



## **Loss of *Community Counts* Website a Step Backwards for Evidence Based Decision Making**

In the latest budget, the Government of Nova Scotia targeted the *Community Counts* website. The site provided information from Statistics Canada and other sources organized by community, community health boards, police or electoral districts, and was an excellent tool for planning services based on community specific profiles. Cutting the service represents a comparably insignificant savings to the overall budget compared to the value and use by not only libraries and community organizations, but also employees in working in the healthcare sector.

The loss of this service is representative of a worrisome trend in Canada. Over the past several years, the federal government has made significant budget cuts and policy changes at Statistics Canada, including eliminating the mandatory long-form census. Decreasing access to reliable, quality information makes it challenging to plan and deliver effective services like healthcare, education, and municipal services. The loss of valuable resources like *Community Counts* erodes the ability of researchers, policy makers, government agencies, and other organizations to make informed decisions that impact residents of Nova Scotia.

The Atlantic Provinces Library Association urges the provincial government to reconsider termination of the *Community Counts* program, a well-used tool for informed decision making in Nova Scotia.

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