



FEDERATION OF ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Q2 MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026

[JOIN VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM](#)

-
1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
 - a. WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!
 2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT Doc 1
 3. REGRETS
 4. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST
 5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2026 Q1 BOARD MEETING Doc 2

THAT this Board approve as circulated the minutes of the FOPL Board Meeting of February 27, 2026.
 6. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 24, 2026 POST- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Doc 3

THAT this Board approve as circulated the minutes of the FOPL Post-AGM Board Meeting of April 24, 2026.
 7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

THAT this Board approve as circulated the FOPL Board Agenda for May 22, 2026.
 8. CHAIR'S REPORT W. GRECO Doc 4
 9. TREASURER'S REPORT C. MOSKAU Doc 5
 - a. QUARTERLY TREASURER'S REPORT

THAT this Board receive the Treasurer's report as information.
 10. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT D. STEVENS Doc 6

THAT this Board receive the Executive Director's report as information.
 11. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS
 - a. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WORKING GROUP
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION – BILL 28 ALBERTA D. STEVENS Doc 7

12. PREVIOUS BUSINESS

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|--------|
| a. CIRCULAR MATERIALS UPDATE | D. STEVENS | DOC 8 |
| b. MEMBERSHIP FEE REVIEW | D. STEVENS | DOC 9 |
| c. MEMBER ENGAGEMENT PLAN | D. STEVENS | DOC 10 |

13. NEW BUSINESS

- | | | |
|---|------------|--------|
| a. CAUCUS MEETINGS FEEDBACK | D. STEVENS | DOC 11 |
| b. SAFETY AND SECURITY CAMPAIGN FEEDBACK AND REVIEW | D. STEVENS | DOC 12 |
| c. ADVOCACY PRIORITIES REVIEW | D. STEVENS | DOC 13 |
| d. ADVOCACY POLICY | D. STEVENS | DOC 14 |
| e. GOVERNANCE REVIEW | D. STEVENS | DOC 15 |

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

15. NEXT MEETING:

Q3 – SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

HYBRID – LOCATION TBD

16. ADJOURNMENT

WE, the public libraries of Ontario acknowledge that the lands now referred to as Ontario have been inhabited by many distinct Nations since time immemorial. The Original Peoples have been and continue to be the traditional custodians of this land. Ontarians, as well as Canadians, need to remember and reaffirm our accountability to these Indigenous Nations, and the lands, resources and waters which nourishes life. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory. FOPL acknowledges the lands and treaties upon which our public libraries across Ontario prosper.

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Meeting Date: Feb 27, 2026

Meeting Time: 10:00a.m.

Location: Virtual

Secretary: Dina Stevens, Executive Director/Secretary of the Board

In Attendance: **Francophone Caucus:** Catherina Moskau

Large Urban Caucus: Wayne Greco, Sarah Douglas-Murray, Margie Singleton, Sarah Vaisler

Small & Medium Caucus: Beverley King, Jodie Delgado

Northern Caucus: Rebecca Hunt

Rural Caucus: Jennifer La Chapelle

Toronto Caucus: Paul Ainslie, Moe Hosseini-Ara, Lisa Radha Vohra, Ben Liu

Former Library Leaders: David Harvie

Regrets: Emma Kinsman, Kathy Fisher, Feather Maracle, Nadine Williams, Susan McGibbon

Absent: None.

FOPL Team: Dina Stevens, Executive Director, Diana Chiavaroli, Administrative Assistant

Prepared By: Diana Chiavaroli, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Q1 Board Meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by the Chair.

2. Land Acknowledgement

3. Regrets

As noted above.

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None.

5. Approval of the Minutes of the December 12, 2025 Board Meeting

Moved by Margie Singleton and seconded by Jennifer La Chapelle, THAT this Board approve, the minutes of the December 12, 2025 board meeting. CARRIED.

An update was provided on the business of insurance benefits – further information will be provided at the next board meeting.

It was noted that board members who have left the board since the board recognition program was approved have been sent framed indigenous artwork as a token of appreciation.

6. Approval of the Agenda.

Moved by Wayne Greco and seconded by Jodie Delgado, THAT this Board approve as circulated, the FOPL Board Agenda of February 27, 2026. CARRIED.

7. Treasurer's Report

ED welcomed new board member Ben Liu. Warm wishes were given to Jonathan Hoss who resigned from the board.

10:12 Sarah Vaisler joined the meeting

10:18 Catherina Moskau joined the meeting

ED provided a summary of the treasurer's report, highlighting a new membership campaign successful in acquiring two new members. Concerns were raised over a few members declining 2026 membership. Some members offered donations instead of full membership fees. Reasons noted for declined membership were monetary. Monetary concerns were also noted as the primary concern for non-members declining. Suggestions were made on best ways to retain members, as well as engaging new members. A request was made for a comprehensive engagement plan, which the ED will bring to the May board meeting. A committee was suggested to create the engagement plan.

Moved by Catherina Moskau and seconded by David Harvie, THAT this Board receive the Treasurer's Report as information. CARRIED.

8. Executive Director's Report

a. 2026 WorkPlan

ED provided a summary of the Work Plan

Moved by Sarah Vaisler and seconded by Sarah Douglas-Murray, THAT this Board receive the Executive Director's Report as information. CARRIED.

Moved by Rebecca Hunt and seconded by Catherina Moskau, THAT this Board receive the Executive Director's 2026 Workplan as information. CARRIED.

9. Previous Business

a. Bylaw and Policy Approval

Moved by Moe Hosseini-Ara and seconded by Lisa Radha Vohra THAT the Board approve the edits to the Bylaw and Finance Policy. CARRIED.

10:56 Ben Liu left the meeting

10. New Business

a. Audit Review and Approval

Moved by Jennifer La Chapelle and seconded by Beverley King THAT the Board approve the 2025 draft financial statements. CARRIED.

b. Membership Fee Review

The ED reviewed the current membership fees, noting the bands that have the most non-members. A discussion was had regarding how membership fees might be adjusted to make membership more accessible. It was agreed that a committee will be formed to review and propose amendments to the current fee structure and will serve for this task as well as to create an engagement plan as the two are closely linked. Volunteers for the committee were selected during the discussion.

Moved by Jennifer La Chapelle and seconded by Jodie Delgado THAT the Board accept the formation of a committee for membership review. CARRIED.

c. Recycling Books Issue with Circular Materials

The ED provided an update on the issues regarding recycling books. The question was raised and discussed if this is an issue FOPL should be involved with. It was agreed a survey be sent to the membership to evaluate the issue across the province, and contact be made with the ministry to evaluate if the issue can be pursued. A report will be brought to the board at the Q2 May board meeting.

