



# BUILDING A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LIBRARY SYSTEM FOR ALL ALBERTANS

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## WHO WE ARE

Created in 1997, The Alberta Library is an internationally-recognized consortium of 49 members in over 300 locations. As a result of our collaboration, Albertans at even the smallest rural library have access to millions of resources, including books, newspapers, magazines, music, video games, electronic databases and more.

Members include:

- public libraries
- regional library systems
- university libraries
- college and technical institute libraries
- Aboriginal college libraries
- special libraries

The Alberta Library (TAL) was created as a result of the library community coming together to find better ways of providing services. The organization symbolizes the provincial library community's commitment to creating a library system that meets the needs of all Albertans. With the support of the Government of Alberta, the province's libraries are working together to create one of the most progressive and dynamic library systems in North America.

The benefits of a collaborative library system are immense, including:

- improved access to information anytime, anywhere
- improved literacy and education
- an enhanced quality of life

## TAL'S VISION

Together. One Card. One Click.





The Alberta Public Library Electronic Network (APLEN) was created in 1997 in partnership with the Government of Alberta. An integral part of The Alberta Library, APLEN's mandate is the ongoing development of the public library network and provision of services to public libraries.

APLEN provides:

- opportunities for public library cooperation, collaboration and innovation
- coordination of the development and growth of an electronic library network in Alberta
- opportunities for libraries to increase their capacity for electronic services to the public
- funding for pilot projects and research into emerging technologies
- training and professional development
- promotion of electronic library services to the public

APLEN radically improves libraries' ability to provide up-to-date, accurate information services to all Albertans in an equitable, cost-effective way. In addition to providing a framework for cooperation, collaboration and strategic direction, APLEN helps ensure all areas of the province have equitable access to library programs and services by connecting hundreds of public libraries throughout Alberta.

APLEN provides a 70 per cent subsidy to member public libraries for the cost of online resources in the Universal Core (an authoritative suite of electronic resources), along with *Novelist*, *Heritage Quest Online* and *Auto Repair Reference Centre*.

## CORE SERVICES



### TAL Card

A free TAL Card gives Albertans access to the print collections of all member libraries. Albertans can walk into over 300 public, post-secondary and special libraries across the province, borrow material, and return it to any participating library.

### TAL Online ([www.talonline.ca](http://www.talonline.ca))

With TAL Online, all member libraries are the same size. TAL Online is a free, web-based search engine providing access to the catalogues of over 300 libraries province-wide. It enables users to search and access over 30 million items.

### Ask A Question ([www.askaquestion.ab.ca](http://www.askaquestion.ab.ca))

With Ask A Question the public can e-mail a question any time and get an answer from qualified library reference staff – usually within 24 hours.

### Online Reference Centre ([www.learnalberta.ca](http://www.learnalberta.ca))

The Online Reference Centre (ORC), a collaborative partnership between TAL and Alberta Education, licenses and provides digital resources in support of Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning community. Available in both English and French, ORC resources provide digital tools for 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms.

### Licensing

Purchasing online resources is a costly, time-consuming and specialized task for libraries. That's why The Alberta Library negotiates and administers over \$6 million in license agreements for electronic resources for member libraries and for the Online Reference Centre. Leveraging the power of a consortium results in savings for libraries – in some cases 25 per cent or more – which improves access to information for all Albertans.

### Professional Development and Training

TAL coordinates and provides professional development and training opportunities for member libraries and hosts Netspeed, a conference that enables librarians, technical staff and trustees to explore new technologies in a connected world.

### Communications

The Alberta Library coordinates cross-province marketing, promotional and advocacy initiatives for the library community.

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The Alberta Library  
6-14, Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2V5  
(P) 780.414.0805  
(F) 780.414.0806



**Government  
of Alberta** ■

[www.thealbertalibrary.ab.ca](http://www.thealbertalibrary.ab.ca)

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