

## Advocacy Policy

<b>Date:</b>	April 26, 2021
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report is to present a new Advocacy Policy for the Toronto Public Library Board for approval as included in Attachment One.

Advocacy is a critical tool to achieving Toronto Public Library's (TPL's) strategic outcomes by advancing funding, legislation and policy positions that support the development and delivery of excellent public library services now and in the future. TPL's advocacy approach as outlined in the Policy is collaborative, working with City partners and the public library sector to advance support for shared values and outcomes.

A renewed focus on advocacy is increasingly important. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated and disrupted existing trends in e-government, health and education, and transformed the remote and physical workplace, deepening existing social and income inequities for Toronto's residents and communities. Advocacy contributes to the resilience of the public library and its staff and the Library's capacity to deliver responsive services.

The Advocacy Policy provides a framework to focus TPL's efforts by clarifying:

- How TPL's advocacy efforts will contribute to the delivery of public library services;
- The areas in which TPL will take a leading or supporting role in advocacy; and
- Areas which are out of scope.

A principal focus of TPL's advocacy is to communicate the value and impact of public library staff and services for Toronto and its diverse residents and communities. Linking the Library's contribution to the shared outcomes of the City and other orders

of government will result in increased support for the public library. By contributing to the advocacy efforts of the broader public library sector, TPL will advance the public library's current and future role as a vital and inclusive democratic institution in an increasingly digital and globalized society.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:**

1. approves the Advocacy Policy in Attachment One; and
2. directs Library staff to implement the Advocacy Policy and bring appropriate advocacy opportunities to the Library Board as required.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The Advocacy Policy has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN**

Implementation of the Advocacy Policy will enable TPL to advance its strategic priorities by communicating to funders and stakeholders the value and impact of public library services for Toronto and its diverse communities.

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The Advocacy Policy will have a positive impact on services to equity seeking groups. By engaging with stakeholders and partners who are critical to advancing the Library's mission and strategic priorities, the Library will have enhanced capacity to understand and remove barriers to access and deliver responsive services for all Torontonians.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

The development and implementation of an Advocacy Policy is responsive to the Toronto Public Library Board – Self-Evaluation: 2020 Results,  
<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the->

[library/pdfs/board/meetings/2021/mar22/12-tplb-self-evaluation-survey-results-2020-combined.pdf](https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/library/pdfs/board/meetings/2021/mar22/12-tplb-self-evaluation-survey-results-2020-combined.pdf)

## COMMENTS

Advocacy is a critical tool to achieving TPL's strategic outcomes by advancing funding, legislation and policy positions that support the development and delivery of responsive, innovative and excellent public library services. As outlined to the Library Board in June 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical importance of responsive public services, creating new requirements for the Library to build resilience and capacity in its staff and services in response to a volatile and changing service environment.

The pandemic has transformed the remote and physical workplace while deepening existing social and income inequities for residents and communities. The Advocacy Policy provides a foundation for TPL to sustain and enhance responsive and innovative library services, which address community needs in the short and longer term. The Policy supports the Library Board, staff and partners in promoting an understanding of the value and impact of public library staff and services in contributing to an inclusive economy and better future.

### Policy Overview

The objective of the Advocacy Policy is to clarify the areas in which TPL will take a leading or supporting role in advocacy, and areas which are out of scope. The anticipated outcome of the Policy is the enhanced ability to influence legislation, policies, funding and partnerships that advance free and equitable access to Library services which meet the changing needs of Torontonians.

The principles of the Policy commit the Library to:

- engaging in advocacy in a way that is strategic, focused and measurable;
- collaborating with the City, stakeholders and partners who are critical to achieving TPL's mission and strategic priorities; and
- undertaking advocacy as a shared responsibility of the Board and staff.

The principles further reinforce the role of the Library Board to act as an advocate for library staff and services and represent the Library before City Council and in the community.

The Policy commits TPL to:

- being both proactive and reactive in advocacy, responding to changes in legislation and funding;
- focusing on advancing the Library's strategic priorities and communicating the value and impact of library staff and services for Torontonians; and
- leveraging and contributing to the advocacy efforts of the City and the broader public library sector for greater impact.