Moved by Catherina Moskau and seconded by Wayne Greco THAT the ED will pursue and initiate advocacy regarding Circular Materials and books ineligible for recycling under the new provincial program. CARRIED.

11. Announcements

The ED noted the changeover in TPL's board representation from Jonathan Hoss to Ben Liu. The sudden closure of the Six Nations PL building was noted.

Board vacancies were also highlighted with a request for board members to reach out for potential representatives.

12. Next Meeting

AGM – Friday April 24, 2026, 10:00am

Q2 – Friday May 22, 2026, 10:00am

The May Q2 board meeting is hybrid with location TBD – Ajax PL was offered. Confirmation will be provided by email.

13. Adjournment

Moved by Paul Ainslie and seconded by Wayne Greco THAT the meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32.

Paul Ainslie, Chair

Dina Stevens, Board Secretary

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Meeting Date: April 24, 2026

Meeting Time: Post AGM, 11:00 a.m.

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Secretary: Dina Stevens, Executive Director/Secretary of the Board

In Attendance: **First Nations Caucus:** Feather Maracle
Francophone Caucus: Catherina Moskau
Large Urban Caucus: Wayne Greco, Margie Singleton, Kathy Fisher, Sarah Douglas-Murray
Small & Medium Caucus: Jodie Delgado, Beverley King, Emma Kinsman
Northern Caucus: Chantal Gingras, Marianne LaBerge
Rural Caucus: Susan McGibbon, Jennifer La Chapelle
Toronto Caucus: Paul Ainslie, Lisa Radha Vohra, Moe Hosseini-Ara
Former Library Leaders: Margie Singleton

Regrets: Sarah Vaisler, Ben Liu, Laura Carter

Absent : Nadine Williams

FOPL Team: Dina Stevens, Executive Director
Diana Chiavaroli, Administrative Assistant

Prepared By: Diana Chiavaroli, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The first Board meeting post Annual General Meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by the Chair.

2. Regrets

As noted above.

3. Election of Members

First Nations Caucus CEO	<i>Vacant</i>
Francophone Caucus Trustee	<i>Vacant</i>
Large Urban Caucus Trustee	<i>Vacant</i>

Large Urban Caucus CEO	Laura Carter, Kingston Frontenac Public Library
Northern Caucus Trustee	Marianne LaBerge, Blind River Public Library
Norther Caucus CEO	Chantal Gingras, Marathon Public Library
Small/Medium Caucus CEO	Beverley King, Halton Hills Public Library
Former Library Leaders Rep	Margie Singleton

FOPL-Resolution-01

Moved by Jennifer La Chapelle and seconded by Jodie Delgado, THAT this Board elects the above stated members to the board. CARRIED.

4. Election of Executive Committee

Chair	Wayne Greco
Vice Chair	Sarah Vaisler
Past Chair	Paul Ainslie
Treasurer	Catherina Moskau

FOPL-Resolution-02

Moved by Sarah Douglas-Murray and seconded by Emma Kinsman, THAT this Board elects the above stated members to the executive committee. CARRIED.

5. Next Meeting

Friday May 22, 2026

10:00am

Hybrid – Audley Branch, Ajax Public Library, 1955 Audley Rd, Ajax, ON L1Z 0L2

6. Adjournment

FOPL-Resolution-03

Moved by Susan McGibbon and seconded by Margie Singleton, THAT the Post-AGM meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

The Board meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Wayne Greco, Board Chair

Dina Stevens, Board Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens on behalf of Catherina Moskau
Prepared on: May 8, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the FOPL Board receive this report as information for the period ending April 30, 2026

BACKGROUND

This report covers the period January 1, 2026 to April 30, 2026 to present finances to date within the current fiscal year. This reflects an unaudited representation of FOPL finances.

REPORT

Financial Reports (attached):

- Comparative Income Statement, known as “Budget vs. Actuals”: Provides FOPL’s operating revenue and expenditures from January 1, 2026 to April 30, 2026.
- Balance Sheet: Provides information on FOPL’s full financial situation as of April 30, 2026 including accounts and investments.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

- All members have been invoiced for the 2026 membership year. Outstanding membership dues amount to \$525 as of April 30, 2026.
- The audit process is complete; the membership approved the audit at the AGM and adjustments have been completed and sent back to the auditor.
- The auditor was consulted to adjust the budget to include reserve funds for special projects. OCHD stated that the way we have been representing these projects in the budget is correct and adding in a line of revenue from the reserve fund to cover special projects “would misstate the financial results and is not allowed by the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. The operating deficit is a real result and needs to be presented as such in the financial statements.” Instead, they recommended adding a line for the reserve fund under expenses with any payments made using reserve funds to fall within that budget line. This would allow the expense to be represented in the budget without impacting net revenue and showing it as a deficit.
 - Our net revenue covers the cost of this year’s project so it will be left as is. In the future, if we need to draw directly from the reserve, the budget will be changed as recommended.

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Budget vs. Actuals: Budget_FY26_P&L - FY26 P&L

