



Aurora Public Library Board

Library and Political Elections Policy

1. Purpose

Aurora Public Library (the Library) operates in a non-partisan manner and supports the democratic process by providing equitable access to information and opportunities for informed civic participation. This policy establishes clear expectations regarding the use of Library spaces, services, resources, communications, and governance roles during municipal, provincial, and federal election periods.

The Library does not endorse or oppose any candidate, political party, political position, or issue. All activities during election periods must reflect the Library's commitment to intellectual freedom, fairness, transparency, and public trust.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Members of the Aurora Public Library Board, including appointed municipal councillors;
- Library employees;
- Volunteers;
- Candidates, political parties, third-party advertisers, advocacy groups, political action committees, and issue-based groups insofar as they interact with Library spaces, services, or resources.

3. Legislative and Governance Authority

This policy is guided by, and must be interpreted in accordance with:

- The *Public Libraries Act*, R.S.O. 1990;
- The *Municipal Elections Act*, 1996;
- The *Election Finances Act*;
- The *Canada Elections Act*;
- The Aurora Public Library Board Procedural By-law and Code of Conduct;
- Applicable conflict-of-interest and freedom-of-information legislation.

Where there is a conflict between this policy and legislation, the legislation shall prevail.

4. Definition of Election Period

For the purposes of this policy, an **election period** is defined as:

- **Municipal elections:** the period beginning on the first day nominations officially open under the *Municipal Elections Act* and ending on election day.
- **Provincial or federal elections:** the period beginning on the issuance of the writ and ending on election day.

Where an individual has declared, registered, or is publicly known to be seeking election as a candidate (including prior to the legislated election period), **this policy applies in full** to that individual's interactions with Library spaces, services, resources, communications, and governance roles from the time of that declaration/public candidacy onward.

5. Guiding Principles

During election periods, decisions under this policy will be guided by the following principles:

- Non-partisanship and neutrality;
- Fair and equitable access;
- Operational integrity and safety;
- Intellectual freedom and access to information;
- Public confidence in the Library as a trusted civic institution.

6. Use of Library Resources and Property

The Library shall ensure that no candidate, political party, third-party advertiser, advocacy group, political action committee, or issue-based group is provided with an unfair advantage through the use of Library resources.

- All candidates and political organizations shall have equal access to publicly available Library services and spaces, subject to this policy and other applicable Library policies.
- Library staff, equipment, supplies, technology, branding, and logos shall not be used for campaign, advocacy, or election-related purposes.
- The Library's name, logo, or likeness shall not be used in campaign or advocacy materials.

7. Use of Meeting Rooms and Bookable Spaces

The Aurora Public Library provides meeting rooms and bookable spaces for public use in accordance with its Meeting Room and Space Use Policy.

During an election period:

- Individuals who are candidates for elected office, or who are acting on behalf of a candidate, political party, or third-party advertiser, may use Library meeting rooms only for purposes that are unrelated to campaigning or election promotion, and only under the same terms and conditions that apply to all members of the public.
- Library meeting rooms may not be booked or used for the purpose of campaigning, including but not limited to:
 - Promotion of a candidacy or political platform;
 - Distribution of campaign materials;
 - Fundraising activities;
 - Meetings or events intended to solicit electoral support.
- All users are responsible for ensuring that their use of Library space complies with this policy and all other applicable Library policies. Where a booking, event, or activity is determined to be linked to campaigning or election promotion, the Library may refuse the booking, cancel the use of space, or require the activity to cease.
- No preferential booking, priority access, fee waivers, or special conditions shall be provided to candidates or political organizations during an election period.
- The only campaign-related events permitted in Library spaces during an election period are Library-hosted or Library-approved structured, neutral events, such as all-candidates meetings, that are designed to support informed civic participation and that meet the requirements set out in this policy.

8. Campaigning in the Library

The Library permits campaigning **only** in the form of structured, neutral events that support informed civic participation.

8.1 Permitted Campaigning Activities

- Campaigning is limited to Library-hosted or Library-approved events that are structured, neutral, and educational in nature (e.g., all-candidates meetings, moderated forums).
- All candidates for the relevant office must be invited to participate on equal terms.
- Events must be coordinated and approved in advance by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate.

8.2 Candidate Visibility and Introductions

- Candidates shall not be given special recognition, introductions, speaking opportunities, or visibility at Library programs or events outside of approved structured election-related events.
- Candidates may not be acknowledged in a manner that could reasonably be interpreted as endorsement, promotion, or preferential treatment.

