



Title: Elections, Including Use of Library Resources during an Election
Policy Type: Operational
Policy No.: OR-L-04

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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, or Questions on a Ballot. 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*, the *Canada Elections Act*, and relevant municipal by-laws.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to Board Members, Employees and Volunteers and their dealings with Candidates for Elected Office, including current City Councillors Campaigning during the municipal Election Campaign Period.

Nothing in this policy prohibits:

- Board Members from performing their duties;
- City Councillors from performing their duties, including representing the interests of their constituents in a manner consistent with their duties as Elected Officials; and/or,
- The Library from advocating on issues that affect the Library specifically and/or the public library sector in general.

DEFINITIONS:

Campaigning: any activity by or on behalf of a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant, advocate or Question on a Ballot meant to elicit support during the Election Period. Campaigning does not include the appearance of Elected Officials, other Candidates or their Supporters, or Registrants at an event in their personal capacity without the display of any signage or graphic that identifies the individual as a Candidate or Registrant and without the solicitation of votes.

Campaign Materials: any materials used to solicit support during an Election Period, including but not limited to literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia. Campaign Materials include materials in all media, e.g., print, physical and digital displays, advertising, and online platforms including websites and social media.

Candidate: any person who has filed and not withdrawn a nomination for an Elected Office at the municipal, school board, provincial or federal level in an Election or by-election.

Contribution: money, goods and services given to and accepted by or on behalf of a person for his or her Election campaign.

Elected Office: an elected position of authority to exercise a public function and to receive whatever compensation may belong to it.

Elected Official: an individual elected to the House of Commons, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, London City Council or a school board.

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

Election Period: the official period of an Election:

- for a municipal Election, the Election Period means the period starting on the day an Election is called and ending on Election day;
- for a provincial or federal Election, the Election Period commences the day the writ for the Election is issued and ends on Voting Day;
- for a Question on a Ballot, the Election Period commences the day London City Council passes a by-law to put a question to the electorate, and ends on Voting Day; and,
- for a by-election, the Election Period commences when the by-election is called and ends on Voting Day.

Glad-hand: attend a Library Event as a private individual and interacting with other event attendees without displaying signage or disseminating material that identifies the individual as a Candidate and without encouraging votes for a Candidate, a Political Party or a position on a Question on a Ballot.

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:

- **Employee:** a person who is employed by the Library and includes all Employees, including page and casual staff.
- **Library Events:** events, 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:** any facility, including adjoining property, that is owned or leased by the Library and 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:** funding support received through the City'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:** any physical or technology systems that support the operation of Library programs and services, including, but not limited to, the Library's fleet vehicles, 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.
- **Volunteer:** a person who voluntarily extends their services to actively support the Library, and who does so without remuneration. While Board Members volunteer their time and do not receive remuneration, for the purposes of this policy, they will be referred to as Board Members as they have roles and responsibilities that are different from those of other Volunteers.

Media Scrum means an unplanned encounter between a Candidate, a Registrant, and/or their staff and member(s) of the media.

Member of Council: the Mayor and all City Councillors.

Non-partisan: not supporting or opposing any Political Party, platform or Candidate for public office.

Political Parties: for provincial and federal Elections, Political Parties 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 or a Question on a Ballot 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, or to promote the acceptance of a certain position on a Question on a Ballot.

Question on a Ballot: any question or by-law submitted to the electors by London City Council, a school board, an elected local board, or the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Registrant: an individual, corporation or trade union who has registered as a third party for the Election with the City Clerk under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Supporter: a Supporter of a “yes” or “no” response to a Question on a Ballot but not incurring expenses like a Registrant.

Voting Day: the day on which the final vote is to be taken in an Election.

POLICY STATEMENT:

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, Candidate or support a Question on a Ballot.

Activities Allowable During an Election

1. All-Candidate meetings can be held at Library Facilities provided that all Candidates for an Elected Office are invited to attend and the meetings are open to all members of the public. This clause is subject to availability of space and all applicable City of London by-laws and Library policies. It is the responsibility of the organizer(s) to ensure that all Candidates have been invited to participate in the event. The Library will provide space at market value in accordance with Library policies.
2. A Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election is permitted to distribute Campaign Materials on public right-of-way sidewalks and thoroughfares at public libraries only as permitted by City of London policies and by-laws. They cannot distribute such materials on Library property or in Library Facilities or through the Library’s outreach services.
3. Informal Media Scrums are permitted in public or common areas at Library Facilities provided that no apparatus, mechanism or device for the amplification of the human voice or any sound is used and that the activity is not disruptive to regular Library activities in the vicinity. If the Media Scrum is deemed to be potentially disruptive, Employees may ask the participants to find an alternative location.
4. A Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election is permitted to attend Library Events, or events held at Library Facilities, in either their capacity as an elected representative or as a private

citizen to Glad-hand with attendees and visitors, but may not solicit votes for themselves, a Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot, unless permitted by the *Canada Elections Act*.

