

Board Motion Number:	2022-05	Year of Next Review:	2026
Date Approved:	March 21, 2022	Chairperson's signature:	
Reference Documents:	<i>Community Information Policy.</i> <i>Meeting Room Policy.</i>		

THE LIBRARY AND POLITICAL ELECTIONS

BACKGROUND

One of Oxford County Library's core values is to support the community in civic engagement and participation.

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.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent approach and direction on how Library resources can and cannot be used during municipal, school board, provincial and federal election campaigns or questions on the ballot. It is also to ensure that Oxford County Library is in compliance with relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the *Municipal Elections Act*, the Ontario *Elections Finances Act*, the *Canada Elections Act* and relevant municipal by-laws.

This policy applies to Board members, employees and volunteers at the Library in their dealings with candidates and political parties and the use of Library resources during political campaigns.

PROCEDURES

Section 1: Responsibility and application

1. 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 political campaigns.
2. 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.

Section 2: Use of library resources and property

1. It is the responsibility of the library to ensure that no candidate, registered third-party advertiser or political party is provided with an unfair advantage in the use of library resources at any time.
2. For municipal elections, by May 1st in the election year, the library will establish the rules

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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.”

3. Rules for use of library resources and property are as follows:
 - a. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the library.
 - b. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with the Oxford County Library Meeting Room Policy.
 - c. 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.
 - d. “All-candidates” meetings can be held in 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.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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.
 - g. In accordance with the Oxford County Library Community Information Policy, during an election political materials may be eligible for posting or display in the library for the sole purpose of announcing meetings and forums for discussion of community issues.
 - h. 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 3: Campaign contributions

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

1. Municipal Elections

The Board 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 which reads:

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“Contributions to candidates

88.8 (1) *A contribution shall not be made to or accepted by a person or an individual acting under the person's direction unless the person is a candidate. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.*

Only during election campaign

(2) *A contribution shall not be made to or accepted by a candidate or an individual acting under the candidate's direction outside the candidate's election campaign period described in section 88.24. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.*

Who may contribute

- (3) *Only the following persons may make contributions:*
1. *An individual who is normally resident in Ontario.*
 2. *Subject to subsection (5), the candidate and his or her spouse. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.*

Who cannot contribute

- (4) *For greater certainty, and without limiting the generality of subsection (3), the following persons and entities shall not make a contribution:*
1. *A federal political party registered under the Canada Elections Act (Canada) or any federal constituency association or registered candidate at a federal election endorsed by that party.*
 2. *A provincial political party, constituency association, registered candidate or leadership contestant registered under the Election Finances Act.*
 3. *A corporation that carries on business in Ontario.*
 4. *A trade union that holds bargaining rights for employees in Ontario.*
 5. *The Crown in right of Canada or Ontario, a municipality or a local board. 2016, c. 15, s. 51.”*

2. Provincial Elections

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

“16 (1) Contributions to parties, constituency associations, nomination contestants, candidates and leadership contestants registered under this Act may be made only by persons individually. 2016, c. 22, s. 10 (1).”

3. Federal Elections

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

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of federal political parties in the form of money, goods or services in accordance with the *Canada Elections Act*, Section 363(1) which reads:

“363 (1) No person or entity other than an individual who is a Canadian citizen or is a permanent resident as defined in subsection 2(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act shall make a contribution to a registered party, a registered association, a nomination contestant, a candidate or a leadership contestant.”

Section 4: Employee, Volunteer and Board Member Participation in Election Campaigns

1. 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.
2. 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).”
3. Board members may continue their library board responsibilities when they are running for office.

Section 5: Requests for Information about the Library

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