



Policy Type: Operational
Policy No: OP-08
Policy Title: Library and Political Elections Policy
Effective: April 2026
Review Date: April 2030

Purpose, Scope, and Principles

The Grey Highlands Public Library must act, and be seen to act, in a non-partisan manner at all times. This is especially important during election periods. At the same time, the Library supports the democratic process, freedom of expression, and informed public discussion of political issues.

The purpose of this policy is to balance freedom of expression with the Library's legal obligation to ensure that no candidate, third-party advertiser, or political party is given an unfair advantage through the use of Library resources during municipal, provincial, or federal elections.

This policy provides guidance on:

- the use of Library resources during election periods
- interactions with candidates, political parties, and third-party advertisers
- the responsibilities of Board members, employees, and volunteers during elections

This policy applies to all Library Board members, employees, and volunteers.

This policy recognizes that Members of Council continue to hold office until the end of their term and may continue to fulfill their responsibilities while running for re-election. Nothing in this policy prevents Library Board members from carrying out their Board duties.

Legislative Authority

This policy is guided by the following legislation:

- Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- Election Finances Act, 1990
- Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000



Under this legislation, the Grey Highlands Public Library may not contribute money, goods, or services to any candidate, third-party advertiser, or political party during a municipal, provincial, or federal election.

Use of Library Resources and Property

1. The Library is responsible for ensuring that no candidate, third-party advertiser, or political party is given an unfair advantage through the use of Library resources.
2. For municipal elections, and in accordance with section 88.18 of the Municipal Elections Act, rules and procedures for the use of Library resources during the election period will be established by May 1 of the election year.
3. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available Library services and resources that are normally available to the general public.
4. All-candidates meetings may be held at the Library, either as Library-organized programs or events sponsored by another organization, provided that all candidates are invited to attend. No individual candidate may be featured, promoted, or highlighted as part of any other Library program or event.
5. Meeting rooms and Library facilities may not be used or rented for election-related purposes, including campaign meetings, fundraisers, volunteer coordination, or campaign strategy sessions, whether during regular operating hours or after hours, even where meeting rooms are otherwise available for public booking.
An exception may be made for all-candidates meetings held outside of regular operating hours, provided that all candidates are invited and no individual candidate, political party, or third-party advertiser is featured, promoted, or opposed. All-candidates meetings must be coordinated and approved by Library management.
6. Candidates, third-party advertisers, and political parties may not use Library equipment, supplies, staff time, or operational resources for any campaign purpose.

This restriction includes, but is not limited to:

- makerspace equipment, tools, materials, or services used to create campaign or election-related items such as buttons, clothing, signage, printed materials, decals, or promotional products
- loanable technology such as laptops, tablets, mobile devices, cameras, accessories, or related equipment for campaign or election-related activities
- Library software, digital tools, or subscriptions used to design, store, or distribute campaign materials

The Library's makerspace and loanable technology may not be used to create, support, or facilitate campaign or election-related materials or activities during an election period.



7. Photographs or videos created by the Library, including content produced for the Grey Highlands Cultural Channel, may not be used for election or campaign purposes.
 8. Library-funded websites, domain names, social media platforms, and television channels will not:
 - o include campaign materials
 - o identify or profile individuals as candidates
 - o promote or oppose a political party or third-party advertiser
 - o display slogans, logos, or symbols associated with campaigns or ballot questions during an election period
 9. Candidates and political parties may not distribute campaign materials on public rights-of-way at Library locations, in accordance with Municipality of Grey Highlands Policy A09-C-04, Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes.
 10. Candidates and campaign representatives may not campaign inside Library facilities. Campaigning includes soliciting votes, distributing campaign materials, or displaying campaign signage. Candidates may use the Library as members of the public, provided no campaigning occurs.
 11. Election signs, posters, or campaign materials for specific candidates or political parties may not be posted on Library property or inside Library buildings.
 12. Nothing in this policy prohibits the Library from promoting awareness of elections or providing neutral, factual information that encourages civic participation, provided that no candidate, third-party advertiser, or political party is promoted, supported, or opposed.
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Access to Library Information During an Election Period

