



Policy number: OP - 15
Policy type: Operational
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The Library and Political Elections

The Southgate Public Library (the library) operates in a non-partisan manner and supports the democratic process, fundamental freedoms, and informed discussion on political issues. This policy applies to municipal, provincial, and federal election campaign periods.

Section 1: Scope and Responsibility

1. This policy applies to the library board, employees, and volunteers:
 - a. in dealing with candidates and political parties, and
 - b. the use of library resources during campaign periods for municipal elections.
2. It is the responsibility of the CEO or designate 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 establishes 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, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.***, Section 88.18.
3. Rules for use of library resources and property are as follows:
 - a. All candidates and political parties have the same access to publicly available resources and library services as any member of the public
 - b. Beyond the normal provision of service, Library staff and volunteers will not perform any service or provide any information solely for the use of a candidate, political party, registrant, advocate, supporter or opponent of a question on a ballot during an election. Library resources cannot be used to support, endorse, or otherwise provide an unfair advantage to any candidate or political party.
 - c. Room rentals for partisan events, election, or campaign activities are not permitted.
 - d. All-candidates meetings may be held at the library when sponsored by an external group, provided that all candidates are invited to attend. Approval must be granted by the Librarian CEO. A candidate shall not be featured or promoted in connection with any regular library program or event. The Library may also permit meeting rooms to be used as official voting stations.
 - e. Candidates and political parties may not undertake campaign-related activities on Library property as it is incompatible with the function and purpose of the Library



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- services. 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.
- f. The Library will, however, assist in the promotion of the awareness of elections and provide general information on elections to encourage participation in the democratic process.

Section 3: Campaign Contributions

The library complies 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 (4).

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. This is in accordance with the Ontario *Elections Finances Act*, Section 16(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 of federal political parties in the form of money, goods or services. This is in accordance with the *Canada Elections Act*, Section 363(1).

Section 4: 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 working hours.
2. A library employee running as a candidate in a municipal election must comply with the *Municipal Elections Act*, Section 30.
3. Board members may continue their library board responsibilities running as a candidate in an election.

Section 5: Requests for Information about the Library

1. The CEO or designate coordinates requests for information about the library received from candidates or political parties.



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2. Information that is provided by the library to one candidate or political party is also 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 designate or make a tour of the library.

Any situations not explicitly covered within this policy will be governed by the Township of Southgate's *Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Policy*.

Related Documents:

Meeting Room Policy

Township of Southgate's Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Policy

Canada Elections Act (S.C. 2000, c. 9)

Election Finances Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.7

Municipal Affairs Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.46

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 32, Sched.