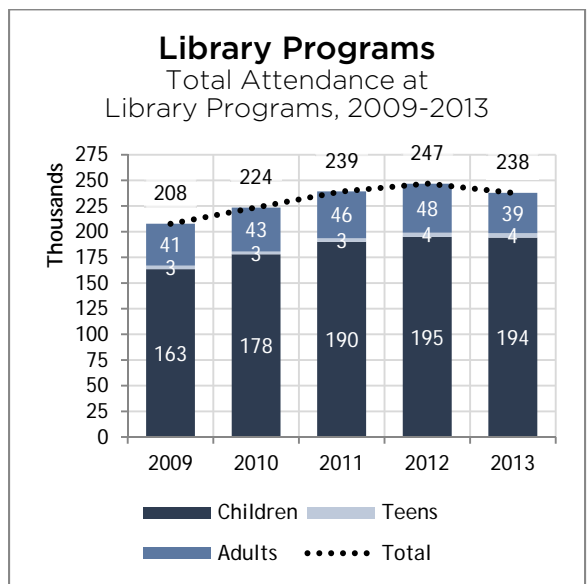
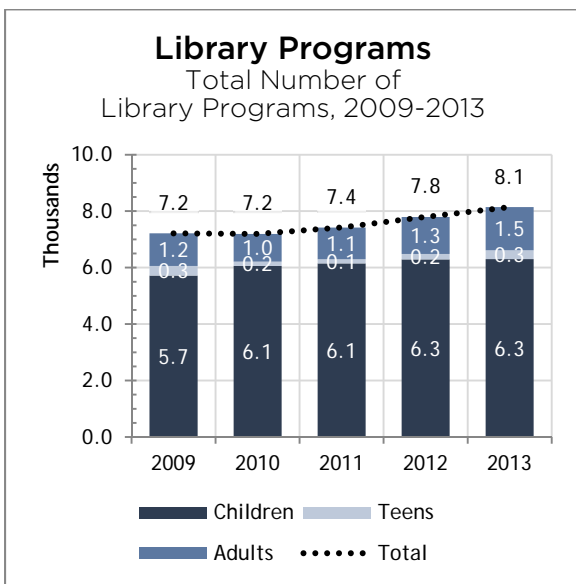
Vancouver Public Library – Circulation Demographics

Circulation statistics also provide insight into the people that use library materials. The graph below left compares the share of materials checked out by patron age in 2011 compared to the city’s population recorded in the 2011 Census. The map below right compares the share of materials checked out by patrons living in different postal code areas to the total population. Elementary school-aged children tended to borrow the most materials, while people in their 20s and 30s borrowed the least relative to their share of Vancouver’s population. People in Downtown and parts of Sunset and Renfrew-Collingwood were relatively less likely to borrow materials than people in the city overall, while people in some west side, West End, midtown and east side neighbourhoods were relatively more likely to use the library.



Vancouver Public Library – Program Participation

Both the number of programs offered by the Vancouver Public Library and the total participation has generally increased from 2009 to 2013, though there was a small decrease in participation from 2012 to 2013. Children’s programs make up most of the programs offered and consistently attract the most participants, while teen programs represent the smallest group.

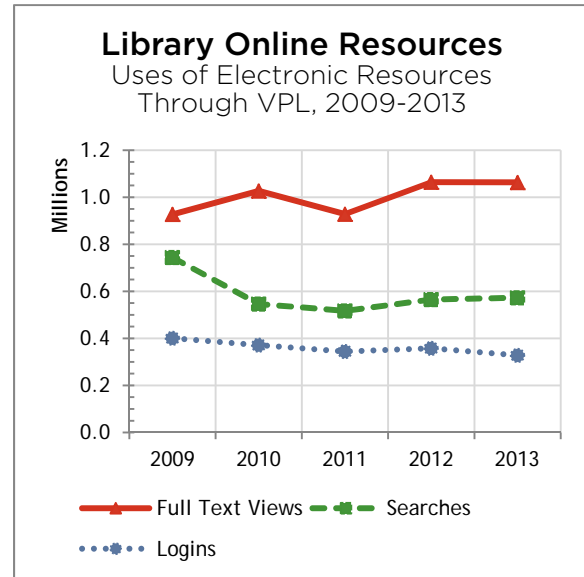
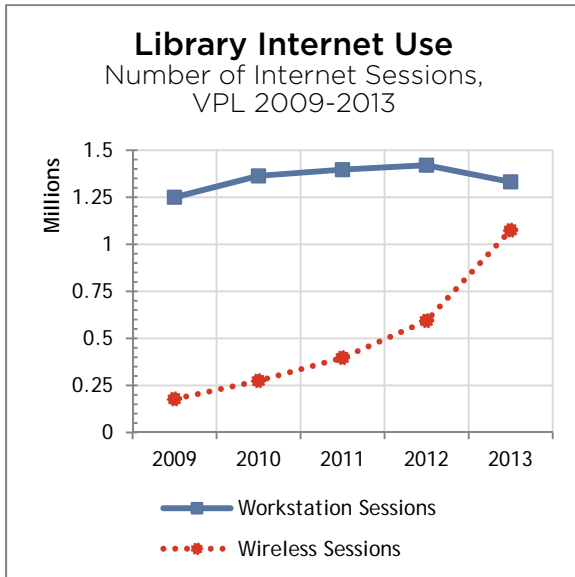


