



Woodstock Public Library Policy

Policy Name: Use of Library Resources During Elections

Category: Library Services

Version: 10 February 2026

Policy Statement and Rationale

One of Woodstock Public Library's core values is to support the community in civic engagement and participation. As such the Library strives to be non-partisan in its use of resources and will not support, endorse, or advocate the viewpoints or beliefs of any one candidate, political party, organization, or group.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent approach and direction on how Library resources can and cannot be used during municipal, school board, provincial and federal election campaigns or questions on the ballot. It also ensures that Woodstock Public Library is in compliance with relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the Municipal Elections Act, the Province of Ontario Elections Act, the Canada Elections Act, and relevant municipal by-laws.

Scope

This policy applies to Board Members, employees and volunteers of Woodstock Public Library and their dealings with candidates for elected office, including current City Councillors campaigning during the municipal election campaign period.

Nothing in this policy prohibits Woodstock Public Library Board Members from performing their duties; or City Councillors from performing their jobs, including representing the interests of their constituents in a manner consistent with their duties as an elected official.

General Principles

1. The CEO is responsible for the enforcement of this policy.
2. The Library will encourage and support discussion on civic and social issues in a manner that is neutral, fair, and equitable to all those seeking elected office.

3. The Library will balance the need for freedom of expression and assembly of all candidates, with its legal responsibility not to provide an unfair advantage to any one candidate.
4. During election campaigns, the Library will maintain a neutral environment in which the Library will not contribute money, goods, or services, or use Library resources to promote a political party, platform, or one candidate over another.

Activities Allowed During an Election

1. Board Members and employees of the Woodstock Public Library must inform the CEO expeditiously if they register to run for office in a municipal, provincial, or federal election.
2. Library Board Members and employees may engage in political activity, including endorsing or opposing a candidate, political party, or a particular response to a referendum question, but not in a manner that would lead a member of the public to infer that they are acting in their capacity as a Library Board Member or on behalf of the Woodstock Public Library.
3. Any Library employee running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with Section 30 of the Municipal Elections Act.
4. All-candidate meetings can be held at Library facilities provided that all candidates for an office are invited to attend such meetings, and the meetings are open to all members of the public. This clause is subject to availability of space, and all applicable City of Woodstock by-laws and Library policies, including those for additional costs. It is the responsibility of the organizer(s) to ensure that all election candidates have been invited to participate in the event. The Library will provide space in accordance with the Library's Public Use of Library Facilities policy. The authority to approve an all-candidates' debate event in Library facilities will reside with the CEO.
5. A candidate, political party, registrant, or supporter during an election is permitted to distribute campaign materials on public right-of-way sidewalks and thoroughfares at public libraries only as permitted by City of Woodstock policies and by-laws. Materials cannot be distributed on Library property, in Library buildings, or through outreach services.
6. Informal media scrums are permitted in public or common areas at Library facilities provided that no apparatus, mechanism, or device for the amplification of the human voice or any sound is used, and that the activity is not disruptive to regular Library activities in the vicinity. If the media

scrum is deemed to be potentially disruptive, Library staff may ask the participants to find an alternative location.

7. A candidate, political party, registrant, or supporter during an election is permitted to attend Library events, or events held at Library facilities, in either their capacity as an elected representative or as a private citizen to interact with attendees and visitors, but may not display or distribute campaign materials, nor solicit votes for themselves, a political party, registrant, or a supporter.
8. 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, political party, registrant or supporter during an election is promoted or endorsed at the event. Promoting awareness may include activities or events sponsored or not sponsored by the Library, in which all candidates are invited to attend.
9. Elected officials are permitted to attend Library-organized events or events held on Library property and act as ceremonial participants in their capacity as elected officials, including speaking at the event and partaking in ceremonial activities. Once the writ is issued for Provincial or Federal elections, MPPs and MPs are no longer elected officials and therefore shall not be invited to attend Library events as such.
10. During an election period, Library Board members who are candidates, registrants, or supporters of a question on a ballot will be identified by title only in media releases and Library materials that describe activities in his or her capacity as a Library Board member.
11. Library online information related to Board Members will continue to be accessible by the public.
12. Library Board Members, employees, and volunteers may work on a campaign or support a candidate outside of their work/volunteer hours.
13. Information, such as the Library's strategic plan or annual report, provided by the Library, Library Board Member, or employee to one candidate, political party, registrant, or supporter during an election, will be provided to all other candidates, political parties, registrants or supporters during an election, either through posting of the information on the internet or through other mechanisms. The provision of information to a candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter during an election will be coordinated through the CEO.
14. Requests by a candidate, political party, registrant, or supporter for personal meetings with the CEO or other Library employees, and requests for tours of Library facilities during the election period will be accommodated where resources and time permits. If a meeting or a tour is

organized for one candidate, political party, registrant, or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election, the CEO will commit to offering a similar meeting or tour for all other candidates, political parties, registrants, or supporters of a question on a ballot during an election.

