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Policy Type: Operational	Number: LIB-OP-86	Approved: April 14, 2022
Title: Elections Policy		Next Review: 2026

## Policy Statement

The Library must act and appear to act in a non-partisan way at all times, but especially during elections, while supporting the democratic process, freedom of expression and informed discussion on political issues. The library must comply with legislation related to elections. These regulations are included in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* as amended by Bill 181, the *Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016*. Specifically, Clause 88.18 *Use of municipal, board resources* states:

*Before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period.*

This policy applies to Board members, employees and volunteers of the library in their dealings with candidates and political parties and the use of library resources during the campaign periods for municipal elections, but these rules and procedures will also be used for provincial and federal elections.

## Definitions

**Campaign materials** include any materials used to solicit votes for a candidate(s) in an election, including but not limited to literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia.

**A Candidate** is any person who has filed and not withdrawn a nomination for an elected office at the municipal, school board, provincial or federal level in an election or by-election.

A **Contribution** means “money, goods and services given to and accepted by or on behalf of a person for his or her election campaign as defined in the *Municipal Elections Act*.

**Election** means an election or by-election at the municipal, school board, provincial and federal level of government, or the submission of a question to the electors.

An **Election Period** means the official period of an election. From the day the election officially begins until the final day of voting.

# Policy

## 1. Campaign Contributions

- 1.1. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, Section 88.8(4), the *Elections Finances Act*, Section 16(1), and *Canada Elections Act*, Section 404(1), the Board may not make a contribution to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of money, goods or services.

## 2. Use of Library Resources and Property

- 2.1. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the library.
- 2.2. Meeting rooms may be booked in accordance with the Library's Meeting Rooms Policy.
- 2.3. Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, staff or other operational resources of the library nor may they use the library's logo in any campaign material.
- 2.4. 'All-candidates' meetings may be held at the library, either as a library program or sponsored by another group, provided that all candidates are invited to attend such meetings. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event.
- 2.5. Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public right-of-ways at the library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law.
- 2.6. In accordance with the *Canada Elections Act* section 81.1(1) federal election candidates or their representatives are allowed to campaign in facilities that are available for free to the public. During municipal and provincial elections candidates will be granted the same right to campaign in the library.
- 2.7. The Library will promote awareness of the election; and provide general information on elections.
- 2.8. The library's free WiFi and Internet services may be used by voters for on-line municipal voting as per the Information Services Policy and Internet Services Policy.
- 2.9. No election sign or poster specific to a candidate or political party can be posted in the library building. No campaign material (brochures, promotional items) from any candidate will be displayed in the library.

## 3. Employee and Volunteer Participation in Election Campaigns

- 3.1. Any library employee running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with Section 30 of the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- 3.2. A library employee or volunteer involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out his or her library duties during and must not participate in campaign activities during his or her working hours.

## 4. Library Board Members as Candidates

- 4.1. Board members may continue their library board responsibilities when they are running for office.

## **5. Requests for information about the library**

- 5.1. The CEO will coordinate requests for information about the library received from candidates or political parties.
- 5.2. Information that is provided by the library to one candidate or political party will be provided to all other candidates and political parties upon request during an election.
- 5.3. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the CEO or tour of the library.

## **Citations**

*The Municipal Elections Act, the Elections Finances Act, and Canada Elections Act.*

Ontario. Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, s. 23 & 37, R.R.O. 1990, 976.

Ontario. Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56.

## **Date comes into Effect**

This policy replaces previous versions and comes into effect on April 14, 2022.

## **Related Documents**

Meeting Room Policy

Information Services Policy

Internet Services Policy

The Southern Ontario Library (SOLS): *The Library and Political Elections*. April 2018.

The London Public Library. *Elections, Including the Use of Library Resources during an Election*. January 2018.