January - December 2026

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Income				
4000 Revenue				
4010 Sponsorships		0.00	0.00	
4015 Gifts & Donations	2,078.33	0.00	2,078.33	
4020 Membership Fees	265,550.00	277,000.00	-11,450.00	95.87 %
4030 Grants		0.00	0.00	
4040 Sale of Material		0.00	0.00	
4050 Other Revenues	1,404.02	4,000.00	-2,595.98	35.10 %
4051 Special Peer Comparisons Fees		0.00	0.00	
4061 Library Training & Development Fees		0.00	0.00	
4070 Interest Income	753.02	2,000.00	-1,246.98	37.65 %
Total 4000 Revenue	269,785.37	283,000.00	-13,214.63	95.33 %
Total Income	\$269,785.37	\$283,000.00	\$ -13,214.63	95.33 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$269,785.37	\$283,000.00	\$ -13,214.63	95.33 %
Expenses				
5050 Office Consultants				
5055 Executive Director	39,583.91	125,000.00	-85,416.09	31.67 %
5060 Administrative Assistant	9,579.00	31,500.00	-21,921.00	30.41 %
5065 Marketing & Social Media		0.00	0.00	
Total 5050 Office Consultants	49,162.91	156,500.00	-107,337.09	31.41 %
5100 Administrative Expenses				
5110 Admin Meeting		200.00	-200.00	
5115 Admin Travel	3,677.60	14,000.00	-10,322.40	26.27 %
5120 Admin Professional Development		0.00	0.00	
Total 5100 Administrative Expenses	3,677.60	14,200.00	-10,522.40	25.90 %
5155 Board Expenses				
5160 Board Travel	159.84	6,000.00	-5,840.16	2.66 %
5165 Board Meeting	286.87	2,500.00	-2,213.13	11.47 %
5170 Board Professional Development		0.00	0.00	
5175 Board Recruitment		0.00	0.00	
5180 Annual General Meeting		0.00	0.00	
5185 Legal		0.00	0.00	
5190 Board Appreciation	114.38	1,000.00	-885.62	11.44 %
Total 5155 Board Expenses	561.09	9,500.00	-8,938.91	5.91 %
5200 Committee Work				
5205 CELUPL		500.00	-500.00	
5210 Working Groups		0.00	0.00	
Total 5200 Committee Work		500.00	-500.00	
5250 Operational Expenses				
5255 General Office Supplies	0.00	250.00	-250.00	0.00 %
5260 Postage & Courier	352.28	1,200.00	-847.72	29.36 %
5265 Photocopying Supplies		0.00	0.00	
5270 Printing	768.92	2,000.00	-1,231.08	38.45 %
5275 Telephone	220.38	1,000.00	-779.62	22.04 %
5280 Telecommunication		0.00	0.00	
5285 Insurance (DS)		2,000.00	-2,000.00	

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Budget vs. Actuals: Budget_FY26_P&L - FY26 P&L

January - December 2026

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
5290 FOPL Memberships	2,400.00	3,700.00	-1,300.00	64.86 %
5295 Subscriptions		0.00	0.00	
Total 5250 Operational Expenses	3,741.58	10,150.00	-6,408.42	36.86 %
5300 Furniture and Equipment				
5310 Furniture		0.00	0.00	
5315 Equipment		500.00	-500.00	
5320 Information Technology Hardware	376.82	1,000.00	-623.18	37.68 %
5325 Information Technology Software	785.00	1,700.00	-915.00	46.18 %
Total 5300 Furniture and Equipment	1,161.82	3,200.00	-2,038.18	36.31 %
5500 Finance				
5510 Bank Charges & Interest	105.80	600.00	-494.20	17.63 %
5511 5511 QuickBooks Payments Fees	190.06	300.00	-109.94	63.35 %
5515 Credit Card Charges		100.00	-100.00	
5520 Audit	8,475.00	8,200.00	275.00	103.35 %
5525 Services & Consultants		500.00	-500.00	
Total 5500 Finance	8,770.86	9,700.00	-929.14	90.42 %
5600 Marketing and Promotions				
5610 Conferences & Exhibitions	4,904.05	18,000.00	-13,095.95	27.24 %
5615 Advertising & Promotions	337.08	500.00	-162.92	67.42 %
5620 Special Events		0.00	0.00	
5625 Publications & Printing		500.00	-500.00	
5635 Presentation Supplies	143.69	500.00	-356.31	28.74 %
5640 Indigenous Language Translation		3,000.00	-3,000.00	
5641 French Language Translation		1,000.00	-1,000.00	
5645 Website	843.56	2,000.00	-1,156.44	42.18 %
Total 5600 Marketing and Promotions	6,228.38	25,500.00	-19,271.62	24.43 %
5700 Programs and Projects				
5710 Contract Services	5,212.13	20,000.00	-14,787.87	26.06 %
5715 Research & Development		600.00	-600.00	
5720 Statistician Fees		0.00	0.00	
5725 Library Member Training		0.00	0.00	
5730 Working Groups - 1		2,000.00	-2,000.00	
5735 Legal Opinions		0.00	0.00	
5740 Public Relations Services	10,896.03	60,000.00	-49,103.97	18.16 %
5990 Write-off		0.00	0.00	
Total 5700 Programs and Projects	16,108.16	82,600.00	-66,491.84	19.50 %
5950 UNKNOWN EXPENSE		0.00	0.00	
Total Expenses	\$89,412.40	\$311,850.00	\$ -222,437.60	28.67 %
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$180,372.97	\$ -28,850.00	\$209,222.97	-625.21 %
Other Expenses				
5000 Payroll Expenses				
5010 Part-Time Permanent Salaries		0.00	0.00	
5020 Contract & Temporary Staff		0.00	0.00	
5025 EI Expense		0.00	0.00	
5030 CPP Expense		0.00	0.00	

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Budget vs. Actuals: Budget_FY26_P&L - FY26 P&L

January - December 2026

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Total 5000 Payroll Expenses		0.00	0.00	
Total Other Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
NET OTHER INCOME	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
NET INCOME	\$180,372.97	\$ -28,850.00	\$209,222.97	-625.21 %

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Balance Sheet

As of Apr 30, 2026

	TOTAL
Assets	
Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalent	
1010 Scotia Chequing Account	\$235,417.89
1011 Visa Holding Cash Investment Account Scotia	\$10,000.53
1020 Scotia Savings Account	\$148,317.40
Undeposited Funds	\$0.00
Total for Cash and Cash Equivalent	\$393,735.82
Accounts Receivable (A/R)	
Accounts Receivable	\$1,125.00
Total for Accounts Receivable (A/R)	\$1,125.00
1040 Payroll Clearing	\$0.00
1110 Investments	\$0.00
1200 Accounts Receivable - History	-\$75.00
1201 Accounts Receivable Adjustments	\$0.00
1210 Interest Receivable	\$0.00
1320 Prepaid Expenses - 1	\$4,499.58
Total for Current Assets	\$399,285.40
Total for Assets	\$399,285.40
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable (A/P)	
Accounts Payable	\$179.67
Total for Accounts Payable (A/P)	\$179.67
Credit Cards	
2021 Visa 9458	\$1,210.11
Total for Credit Cards	\$1,210.11
2011 Accounts Payable Adjustments	\$0.00
2015 Accrued Liabilities	\$6,999.74
2110 EI Payable	\$0.00
2120 CPP Payable	\$0.00
2130 Federal Income Tax Payable	\$0.00
2140 Federal Tax 2016 Adjustment	\$0.00
2210 Vacation Payable	\$0.00
2320 GST Paid on Purchases	\$0.00
2610 Deferred Revenue	\$450.00
Total for Current Liabilities	\$8,839.52
Total for Liabilities	\$8,839.52
Equity	
3500 Opening Balance	\$377.00
3550 Retained Earnings - Previous Year	-\$4,525.94
Retained Earnings	\$191,632.99
Profit for the year	\$202,961.83
Total for Equity	\$390,445.88
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$399,285.40

Executive Director's Report

Report to: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens, Executive Director
Prepared on: May 12, 2026

Recommendation

THAT the FOPL board receive this report as information.

