

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction on how library resources are used during municipal, school board, provincial and federal election campaigns. It is also to ensure that the library is complying with relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the [Municipal Elections Act, 1996](#), the [Ontario Election Act, 1990](#), the [Canada Elections Act, 2000](#), and relevant municipal by-laws.

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.

Scope

This policy applies to Library 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

Campaigning is any activity by or on behalf of a candidate or political party meant to elicit support during the election period. Campaigning does not include the appearance of elected officials or candidates at an event in their personal capacity without the display of any signage or graphic that identifies them as a candidate or registrant and without the solicitation of votes.

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A Candidate is any person who has filed and not withdrawn a nomination for an elected office at the municipal, school board, provincial or federal level in an election or by-election.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

Library Resources include but are not limited to library employees and volunteers, library events, programs and services (including online services such as online and social media channels), library facilities, equipment and supplies, library funds, information, intellectual property and library infrastructure. These are further defined as follows:

- An **Employee** is a person who is employed by the library and includes all employees, including students and casual staff.

- **Library Events** can be both in person and online, funded or organized by the library, including events that may be jointly organized with community organizations and/or with external sponsors. Library events include, but are not limited to, community meetings and consultations, educational programs, cultural celebrations, and special events. Events organized by agencies and corporations are not considered library events for the purpose of this policy.
- **Library Facilities** include any facility that is directly managed and operated by the library. Library facilities do not include public right-of-ways, such as sidewalks, roads, boulevards and laneways.
- **Library Funds** include funding support received through the County's annual operating or capital budgets and the Province of Ontario Operating Grant for Libraries, and including, but not limited to, funds provided directly to library programs and services, Board Member expense payments and staffing budgets.
- **Library Infrastructure** is any physical or technology systems that support the operation of Library programs and services, including, but not limited to, the library van, computer network, communication systems, wireless equipment, computer hardware, software and peripherals, printing and mailing equipment, internet and intranet. Library infrastructure excludes public right-of ways, including sidewalks, roads, boulevards and laneways.
- A **Volunteer** is a person who voluntarily extends their services to actively support the library, and who does so without remuneration.
- **Non-partisan** means not supporting or opposing any political party, platform or candidate for public office.

Political Parties for provincial and federal elections are those registered with the [Ontario Election Finances Act](#) or in the registry of parties referred to in the [Canada Elections Act](#). Political Parties for municipal and school board elections mean any organization(s) whose fundamental purpose is to participate in public affairs by endorsing one or more of its members as candidates and supporting their election.

Policy

The right to vote is one of the greatest rights of a free society and is vital to democracy. Thus, the library will provide library resources within our capacity and legal limitations to support the democratic process.

The library will encourage and support discussion on civic and social issues in a manner that is non-partisan, fair and equitable to all those seeking elected office to increase voter awareness. It will maintain a neutral environment in which the library will not make any contribution (including money, goods and services) or use library resources to promote a political party, platform, or candidate.

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 Library 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 as do all members of the public. No preference will be given to candidates and political parties.
- 2.2. Meeting rooms may be booked in accordance with the Library's Meeting Rooms Policy.
- 2.3. Candidates may use equipment, supplies, staff or other operational resources of the library in accordance with typical patron support levels and approved fee/usage structures.
- 2.4. Candidates may not use the library's logo in any campaign material.
- 2.5. '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.
- 2.6. A Candidate is permitted to attend Library Events, or events held at Library Facilities as a private citizen, but may not solicit votes for themselves or a vote on a ballot.
- 2.7. Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public right-of-ways outside of the library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law.
- 2.8. 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. Such activities must be coordinated with the County Librarian or designate to avoid any conflict with regular or planned library operational needs.
- 2.9. The Library will promote awareness of the election; and provide general information on elections.
- 2.10. 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.
- 2.11. 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 County Librarian 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 during an election.
- 5.3. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the County Librarian or a tour of the library.

Replacement Statement

This policy replaces all previous versions and comes into effect on the date passed.

Citations

[Canada Elections Act \(S.C. 2000, c. 9\)](#)

[Ontario. Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.](#)

[Ontario. Election Finances Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.7](#)

[Ontario. Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44](#)

[Ontario. Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56.](#)

Related Documents

[Huron County Library. *Meeting Room Policy*. 2024.](#)

[Huron County Library. *Information Services Policy*. 2025.](#)

[Huron County Library. *Internet Services Policy*. 2022.](#)

[Federation of Ontario Public Libraries. *Ontario Library Board Policies Regarding Provincial, Municipal and Federal Elections*. February 14, 2018.](#)

[Huron County. *Use of Corporate Resources Policy*. 2022.](#)

[The London Public Library. *Elections, Including the Use of Library Resources during an Election*. January 2022.](#)

[Ontario Elections Advocacy Toolkit](#)

[Ontario Library Service. Trillium Public Library. OP-15. The Library and Political Elections. December 2025.](#)