5. Promoting awareness of, or providing general information on Elections is acceptable, such as teaching members of the public how to become a Candidate or how to register and vote, as long as no one particular Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election is promoted or endorsed at the event. Promoting awareness may include activities or events sponsored or not sponsored by the Library, in which all Candidates are invited to attend.
6. Elected Officials are permitted to attend Library Events or events held on Library property and act as ceremonial participants in their capacity as Elected Officials, including speaking at the event and partaking in ceremonial activities. Once the writ is issued for provincial or federal Elections, MPPs and MPs are no longer Elected Officials and therefore shall not be invited to attend Library Events as such.
7. Citizen Board Members must inform the Library CEO & Chief Librarian immediately if they register to run for office in an Election. Citizen Board Members should also abide by City policies, which may affect Citizen Board Members running for office. During an Election Period, Board Members who are Candidates, Registrants or Supporters of a Question on a Ballot will be identified by title only in media releases and Library materials that describe activities in his or her capacity as a Board Member.
8. Library online information related to Board Members will continue to be accessible by the public.
9. Board Members, Employees and Volunteers may engage in political activity, including endorsing or opposing a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot, but not in a manner that would lead a member of the public to infer that they are acting in their capacity as a Board Member, Employee or Volunteer on behalf of the Library.
10. Information, such the Library's Strategic Plan or annual report to the community, provided by the Library, a Board Member or an Employee to one Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election will be provided to all other Candidates, Political Parties, Registrants or Supporters of a Question on a Ballot during an Election, either through posting of the information on the Library's website or through other mechanisms. The provision of information to a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election will be coordinated through the Library's Executive Assistant.
11. Requests by a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot for personal meetings with the Library CEO & Chief Librarian, Directors, Managers or other Employees, and requests for tours of Library

Facilities during the Election Period will be accommodated where resources and time permits. If a meeting or a tour is organized for one Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election, the Library CEO & Chief Librarian, Directors, Managers or other Employees commit to offering a similar meeting or tour for all other Candidates, Political Parties, Registrants or Supporters of a Question on a Ballot during an Election.

Polling Places

Provision of Polling Places at Library Facilities

- Municipal Elections: The Library may provide polling places at Library locations for the municipal Election and shall do so free of charge. When after-hours security services are required, the Library will seek reimbursement for costs incurred.
- Provincial Elections: In accordance with the Ontario *Election Act*, the Library may provide polling places at Library locations for the provincial Election and shall do so free of charge. When after-hours security services are required, the Library will seek reimbursement for costs incurred.
- Federal Elections: The Library may provide polling places at Library locations for the federal Election. Elections Canada will pay the Library for the rental and will make direct payment to the contracted security company for after-hours security services.

Accessible Polling Places

The Library will work with the City Clerk's Office, City of London, Elections Ontario and Elections Canada to ensure that all polling places at Library branches are physically accessible and that there are no physical barriers that prevent people with disabilities from exercising their right to vote.

Activities Not Allowable During an Election

1. Library Resources may not be used to support, endorse or otherwise provide an unfair advantage to any Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election.
2. Due to limited availability of space and the priority given to all-Candidates meetings, the Library will not rent meeting rooms, study rooms or other space to a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot for use as part of the Election process and/or a specific campaign.
3. Employees may not campaign or actively work in support of a municipal, school board, provincial or federal Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election during working hours unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, or vacation leave.

4. A Board Member may not use their position on the Board to influence other Board Members, Employees or Volunteers for the benefit of a specific Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election.
5. Volunteers may not participate in Election campaigns during the hours in which they have agreed to provide volunteer service to the Library and may not use their position with the Library to influence Board Members, Employees, or other Volunteers or those they mentor for the benefit of a specific Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election.
6. During work/volunteering hours, while on Library property, in Library vehicles, when representing the Library online, including through social media and virtual programs, and when on Library business, Board Members, Employees and Volunteers shall not:
 - a. wear anything that promotes a specific issue, Candidate or Political Party, e.g., Election buttons, campaign t-shirts; and/or,
 - b. post, distribute or promote any Election Candidate or Political Party materials, e.g., campaign literature, flyers, signs, etc. in work spaces or online.
7. Library Facilities, Property and Infrastructure cannot be used for any Election-related purposes by a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election, including for the physical and digital display of any campaign-related signs, press conferences or other media events, as well as for any other form of Campaigning, except:
 - a. as described under the Activities Allowable During an Election section of this policy; and/or,
 - b. where permitted by the *Canada Elections Act*.
8. No permits, licenses, leases, or any other agreement for the use of Library Facilities, will be issued for the use or promotion of a particular Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election.
9. Consistent with the *Library Bulletin Board, Flyer and Free Literature Distribution Policy*, any Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election shall not distribute any Campaign Materials in Library Facilities or at Library Events, except on public right-of ways and thoroughfares as described under the Activities Allowable During an Election section of this policy, as permitted by the *Canada Elections Act* or during all-Candidates meetings.
10. Candidates cannot be featured or promoted in association with any Library-sponsored program. Library print and digital communications materials, whether for internal or public distribution, will not:

