



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy - Update

**Date:** December 1, 2025

**To:** Toronto Public Library Board

**From:** City Librarian

#### **SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to seek Toronto Public Library Board approval of the updated Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy (Attachment 1).

The current Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy was last updated in 2015. There are no identified issues or points of confusion with the existing policy.

Proposed changes to the policy have been identified based on a policy review, as well as to align it with the format and layout of TPL's new policy framework.

In 2022, TPL's Research Participation Policy was created. The Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy has been updated to clarify that TPL does not accept materials soliciting research unless otherwise approved through TPL's Research Participation Policy.

Language revisions have also been incorporated to create greater clarity around which materials are permitted for posting and distributing and which ones are not.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. approves the updated Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy, appended as Attachment 1.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There is no financial impact associated with this report.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN**

The policy advances TPL's Strategic Plan 2025-2029 priority of Awareness and Availability. The policy reinforces TPL's commitment to creating welcoming environments for everyone and providing residents with opportunities for full participation in the life of their community.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting on February 17, 2015, the Library Board approved revisions to the [Display and Information of Information for the Public Policy](#).

At its meeting on February 27, 2012, the Library Board approved revisions to the [Display and Distribution of Information for the Public Policy](#).

At its meeting on May 12, 2008, the Board first reviewed and approved the [Displaying and Distributing Information for the Public Policy](#).

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy update will provide clarity for staff and external individuals, community groups, agencies, institutions and government on the condition within which TPL supports the display and distribution of information to the public.

## COMMENTS

### Display and Distribution Policy Overview

The current Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy was last updated in 2015. Proposed changes to TPL's Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy have been identified based on a comprehensive policy review, as well as to align it with the format and layout of TPL's new policy framework. The main changes to the policy are highlighted in the redline version of the policy included in Attachment 2.

The current Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy states that TPL does not accept materials soliciting medical research. The proposed edits broaden this from medical research to all forms of research unless otherwise approved through TPL's Research Participation Policy. In addition, TPL will not accept survey materials unless otherwise approved through TPL's Research Participation Policy.

A further edit specifies that materials must effectively communicate the intent of the posting. In the past, TPL has received materials which were confusing or did not reflect clear messaging.

Language has been added that TPL will not display materials promoting events or activities with an associated fee. Exceptions to this are identified in the policy.

For further clarity, language has been added that TPL will not accept materials where it is not obvious that the event or activity is free for the public to participate in.

The Display and Distribution of Information to the Public Policy refers only to non-commercial or community requests and does not include commercial advertising and sponsorship, which are outlined in separate policies.

## **CONTACT**

Linda Hazzan; Director, Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement; Tel: 416-393-7214; Email: [lhazzan@tpl.ca](mailto:lhazzan@tpl.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Moe Hosseini-Ara  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1:	Display and Distribution update (revised version)
Attachment 2:	Display and Distribution Policy update (redlined to show changes)

Policy Title: Display and Distribution of Information to the Public  
Policy Classification: Board Policy

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## **Display and Distribution of Information to the Public**

### **Policy Classification: Board Policy**

#### **Motion # and Approval Date:**

08 - 085 – May 12, 2008

#### **Motion # and Last Revision Date:**

12 - 036 – February 27, 2012

15 - 034 – February 17, 2015

December 1, 2025

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### **Purpose**

To establish the conditions and context within which Toronto Public Library supports the distribution and posting of community information from individuals, community groups, agencies, institutions and government.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all materials displayed and/or distributed on library premises from external individuals, community groups, agencies, institutions and government.

This policy does not apply to:

- Commercial Advertising (see Advertising Policy);
- Sponsorship (see Sponsorship Policy).

Commercial advertising, which allows the display of commercial materials for a fee, is covered by the Advertising Policy. The recognition of sponsors, including the display of the sponsor's name, is covered by the Sponsorship Policy.

### **Underlying Principles**

The Display and Distribution of Information for the Public Policy is driven by principles defined in the Library's Values, Vision and Mission and in TPL's Equity

## Statement and Intellectual Freedom Statement.

### **Policy Statement**

In keeping with the Library's mission, the display and distribution of material provides residents with opportunities for full participation in the life of their community and promotes an informed citizenry. In fulfilling this service role, the Library strives to create a welcoming environment for everyone. The Library provides access to a range of information about community events, activities and other information of interest or value to residents. The Library also provides spaces to display materials on library property in a variety of formats, including bulk publications (e.g., community newspapers and magazines, cultural brochures, continuing and full-time education calendars).

