

2024

Annual Report



Organizational Overview

Mission

The Fort Erie Public Library opens the door to life-long learning and leisure opportunities for the empowerment of all members of the community.

Vision

The Fort Erie Public Library provides for the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the residents of Greater Fort Erie in a cost-effective manner and an atmosphere that is welcoming, respectful and businesslike.

Hours of Operation



Centennial

Monday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Tuesday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Wednesday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Thursday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Friday 9:30 am – 5 pm
Saturday 9:30 am – 5 pm



Crystal Ridge

Monday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Tuesday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Wednesday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Thursday 9:30 am – 8 pm
Friday 9:30 am – 5 pm
Saturday 9:30 am – 5 pm



Stevensville

Monday 9:30 am – 2 pm
Tuesday closed
Wednesday 3:30 pm – 8 pm
Thursday 3:30 pm – 8 pm
Friday closed
Saturday 9:30 am – 2 pm

Trustees

Larry Graber, Chair
Barbara Ruegg, Vice Chair
Joan Christensen, Council Representative
Andrew Caird, Member at Large

Ken Burden, Member at Large
Samantha MacLean, Member at Large
Stan Sauer, Member at Large
Tricia-Lynn Pascia, Member at Large

Library trustees are appointed by the municipal council, through a formal application and selection process. Trustees serve as volunteers and are responsible for governing the library, ensuring it meets the needs of the community. Their duties include setting policies, overseeing the library's budget, advocating for library services, and supporting the library's mission to provide accessible resources and programs. We thank them for their commitment, which helps guide the library's growth and impact in Fort Erie.



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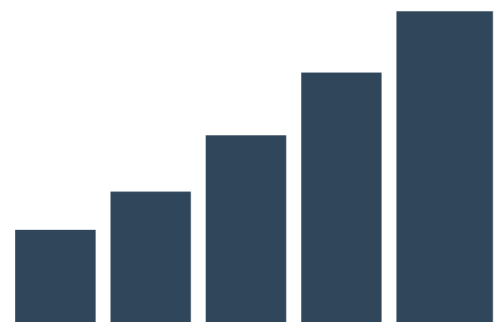
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Letter from our Board Chair

As Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Fort Erie Public Library, it is my privilege to address you in this year's annual report. This past year has been one of reflection, transition, and our ongoing commitment to the mission of our library.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the challenges we have faced in recent years. We have navigated periods of uncertainty, but through it all, the library has remained a vital resource for our community. This resilience is a testament to the dedication of our staff, the support of our patrons, and the enduring value of the services we provide.

In November, we welcomed Jen Kendall as the new CEO of the Fort Erie Public Library. This appointment marks a pivotal moment in the library's journey. Jen brings a wealth of experience, a clear vision, and a deep commitment to the principles that make libraries indispensable: access, equity, and innovation. The Board has full confidence in her ability to lead the Fort Erie Public Library into a bright and sustainable future.

Under Jen's leadership, and with the Board's unwavering support, we are taking decisive steps to ensure Fort Erie Public Library remains a cornerstone of our community. Our priorities for the coming year include:

- **Strengthening Community Engagement:** We will deepen our connections with you, our patrons, to ensure our services and programs reflect your needs and aspirations.
- **Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusion:** We are committed to making Fort Erie Public Library a welcoming space for all, where everyone feels valued and empowered.
- **Setting a Path Forward:** We will be reviewing and developing our strategic plan to ensure we can meet the evolving demands of our community while preserving the timeless value of our collections and services.

The Board of Trustees is steadfast in its responsibility to provide strategic oversight and ensure the long-term success of Fort Erie Public Library. We are confident that the steps we are taking today will position the library as a leader in our region for years to come.

We also recognize that the library's strength lies in the support of its community. Your engagement, feedback, and advocacy are essential to our success. Together, we will ensure that the Fort Erie Public Library continues to be a place of learning, connection, and opportunity for all.

Thank you for your trust and support. We look forward to sharing the progress we make in the year ahead and to working alongside you to build a stronger, more vibrant community.

Larry Graber
Board Chair

Letter from CEO

It is with great enthusiasm and a deep sense of responsibility that I write to you as the new CEO of the Fort Erie Public Library. Since joining the team in November, I have been inspired by the dedication of my staff, the passion of our patrons, and the vital role this library plays in our community.