8.3 Prohibited Campaigning Activities

- Informal, individual, or ad-hoc campaigning within Library spaces;
- Display of campaign signage or posters inside or on Library property;
- Campaigning that interferes with Library operations, services, or the safe and welcoming use of the Library.

9. Candidate Information

The Aurora Public Library supports informed civic participation by providing limited access to space for candidate information in a neutral and equitable manner during an election period. The provision of space for candidate information is discretionary and is not guaranteed.

- The provision of space for candidate information is limited to passive informational display only and shall not be interpreted as permitting campaigning, promotion, solicitation, or electoral activity within Library spaces.
- The submission, review, approval, display, management, and removal of candidate information shall be governed by a separate Library procedure, as established and administered by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate. Compliance with the applicable procedure is a condition of any approval to display candidate information.
- Candidate information may only be displayed in locations designated by the Library and in accordance with this policy and the applicable procedure. Candidate information that does not comply with policy requirements or procedural conditions may be refused, removed, or otherwise managed at the Library's discretion.
- Candidate information shall not be displayed or made publicly available within Library spaces prior to the twenty-eighth (28th) day before Voting Day. The Library may accept candidate information in advance of this date for administrative purposes; however, early acceptance shall not override or alter the public display timeline established by this policy.
- All candidate information shall be removed from public display on the day following Voting Day.

- The Library shall clearly indicate that the provision of space for candidate information does not constitute endorsement, support, or opposition of any candidate, political party, or political position.

10. Library Board Members and Election Participation

Library Board members must uphold the Library's non-partisan role and public trust during election periods.

- Board members, including those who are appointed municipal councillors, shall not use Library resources, staff, facilities, information, or their position on the Library Board to support or oppose any candidate, political party, or issue.
- Candidates may refer to their volunteer service on the Library Board, but they must not suggest they are speaking on behalf of, or endorsed by, the Library or the Board.
- Board members remain subject to the Aurora Public Library Board Procedural By-law, Code of Conduct, and applicable conflict-of-interest legislation during election periods.
- A Board member who is a candidate in an election, or who has a direct personal interest in an election outcome, should declare a conflict of interest and may be required to recuse themselves from Board discussions or decisions related to election-related use of Library spaces, services, or policies.

11. Employees and Volunteers

- Library employees and volunteers must remain politically neutral while performing Library duties.
- Campaign or advocacy activities may not take place during working hours or while representing the Library.
- Employees or volunteers who choose to run as a candidate must comply with all applicable legislative requirements and Library policies.

12. Marketing, Communications, and Photography During Elections

Aurora Public Library regularly documents and promotes Library programs, services, and community engagement activities. During election periods, particular care must be taken to avoid any real or perceived political bias.

- The Library may share images, videos, or content from Library events that include political figures or candidates only when the content is clearly focused on the Library program, service, or activity, and not on the individual's political role or candidacy.
- Marketing and communications must avoid highlighting, tagging, naming, or quoting individual candidates or advocacy groups in a manner that could reasonably be interpreted as endorsement, promotion, or preferential treatment.
- The Library does not stage, pose, or intentionally capture photographs that focus on individual candidates during election periods.

- Where images or content incidentally include political figures or candidates, the Library should, where practicable:
- Use neutral captions that describe the event rather than the individual;
- Avoid campaign slogans, campaign apparel, signage, or other partisan identifiers;
- Apply consistent standards across similar events and participants.
- Library social media accounts, websites, and promotional materials shall not be used to amplify campaign messages, platforms, or election-related advocacy.

Marketing and communications staff are encouraged to consult with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate where there is uncertainty regarding the appropriateness of content during an election period.

13. Requests for Information

- Requests for information about the Library received from candidates, political parties, or advocacy organizations shall be coordinated by the CEO or designate.
- Information provided to one candidate or organization shall be made available to all others upon request during an election period.

14. Administration and Interpretation

The CEO or designate is responsible for administering, interpreting, and enforcing this policy. Any questions or disputes regarding the application of this policy shall be directed to the CEO or designate.

Related policies and Documents

1. Aurora Public Library Board Procedural By-law
 - Aurora Public Library Board Code of Conduct
 - Meeting Room and Space Use Policy
 - Community Information and Display Policy
 - Social Media Policy
 - Rules of Conduct
 - Municipal Elections Act, 1996
 - Election Finances Act (Ontario).
 - Canada Elections Act.

Reviewed by: Executive Leadership Team, March and April 2026

Jodi Marr
Chief Executive Officer

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