#### **1. General**

- 1.1 The Library may display or distribute materials from any individual or group wishing to display and/or distribute information on physical and digital library properties or through library channels (including branches, and digital channels) subject to the restrictions specified in this policy. This includes materials from:
  - Toronto Public Library Foundation;
  - library partners in programming or marketing;
  - City of Toronto;
  - agencies, boards, commissions, corporations of the City of Toronto;
  - local elected representatives (subject to restrictions outlined in the Municipal Election Campaign Policy);
  - provincial or federal government or a government agency;
  - organizations distributing bulk publications that are free of charge;
  - any other individuals or community organizations that meet the requirements outlined in 1.2
- 1.2 The Library will not display or distribute any material, from any source, that is:
  - contrary to any law, including the Ontario Human Rights Code;
  - contrary to any library policy;
  - promoting or affiliated with any faith or religion;
  - primarily political in nature (including election campaign materials);

- primarily devoted to the sale, advertising, solicitation, or promotion of commercial products or services (including rentals), except as permitted under section 3;
- primarily devoted to promoting an event or activity that requires a fee to participate in, except as permitted under section 3;
- a personal ad;
- an invitation to participate in research except in cases that have been approved through TPL's Research Participation Policy process;
- a survey except in cases that have been approved through TPL's Research Participation Policy process;
- a contest;
- a petition or pledge form; for the purposes of fundraising, except from the Toronto Public Library Foundation or for the Royal Canadian Legion's Poppy Campaign.

1.3 The Library may only display materials that are commercial, or that promote events or activities with a fee:

- from the Toronto Public Library Foundation;
- from partners in library programming or organizations with library partnership marketing arrangements;
- for events, programs or services directly delivered by the City of Toronto or its agencies, boards, commissions, or corporations. This excludes events or programs delivered by third-party organizations (including rentals) being held at properties or venues owned by the City of Toronto or its agencies, boards, commissions or corporations. These materials are subject to the directives specified in the Library's Advertising Policy.

## **2. Authority and Approvals**

2.1 All requests to display and distribute materials will be handled in a fair and consistent manner.

2.2 Because space is limited at branches, it may not be possible to display all materials that are acceptable under this policy at a given time. The Library will display and distribute materials in appropriate locations for a limited time, subject to the availability of space.

2.3 All material becomes the property of the Toronto Public Library Board and

the Library reserves the right to dispose of the material as it sees fit.

- 2.4 The Library reserves the right to reject material that, in the Library's sole opinion, may adversely affect public confidence in the Library or the value of the Library brand. This includes material that does not effectively communicate the intent of the posting, materials where it is not explicit that the programs or events being offered are free of charge to the public or that is not aligned to the directives in the Advertising Policy; in particular, material that could be construed as being targeted to children by its manner, the space that it occupies, and the intent of the advertised product or service.
- 2.5 Decisions to refuse display or distribution of materials may be appealed. An appeal must be made in writing to the City Librarian.

### **3. Format**

- 3.1 All materials must be in a suitable format for display. Toronto Public Library reserves the right to refuse materials that are unsuitable including, but not limited to, oversized materials or materials with tear-away segments.
- 3.2 Toronto Public Library will accept material in languages other than English. Information in English about the content of the material, organization and event may be required.

### **4. No Endorsement of Content**

- 4.1 The display of materials does not constitute an endorsement of any group or its views.

#### **Accountability**

##### **City Librarian is responsible for:**

- receiving appeals and notifying appellants of the decision in writing.

##### **Director, Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement or his or her designate, is responsible for:**

- reviewing and approving materials for system-wide distribution within the criteria set out in this policy;

- communicating with publishers for bulk publications distribution;
- reviewing and approving material received from branches and providing either distribution instructions or reason for declining.

**Managers are responsible for:**

- communicating this policy and procedure to all employees;
- approving materials within criteria set out in this policy;
- approving the selection of bulk publications for branches in their jurisdiction;
- responding to customer comments about materials that are posted/distributed.

**Branch staff are responsible for:**

- approving requests that comply with the policy to post/distribute materials from their branch or outdoor signage only;
- seeking guidance from Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement regarding the acceptability of materials to determine whether or not materials comply with the policy;
- forwarding requests to post/distribute materials to more than one location to Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement for approval.

**Related Legislation**

- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990, c. H.19 as amended
- Criminal Code (R.S., 1985, c. C-46) as amended

**Related Library Policies**

[Community and Event Space Rental Policy](#)

[Research Participation Policy](#)

[Advertising Policy](#)

[Materials Selection Policy](#)

[Rules of Conduct Policy](#)

[Sponsorship Policy](#)

[Use of Library Space for Art Exhibits Policy](#)

[Use of Library Resources During an Election Period](#)

**Definition of Terms**

**Bulk Publications:** Community newspapers and other publications (e.g., magazines, cultural brochures, continuing and full-time education calendars) that are delivered in bulk for pick-up from the branches and are distributed in the Library free of charge.

**Commercial:** Any particular activity, transaction, act or conduct connected with trade and commerce – including, but not limited to, the buying and selling of merchandise and the exchange of goods or services – whether or not the person or organization who carries it out does so in the expectation of profit.

**Library Property:** All library branches, buildings and property of the Toronto Public Library whether leased or owned. For the purposes of this policy, library property also includes indoor and outdoor signage, and the online environment.

**Materials:** For the purposes of this policy, any information about community activities, events, products and/or services. Information can be presented in a variety of formats, including posters, bulk publications, outdoor signage or online content.

## **Contact**

Director of Communications, Programming and Customer Engagement

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