

Chatham-Kent Public Library

Use of Library Resources During Elections

Purpose

This policy provides guidance for Chatham-Kent Public Library (CKPL) staff and the Library Board in regard to use of library resources, advocacy and participation in elections and political parties.

Background

Public Libraries in Ontario, like CKPL, are governed by the Public Libraries Act which established that we are governed by independent boards. At CKPL a core value is intellectual freedom, and our role is to facilitate the expression of a wide range of ideas. Public libraries also play an important role in supporting the community in civic engagement and participation. At the same time, CKPL strives to be non-partisan in our services, spaces, and communications. To accomplish this CKPL will 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.

Content

The Library Board encourages staff to support non-partisan activities that encourage political participation and voter awareness. Approved activities include things like the following:

- using library space to serve as polling stations
- using library space for non-partisan voter registration tables
- using library space to host all candidates' meetings
- using library space to host programs and discussions about relevant current issues

Approval for using the library space or promotion on the library's website for non-partisan activities requires approval of the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate.

To maintain public trust and independence 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 distributing 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

Requests for information received from candidates or political parties about the library will be coordinated by the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate received. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate will ensure that information provided by the library for one candidate will be provided to all other candidates and political parties upon request during an election. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting or tour of the Library with the CEO/Chief Librarian or designate.

Issue Date: March 2022

Revision Date:

Board Approved Date: March 26, 2022

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Background Documents: Municipal Code of Conduct Policy;

For more information or alternative formats of this document, please email cklibrary@chatham-kent.ca.