



## Collingwood Public Library

Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number: **OP – 21**

Policy Title: **Political Participation  
and Elections Policy**

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The Library must 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.

### Section 1: Definitions

**Campaign** means the expenditure of funds or receipt of contributions only permitted once a nomination has been filed or a third party advertiser has registered.

**Campaign activity** means any activity, using campaign materials, by or on behalf of a candidate, political party, or registered third party meant to elicit support during the election period and includes “campaign”.

**Campaign materials** means any materials used to solicit votes for a candidate(s) or question in an election including but not limited to literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, or other paraphernalia. Campaign materials include, but are not limited to, materials in all media, for example, print, displays, electronic radio or television, online including websites or social media.

**Campaign Period** means the date on which the Nomination Form or Notice of Registration is filed by a Candidate or Registered Third Party until December 31 in the year of an election, and for Registered Third Party “Campaign Period” is the date on which the Notice of Registration as a Registered Third Party is filed until December 31 in the year of an election (unless a request for extension or campaign period has been filed).

**Candidate** means a person who has filed a nomination to run in a municipal (including school board trustee), provincial or federal election, and shall be deemed to include Registered Third Parties and any person seeking to influence other persons to vote for or against any Candidate or any question or by-law submitted to the electors under section 8 of the *Municipal Elections Act*.

**Election** means an election or by-election at the municipal, regional, school board, provincial and federal level of government, political party election or the submission of a question or by-law to the electors.



**Registered Third Party** means an individual, corporation or trade union that has filed a Notice of Registration as a Third Party Advertiser in the municipal election.

## **Section 2: Responsibility**

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 the campaign periods for elections.
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.
3. For municipal elections, by May 1 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.”*

## **Section 3: Use of Library Resources and Property**

1. It is the responsibility of the Library CEO 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. 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) 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.
  - c) All-candidates meetings can be held at the library provided that all candidates are invited to attend such meetings. It is the responsibility of the organizer(s) to ensure that all election candidates have been invited to participate in the event.
  - d) Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public rights-of-way sidewalks and thoroughfares at the library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law. They cannot distribute such materials on library property or in the library building, unless permitted by the *Canada Elections Act* or during all-candidates meetings.
  - e) A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event, but is permitted to attend library events, or events held at the library, in either their capacity as an elected representative or as a private citizen to glad-hand



with attendees and visitors. They may not solicit votes for themselves or a political party, unless permitted by the *Canada Elections Act*.

#### **Section 4: Promoting Democratic Awareness and Participation**

The Library Board encourages staff to support non-partisan activities that encourage political participation and voter awareness. Approved activities include:

- a) Using library space to serve as polling stations, for non-partisan voter registration tables, to host all-candidates meetings, to host programs and discussion about relevant current issues.
- b) Promoting awareness of, or providing general information on elections is acceptable, such as teaching members of the public how to become a candidate, as long as no one particular candidate is promoted or endorsed.

#### **Section 5: 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. During work or volunteer hours, employees and volunteers shall not wear anything that promotes a specific issue, candidate or party (buttons, t-shirts, etc.), or post, distribute or promote any election candidate or party materials (campaign literature, flyers, signs, etc.) in the work place or online.
3. 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).”*
4. Board members may continue their library board responsibilities when they are running for office.

#### **Section 6: 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:

**“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 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 7: 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.

**Related Documents:**

Collingwood Public Library. **OP-08 – Room Booking Policy.**

Collingwood Public Library. **OP-09 – Community Information.**