Report

Since our last Board meeting at the end of February, FOPL has been exceptionally active across advocacy, member engagement, governance, and organizational development initiatives. I look forward to sharing more detailed updates at the upcoming meeting, particularly related to the provincial Safety and Security advocacy campaign, the work undertaken through the Fee Review and Member Engagement Committee, and recommendations emerging from the Government Relations Working Group regarding proactive intellectual freedom advocacy.

Our Safety and Security campaign work continues to advance significantly. Over the past several months, FOPL has met with staff and policy advisors from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG), staff from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and representatives from the Solicitor General's office to discuss the growing pressures libraries are facing related to homelessness, mental health and addictions, workplace safety, and increasing security incidents in public library spaces. These discussions have been productive and constructive, and we anticipate a meeting with Minister Stan Cho in the near future as this work continues to gain momentum. Thank you to our spokespeople who have made the time to attend these meetings and made our messaging so impactful.

FOPL also maintained a presence at the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) Conference in Parry Sound, providing another valuable opportunity to engage municipal leaders and continue raising awareness of the critical role public libraries play as community infrastructure and frontline public service organizations.

Our caucus meetings were successfully completed this spring, with strong participation and thoughtful engagement from members across the province. Members provided meaningful feedback on FOPL's advocacy



priorities, emerging sector concerns, and organizational direction. I look forward to reviewing this feedback with the Board and discussing the themes and priorities that emerged through these conversations.

The website redevelopment project is also well underway. While the project timeline has extended somewhat beyond the original expectations, this is largely due to the substantial amount of historical content, documentation, and archival material being mined and reviewed from the existing website. The contractors have indicated that the volume and complexity of the content migration process is greater than initially anticipated. Despite this, the work continues to progress steadily, and the redevelopment will significantly improve FOPL's communications capacity, member experience, and long-term content management capabilities.

FOPL has also been closely monitoring developments related to Bill 28 in Alberta and the broader implications the legislation may have for intellectual freedom, public library governance, and collection management practices across Canada. In response, FOPL issued a public statement expressing concern regarding the legislation and wrote a letter of support aligned with the positions advanced by the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries (CAPL), the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA), and the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC). Both documents are attached to this report for the Board's information. Bill 28 has now passed and received Royal Assent. While this outcome is disappointing and concerning for the broader Canadian public library sector, it reinforces the importance of proactive advocacy, strong intellectual freedom policies, and continued engagement with our members and partners on these issues. FOPL will continue monitoring developments closely and supporting sector-wide conversations around governance, intellectual freedom, and public trust in libraries.

Finally, FOPL successfully held its Annual General Meeting during this reporting period. I would like to thank the Board, caucus representatives, working groups, members, and partners for their continued engagement and support. The pace of activity over the past several months has been substantial, and I am grateful for the collaboration and leadership that continues to move the organization forward.

Kind Regards,

Dina Stevens, MLIS
Executive Director

May 8, 2026

The Honourable Dan Williams
Minister of Municipal Affairs
320 Legislature Building,
10800 - 97 Avenue,
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Subject: Opposition to Bill 28 and Defense of Local Library Governance

Dear Premier Smith and Minister Williams,

On behalf of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, I am writing to urge you to stand in defense of intellectual freedom and democratic local governance in the face of unprecedented provincial overreach occurring in Alberta. The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) represents over 350 library systems in Ontario, with over 1100 branches in nearly every community in the province. We write to express our unwavering support for the position statements of the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries (CAP Libraries) and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations-Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) regarding Alberta's Bill 28.

As FOPL has strongly affirmed, local governance, trained library professionals, and community accountability are what make public libraries successful, and trust must be earned through consistency and transparency, not government overreach. This provincial legislation fundamentally undermines freedom of expression, local decision-making, and the privacy of citizens.

Granting a single provincial minister sweeping, discretionary authority, with insufficient safeguards, to bypass local library boards and deploy inspectors to examine library records is a direct threat to the democratic institutions that Canadians rely on.

From beyond Alberta's borders, we stand in solidarity with the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries (CAP Libraries) in affirming that public trust is built through consistency and transparency — never through government overreach. We urge the Government of Alberta to

withdraw all provisions of Bill 28 that pertain to the Libraries Act. Public libraries must remain free from partisan interference and continue to serve as spaces where every person can freely access information and ideas without fear or restriction.

Sincerely,



Dine Stevens, Executive Director
Federation of Ontario Public Libraries
Toronto, Ontario
dinastevens@fopl.ca

Distribution: The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta
 Megan Ginther, President, Library Association of Alberta
 Pilar Martinez, CEO, Edmonton Public Library
 Sarah Meilleur, CEO, Calgary Public Library

Statement of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) on the Continued Protection of Canadian Public Libraries in response to Alberta's Bill 28

May 11, 2026

WHEREAS public libraries across Canada are founded on the principles of free and open access to information as a cornerstone of a democratic society, respecting the rights of individuals to privacy, intellectual freedom, and choice;

WHEREAS public libraries are locally governed institutions, supported by municipalities and guided by trained professionals who apply evidence-based policies and practices to collection development and access;

WHEREAS the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries has taken a strong stand in support of Intellectual Freedom, as reflected in FOPL's [Intellectual Freedom Position Statement](#); and,

WHEREAS the proposed amendments to the Alberta Libraries Act through Bill 28 represent a significant departure from long-standing Canadian public library principles, including independent local governance and professional, community-responsive decision-making;

WHEREAS national library organizations have raised serious concerns that legislated restrictions on access to library materials constitute censorship, erode intellectual freedom, weaken personal privacy protections, and diminish public trust in libraries;

FOPL affirms that decisions regarding library collections and access must remain at the local level, guided by professional expertise, community needs, and accountable governance structures - not political direction or legislative overreach;

FOPL further affirms that protecting the privacy of library users is essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring that libraries remain safe and inclusive spaces for all;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that FOPL expresses its strong support for the positions advanced by the [Canadian Federation of Library Associations \(CFLA-FCAB\)](#), the [Canadian Urban Libraries Council \(CULC\)](#), and the [Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries](#).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that FOPL calls on governments across Canada, library boards and library professionals to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom, local governance, and user privacy, to advocate for the autonomy and integrity of the public library in their communities, and to reject legislative approaches that enable censorship or political interference in public libraries.

