

# Government Relations Working Group Report

**Report To:** The FOPL Board  
**Report Name:** Government Relations Working Group Report  
**Prepared by:** Margie Singleton

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**Working Group**

Sonia Bebbington, Ottawa PL  
Vickery Bowles, Toronto PL  
Michael Ciccone, London PL  
Jodie Delgado, Springwater PL  
Christine Row, Mississippi Mills PL  
Stephanie Clare, Georgian Bay PL  
Margie Singleton, Vaughan PL (working group Chair)  
Dina Stevens, FOPL Staff Resource

**Meeting Dates**

February 10, 2023  
April 28, 2023  
June 16, 2023  
September 14, 2023

## Recommendation

**THAT the FOPL Board receive this report as information.**

## Background

The Government Relations Working Group has been a standing committee of FOPL for many years. Since reauthorizing Working Groups in the Fall 2021, this committee has met numerous times and expanded the membership to include a wider representation from FOPL member libraries.

## Discussion of Needs, Issues and Work Completed

Various recommendations were discussed and referred to the FOPL Board for approval including:

1. That the FOPL Board work with CULC Safety and Security Task Group to pursue joint initiatives to support Ontario Public Libraries in their quest to deliver safe and secure spaces.
2. That the FOPL Board support by submission of a letter, the Canadian Urban Libraries Council/Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic/Canadian Association of Research Libraries/ Canadian Federation of Library Associations request for changes to the Consumer Protection Act identifying public libraries as consumers and additional sector specific legislation proposals to ensure library protection against unfair digital contracts that target publicly

supported libraries and ensuring public libraries have sustained reasonably priced access to ebooks and eaudiobooks for their customers.

3. That the FOPL Board ensure the FOPL priority of increased Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) funding be integrated into all future provincial government advocacy initiatives.

A request from an individual citizen for FOPL to oppose Simcoe County Council's request to amend the Public Library Act was denied.

The Government Relations working Group did not support a proposal that FOPL embark upon an advocacy campaign focusing on public libraries as inclusive for all marginalized groups. Rather the Group preferred an advocacy campaign focusing on public libraries are for everyone and support intellectual freedom.

Members of the Government Relations Working Group enthusiastically participated November 14 and 15, 2023 at *Library Days at Queens Park* meeting with numerous MPPs and staff and attended the preceding advocacy training with Counsel Public Affairs consultants. The clear message of FOPL's three priorities for increased First Nations Public Libraries' funding, creation of the Ontario Digital Public Library (ODPL) and increased operating funding for public libraries was confidently delivered by all Working Group members participating.

The Government Relations Working Group Terms of Reference were edited several times however have not yet been forward to the FOPL Board for approval.

The leadership of this Working Group changed and April 28, 2023 and Margie Singleton was appointed as Chair.