



BRACEBRIDGE LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Number: OP-17 Title: Use of Library Resources During an Election Campaign Board Approval Date: April 2025	Category: Operational Policy Replacing: OP-17: Use of Library Resources During an Election Campaign Year of next review: 2028
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PURPOSE:

The Bracebridge Library is committed to supporting the community in civic engagement and participation. To fulfill this role, the Library remains strictly non-partisan in the use of its resources and does not support, endorse, or advocate for the viewpoints or beliefs of any candidate, political party, organization, or group.

The Library also adheres to the **Election Policy of the Corporation of the Town of Bracebridge (TOB-EP-2018-01)** regarding the use of municipal resources during an election campaign period, ensuring compliance with all applicable policies and regulations.

DEFINITIONS:

Campaign Materials – Any materials used to solicit votes for a candidate(s) in an election. This includes, but is not limited to, literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, online and social media content, and other campaign-related paraphernalia.

Candidate – Any individual who has filed and not withdrawn a nomination for an elected office at the municipal, school board, provincial, or federal level.

Library Resources/Information – Includes, but is not limited to:

- Library events, programs, and services.
- Technology resources such as internet access, software, printers, computer equipment, devices, cloud-based resources, and Internet Service Providers (ISPs).
- Library facilities, equipment, and supplies.
- Library funds.
- Information, including patron databases and other data maintained by the Library.

Library Infrastructure – Refers to all Library property, workplaces, and technology systems that support the operation of Library programs and services. This includes, but is not limited the Library's computer network, telecommunications systems, email systems, wireless equipment, computer hardware and software. Library infrastructure **excludes** public rights-of-way, such as sidewalks, roads, laneways, and boulevards.

Social Media – Any web application, platform, site, or account created and maintained by the Bracebridge Public Library to facilitate an environment where staff, users, and the public can share information, observations, and opinions about Library-related subjects or issues.

POLICY STATEMENT:

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.

Nothing in this policy prevents Library staff, Board members, or volunteers from exercising their civic rights and responsibilities by participating in the election process as private citizens, provided that such participation occurs outside of their official Library duties and does not imply Library endorsement.

Section 1 - Responsibility and Application

- 1.1 This policy applies to Board members, employees, and volunteers of the library in their dealings with current elected officials, candidates and political parties and the use of library resources during the campaign periods.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 If a written complaint is received regarding the alleged misuse of Library resources in contravention of this policy, the Library CEO or their designate shall have the authority to investigate and address the issue. Appropriate action will be taken to resolve the matter in accordance with Library policies and applicable legislation.

2 Section 2 - Use of Library Resources and Property

- 2.1 Provision of Election Information: As a trusted information hub, the Library may provide factual, nonpartisan information related to the election process. This may include, but is not limited to, details about election dates, voting locations, and voting procedures. In alignment with the Town of Bracebridge’s Election Policy, the Library’s facilities, equipment, supplies, services, and other resources—including staff time—shall not be used for any activities related to election campaigns. Campaign-related activities, including the direct promotion of political parties, candidates, or campaign platforms, are strictly prohibited on Library property or at any Library program or event, including those held offsite.
- 2.2 Printing Restrictions: The printing of election campaign materials is not permitted on Library property.
- 2.3 Display and Distribution of Campaign Materials: During work or volunteer hours, while on Library property, when representing the Library online, or while conducting Library business, Library Board members, staff, and volunteers shall not wear or display any item promoting a

candidate, political party, or ballot issue. This includes, but is not limited to, election buttons, campaign t-shirts, and other promotional materials.

Additionally, Library Board members, staff, and volunteers shall not post, distribute, or promote election candidates or campaign materials in Library workspaces or through Library-affiliated online platforms.

2.4 Service and Information Provision: Beyond the normal provision of Library services, staff shall not provide any service, advice, or information intended solely for the benefit of one candidate, political party, party advocate, or supporter/opponent of a ballot question during an election period. This restriction is in accordance with all applicable legislation governing elections.

2.5 Participation in Library Events: Once the writ is issued for Provincial or Federal elections, MPPs and MPs are no longer considered elected officials and shall not be invited to attend Library events in that capacity.

During the Municipal election period, candidates and their representatives shall not be invited to participate in Library programs, events, or activities.

3 Section 3 - Campaign Contributions: The library will comply with legislation on campaign contributions at all levels.

3.1 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:

“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.”

3.2 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).”

3.3 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.”

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

4.1 Staff Running as Candidates: Library staff who choose to run as candidates in an election must comply with all applicable election legislation.

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).”

- 4.2 Participation in Political Campaigns: Library staff or volunteer involved in a political campaign must remain politically neutral while performing their Library duties. Campaign activities are not permitted during working hours, including paid breaks.
- 4.3 Board Members Seeking Office: Library Board members may continue to fulfill their Board responsibilities while running for office, provided they do not use their position to influence Library operations or staff.
- 4.4 Board Member Conduct: Library Board members shall not use their position to influence other Board members or staff for the benefit of a specific candidate, political party, or ballot question during an election period.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION:

Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended
Canada Elections Act, 2000, as amended
Town of Bracebridge Election Policy (TOB-EP-2018-01)
Bracebridge Public Library Policies and Procedures Glossary

PREVIOUS REVISIONS: May 8, 2018