Working Group Report

Report To:	The FOPL Board
Report Name:	Government Relations Working Group Report
Prepared by:	Dina Stevens, Executive Director
Working Group:	Margie Singleton, Vaughan Public Libraries Moe Hosseini-Ara, Toronto Public Libraries Jodie Delgado, Springwater Public Library Michael Ciccone, London Public Library (chair) Stephanie Clare, Georgian Bay Public Library Caroline Goulding, Dryden Public Library Sonia Bebbington, Ottawa Public Libraries Dina Stevens, ED Ex-Officio
Meeting Date:	May 6, 2026
Location:	Via Zoom

Background

The Government Relations Working Group convened to discuss a coordinated response to Alberta's Bill 28 and its potential implications for public libraries across Canada and recommendations actions for FOPL. The discussion was prompted by national advocacy efforts led by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA), the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC), and the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries (CAP Libraries), as well as growing expressions of support from library boards across Ontario and Canada.

The Working Group considered the role of FOPL in responding to legislation outside of Ontario, balancing the need to support national partners with the importance of remaining within FOPL's provincial mandate. Guidance from Council Public Affairs advisors emphasized a cautious approach, recommending that FOPL focus on reaffirming core principles—such as intellectual freedom, local governance, and user privacy—rather than directly criticizing another province's legislation. The group agreed and made several recommendations include language inclusive to FOPL's statement on the issue and ultimately decided on a few key actions for FOPL that stayed close to mandate.

Discussion

The Working Group engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the tone, scope, and strategic intent of FOPL's response.

There was strong consensus that FOPL should issue a letter of support aligned with CFLA's template and release a public statement affirming core library principles. However, members agreed that FOPL should avoid directly calling on the Government of Alberta to withdraw Bill 28 or making statements that could be perceived as intervening in another jurisdiction. Instead, the response should emphasize support for national organizations and reaffirm the foundational principles of public libraries.

The group also discussed whether to broaden the statement to address governments more generally. While some suggested referencing all levels of government, there was agreement that language should remain high-level and non-accusatory to avoid unintended political implications within Ontario.

A key theme of the discussion was the limited impact FOPL could have on the legislative outcome in Alberta, given the advanced stage of Bill 28. As such, the Working Group emphasized shifting focus toward proactive measures within Ontario. This included reinforcing intellectual freedom, strengthening board-level understanding of governance and autonomy, and preparing for potential future challenges.

Members expressed caution about launching a broad advocacy mobilization campaign on this issue, noting the risk of diluting FOPL's existing priorities—particularly the Safety and Security campaign and core funding advocacy. Instead, the group supported a measured approach centered on awareness and education rather than coordinated action across the membership.

The discussion further highlighted the importance of timing and political context. Members noted sensitivities in engaging municipal councils and provincial officials, particularly given government relations advice to avoid raising issues that may not yet be on the provincial agenda. Quiet, relationship-based engagement with ministry staff was identified as a more appropriate approach.

Finally, the group identified an opportunity to integrate this issue into longer-term advocacy and education strategies, particularly in the context of upcoming municipal elections. This includes reinforcing the role of library boards, intellectual freedom, and governance independence through orientation and training initiatives.

At the end of the meeting, the issue of Chair was raised. The group elected Michael Ciccone, CEO of London Public Libraries as the new Chair.

Recommendations

The Government Relations Working Group recommends that the FOPL ED and Board:

- **Issue a formal letter of support** to the Government of Alberta, aligned with CFLA's template, expressing support for national library associations and core public library principles.

- **Release a public statement (press release)** reaffirming FOPL's commitment to intellectual freedom, local governance, and user privacy, using revised language that avoids direct criticism of Alberta's legislation.
- **Share information and resources from the CFE and CFLA with members**, encouraging:
 - Board-level discussions on intellectual freedom
 - Review and strengthening of intellectual freedom policies
 - Proactive reaffirmation of core library principles
- **Endorse a member education approach** rather than a coordinated advocacy campaign, including:
 - Sharing CFE and CFLA materials to support board discussions
 - Integration of intellectual freedom and governance topics into board orientation sessions planned for post- municipal elections
 - Collaboration with partners (e.g., OLBA) to support training initiatives
- **Monitors developments in Alberta** to assess potential impacts and lessons for Ontario
 - Reach out to CAPL to ask whether they plan to track incidents in their libraries should the Bill pass so that we can see the impacts play out in Alberta libraries

Circular Materials Advocacy Update

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 12, 2026

BACKGROUND

At the Q1 2026 Board meeting, recycling challenges due to provincially mandated changes to municipal recycling programs was brought to the attention of the board. Colloquial information was provided to the ED from a variety of members and member staff that the new recycling program, which excluded books, had the potential to cause significant impacts to budget and staff time. The Executive Director was directed to survey the membership and make preliminary inquiries to determine a route of advocacy, should the board wish to pursue it.

SURVEY AND RESEARCH

A survey was conducted in late February / early March to assess the impacts of these recycling changes to member libraries. The survey results were collated and distributed to the membership in April 2026. Results are attached to this report as well for ease of access.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

- In 2016, the government passed framework legislation to enable regulations to transition Ontario from municipally operated Blue Box programs to a single, province-wide Blue Box program.
- Under the old model, producers of consumer goods that result in packaging etc. reimbursed municipalities 50% of the cost of recycling.
- Under the new model, the Blue Box program is controlled by and fully paid for by the producers. Rather than recycle these products themselves, producers now fulfill their responsibilities by contracting with Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) who manage collection, hauling and processing to ensure producers are compliant with the new law.
- The dominant PRO, which holds contracts with most producers, is Circular Materials Ontario.
- As a result of these reforms, Ontario libraries no longer have access to municipally operated Blue Box recycling services.
- The regulation implementing the new system was introduced in 2021 and phased in across all municipalities to January 1, 2026.
- In the 2021 regulation, the definition of “eligible materials”, i.e., the kinds of products and packaging that could be put out for recycling, was changed to exclude used books.