Social Indicators and Trends 2014: Lifelong Learning

Vancouver Public Library - Internet Access and Electronic Resources

Libraries are important community public spaces, and are relied upon by many community members for access to the Internet and other electronic resources. Access to computer workstations is a longstanding feature of all library branches, and wireless Internet access has been offered since 2007. Use of workstations has been relatively steady from 2009 to 2013. The number of times the Library's wireless Internet service has been used at Vancouver Libraries has increased steeply during the same period.

Electronic resources, such as research databases, have also seen steady use from 2009 to 2013. The number of logins to electronic resources has declined slightly, but other indicators of use have been steady or increasing. The number of searches declined from 2009 to 2011, but has been slightly increasing since, and the number of full text views of articles and other resources has increased except for a dip in 2011.



Data Sources

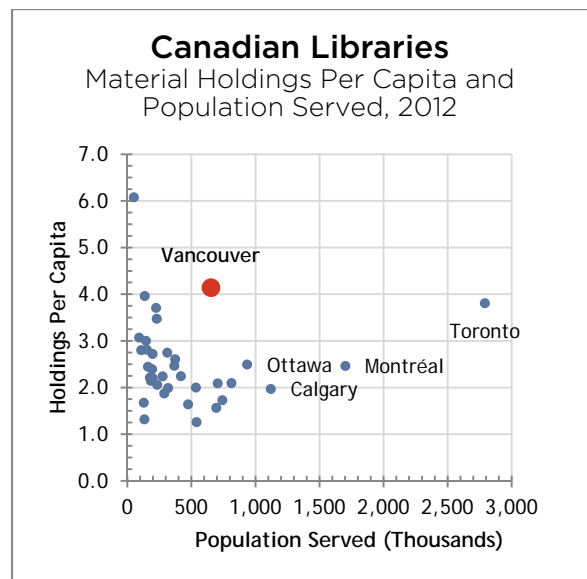
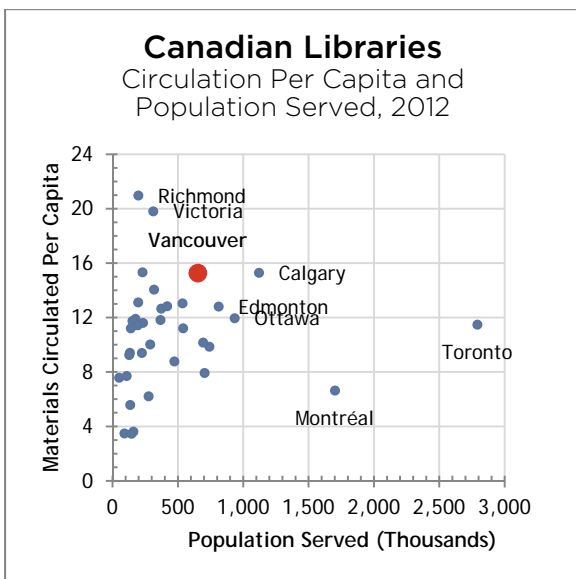
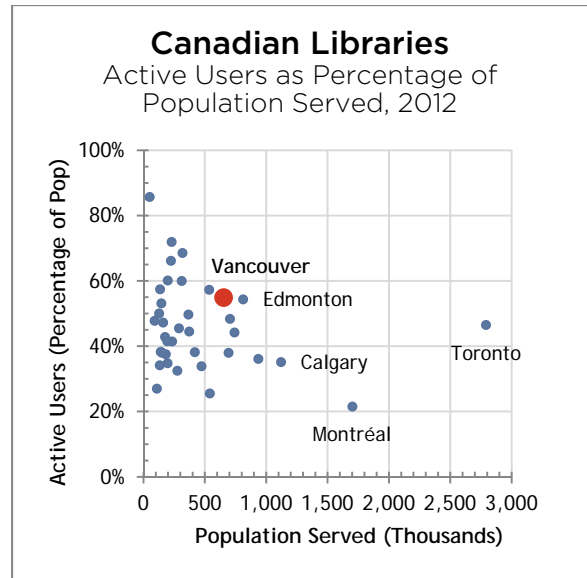
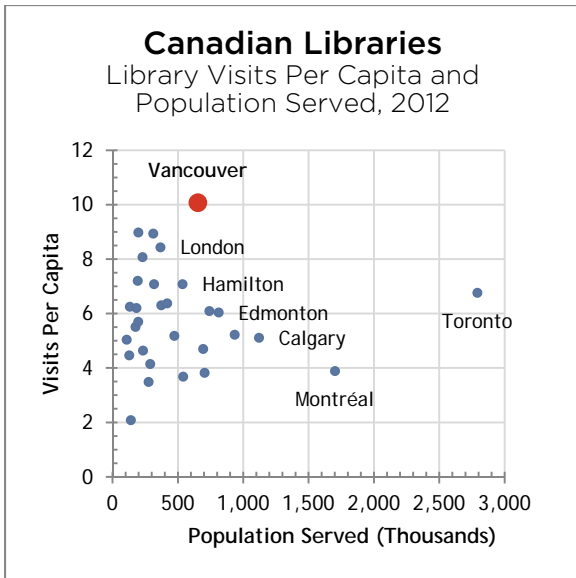
Most time-series information in this section is adapted from the Vancouver Public Library's annual Operating Reports, available at www.vpl.ca/about. The Library also maintains an extensive open data catalogue at www.vpl.ca/opendata, including numerous branch- and system-level statistics on library use.

