

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to maintain the neutrality of Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) during municipal, provincial and federal elections in compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act* and other relevant legislation.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to Vaughan Public Library Board (VPLB) Trustees and VPL employees and volunteers in their dealings with candidates and political parties and the use of VPL resources during the campaign periods for municipal, provincial, and federal elections.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VPL's Vision is to Enrich, Inspire, Transform. In keeping with this Vision, VPL seeks to be a community hub and encourage opportunities for citizen engagement in a manner that is fair and equitable to all.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

The *Municipal Elections Act* prohibits VPL from making contributions to candidates in the form of money, goods or services.

USE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND PROPERTY

- All candidates and political parties have equal access to publicly available resources and services of VPL.
- Candidates cannot use equipment, supplies, employees or other operational resources of VPL nor may they use the VPL logo in any campaign material except when providing a link to VPL's website providing election information to the public.
- Photographic or video materials which have been created by VPL resources may not be used for any election or campaign purpose.
- No official communications (including social media, website, newsletters, publications, etc) produced or prepared by VPL or VPL employees shall at any time promote, support or oppose a person's candidacy or a campaign using VPL resources or paid for with VPL funds.
- Exceptions shall be made for VPL owned or produced material or websites prepared for the purposes of public education during an election or which are provided in accordance with legislated requirements.
- In keeping with City of Vaughan Policy, meeting rooms may be rented following VPL's standard processes for booking meeting rooms at the regular rate established for rental of that space.
- 'All Candidates' meetings can be held at the Library, either as a VPL 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 VPL program or event.
- No permit shall be issued for any election-related event while that VPL facility is acting as a designated voting place.
- No election signs, posters or materials specific to a candidate or political party can be posted or distributed on the grounds of VPL or in a VPL facility and no political solicitation is permitted. This provision does not apply to public right of way sidewalks and thoroughfares, except where prohibited in accordance with York Region and City of Vaughan sign by-laws.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

- Any VPL employee running as a candidate in an election will comply with the *Municipal Elections Act*.
- Any VPL employee involved in a political campaign must be politically neutral in carrying out their VPL duties and must not participate in campaign activities during working hours.
- VPL employees who wish to campaign or work in support of a candidate during normal working hours may do so only by taking a leave of absence without pay, using lieu time, or vacation leave.

LIBRARY BOARD TRUSTEE PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

- VPLB Trustees may continue their VPLB responsibilities when they are running for office.
- VPLB Trustees may engage in political activity but not in a manner that would lead a member of the public to infer that they are acting in their capacity as VPLB Trustee or on behalf of VPL

RESTRICTIONS TO MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OR CANDIDATES

- Elected officials are permitted to attend VPL organized events or events held at VPL facilities and act as ceremonial participants as elected officials including speaking at the event and participating in ceremonial activities.
- In provincial or federal elections, once the writ is issued, MPPs and MPs, with the exception of Ministers of the Crown, are no longer elected officials and therefore should not be invited to attend VPL events in an official capacity.
- Candidates or their affiliates are permitted to attend VPL events or events held at VPL facilities as elected representatives or as private citizens, however, they may not undertake campaign- related activities while in attendance.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT VPL

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will coordinate requests for information about VPL received from candidates or political parties.
- Information that is provided by VPL to one candidate or political party will be provided to all other candidates and political parties upon request during an election.
- Any candidate or political party may request a meeting with the CEO or a tour of VPL facilities.

PROMOTING ELECTIONS

- Nothing in this policy prohibits VPL from promoting awareness of or providing information on elections as long as no particular candidate or political party is supported or opposed.
- Nothing in this Policy prohibits VPL from advocating on issues that affect VPL specifically and/or the public library sector in general.