Like many organizations, in the past few years, we have navigated uncertainty, change, and evolving expectations. Yet, through it all, the library has remained a cornerstone of learning, connection, and opportunity for everyone in our community. This resilience is a testament to the strength of our shared commitment to knowledge, inclusivity, and growth.

As I step into this role, I want to assure you that I am fully committed to building on this foundation. My vision for the Fort Erie Public Library is rooted in three core principles:

- **Community-Centered Service:** The library belongs to you, and your needs and aspirations will guide our decisions. We are here to serve as a hub for learning, creativity, and connection for all ages and backgrounds.
- **Innovation and Adaptability:** In a rapidly changing world, we will embrace new technologies, programs, and services to meet the evolving needs of our community while preserving the timeless value of books, storytelling, and human connection.
- **Transparency and Trust:** I believe in open communication and accountability. As we move forward, I will ensure that you are informed, engaged, and confident in the direction we are taking.

In the coming year, we will focus on strengthening our programs, expanding access to resources, and fostering partnerships that enhance the library's impact. We will also work to ensure that Fort Erie Public Library remains a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone.

I am deeply honored to lead this incredible institution, and I am committed to earning your trust every step of the way. Together, we will write the next chapter of Fort Erie Public Library's story—one that reflects the strength, diversity, and spirit of our community.

Thank you for your continued support. I look forward to meeting many of you in the months ahead and hearing your ideas, feedback, and dreams for our library.