- Books were always an irritant to recyclers because of residual glue etc. that made recycling challenging. Producers wanted books excluded because they were seen to drive up costs.
- Libraries were also excluded from the regulation's parameters for a province wide Blue Box system, because they are considered part of the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) sector.
 - Previously, some municipalities included libraries voluntarily in their blue box programs even though it was not mandatory under the old system.
 - It is our understanding that some municipalities may continue to provide Blue Box recycling services to public libraries by including them in their private recycling contracts for municipal facilities.
- As municipalities exited their municipally run programs and PROs took over responsibility, they began to cease their voluntary recycling programs for libraries and other parts of the ICI sector.
- As of 2026, a substantial number of libraries across Ontario no longer have access to free recycling services through their municipalities. Those that do may no longer be able to recycle books.

POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR ADVOCACY

- Unlike other affected ICI institutions (school boards, hospitals etc.) that have lost access to the Blue Box program, libraries are largely municipally funded organizations.
- This suggests two pathways to advocate for restoration of funding and delivery of recycling for used books:
 - (i) inclusion in municipally funded recycling services for libraries;
 - or (ii) changes to the Province's regulation.

Municipal level advocacy

As most municipal facilities are no longer included in the province-wide Blue Box program, municipalities are required to enter into private service agreements to continue to provide recycling services at municipal facilities, such as city halls and community centers. Many may already include public libraries in these agreements, either out of convention or co-location of facilities.

At a municipal level, it is advisable that CEOs engage directly with their municipal counterparts to better understand the current contracting arrangements for recycling at municipal facilities. Based on this, they should open an active dialogue with municipal officials and (as necessary) Mayors and councilors to:

- 1) Seek to have public libraries included in the recycling agreements for municipal facilities;
- 2) Discuss how any cost requirements will accrue to the public libraries, and how these may be reasonably managed or offset; and
- 3) Seek to have used books – subject to reasonable requirements on what portions can be recycled – included in recycling services.

Provincial level advocacy

Restoring libraries' access to the provincial Blue Box program would require two changes.

- First, used books would have to be added back into the definition of “eligible materials”, at least under defined circumstances (ie. removal of non-recyclable components).
- Second, libraries as institutions would need to be carved out of the broad exclusion of ICI organizations from access to the Blue Box.

There is an opportunity for advocacy as the Blue Box regulation is expected to be reformed within the next year. The driver for reform is the concern of producers that the costs of the new model are greatly in excess of what was anticipated. Producers supported the 2016 reform because they believed they could find efficiencies and cost savings through a single province side system that they controlled. Savings have not materialized and intense lobbying for further reform is under way.

The challenge for the library sector is that the government is under pressure to make reforms that will reduce costs, while the restoration of Blue Box services for libraries’ used books is a further cost driver. Counterbalancing this is the significant reputational value of public libraries and the relatively modest financial increase this would represent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Counsel Public Affairs recommends two options for consideration if FOPL is interested in further engagement on this issue.

Option 1 – Informational Webinar

- Within the existing legislative and regulatory structure, there is an opportunity to deeply inform members about the changes, how they impact libraries, and how public libraries may be able to engage with their municipalities to facilitate sustainable recycling, both for patrons and materials disposal.
- Frank Denton, Senior Advisor at Counsel Public Affairs and former CEO of Ontario’s recycling regulator, the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, will deliver a customized webinar for all CEOs to provide them with greater insight and address their questions.
- A single project fee, based on further discussion and scope, will be required.

Option 2 – Expanded Provincial Engagement

- Counsel Public Affairs, working alongside FOPL, could expand its Ontario Government advocacy to include revisions to the Blue Box regulatory framework.
- As noted, there is a timely opportunity to embark and participate in this discussion, which is expected to be very active over the next 12 months.
- This will require an additional increase to the monthly fee to account for both the expanded mandate and the inclusion of additional personnel (Frank Denton) required to successfully pursue these changes.

Impact of Ontario's New Recycling Rules on Libraries Survey April 2026

Impact Summary

Recent changes to recycling programs are creating significant and uneven impacts across public libraries, with urgent implications for sustainability, budgets, and service delivery.

- **Unsustainable Financial Pressure**
Libraries are facing new, unplanned costs for waste disposal and recycling. Many—particularly small and rural systems—cannot absorb private contractor fees, forcing difficult trade-offs, including potential reductions in programming and services.
- **Operational Disruption Across Systems**
The changes have introduced substantial staff workload increases, storage challenges, and inefficient interim processes. With little advance notice, libraries were unable to plan budgets or adjust operations effectively.
- **Inequitable Municipal Support**
Access to recycling solutions currently depends on local municipal decisions, resulting in a patchwork of service levels. Some libraries remain supported, while others are left without viable or affordable options.
- **Environmental & Public Impact**
Libraries are increasingly forced to send materials to landfill, undermining municipal and provincial waste diversion goals and creating negative public optics for trusted community institutions.
- **Policy Gaps & Systemic Need**
Ongoing confusion about acceptable recycling practices highlights the absence of clear, consistent guidance. Libraries require a coordinated, sector-wide solution rather than fragmented local approaches.

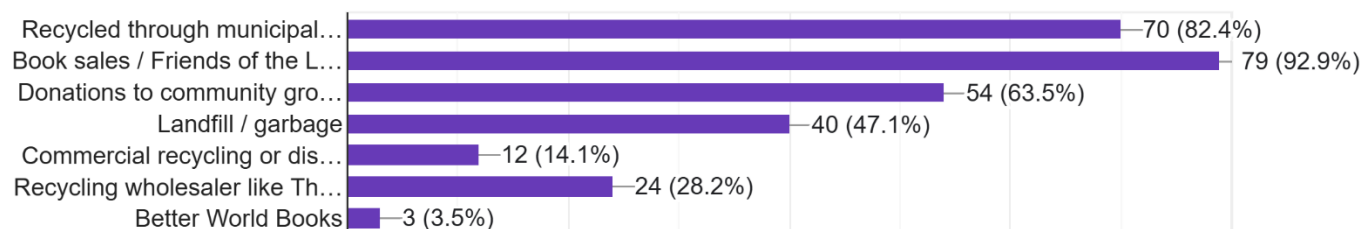
Survey Results

- Prior to Jan 1, 2026, 82.4% of respondents recycled some of their materials through municipal recycling. After the new recycling rules were introduced, this number dropped to 17.6% of respondents.
- The number of respondents sending some materials to landfill/garbage increased from 47.1% to 61.2% after the new recycling rules were introduced.
- After the new recycling rules, 21.2% of respondents use private recycling, while previously only 14.1% used a commercial recycling or disposal service.
- The number of books being held in storage increased from 1.2% to 9.4%
- The majority of respondents have not seen an increased cost or increase to their operating budget due to these changes. Of those that have seen increased costs, most are between \$1000 - \$5000.