- a. profile (name or photograph), reference and/or identify any individual as a Candidate in any Election or a Registrant in a Question on a Ballot; and/or,
- b. advocate, support or oppose a particular Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or Question on a Ballot during an Election.

Communications materials include, but are not limited to, media releases, invitations for events, promotions for Library-sponsored programs or Library Events, social media posts, flyers, posters, banners, brochures and newsletters.

11. Websites or domain names that are funded by the Library will not include any Campaign Materials, reference and/or identify any individual as a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant, advocate, Supporter or opponent of a Question on a Ballot during an Election, or profile any slogan or symbol associated with a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election.
12. Official Library online and social media platforms managed by Employees will not reference and/or identify any individual as a Candidate, Political Party, Registrant or a Supporter of a Question on a Ballot during an Election.
13. Materials that have been or may be created by Employees or with Library Resources cannot be used in any Campaign Materials, including, but not limited to, photographs, videos, graphics, social media posts and website and other online content.
14. Photographs of the exteriors of Library Facilities may be used in Campaign Materials to identify the Library as a community asset in the ward or riding. In order to respect the privacy rights of individuals, photos of Library users or Employees may only be included with express permission of the individual(s) and in accordance with the Library's *Photography/Videography/Filming Policy*.
15. The Library logo and branding cannot be used in any Campaign Materials, including materials promoting events held at rented Library Facilities.
16. Patron data collected and stored by the Library cannot be used by any Candidate, Political Party, Registrant, advocate, Supporter or opponent of a Question on a Ballot during an Election, unless the data has already been released for public use.
17. Library Infrastructure cannot be used for any Election purposes unless permitted by the *Canada Elections Act*. Tenants of the Library must abide by this policy in such cases where the physical space being leased is visible to the public.
18. Beyond the normal provision of service, Employees and Volunteers will not perform any service, offer any advice or provide any information solely for the use of one Candidate, Political Party, Registrant, advocate, Supporter or opponent of a Question on a Ballot during an Election in accordance with legislation governing Elections.

Restrictions Related to Services Provided to Members of Council During an Election Year

As Members of Council may also be Candidates in a municipal Election, after the first day upon which nomination papers may be filed in the municipal Election year, Employees will discontinue the following activities for Members of Council. The same rule applies to all Members of Council, irrespective of whether they are seeking Election in the new term or not:

- Advertising and other print and digital communications materials paid for by Library Funds and distributed by the Library will not reference the name of a Member of Council. The exception is that Library publications, which usually have the names of all Board Members listed as being Members of the Library Board, including Members who are City Councillors, will continue to list them until the new Library Board has been appointed.
- Program and event signage, including banners and posters, will not reference the name of a Member of Council.
- Media releases issued by the Library will not reference the name of a Member of Council.
- Media releases will not be distributed on behalf of any Member of Council unless such a release is considered to be consistent with their duties as an Elected Official. The decision to distribute a release will be made by the Library CEO & Chief Librarian or the Manager, Communications.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Should any written complaint arise regarding the alleged use of Library Resources in contravention of this policy, the CEO & Chief Librarian, or his or her designate, shall have the delegated authority to investigate it and resolve any issues.

INQUIRIES:

CEO & Chief Librarian

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- [*Bulletin Board, Flyer and Free Literature Distribution Policy*](#)
- [*Communications Policy*](#)
- [*Meeting Space Policy*](#)
- [*Monetary Charges Policy*](#)
- [*Legislation & Policy Statements*](#)

Federal:

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

- [Income Tax Act, R.S.C., 1985, c.1 \(5th Supp.\).](#)
- [Canada Revenue Agency Policy Statement CPS-022, Political Activities](#)

Provincial:

- [Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6.](#)
- [Election Finances Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.7.](#)
- [Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.](#)

Municipal:

- [Election Sign By-law No. E.-185-537, City of London](#)
- [Use of City London Resources for Election Purposes, City of London.](#)

DOCUMENT CONTROL:

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