

**TEMISKAMING SHORES PUBLIC LIBRARY
POLICY**

SUBJECT: The Library and Political Elections POLICY NO: Facilities-11
APPROVAL DATE: April 27, 2022 MOTION NO: 2022-31
REVIEW DATE: 1st quarter 2026

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.

Section 1: Responsibility and application

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

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.

Section 2: Use of library resources and property

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.

For municipal elections, by May 1st 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.”

Rules for use of library resources and property are as follows:

- All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the library.

- 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.
- 'All-candidates' meetings and debates can be held at the library in the library meeting spaces, either as a library program or sponsored by another group, provided that all candidates are invited to attend such meetings. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event.
- In accordance with the TSPL Community Information Policy, during an election the library will promote awareness of the election; and provide general information on elections. Campaign materials promoting a particular candidate are not distributed on the premises.

The Library Board requires staff to refrain from activities that could erode our position of trust and independence. The Library will not support, endorse, or advocate the viewpoints or beliefs of any one candidate, political party, partisan organization or group. The following activities are not permitted:

- The posting or distribution of partisan election or campaign material in or around library facilities or on the website
- Renting library space for partisan events, election or campaign activities
- While at work staff will not wear anything that promotes a specific candidate or party. They will not post, distribute or promote any election candidate or party while on library property

Section 3: Campaign Contributions

The library will comply with legislation on campaign contributions at all levels.

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

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

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

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.”

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).”

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 4: Employee, Volunteer and Board Member Participation in Election Campaigns

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

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).”

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

Section 5: Requests for information about the library

The CEO will coordinate requests for information about the library received from candidates or political parties.

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.

Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the CEO or tour of the library.

Related Documents

TSPL Facilities 2: Community Use of Meeting Rooms policy

TSPL Facilities 3: Community Information policy

(April 27, 2022)