2011 population counts are adapted from Statistics Canada's 2011 Census of Population.

Indicator: Comparative Library Use

Use of the Vancouver Public Library system compares favourably to other large municipal libraries. In 2012, among members of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council, the Vancouver Public Library had the highest visits per capita. Vancouver also had a high percentage of its population using the library, with over 350,000 registered borrowers or active users. For its population, Vancouver had the second highest number of materials available, and a high rate of material circulation.

It is noteworthy that other cities in British Columbia also often perform quite strongly: Victoria and Richmond, for instance, had the next highest rates of library visits after Vancouver, and had the highest rate of material circulation in Canada.



Data Sources

Information in this section is adapted from the Canadian Urban Libraries Council’s 2012 Canadian Public Library Statistics, available online at www.culc.ca/kpis/.

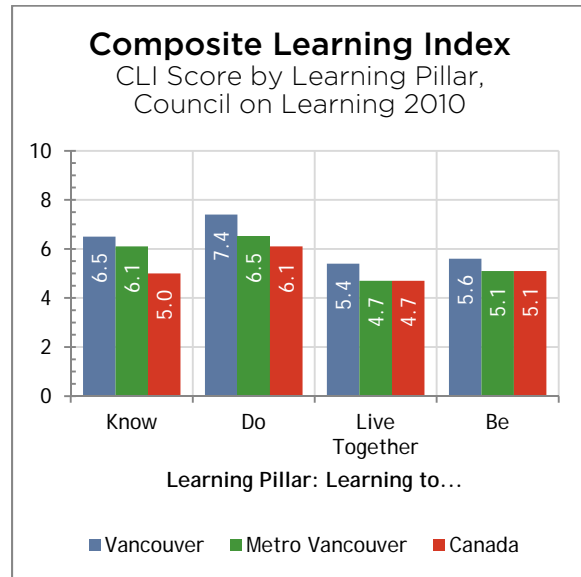
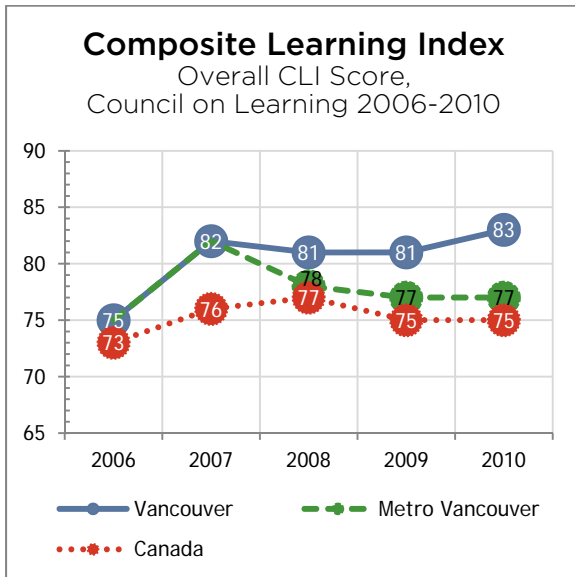
Indicator: Lifelong Learning in Canada