1. Information of a general nature that may be useful to all candidates, third-party advertisers, or political parties will be made equally available. When appropriate, such information will be posted publicly to ensure equal access.
 2. Requests for meetings or tours by candidates, third-party advertisers, or political parties may not always be accommodated due to time or resource constraints. If a meeting or tour is provided, similar opportunities will be offered to others upon request.
 3. Library databases, email lists, and mailing lists may not be used for campaign purposes unless the database is publicly available to all users under normal Library conditions.
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Employees, Volunteers, and Election Campaigns



1. Any Library employee running as a candidate in a municipal election must comply with section 30 of the Municipal Elections Act, which requires taking an unpaid leave of absence from the date of nomination until voting day.
 2. Library employees and volunteers may participate in political campaigns on their own time. While performing Library duties, they must remain politically neutral and must not participate in campaign activities during working or volunteer hours.
 3. A Library Board member may not use their position to influence Board members, employees, or volunteers for the benefit of or opposition to any candidate, third-party advertiser, political party, or ballot question.
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Library Board Members as Candidates

1. Library Board members may continue to fulfill their Board responsibilities while running for elected office.
 2. Citizen Board members must inform the CEO immediately if they register as a candidate in an election. Citizen Board members must also contact the Municipal Clerk's office and comply with applicable municipal policies.
 3. Councillor Board members must inform the CEO if they are running for provincial or federal office.
 4. Library Board members may engage in political activity in their personal capacity, including endorsing or opposing candidates or ballot questions, provided that such activity does not create the impression that they are acting on behalf of the Grey Highlands Public Library.
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Requests for Information About the Library

1. The CEO or Chief Librarian will coordinate all requests for information about the Library received from candidates, political parties, or third-party advertisers.
 2. Information provided to one candidate or political party will be made available to others upon request during the election period.
 3. Candidates or political parties may request meetings or tours with the CEO, subject to availability and operational constraints.
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Accountability

If a written complaint is received alleging misuse of Library resources during an election period, the CEO, Chief Librarian, or designate is authorized to investigate the matter and resolve any issues in accordance with this policy.

Definitions

Campaigning

Any activity intended to solicit support for or oppose a candidate, political party, third-party advertiser, or ballot question during an election period. This does not include attending Library events as a member of the public without campaign materials, signage, or vote solicitation.

Contribution

Money, goods, or services provided for election or advertising purposes, as defined in applicable election legislation.

Election Period

- Municipal elections: May 1 of an election year to voting day
- Provincial or federal elections: From the issuance of the writ to voting day
- Ballot questions or by-elections: From the date a question or by-election is called to voting day

Employee

Any person employed by the Library, including casual and contract staff.

Library Events

Events funded or organized by the Grey Highlands Public Library, including those organized in partnership with other organizations.

Library Facilities

Any facility owned or leased, managed, and operated by the Grey Highlands Public Library.

Library Resources

Includes staff, volunteers, programs, services, facilities, equipment, supplies, funds, information, intellectual property, online platforms, makerspace equipment and services, and loanable technology.



Third-Party Advertiser

An individual, corporation, trade union, or group that promotes or opposes a candidate, political party, or ballot question during an election period.

Where applicable, a registered third-party advertiser is a third-party advertiser that is registered with the appropriate elections' authority under election legislation.

For the purposes of this policy, all third-party advertisers, whether registered or not, are subject to the same restrictions on the use of Library resources.

Volunteer

An individual who provides services to the Library without remuneration. Library Board members are governed separately under this policy.

Related Documents

- Grey Highlands Public Library Facilities Use Policy
- Canada Elections Act
- Income Tax Act (Canada)
- Canada Revenue Agency Policy Statement CPS-022, Political Activities
- Election Act (Ontario)
- Election Finances Act (Ontario)
- Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- Municipality of Grey Highlands Policy A09-C-04, Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes