



Canadian Library Association  
Association canadienne  
des bibliothèques

# **CLA Toolkit: Budget Cuts to Federal Libraries**

**Contact Your Local Member of  
Parliament Today!**

## **Budget Cuts to Federal Libraries**

### **Introduction**

**This toolkit has been prepared by the Canadian Library Association (CLA) in its role as advocate on behalf of Canada's library communities.**

Canada's library communities continue to be seriously concerned about the negative impact of government budget cuts on libraries in federal departments and at Library and Archives Canada (LAC). These cuts will negatively impact access to information for the people of Canada.

LAC has a broad mandate to acquire, preserve and make available the documentary heritage of Canada. It is also responsible for the management of the archival records of government. Taken together, these two areas of activity make LAC a significant contributor to the cultural and historical records of our nation.

Government librarians provide essential support to their departments. Library staff members have expertise in specialized subject areas, in addition to their library skills, which helps them to assess and interpret information sources. And government libraries hold unique collections of materials relevant to the department they serve. Government librarians and government libraries contribute directly to the quality of decision-making within the federal government.

**We need your help to call on the Government of Canada to consider the impact of these cuts on the ability for all Canadians to access information, and to ensure that our national government makes informed decisions!**

## **Contact Your Member of Parliament (MP) Today**

Any CLA member can help to get this vital message across. In joining this grassroots fight, you will not be alone. You will be joined by other committed CLA members, who share your concern.

A targeted approach is needed at the local level in order to address the library community's concerns with regards to budget cuts to federal libraries. Everyone who cares must work together to develop strong partnerships with decision makers, and communicate to them how critical this issue is to members of their communities.

Contact your MP today and **make your voice heard!**

### **Critical Key Messages**

1. Budget cuts to Library and Archives Canada will negatively impact its ability to provide services, resulting in reduced access to information for Canadians.
2. Canada's national library and archives has a broad mandate to acquire, preserve and make available the documentary heritage of Canada. It is also responsible for the management of the archival records of government.
3. Budget cuts to libraries in other federal government departments will result in less support for departmental staff in their roles advising government on issues.
4. Government librarians provide essential support to the government. Library staff members have expertise in specialized subject areas, in addition to their library skills, which helps them to assess and interpret information sources.
5. CLA strongly encourages the Government of Canada to ensure access to and preservation of Canada's documentary heritage.

## What You Can Do

1. Write a letter to your MP outlining your key concerns with respect to budget cuts to federal libraries (**see sample letter below**).

If you need help finding your MP, please consult the website below. When entering your postal code, remember to enter both office and home postal codes, as the MP may be different, depending on the locations. The more politicians contacted, the more likely we are to effect change.!

Website to find your MP:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Language=E&Menu=HOC>

2. Follow up with your MP by requesting a meeting on this issue. If he or she is difficult to meet with, insist that you at least talk to him/her by telephone so that you can express your views directly.

Prior to meeting with your MP, please review the enclosed Meeting Guide to help prepare. When the meeting is over, please fill out the meeting feedback form.

3. Engage the media. Send out a press release or write an op-ed piece or letter to the editor of the local newspaper.

***\*\*For more information and/or assistance with media outreach, please contact Alana Baker at 613-233-8906 or [cla@impactcanada.com](mailto:cla@impactcanada.com)\*\****

## Meeting Guide

1. Keep in mind that most government representatives have only 15-30 minutes to spend, so it's important to be brief and to the point. If there are two or more of you at the meeting, it can be useful to decide on a principal spokesperson to handle the main points. However, anyone should feel free to comment at any time.
2. The meeting can be opened by thanking the MP for having taken the time from his/her busy schedule to meet and discuss this important issue.
3. Introduce yourself, including information about your organization.
4. Say a few words about the purpose and aim of the meeting:
  - To raise the profile of CLA and the Canadian library community.
  - To highlight key concerns and the negative impact these budget cuts will have.
  - To build a long lasting relationship in anticipation of another meeting.
5. Note that you will be talking about the meeting to other CLA members and colleagues in the MP's riding.
6. Do not hesitate to share personal anecdotes with the MP. They can be very receptive to pieces of information that have a personal touch and in which you have been directly involved.
7. Briefly summarize the key points on the issue being raised. Make sure to add that if he/she has any questions, to not hesitate to either personally contact you (leave a business card, if you have one), or Kelly Moore, CLA Executive Director, at (613) 232-9625 Ext. 306.
8. After the meeting, please complete the Meeting Feedback Form below and return it by fax to (613) 230-2669 or [cla@impactcanada.com](mailto:cla@impactcanada.com).