Until 2012, the Canadian Council on Learning published research on a number of indicators of the state of lifelong learning in Canada. It published a Canadian Composite Learning Index (CLI), based on four pillars of learning:

- **Learning to know** is the development of skills that are needed to function in the world including literacy, numeracy and critical thinking.
- **Learning to do** refers to the acquisition of skills that are often link to occupational success such as computer training, managerial training and apprenticeships.
- **Learning to live together** refers to the development of social skills and values such as respect and concern for others, social and inter-personal skills and an appreciation of diversity.
- Finally, **learning to be** is defined as activities that foster personal development (body, mind and spirit) and contribute to creativity and personal discovery.

The Index brought together a number of different indicators for each pillar. In 2010, the last year data was collected for the CLI, the City of Vancouver’s average score was higher than that for the region or for the country. Vancouver scored the highest for “learning to do” and the lowest for “learning to live together.” The many ways in which we learn—including learning to be—demonstrates the need for a holistic strategy to address interconnecting goals such as Lifelong Learning and Cultivating Connections.

The charts below present a summary of Vancouver’s overall score for each learning pillar. The specific indicators for which Vancouver had better-than-average scores included a low high-school drop-out rate, availability of workplace training, and shorter time required to physically access post-secondary education, libraries, museums and galleries. Vancouver had a below-average score for participation in clubs and exposure to reading.



Data Sources

Although the Canadian Council on Learning is now dissolved, its website and research materials have been archived by the University of Ottawa and remain accessible. The CCL’s main website is www.ccl-cca.ca, and the Composite Learning Index site is located at www.cli-ica.ca.

Toward a Healthy City for All

Promoting lifelong learning for all Vancouverites requires a number of steps, including:

- **Ensuring access to learning opportunities for all**, by reducing barriers to participation through the provision of free programs and creation of spaces that are inclusive.
- **Recognizing the importance of non-formal and informal learning** by increasing opportunities to participate in art, culture and civil society.
- **Fostering a learning city identity** through formal recognition that accessible lifelong learning is critical to a healthy city. This can be achieved through collaborations such as the Learning City partnership.

Many individuals and organizations have a role to play in lifelong learning. Educational institutions, public libraries, City departments, non-profit agencies, community organizations, grass-roots community collaboratives, individuals, and commercial enterprises contribute to the learning landscape in a city and provide a range of opportunities for residents.

The City's Role

Key areas in which the City can show leadership include:

- **Promoting the Vancouver Learning Guide**, an initiative of the Vancouver Learning City (VLC). This will create a unified, web-based program guide hosted by the Vancouver Public Library. The guide will have information on free non-formal learning opportunities available to Vancouver residents through various organizations, businesses, or community-based collaborative efforts.
- **Expanding the VLC collaboration to include a greater diversity of partners**. The VLC organizing group currently represents major publicly funded learning providers across Vancouver. The VLC intends to expand membership to community organizations because of the important role community groups play in providing a diverse lifelong learning programs and events.
- **Launching the Vancouver Summer of Learning in 2015**. Vancouver Public Library will work with the VLC and other community groups to create a summer learning program engage lifelong learners, such as school aged children during summer break. The purpose of Summer of Learning is to raise awareness of the engaging, fun, and surprising ways we can learn.

Your Turn

Lifelong learning is an aspiration for all of us. Learn more and get involved at vancouver.ca/healthcity4all.