

# North Shore Libraries win provincial award for pandemic-era tech program

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## British Columbia Library Association honours libraries for tech distribution initiative

North Shore libraries are being recognized for their pandemic-era program that delivered 400 tablets and smartphones to vulnerable residents last spring.

The British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) Building Better Communities Award will be given to each of the three libraries at its annual general meeting Wednesday, June 23 for the Take-Home Tech initiative.

The initiative, generously supported by Telus, saw North Vancouver City Library, North Vancouver District Public Library and West Vancouver Memorial Library work together with social service agencies across the North Shore to get internet-enabled devices into the hands of people who most needed it.

Pre-pandemic, about 500 people use public library computers daily, according to the libraries' statistics. When the pandemic forced the libraries' closure in March 2020, hundreds of people were immediately cut off from important social and government services that had shifted online.

"Without access to the internet, many community members were also experiencing loneliness and stress, made worse by the uncertainty of the pandemic," said Sarah Felkar, Head of Technology at WVML and one of the program's initial architects.

Devices were provided through social service agencies, who distributed them to their clients.

The award, given annually, recognizes an individual or organization responsible for increasing the relevancy and impact of library service through partnership, collaboration and building trust where little has previously existed.