## SAMPLE LETTER TO YOUR LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

MP NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

{insert date}

Dear MP NAME,

As a {insert role} in your community, I am writing you today to highlight some key concerns I have with the recent announcement of budget cuts to Library and Archives Canada and to other federal libraries.

The entire library community is extremely concerned about the negative impact these cuts will have on the services these libraries provide to other libraries and their users across Canada, ultimately resulting in reduced access to information for the people of Canada.

Canadians expect to have access to the cultural and historical record managed by Library and Archives Canada, which includes books, journals, photographs, newspapers, personal and corporate archives, government records, paintings, film, and sound recordings.

Furthermore, the Canadian library and archival communities expect leadership on professional issues from their national institution, including standards for activities and support for the provision of quality library and archival services across the country.

Government librarians provide essential support to their departments. Many library staff members have expertise in specialized subject areas, in addition to their library skills, which helps them to assess and interpret information sources in support of policy development and evidenced-based decisions. And many government libraries hold unique collections of materials relevant to the department they serve. Government librarians and government libraries contribute directly to the quality of all public services. With these budget cuts, services to Canadians will be negatively affected.

It is absolutely vital that the Government of Canada consider the impact of these cuts on the ability for the people of Canada to access information. I urge you, as a Member of Parliament, to work to ensure that adequate services are maintained in government libraries, for the benefit of the nation.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this issue in greater detail. Please contact me at {insert phone number} to coordinate a meeting. I look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

**Federal Library Budget Cuts Meeting Feedback Form**

Name of MP that you met with: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Party: \_\_\_\_\_

Riding Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Duration of the Meeting:**

15 Minutes or Less

15-30 Minutes

30 Minutes or more

**I found this individual to be:**

- Knowledgeable of the Federal Library Budget Cuts                      Yes     No
- Aware of the negative effects on libraries and their users    Yes     No
- Interested in more information    Yes     No

**Comments and Follow-up**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Questionnaire completed by \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please complete and return by fax to Alana at (613) 230-2669 or by email at [cla@impactcanada.com](mailto:cla@impactcanada.com)*

## Background Information

### CLA dismayed by impact of budget cuts on federal libraries

#### -FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

OTTAWA (May 2, 2012)The Canadian Library Association is seriously concerned about the negative impact of government budget cuts on libraries in federal departments and at Library and Archives Canada. While not all details are known at this time, indications are that libraries are being hit hard by budget reductions.

At Library and Archives Canada, 430 people have been given notices, with more than 200 jobs to be cut over the next three years, representing a reduction of 20% of their workforce. They have also had to cut their acquisitions budget, end their role in national inter-library loan activities, and cut the National Archival Development Program, which has provided funding to Canadian archival organizations to increase their capacity to preserve archival materials and make them available to Canadians. These cuts will negatively impact Library and Archives Canada's ability to provide front-line services, resulting in reduced access to information for Canadians.

"Our national library and archives has a broad mandate to acquire, preserve and make available the documentary heritage of Canada. They are also responsible for the management of the archival records of government. Even before the cuts, Library and Archives Canada was challenged to fulfill its mandate; with this reduction in their financial and staff resources, the job becomes even more difficult," said CLA President Karen Adams.

Canadians expect to have access to the vast wealth of materials managed by Library and Archives Canada, which includes books, journals, photographs, newspapers, personal and corporate archives, government records, paintings, film, and sound recordings. The Canadian library and archival communities expect leadership on professional issues from their national institution, including standards for activities and support for the provision of quality library and archival services to Canadians across the country. These expectations cannot adequately be met with the level of resources now available to Library and Archives Canada.

CLA has also received reports that many libraries in federal government departments will be losing staff; some will be shuttering their libraries altogether. Not only does this result in less support for departmental staff and researchers to access relevant information; but as many of these libraries also provide direct services to the public, Canadians will be prevented from having access to that information. Affected departments identified so far include Agriculture Canada, Environment Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Industry Canada, the National Capital Commission, National Defence, Public Works and Government Services, the Public Service Commission, and Transport Canada. Earlier this year, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada had already announced their intention to close that department's library.

"Government librarians provide essential support to their departments," added Adams. "Many of those library staff have expertise in specialized subject areas, in addition to their library skills, which helps them to assess and interpret information sources. Good policy relies on good information."

Government librarians and government libraries contribute directly to the quality of all public services. With these budget cuts, services to Canadians will be negatively affected.

The Canadian Library Association calls on the Government of Canada to consider the impact of these cuts on the ability for all Canadians to access information, and to re-evaluate spending priorities to ensure that adequate services will be maintained in government libraries.

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*CLA is Canada's largest national library association, representing the interests of public, academic, school and special libraries, professional librarians, library workers, library trustees, and all those concerned with enhancing the quality of life of Canadians through access to knowledge, literacy and lifelong learning.*