



Working Group Report

Report To: FOPL Board and Members, Annual General Meeting
Report Name: Government Relations Working Group – AGM 2025
Report Prepared by: Catherina Rouse – WG Chair

French Translation Working Group:

Sonia Bebbington	Ottawa PL
Vickery Bowles	Toronto PL
Michael Ciccone	London PL
Stephanie Clare	Georgian Bay PL
Jodie Delgado	Springwater PL
Christina Row	Mississippi Mills PL
Margie Singleton	Vaughan PL (Chair)

Location: Virtually

Recommendation

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

Background

The Government Relations Working Group has been a standing committee of FOPL for many years. Since the rejuvenation of the Working Group in Fall 2021, the committee has enthusiastically supported FOPL advocacy initiatives.

Discussions of Needs, Issues and Work Completed

The Working Group met to discuss FOPL advocacy priorities. It was agreed that the Group encourage the FOPL Board to continue with the Ontario Digital Public Library (ODPL) as FOPL's advocacy priority as recommended by Counsel Public Affairs, FOPL's government relations firm. It was proposed that the Executive Director share the value of ODPL at each Caucus meeting to ensure members are informed of the rationale behind advocacy priorities.

To prepare members so they can confidently embark on individual advocacy meetings with their local MPPs, FOPL will convene an Advocacy Forum/Training session annually in the Fall.



Potential partners and collaborators were reviewed including Big City Mayors, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO). Topics of shared concern with Big City Mayors are Safety and Security in public libraries and civic spaces whereas to AMCTO and AMO the positive impact of public libraries on the economic development and fiscal success of a community might be highlighted. The Executive Director will coordinate a booth at both AMCTO and AMO conferences and Working Groups members will assist manning the booth if possible.

Impact of Strong Mayor Powers on Ontario's public libraries was discussed. A possible survey will be released to gather a comprehensive picture of the impact provincially.

A desire to refocus FOPL's municipal outreach campaign from "Libraries are for Everyone" to Intellectual Freedom and censorship was confirmed. Toronto PL is encouraging other libraries to support their creative Intellectual Freedom campaign. FOPL will investigate the possibility of sharing TPL resources.