



Policy Name:	The Library and Political Elections
Policy Type:	Operational
Policy Number:	OP-16
Original Adoption Date:	April 2018
Current Approval:	March 2025
Review:	March 2028
Motion:	2025:24

The Library and Political Elections

1. Purpose:

The Library must act and appear to act in a non-partisan way at all times, especially during elections, while supporting the democratic process, freedom of expression and informed discussion on political issues. This policy applies to municipal, provincial, and federal elections. This is in order to preserve the public trust, to maintain the neutrality of the Orillia Public Library during election campaigns, and to ensure that the Orillia Public Library complies with the ***Municipal Elections Act, 1996***.

2. Policy:

The Orillia Public Library supports the principle of intellectual freedom, which is the free exchange of information and ideas in a democratic society. The Library seeks to engage and encourage discussion on civic and social issues in a manner that is neutral, fair, and equitable to all those seeking elected office. The Orillia Public Library does not make contributions (including money, goods and services) or use Library resources to promote any candidate, registered third-party advertiser, political party, or supporters of a question on a ballot during an election.

3. Responsibility

- a. 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 campaign periods.



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- b. It is the responsibility of the Library CEO to ensure that the Library complies with legislation related to elections at all levels - municipal, provincial, and federal.

4. Procedure

Section 1 – Use of Library Resources and Property

- a. It is the responsibility of the Library to ensure that no candidate, third-party, or political party is provided with an unfair advantage in the use of Library resources at any time.
- b. For municipal elections, by May 1st in the election year, the library will establish the rules and procedures with respect to use of library resources during the period leading up to the municipal election. This requirement is found in the ***Municipal Elections Act 1996, Clause 88.18*** Use of municipal, board resources which 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.”

- c. Rules for use of library resources and property are as follows:
 - i. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the Library.
 - ii. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with the Orillia Public Library’s Meeting Room policy (OP-08).
 - iii. Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, staff, or other operational resources of the Library that the general public cannot access.



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- iv. Candidates cannot use the Library’s logo on any campaign material.
- v. ‘All-candidates’ meetings can 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.
- vi. Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public rights-of-way at the Library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law.
- vii. 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.
- viii. No election sign or poster specific to a candidate or political party can be posted on the grounds of the Library or in the Library building.

Section 2 – Campaign Contributions

The Library will comply with legislation on campaign contributions at all levels.

a. Municipal Elections

The Board as a whole may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of money, goods or services. This is in accordance with the ***Municipal Elections Act, Section 88.8.***

b. Provincial Elections

The Board may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate of a provincial election, constituency association, nomination contestant, candidates, and



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leadership contestant of provincial political parties in the form of money, goods or services in accordance with the ***Ontario Elections Finances Act, Section 16(1)***.

c. Federal Election

The Board may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate of a federal election, a registered party, a registered association, nomination contestant, and leadership contestant of federal political parties in the form of money, goods or services in accordance with the ***Canada Elections Act, Section 363(1)***.

Section 3 - Employee, Volunteer and Board Member Participation in Election Campaigns

- a. A Library employee or volunteer involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out their Library duties and must not participate in campaign activities during their working hours.
- b. With respect to a municipal election, any Library employee running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with the entirety of ***Section 30 of the Municipal Elections Act*** which reads, in part

“30 (1) An employee of a municipality or local board is eligible to be a candidate for and to be elected as a member of the council or local board that is the employer if he or she takes an unpaid leave of absence beginning as of the day the employee is nominated and ending on voting day. *1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 30 (1); 2002, c. 17, Sched. D, s. 9 (1).*”

- c. Board members may continue their Library Board responsibilities when they are running for office.



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Section 4 - Requests for information about the library

- a. The CEO will coordinate requests for information about the Library received from candidates or political parties.
- b. 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.
- c. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the CEO or tour of the Library.

Section 5 – Promoting Elections

Nothing in this policy prohibits the Orillia Public Library from promoting awareness of or providing information on elections as long as no particular candidate, registered third-party advertiser or political party is promoted, supported or opposed at the event. This includes promoting awareness of activities or events in which all candidates in an election are invited to attend.

Related Documents:

- [*Canada Elections Act, SC.,2000*](#)
- [*Municipal Elections Act, 1996.*](#)
- [*Ontario Elections Finances Act, R.S.O, 1990*](#)
- Orillia Public Library: Community Information (OP-09)
- Orillia Public Library: Purpose and Duties of the Board (GOV-01)
- Orillia Public Library: Meeting Rooms (OP-08)