

Political Elections Policy

For: The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry
County Library Board

Policy No.: OP-17

Policy Type: Operational

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Date of Last Revision: April 14, 2022

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1. Purpose

The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry County Library (SDG Library) must act and appear to act in a non-partisan manner at all times, particularly during elections, while supporting the democratic process, freedom of expression and informed discussion on political issues. Perceived bias includes actions that a reasonable member of the public could interpret as endorsement or opposition to a candidate or party.

This policy applies to SDG Library Board members, employees and volunteers of the SDG 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. The Director of Library Services is responsible for interpreting and enforcing this policy.

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act*, Section 88(18), this policy shall be reviewed prior to May 1st in the year of a regular municipal election.

2. Definitions

“Library Resources” refers to all assets, services, and supports owned, leased, operated, or funded by the SDG Library, including but not limited to staff time and expertise, facilities and space, equipment and materials, technology and systems, communication channels, branding, and financial resources. “Library Resources” also includes any indirect use of the above, where such use could reasonably be perceived as supporting or opposing a political candidate or party.

3. Campaign Contributions

3.1. 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 SDG Library Board may not make a contribution to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of money, goods or services.

3.2. The SDG Library Board may not make indirect contributions to the campaign of any candidate or political party in the form of discounted space, staff assistance, or promotional support.

4. Use of SDG Library Resources and Property

4.1. All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of the SDG Library. Access is provided on a first-come, first-served basis and fees will be applied consistently to all users.

4.2. Meeting rooms may be booked in accordance with the SDG Library’s *Facilities Use*

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Policy, and any candidate using a room must comply with standard booking terms. Use of SDG Library facilities by candidates or political organizations does not imply endorsement by the SDG Library.

- 4.3. Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, staff, or other library resources of the SDG Library, nor may they use the SDG Library's logo in any campaign material.
- 4.4. An 'all-candidates' meeting can be held at the SDG Library, either as a library program or sponsored by another group, provided that event organizers invite all candidates to attend such meetings. Events may proceed provided all registered candidates were invited, regardless of attendance. A candidate cannot be featured or promoted in association with any other regular library program or event.
- 4.5. In accordance with the SDG Library's *Communications Policy*, the SDG Library will provide general information on elections. Campaign materials are not permitted on library premises. Candidates and political parties may not distribute, display, post, or leave campaign materials at any SDG Library location, including community boards.
- 4.6. All library communications during an election period shall be non-partisan and informational in nature. The SDG Library will not promote or endorse any candidate or political party. Public communications, including social media and media responses, shall be coordinated through the Communications and Marketing Coordinator, under the direction of the Director of Library Services or designate.
- 4.7. No election sign or poster specific to a candidate or political party can be posted on the grounds of the SDG Library or in the SDG Library building.

5. Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers During an Election

- 5.1. SDG Library staff must maintain political neutrality while on duty and must not display, distribute, or advocate for political material in their capacity as SDG Library employees.
- 5.2. Any SDG Library staff member running as a candidate in the municipal election will comply with Section 30 of the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- 5.3. An SDG Library staff member or SDG Library volunteer involved in a political campaign must remain politically neutral while carrying out their library duties and must not participate in campaign activities during their working hours.

6. Responsibilities of Library Board Members During an Election

- 6.1. SDG Library Board members must maintain political neutrality in the performance of their duties and when representing the SDG Library. Board members shall not use their position, influence, or authority to support or oppose any political candidate, party, or campaign.
- 6.2. SDG Library Board members who are running for elected office may continue to fulfill their Board responsibilities; however, they must clearly separate their role as a candidate from their role as a Board member. At no time shall Board duties, meetings, or activities be used for campaign purposes.
- 6.3. Board members who are candidates in an election shall declare a conflict of interest and recuse themselves from any Board discussions or decisions that could provide them with a direct or perceived advantage in the election or otherwise create a conflict between

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their duties to the SDG Library and their personal political interests.

7. Requests for information about the SDG Library

- 7.1. The Director of Library Services will coordinate requests for information about the SDG Library received from candidates or political parties. Requests will be handled in a consistent and equitable manner.
- 7.2. If requested in writing by a candidate, information provided by the SDG Library to any other candidate shall also be provided to the candidate requesting the same.
- 7.3. Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the Director of Library Services or a tour of the SDG Library (and its branches).

8. Related Documents

SDG Library's Communications Policy (Policy No. OP-06)

SDG Library's Facilities Use Policy (Policy No. OP-10)