

Policy: Operational - The Library and Political Elections

Department: Library

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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.

The library must comply with legislation related to elections.

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 the campaign periods for municipal elections. These rules and procedures will also be used for provincial and federal elections.
2. The CEO/Director is responsible for ensuring that Bruce County Public Library complies with legislation related to municipal, provincial, and federal elections.
3. As per the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, Clause 88.18:

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 2: Campaign Contributions

The Library will comply with legislation on campaign contributions at all levels. In accordance with the **Municipal Elections Act**, Section 88.8(4) 3, the **Ontario Elections Finances Act**, Section 16(1), and **Canada Elections Act**, Section 363(1), the Board may not contribute to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of money, goods or services.

Section 3: Use of Library Resources and Property

1. The Library supports non-partisan activities that encourage political participation and voter awareness.
2. Bruce County Public Library will maintain a neutral environment and will not promote a political party, platform, or one candidate over another.

3. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the library.
4. Beyond the normal provision of service, Library staff and volunteers will not perform any service 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. Library resources cannot be used to support, endorse, or otherwise provide an unfair advantage to any candidate or political party.
5. Room rentals for partisan events, election, or campaign activities are not permitted.
6. 'All-candidates' meetings can be held at the library, sponsored by another group, provided that all candidates are invited to attend such meetings. Approval must be granted by the Library CEO or designate. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event.
7. Candidates and political parties are permitted to distribute campaign materials on public right-of-ways at the library, unless prohibited by a municipal by-law.
8. Candidates and political parties may not undertake campaign-related activities on Library property. They may not display or distribute materials on or in library facilities or at library events. This includes election signs, posters, and brochures specific to a candidate or political party.
9. In accordance with the Bruce County Public Library Community Information Policy, during an election the library will promote awareness of the election and provide general information on elections.

Section 4: Employee and Volunteer Participation in Election Campaigns

1. Any library employee running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with Section 30 (1) of the Municipal Elections Act which reads, in part:

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).

2. A library employee or volunteer involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out his or her library duties and must not participate in campaign activities during his or her working hours.

Section 5: Library Board Members as Candidates

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

Section 6: 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 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 designate) or a tour of library branches.

Related Documents

Bruce County Public Library - Meeting Room Policy
Bruce County Public Library - Community Information Policy