

Working Group Report

Report To: FOPL Board and Members, Annual General Meeting
Report Name: Government Relations Working Group Report
Prepared by: Dina Stevens, on behalf of the Working Group

Working Group Members:

Dayna DeBenedet, Leeds and Thousand Islands PL (Chair) (outgoing)
Vickery Bowles, Toronto PL
Michael Ciccone, London PL
Jodie Delgado, Springwater PL
Danielle McDonald, Ottawa PL (outgoing)
Alim Remtula, Toronto PL
Margie Singleton, Vaughan PL
Dave Neeson, Georgina PL (outgoing)
Staff Resource: Dina Stevens, FOPL ED

Location: Virtually

Recommendation

THAT the Government Relations Working Group report be received as information.

Purpose

The FOPL Board recognizes that advocacy, lobbying and public relations initiatives are complex processes that would benefit from the assistance of a Working Group. FOPL's government relation's initiatives are worked on in conjunction with a lobbying firm, Board Members and the Government Relations Working Group.

Mandate: This Standing Committee known as a Working Group, has the mandate to...

- (1) Advise on provincial budget and election strategies and build relationships with provincial and municipal elected officials, as well as civil servants, to influence government policy and practice.
- (2) Support FOPL's work with our Government Relations Firm on government relations initiatives.
- (3) Collaborate with other library associations, organizations and agencies to advocate for public libraries with initiative such as the Library Day at Queen's Park.
- (4) Support all public and First Nations libraries with provincial and municipal advocacy.

Activities of the Working Group 2022

This working groups has discussed, endorsed, and advised a variety of topics that have been brought to the FOPL board for deliberation. Most notably, this has included:

The growing concern of violent incidents and disturbances at libraries of all sizes and location across the province. Safety and security of library staff and customers is becoming a big issue, with many libraries hiring external security companies and providing additional training for staff. Part of the problem is the that the province isn't support those who are mentally ill or have addiction problems, with many social services underfunded or closing, and so these persons turning to public libraries. In April of 2022, TPL identified the provincial advocacy opportunity to "Increase investments in mental health and addiction crisis intervention services available to the community to address the urgent needs of urban public libraries in addressing safety and security issues." Refer to TPL's [Staff Report](#) for more details. For more details about TPL's strategy dealing with these security concerns and vulnerable persons, please refer to TPL's Staff Report on [Alternate Approaches to Safety and Security at TPL](#).

The Government Relations Working Group decided to endorse TPL's advocacy priority to call on the province to increase investments in mental health and addiction crisis intervention services and recommended that the FOPL board adopt this priority as well. The FOPL board agreed and the priority was adopted in November of 2022.