With gratitude and optimism,
Jen Kendall, MLIS
Chief Executive Officer

Key Statistics

Most Popular Post



15,373 views

78,631
circulations



5,570

Total program attendees



4,231

Items added to
the collection

11.8%

Increase in Digital
Circulation

3,386 followers
on social media



32%

Increase in visits

5,828

total Library members



Return on Investment

Our weekly operating cost per capita was less than \$1 in 2024



\$1,119.58

Impact of an open hour

\$53.02

annual funding per capita

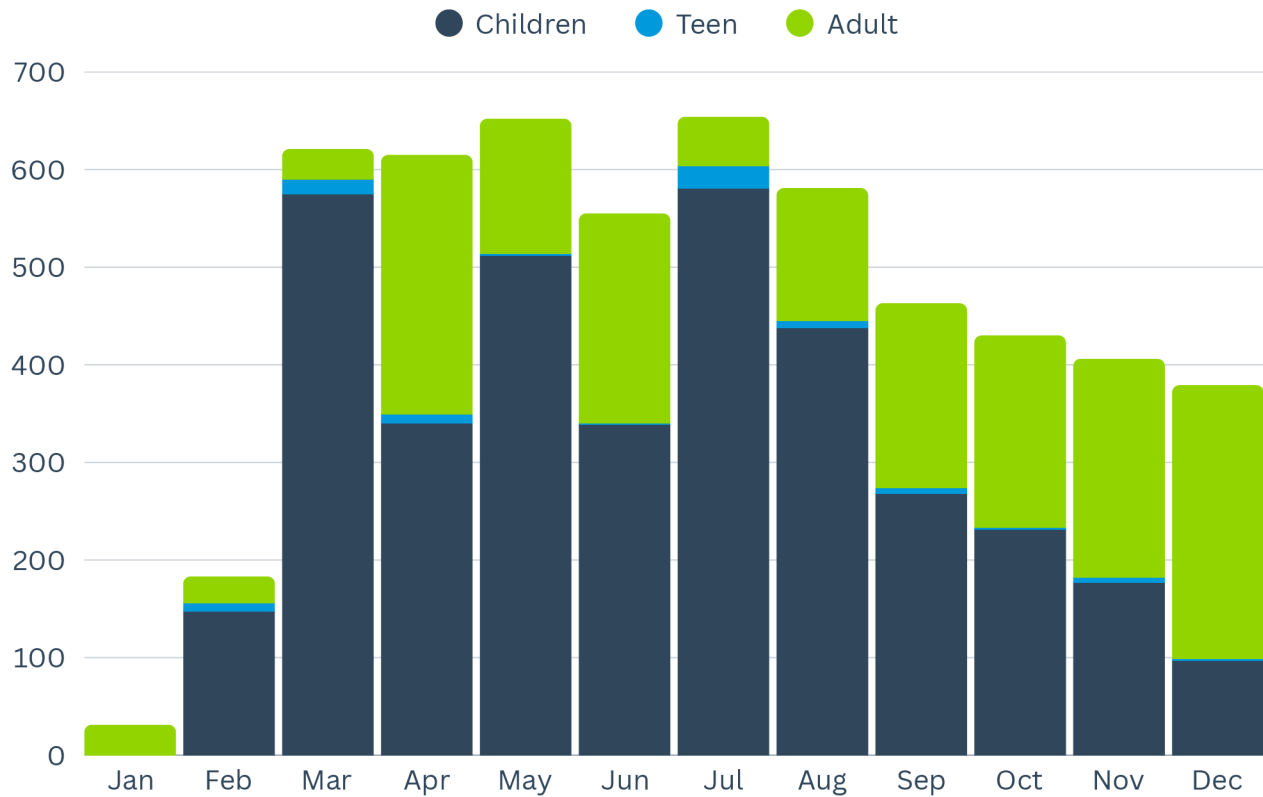


Our annual funding per capita is slightly higher than our operating expenditure per capita of \$51.75

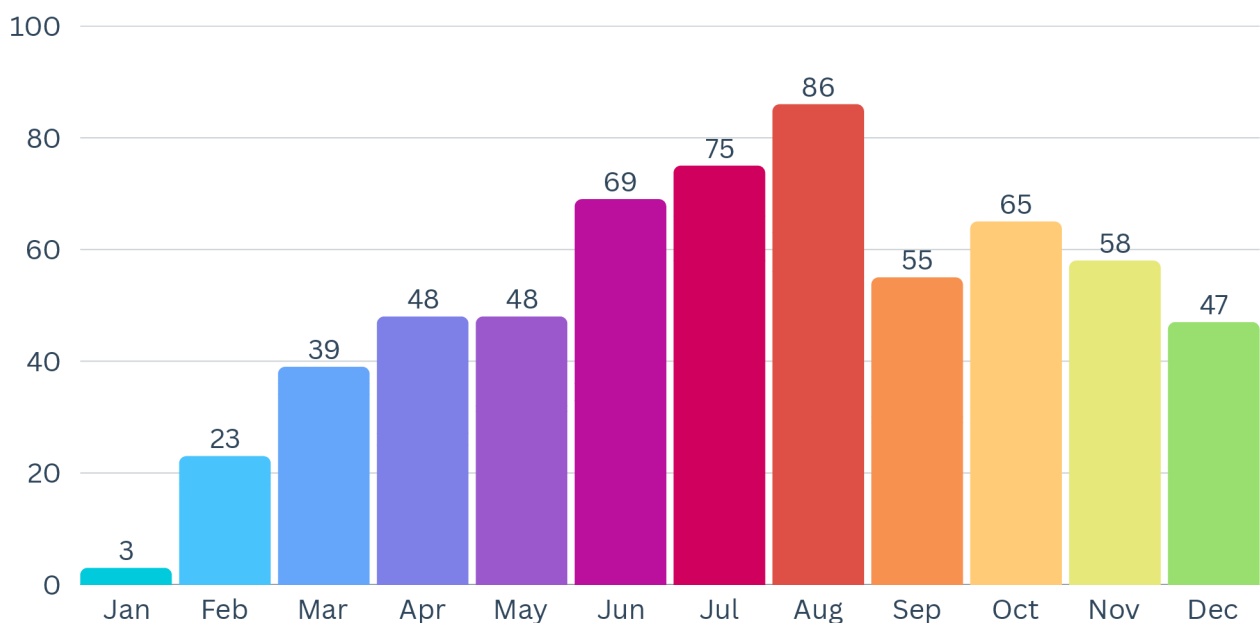
The library brings substantial value to the community, not just through recreation, learning, and providing a safe gathering space. We also provide free educational resources -which improve overall academic achievement in the area-, resources for job seekers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses. Our health information resources and programs promote healthy behaviors, provide mental health support and allow community members to connect, all of which have a host of proven benefits.