- 41.7% of respondents noted they have experienced operational challenges due to the change. The majority of these challenges have been in environmental concerns (26.2%), storage issues (25%) and increased staff time (25%), as well as increased cost (15.5%).

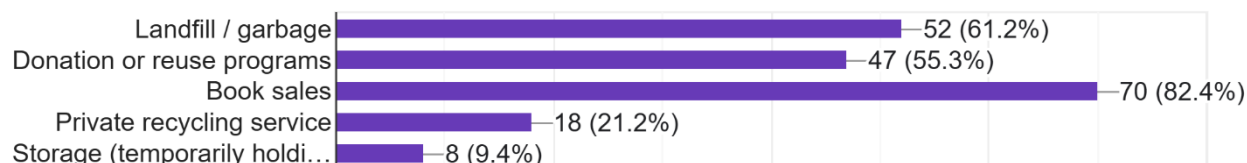
3. Before January 1, 2026, how did your library typically dispose of weeded or damaged books?
(Select all that apply)

85 responses



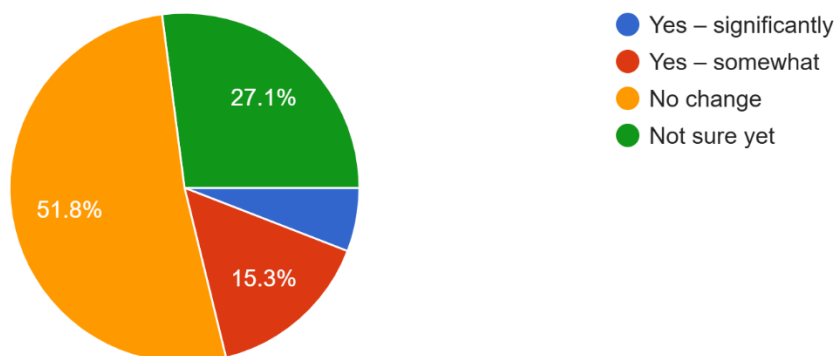
4. Since the new recycling rules came into effect, how is your library disposing of weeded or damaged books?(Select all that apply)

85 responses



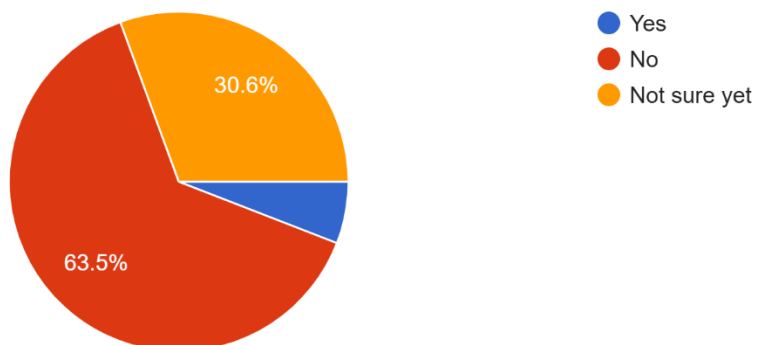
5. Has this change in book disposal increased disposal costs for your library?

85 responses



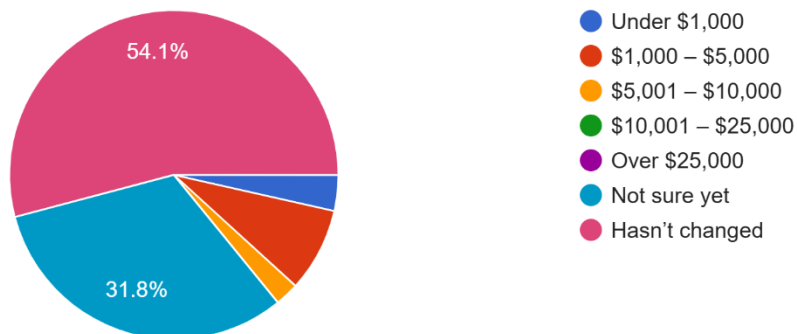
6. Has your library's operating budget increased as a result of these recycling changes?

85 responses



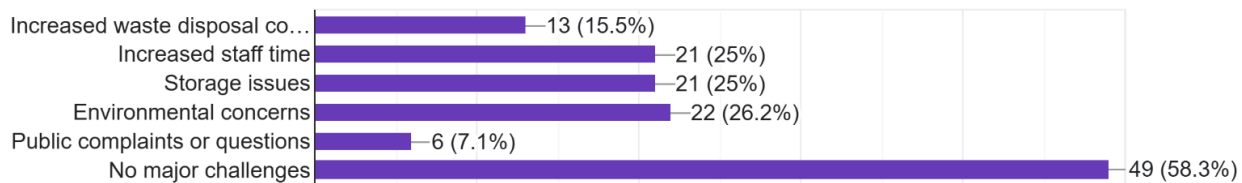
7. Approximately how much has your annual cost increased due to disposal or recycling changes for books?

85 responses



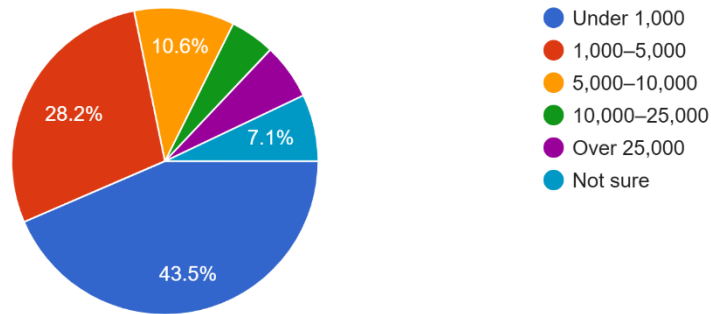
8. Has your library experienced any operational challenges as a result of this change? (Select all that apply)

84 responses



9. Approximately how many books does your library weed annually?

85 responses



What the libraries have to say:

1. Financial Impact & Budget Pressures

- Many libraries cannot afford private recycling services or are concerned about future costs.
- Some have already added new expenses or anticipate increases.
- Unexpected costs were not budgeted for in 2026, forcing trade-offs like reducing programs.
- Smaller libraries tend to report less financial strain, while larger systems expect significant impact.

2. Increased Staff Time & Operational Burden

- Significant staff time is now required for sorting, storing, boxing, and transporting materials.
- Lack of storage space has led to materials piling up in libraries.
- Some rely on volunteers or ad hoc solutions, which are inconsistent.
- The change came with little or no advance notice, leaving libraries unprepared.

