



Government Relations Working Group Report

Report To: FOPL Board and Members, Annual General Meeting
Report Name: Government Relations Working Group – AGM 2026
Report Prepared by: Margie Singleton – WG Chair

Government Relations Working Group:

Sonia Bebbington	Ottawa PL
Moe Hosseini-Ara	Toronto PL
Michael Ciccone	London PL
Stephanie Clare	Georgian Bay PL
Jodie Delgado	Springwater PL
Christine 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 continues to serve as a key advisory body supporting FOPL's strategy and government relations efforts. Since its rejuvenation in Fall 2021, the Working Group has played an active role in shaping advocacy priorities, identifying strategic partnerships, and supporting member engagement in government relations activities.

Over the past year, the Working Group has provided guidance on both provincial and municipal advocacy approaches, ensuring alignment with sector priorities and emerging issues impacting Ontario's Public Libraries.

Discussions of Needs, Issues and Work Completed

Current advocacy priorities and goals were reviewed and discussed. This included a pause from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming on ODPL discussions and the recent success in additional funds to the Connectivity Grant. A shift towards advocacy for safety and security concerns is being pursued due to member feedback on the current crisis in housing, mental health and opioid use and its effects on public libraries. The document titled *“Advocacy Campaign: Public Libraries – Safety and Security”* was distributed that contained draft key messaging for the campaign and a proposed rollout. Committee members provided feedback to inform the strategy and core messaging of the campaign. The Working Group expressed strong overall support for the Safety and Security advocacy initiative. Members emphasized the importance of clearly positioning the campaign as one that does involve funding—specifically advocating for increased investment in upstream supports such as social services, mental health, addictions, and housing.

There was broad agreement that the issue spans all levels of government, and messaging should reflect a shared responsibility beyond the provincial scope. The Group highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships, identifying key stakeholders such as the Big City Mayors (as primary influencers), national organizations, and potential partners in sectors such as social work, education, and public transit.

Members underscored that mental health and addiction challenges are the most pressing issues impacting libraries and should be central to the campaign. At the same time, it was noted that smaller and rural communities must be meaningfully represented, with targeted outreach through organizations such as ROMA, AMO, and NOMA, and a focus on education for municipal leaders and staff.

Additional considerations included awareness of government approaches such as HART Hubs, the potential for coordinated actions such as a letter-writing campaign, and ensuring inclusive language that reflects all age groups, including youth.