

## **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, 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.*

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