

*Letter to the Editor (Winnipeg Free Press)*

Submission link: [https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/send\\_a\\_letter?gclid=Cj0KCQjwla-hBhD7ARIsAM9tQKtupTHNayGV3OMmZRKi9y6kc8e351k6wSeQpdx-8Nkqn0aCvjHjMZgaAoXMEALw\\_wcB](https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/send_a_letter?gclid=Cj0KCQjwla-hBhD7ARIsAM9tQKtupTHNayGV3OMmZRKi9y6kc8e351k6wSeQpdx-8Nkqn0aCvjHjMZgaAoXMEALw_wcB)

Response to: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/2023/04/08/library-stymied-by-lack-of-resources>

**RE: Library Stymied by Lack of Resources (April 8, 2023)**

As librarians, we are writing to express our unease over the working conditions of Winnipeg Public Library (WPL) staff. Chronic understaffing has led to vacant librarian positions, reductions in programming, and challenges keeping libraries open, in addition to inadequate pay for WPL librarians, a job that requires a graduate degree. Throughout these difficulties, the voices of WPL staff have been silenced. We aim to bring to light their hard work in challenging circumstances.

Libraries serve as centres of the community, offering programs and services that promote literacy, education, and social interaction. Libraries are a fundamental component of a democratic society, providing equal access to information and resources for all. Every dollar spent on public libraries gives a return on investment of nearly five dollars in education, employment support, and more.

However, public libraries are only as strong as the people who work within them. Library staff play a crucial role in the daily operations of our libraries, and their contributions and expertise should be recognized and valued.

We are concerned with the level of funding for our city's public libraries. It is essential that the City of Winnipeg take immediate action to improve the working conditions of library staff, including fair pay and adequate staffing levels, and increase the level of funding currently allocated. It is also becoming increasingly apparent that the Library Board, and not elected municipal officials, should oversee the library budget. As Richard Bee asserts, this is common practice in other large Canadian city libraries.

If Winnipeg Public Library staff cannot speak publicly about what is challenging our public libraries, we must advocate for them. As library workers, we strive to provide the highest level of service to everyone who walks into our libraries. We urge the City to prioritize our public spaces, including our much-loved, but much-neglected, public libraries.

Sincerely,

The librarians of the Manitoba Association of Health Information Providers  
Winnipeg, MB