When using OLS' Return on Investment calculator, which factors in programs, our library of things, lending, and other community benefits I've mentioned, the impact of an open hour of the Fort Erie Library is over \$1,000. That's a huge return on investment for the community.

Program Attendance



Total Programs



Please note statistics were not available for January 2024

HIGHLIGHTS

Adults

- Fort Erie Ukes
- Print Making Series
- Adult Crafts
- Bertie Historical Society Presentations
- Author Visits
- Writing Series
- Tai Chi
- Tech Help
- Knitting Groups
- Trivia Night
- Grief Recovery Group
- Community Living Programs
- Book clubs
- Craft Supply Swap
- Diabetes Awareness
- Transit Info Session
- Adult Card Making

Children & Teens

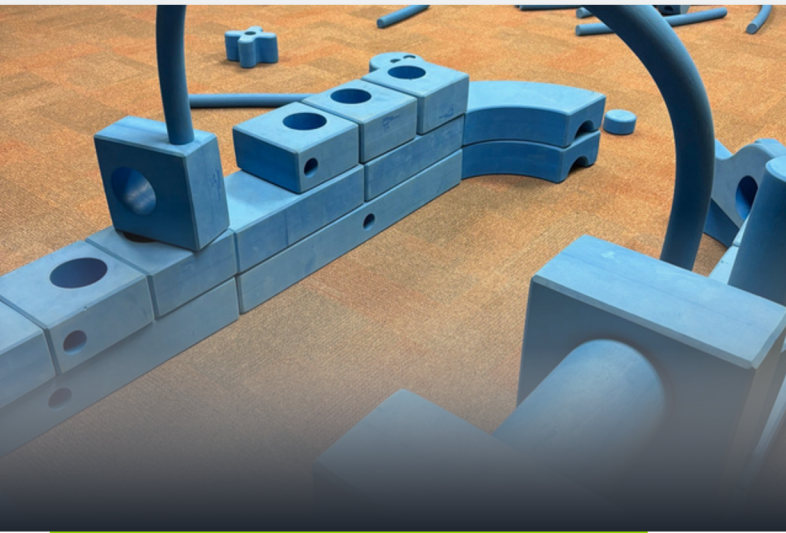
- Mad Science
- Mario Kart Tournaments
- Painting Lessons
- Scoop McCoy
- Scratch Coding
- Early On
- Stuffy Sleepover
- Reptile Kingdom
- Teen Advisory Group
- Big Blue Blocks
- Dungeons and Dragons
- CBC Music Concert
- Teen crafts
- Chess Club
- Board Game Cafe
- Jedi Academy
- STEAM
- Halloween Party
- Escape Rooms



Bookmark Challenge

This summer we hosted a Bookmark Challenge that asked our young patrons to design a bookmark based on some of their favourite books. We had so many amazing designs! Our winners had their designs displayed on official Fort Erie Library bookmarks, which were distributed to all library branches for patrons to take home.





Highlights

- Our programs offer resources and access to information, social connection, and an outlet for creativity. The library has become a hub for the community, in large part due to our programs.
- This year we had some great programs for adults! We had about 67 adult programs this year attended by 490 patrons.
- In total we had more than 320 programs this year, which averages to be about one a day!
- These programs focused on: computer literacy, local history, adult literacy, cultural enrichment, and social engagement.

Kids Programs

- The Fort Erie Public Library is committed to offering a great variety of high quality, fun, and educational programs and resources for children and teens.
- Our programs encourage children's creativity and learning through crafts, games, STEM and STEAM programs, and working in partnership with schools.
- In total we offered over 166 unique children's programs throughout 2024.



TD Summer Reading Club:

- We had 1,778 attendees in total for TD Summer Reading activities.
- Children were encouraged to read with daily prizes and weekly themed beads to add to their Summer Reading keychain.
- At the library we had some wacky events like magic shows, Jedi Academy, nature walks, and crafts galore!

Tax Clinics

The Fort Erie Public Library registered with The Canada Revenue Community Volunteer Income Tax Program to hold free tax clinics for people with lower income. In all, 325 people were served in the 2024 FEPL CRA-CVITP tax clinics. Seniors, newcomers to Canada and lower income people were all helped. This is in comparison to 90 people served in 2023- more than three times the amount!

