

Carlow/Mayo Public Library

Policy Number: **OP-16B**

Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Approval Date: April 4, 2016

Policy Title: The Library and Political Elections

Year of next review: April 2020

The library must act and appear to act in a non-partisan way at all times, but especially during elections, while supporting the democratic process, freedom of expression and informed discussion on political issues. The library must comply with legislation related to elections. 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, provincial and federal elections.¹

Section 1: Campaign Contributions

1. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, Section 70(4), the *Elections Finances Act*, Section 16(1), and *Canada Elections Act*, Section 404(1), the Board may not make a contribution to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of money, goods or services.

Section 2: Use of Library Resources and Property

1. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the library.
2. Meeting rooms may be rented in accordance with the Carlow/Mayo Public Library Meeting Rooms Policy.
3. 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.
4. 'All-candidates' meetings can be held at the library, 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.
5. 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.
6. In accordance with the *Canada Elections Act* section 81.1(1) federal election candidates or their representatives are allowed to campaign in facilities that are available for free to the public. During municipal and provincial elections candidates will be granted the same right to campaign in the library.
7. In accordance with the Carlow/Mayo Public Library Community Information Policy, during an election the library will provide an area where candidates may make available up to 25 copies of their campaign brochure; will promote awareness of the election; and provide general information on elections.²
8. No election sign or poster specific to a candidate or political party can be posted on the grounds of the library or in the library building.

Section 3: Employee and Volunteer Participation in Election Campaigns

1. Any library employee running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with Section 30 of the *Municipal Elections Act*.³
2. 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.

Section 4: Library Board Members as Candidates

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

Section 5: 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

Carlow/Mayo Public Library OP-08 Meeting Room
Carlow/Mayo Public Library OP-09 Community Information

Editors' Notes

1. We found few examples of policies on this issue. Toronto Public Library has the most comprehensive. Other libraries touch on the issue in their policies on the use of meeting rooms and/or posting on bulletin boards and displays. Public library buildings that are owned by the municipality tend to fall under the policies of the municipality with respect to election issues.
2. This is one example of an approach, however, a library may also take the position that no campaign materials will be allowed on the library premises.
3. The *Municipal Elections Act* speaks to employees of local boards running in municipal elections. That Act refers to the definition of *local board* as defined in the *Municipal Affairs Act* where the definition of *local board* includes the public library board.