The Policy provides clarification that the Library:

- will focus its advocacy efforts on those issues that are critical to public library services, and are consistent with its mission, values and strategic priorities;
- will not take a leading role in broader societal or community issues that do not directly impact library services or are beyond the jurisdiction of the Board;
- as a City agency, may endorse or support the advocacy efforts of the City of Toronto through intragovernmental relationships or other activities that support the City, its communities and residents; and
- will support policy positions that advance public library services and staff well-being.

The implementation of the Advocacy Policy will renew TPL's focus on advocacy as a shared responsibility of the Library Board and staff. It will enhance TPL's relationships with individuals, the community and governments. TPL's advocacy efforts will communicate the value of public library services, contribute to the increased financial sustainability of the Library, and build capacity and support to advance services that are responsive to community needs, now and in the future.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
 City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Advocacy Policy

Policy Section Name	Section #:	Page #
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**POLICY:** **Advocacy**

**SECTION:** **Section # - Board**

**MOTION#/DATE:**

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**Effective Date:** April 26, 2021

### **Policy Objective**

The Advocacy Policy sets out how Toronto Public Library's (TPL's) advocacy efforts will contribute to the delivery of excellent public library services. It clarifies the areas in which TPL will take a leading or supporting role in advocacy, and areas which are out of scope.

An Advocacy Policy will provide a framework to enhance individual, community, and government relationships and partnerships. As a result, TPL will have the capacity and support to advance legislation, policies and funding to provide free and equitable access to Library services which meet the changing needs of Torontonians.

### **Principles**

TPL's advocacy efforts are:

- Rooted in the Library's vision, mission and values, with a view to enhancing the delivery of library services;
- Developed in a manner that promotes accountability through implementation plans that are strategic, focused, targeted, and measurable;
- Founded in constructive, authentic engagement and strategic relationships with stakeholders and partners who are critical to achieving the TPL's mission and strategic priorities;
- Based on evidence supporting the importance and need for public library services; and
- Designed for implementation by the Library Board and TPL staff.

## **Policy Statement**

TPL will take a leadership role, strengthen strategic relationships, and advocate for policies, legislation, funding and partnerships that directly affect staff well-being and public library services in Toronto. TPL will also leverage its position to contribute to the advocacy efforts of the broader public library sector and associations for greater impact.

Through its advocacy efforts, TPL, in partnership with the broader public library sector, will have enhanced capacity and support to deliver a range of responsive library services.

A principal focus of TPL's advocacy is to advance the Library's strategic priorities and communicate to funders and stakeholders, the value and impact of library staff and library services for Toronto and its diverse residents and communities.

TPL will take a proactive, as well as reactive, role in its advocacy efforts for the Library and its staff to build capacity to deliver and enhance current and future library services by focusing on:

- Policy positions, legislation and funding opportunities that advance TPL's mission, values and delivery of library services;
- The public library's role as a vital, democratic institution in an increasingly digital and globalized society; and
- Sharing research, knowledge and best practices with local, provincial, national and international library associations.

## **Scope**

TPL's Advocacy Policy provides direction and focus for advocacy efforts by the Library Board and staff. The Library will focus its advocacy efforts on issues that are critical and important to public library services. TPL will advocate for issues that are consistent with its mission, vision, values and strategic priorities.

The Library will not take a leading role in broader social, societal or community issues that do not directly impact Library services, or that are not in the jurisdiction of the Library Board. However, as a City agency, TPL may endorse or support the

advocacy efforts of the City of Toronto.

TPL will not advance interests that are in conflict with the Procedural By-law, the Board Members Code of Conduct, Library policies or the Employee Code of Ethics.

TPL will not support partisan politics, including a particular party or candidate. The Library will, however, support policy positions or recommendations that advance public library services.

## **Accountability**

### *Director of Policy, Planning and Performance Management*

The Director of Policy, Planning and Performance Management will be responsible for implementation and monitoring of this Policy. This includes monitoring of legislation and coordination of research and evaluation that contributes to understanding the value and impact of library services.

### *Director of Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement*

The Director of Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement will support the advocacy agenda from a communication, brand and positioning perspective.

## **Definitions**

Advocacy is a planned, deliberate, sustained and evaluated effort to: raise awareness of an issue or issues. It is an ongoing process whereby support and understanding are built incrementally over an extended period, and influence a desired outcome or effect a desired change.

Policy Section Name

Section #:

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