CBC Music

The Fort Erie Public Library hosted Juno-nominated Mohawk singer-songwriter Shawnee Kish where she performed "Yohahí:yo (The Good Road)," which was written by the young people of Fort Erie and chosen as 2024's Indigenous language song for the Canadian Music Class Challenge.



Looking to 2025

At the library, we are always looking ahead to achieve our strategic goals and expand our program offerings

- waiting for text



DID YOU KNOW?

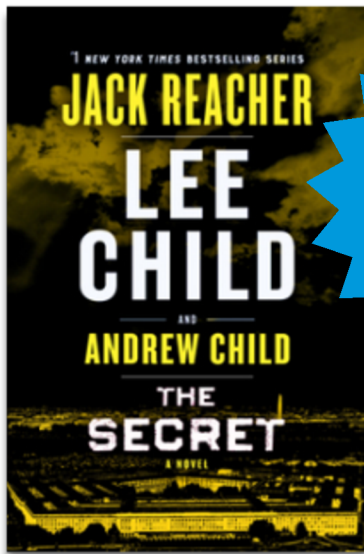
July is the most popular month to visit the library?

We welcomed



1,213

new patrons to the
Fort Erie Public Library!



Most popular with 98 circulations!



Most popular A/V item!



1,399

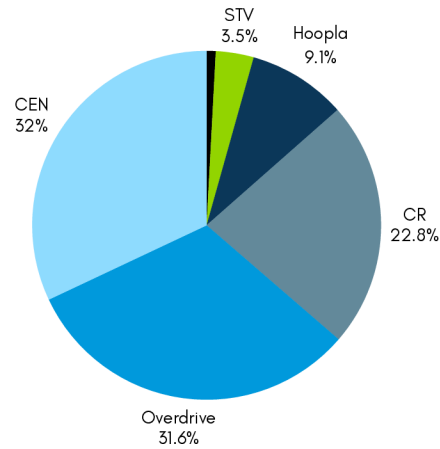
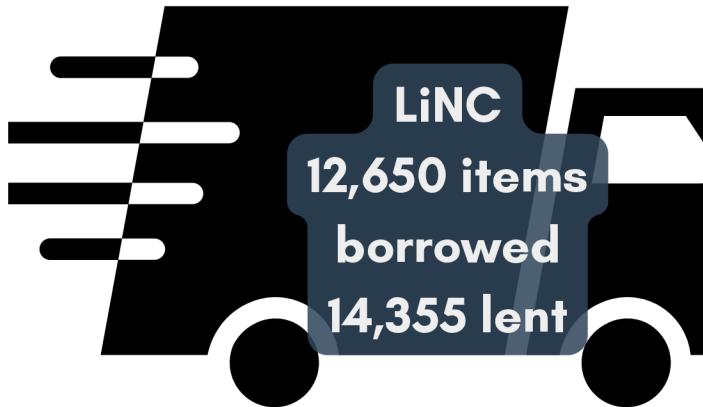
'LIBRARY OF THINGS' CIRCULATED



Most popular Kids pick!



