

Spotlight on Threats to Right to Read in Canada

CFLA is developing a multi-step campaign to counter the spread of legislation similar to Alberta's and is also supporting related activities by member associations. Key talking points prepared by a CFLA Board working group for the upcoming municipal elections in many provinces were distributed to member associations on August 26, 2026. A resolution on freedom to read and local control is in development, inspired by a similar resolution in Quebec that was adopted by 158 municipal councils. In September, the Board will consider a task force that would explore seeking freedom to read legislation at the provincial and territorial level, building on examples in Australia and the United States.

Policy & Advocacy

CFLA-FCAB's core focus areas for policy and advocacy are copyright, Indigenous matters, intellectual freedom, bibliographic metadata, and climate literacy. The following summarizes activities related to these policy areas since May 2026.

- Established monthly policy update email in May profiling federal legislation and national policy that impacts the operations of libraries in Canada. Topics have included Bill C-9 The Combatting Hate Act; Bill C-34 The Safe Social Media Act; and the CFLA Code of Ethics; the series began with identifying relevant legislation. Past updates are available on the website and feedback indicates strong interest in this type of content from CFLA.
- Task force on Understanding Hate Definitions in Canada completed work on guidance document for libraries; publication anticipated late September following Board approval.
- Established CFLA communities of interest for Bibliographic Metadata Standards (Chair Christopher Carr, Concordia University) and Copyright (Chair, Don Taylor, Simon Fraser University) which will enable tracking of issues and recommendations for CFLA action from subject matter experts.
- Delivered Copyright webinar for BC Library Association on August 20 (Copyright Community of Interest Coordinator Don Taylor, SFU, and COI member Trish Mau, Burnaby Public Library)
- Delivered Intellectual Freedom Challenges in 2025 webinar for IFLA Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression Committee on July 9th (Executive Director Christina de Castell, with panelists from Peru and Iran).
- Delivered Climate Action in Canadian Libraries for IFLA Science & Technology Section on June 25 (Chair Lita Barrie with OLA Executive Director Michelle Arbuckle).
- Board approved task force on RDA training in Canada, which will deliver training in 2027, and task force on Climate Action, which will develop recommendations for further CFLA activity in this area.
- Participated in CULC ebook advocacy related meetings with BookNet and Overdrive and strategized about application of US state approach in Canada.

- Obtained intellectual freedom challenges in 2025 from Quebec public libraries and posted these along with other Canadian libraries responses to the Challenges Survey for 2025, which had been summarized by CFE; explored issues related to French language content and lack of Quebec participation in the CFE database.
- Responded to the federal budget pre-budget submission on May 22, 2026 supporting recommendations of CULC and CARL.

Membership Relations & Administration

- Initiated financial sustainability review including membership dues and categories, exploring grant-funded project coordination and an affiliated charitable foundation. Distributed overview to membership in July. The CFLA Board will receive recommendations for consideration in October.
- Consulted with NIKLA on representation of Indigenous matters by CFLA and on Board.
- Hosted Canadian Caucus at IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Busan, co-sponsored by OCLC and CARL, with over 80 attendees, and provided updates on CFLA activities.
- Established framework for member groups including communities of interest and expert representatives to supplement task forces and updated policy.
- Updated all corporate compliance related filings and completed banking transition.
- Thank you to member association CARL for taking on bookkeeping services for CFLA

Upcoming Activities

1. Lita Barrie and Asa Kachan will attend a 3-day workshop hosted by the Canadian Practitioners Network for the Prevention of Extremist Violence (CPN-PREV) and Public Safety Canada in September (federally funded) bringing together professional associations in Canada to support community engagement and to combat extremist violence.
2. CFLA Chair Lita Barrie and Executive Director Christina de Castell will participate in the next meeting of the Library and Archives Canada GLAM Community of Interest and Co-Chair of AI Working Group.
3. Canada is gathering input for the UN Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary National Review for 2027. CFLA will be reaching out to member associations to prepare a submission.
4. Preparing submission for federal consultation on AI Transparency due September 23.

About CFLA

CFLA-FCAB is the united voice of Canada's libraries. Together, we work to influence public policy, advance library excellence, and raise the visibility of libraries in Canada to advance our national intellectual, social, economic, and cultural success.