15. Library facilities may be used as a polling place during municipal, provincial, and federal elections according to room availability. Space for municipal and provincial elections will be provided free of charge.

Activities Not Permitted During an Election

1. Library resources may not be used to support, endorse, or otherwise provide an unfair advantage to any candidate, political party, registrant, or a supporter during an election.
2. Due to limited availability of space and the priority given to all-candidates meetings, the Library will not rent space to a candidate, political party, registrant, or supporter for use as part of the election process and/or a specific campaign.
3. Library employees may not campaign or actively work in support of a municipal, school board, provincial, or federal candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter during an election during working hours unless they are on a leave of absence without pay, lieu time, or vacation leave. Library volunteers may not participate in election campaigns during the hours in which they have agreed to provide volunteer service to the Library.
4. A Library Board Member may not use his or her position on the Board to influence Board Members, employees, or volunteers for the benefit of a specific candidate, political party, registrant, or a supporter during an election.
5. During work/volunteering hours, while on Library property, when representing the Library online and when on Library business, Library Board Members, employees, and volunteers shall not:
 - a. Wear anything that promotes a specific issue, candidate or party, e.g., election buttons, campaign t-shirts; or
 - b. Post, distribute, or promote any election candidate or party materials e.g., campaign literature, flyers, signs, etc. in workspaces or online.
6. Library facilities, property, and infrastructure cannot be used for any election-related purposes by a candidate, political party, registrant or supporter during an election, including for the display of any campaign-related signs, as well as for any other form of campaigning, except:

- a. As described in Section 3.0 of this policy; and
 - b. Where permitted by the Canada Elections Act.
7. No permits, licenses, leases, or any other agreement for the use of Library facilities, will be issued for the use or promotion of a particular candidate, political party, registrant, or a supporter during an election.
8. Consistent with the Library's Bulletin Boards and Distribution of Free Materials Policy, any candidate, political party, registrant, or supporter during an election shall not distribute any campaign materials in Library facilities or at Library events, except on public right-of ways and thoroughfares, or as permitted by the Canada Elections Act or during all-candidates meetings.
9. Candidates cannot be featured or promoted in association with any Library-sponsored program. Library communications materials, whether for internal or public distribution, will not:
 - a. Profile (name or photograph), refer to and/or identify any individual as a candidate or registrant in any election or a registrant in a question on a ballot; and/or
 - b. Advocate, support, or oppose a particular candidate, political party, registrant, or question on a ballot during an election.
10. Websites or domain names that are funded by the Library will not include any campaign materials, make reference to and/or identify any individual as a candidate, political party, registrant, advocate, supporter, or opponent of a question on a ballot or candidate during an election, or profile any slogan or symbol associated with a candidate, political party, registrant, or a supporter during an election.
11. Official Library online and social media channels including sites, blogs, and other news media created and managed by Library employees will not refer to and/or identify any individual as a candidate, political party, registrant, or a supporter during an election.
12. Photographic or video materials that have been or may be created by Library employees or with Library resources cannot be used in any campaign materials.
13. Photographs of the exteriors of Library buildings may be used in campaign materials to identify the Library as a community asset. To respect the privacy rights of individuals, photos of Library users or employees may only be included with express permission of the individual(s).
14. Library databases cannot be used by any candidate, political party, registrant candidate, advocate, supporter, or opponent of a question on a

ballot or candidate during an election, unless the database has already been released for public use.

15. Library infrastructure cannot be used for any election purposes unless permitted by the Canada Elections Act, the Municipal Elections Act, or City of Woodstock by-laws.
16. Beyond the normal provision of service, Library employees and volunteers will not perform any service, offer any advice, or provide any information solely for the use of one candidate, political party, registrant, or candidate, political party, advocate, supporter, or opponent of a question on a ballot or candidate during an election.

Restrictions Related to Services Provided to Members of Council During an Election Year

1. As Members of Council may also be candidates in a municipal election, after the first day upon which nomination papers may be filed in the municipal election year, Library employees will discontinue the following activities for Members of Council:
 - a. Advertising and other communication materials paid for by Library funds and distributed by the Library will not reference the name of a Member of Council. The exception is that Library publications which usually have the names of all Board Members listed as being members of the Library Board, including members who are City Councillors, will continue to list them until the new Library Board has been appointed.
 - b. Program and event signage, including banners and posters, will not reference the name of a Member of Council.
 - c. Media releases issued by the Library will not refer to the name of a Member of Council.
 - d. Media releases will not be distributed on behalf of any Member of Council unless such a release is consistent with their duties as an elected official. The decision to distribute a release will be made by the CEO.

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

Canada Elections Act

Canada Revenue Agency Policy Statement CPS-022, Political Activities Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6

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

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

City of Woodstock – Signs, Other Advertising Devices By-law

Public Use of Library Facilities Policy
Bulletin Boards and Distribution of Free Materials Policy

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