Annual Circulation



42% of
circulation is
digital

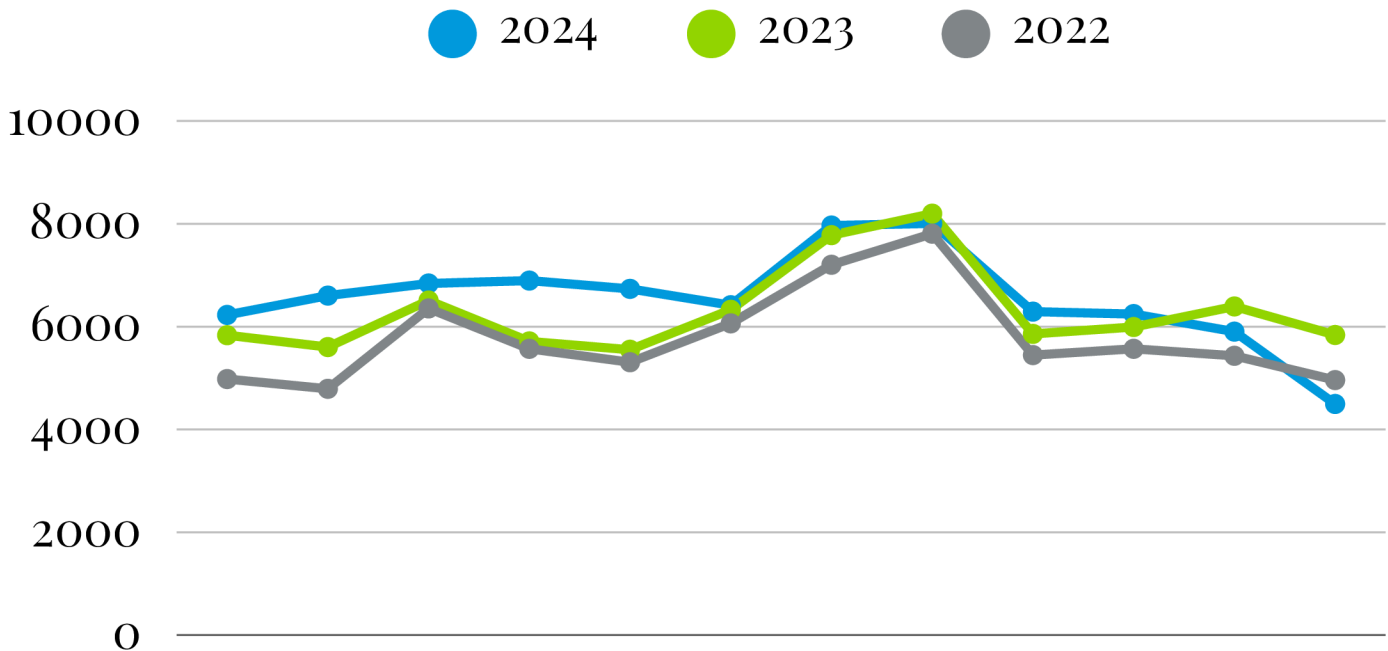


e-book prices
range from
\$50-\$150 for a
2 year license?



DID YOU KNOW?

Our circulation keeps increasing every year! In 2024 we saw a 4.01% increase in physical circulation. The highest percentage increase was at our Stevensville branch, with a 21.5% increase! Digital circulation also increased. Due to the cost difference in purchasing digital resources, we've had to make some budgetary shifts to keep up with demand, both with physical and digital items.



Financial Statements



	2029	2030
Revenue	\$700	\$800
Expenses	\$200	\$250
Profit	\$800	\$900

About the Fort Erie Public Library

Since the late 1890s, citizens of Greater Fort Erie have been served by a library. From reading rooms in Stevensville and Ridgeway and small offices in Fort Erie and Bridgeburg, to an amalgamated Fort Erie Public Library in 1970, patrons have been able to borrow books, movies, music and all manner of 'things' for their recreation and learning needs. Fort Erie Public Library is part of Libraries in the Niagara Cooperative (LiNC) allowing us access to materials from other libraries in the region. If what you are looking for isn't available in our area, we can try to find it with the provincial interlibrary loan system.

In addition to membership and borrowing services, the Fort Erie Public Library offers a variety of services and programs to serve the people of Greater Fort Erie. Patrons have access to computers, small study rooms and larger meeting spaces. Patrons are able to print, photocopy and scan documents and have a copy of coffee or hot chocolate for a small fee. We offer class visits and host a variety of events throughout the year.

The Fort Erie Public Library runs programs for adults and children at all three branches. Book clubs, adult and children's craft workshops, trivia nights are just some of the programming regularly on offer. Special programs run during the summer and March Break to ensure the children of our community have somewhere safe and free to play and learn. Through our many programs and services, the Fort Erie Public Library continues to meet the needs of our ever-growing community.



Friends

2024 was a transformative year for the Fort Erie Public Library. While we had our challenges, we still saw increases in foot-traffic, circulation, and program attendance. We are sure these trends will continue and invite you to provide feedback via our surveys to inform our services and our upcoming strategic plan

Partner Recognition



Friends of the Fort Erie Public Library • Town of Fort Erie
Province of Ontario • Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee • EarlyON
Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

Contact Us



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www.fepl.ca

Find out about upcoming programs and registration dates right away - sign up at **fepl.ca/newsletter**

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