3. Reliance on Municipal Support (Mixed Outcomes)

- Some municipalities have stepped in to help, covering costs or maintaining services (no immediate impact).
- Others have provided limited or no support, forcing libraries to find their own solutions.
- In several cases, the future depends on municipal contracts, creating uncertainty.

4. Confusion & Inconsistent Rules

- Widespread uncertainty about what can still be recycled, especially:

- Whether paperbacks are allowed
- Whether hardcovers can be recycled if covers are removed
- Conflicting information from service providers and municipalities has caused frustration and inconsistent practices.

5. Environmental Concerns & Optics

- Strong concern about sending books to landfill, both environmentally and publicly.
- Libraries feel this undermines sustainability goals and creates negative optics.
- Even with donations and book sales, large volumes of unusable materials remain.

6. Adaptation Strategies

Libraries are responding in various ways:

- Continuing cover removal + recycling pages (where still allowed)
- Switching to private recycling contractors
- Using municipal waste systems or landfill
- Increasing reliance on donations, book sales, and reuse programs
- Leasing materials to reduce disposal volume

7. Uneven Impact Across Systems

- Large and multi-branch systems report major disruptions.
- Small or rural libraries often report minimal or delayed impact, though some lack services entirely.
- Some libraries say it's too early to assess full impact.

8. Desire for Advocacy & System-Level Solutions

- Calls for provincial advocacy and a library-specific recycling program.
- Interest in sector-wide solutions rather than each library managing independently.

Membership Fee Review

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 11, 2026

BACKGROUND

At the February 27, 2026 Q1 Board Meeting, the Board discussed concerns related to the current FOPL membership fee structure, including affordability challenges for some libraries and trends relating to declining or non-renewed memberships. During the discussion, the Executive Director reviewed the current fee bands and identified the membership categories with the highest concentration of non-member libraries. Board members discussed the need to review the current structure to ensure it remains sustainable, equitable, and accessible for member libraries of varying sizes and service populations.

The Board agreed that a committee would be formed to review and propose potential amendments to the current fee structure. The Board also recognized that membership engagement and fee affordability are closely linked and directed the committee to review both areas concurrently. A motion was approved establishing the committee for membership review.

MEETINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Member Engagement Review Committee met to review FOPL's current membership fee structure, membership trends, and affordability concerns raised by both members and non-members. As part of this work, a comprehensive fee review document was developed analyzing current membership fees alongside 2021 resident population data, 2024 ASPL operating budget information, membership participation rates, and fee-to-budget comparisons across library systems.

The review examined the current population-based fee bands and identified areas where fee increases between bands may create challenges for member retention and onboarding. Particular discussion focused on libraries within smaller and mid-sized population bands where significant fee increases may be more difficult to accommodate within existing budgets. The committee also reviewed membership participation rates across the current bands and discussed trends relating to non-member libraries and donation-based participation.

Additional analysis reviewed the relationship between membership fees and library operating budgets, including the percentage of overall library budgets represented by FOPL membership fees and the effective per-capita contribution across different library systems. The committee discussed the importance of ensuring that the fee structure remains equitable, transparent, and financially sustainable while continuing to support the operational and advocacy work of the organization.

Several potential fee structure models were reviewed and evaluated by the committee, including revised fee bands, phased-in increases, and alternative per-capita approaches. Following discussion and review of the analysis, the committee identified the “Fees by Redistributed Fee Bands” model as the preferred option. The committee felt this approach best balances affordability, equity, and organizational sustainability while creating a more gradual progression between fee bands for member libraries.

With this approach, membership fees would continue to be based on population bands, however the fee bands and associated rates would be redistributed to create a fairer and more balanced structure across library systems. The inclusion of more fee based created the least amount of impact for members and retained a similar operating income. The committee also supported the concept of phased implementation for libraries moving into higher fee bands in future years.

The proposed redistributed fee band model and supporting analysis are attached for Board review and consideration. Please note that the revised fee structure results in a nominal \$9000 in revenue, subject to board approval.

Population Band	Old Fee	New Fee	Variance
First Nations Public Libraries (sponsored)	50	0	-50
0 – 5000	75	75	0
5001 – 15,000	150	150	0
15,001 – 20,000	900	750	-250
20,001 – 30,000	900	900	0
30,001 – 40,000	2000	1700	-300
40,001 – 50,000	2000	2100	+100
50,001 – 75,000	3250	3000	-250
75,001 – 100,000	3250	3500	+250
100,001 – 150,000	5500	5500	0
150,001 – 250,000	5500	6500	+100
250,001 – 500,000	7500	8000	+500
500,001 – 1,000,000	10,000	11,000	+1000
1,000,001 – 3000000	10,000	12,500	+2500
3000001 +	17,500	20,000	+2500

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the following:

- That the board approve the revised fee structure as outlined in this report which includes additional fee band categories.
- That sponsorship fees for First Nations Public Libraries are removed and all FNPLs are given FOPL membership free of charge. Partnerships between public libraries and First Nations public libraries should be based on proximity and willingness to share resources.
- That FOPL allow incremental membership fee increases over a period of three years when libraries are moving from one band to another due to population increases.
- That a 3 to 5 year plan for incremental membership fee increases for those libraries who wish to be members but cannot afford it. Should a library not agree to these incremental increases to bring their membership fee up to par with their fee band, a library will be declined membership.

Library	Population	Current Fee	Band	New Fee	Variance
Toronto Public Library	3,200,000	17500	3000001-999999999	20000	2500
Ottawa Public Library	1,200,000	10000	1000001-3000000	12500	2500
Brampton Library	656480	10000	500001-1000000	11000	1000
Hamilton Public Library	569353	10000	500001-1000000	11000	1000
London Public Library	422324	7500	250001-500000	8000	500
Markham Public Library	338503	7500	250001-500000	8000	500
Vaughan Public Libraries	323103	7500	250001-500000	8000	500
Kitchener Public Library	256885	7500	250001-500000	8000	500
Windsor Public Library	229660	5500	150001-250000	6500	0
Oakville Public Library	213759	5500	150001-250000	6500	0
Burlington Public Library	186948	5500	150001-250000	6500	0
Oshawa Public Libraries	175383	5500	150001-250000	6500	0
Barrie Public Library	147829	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Guelph Public Library	143740	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Whitby Public Library	138501	500	100001-150000	5500	0
Cambridge Public Library	138479	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Milton Public Library	132979	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Kingston Frontenac Public Library	132485	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Ajax Public Library	126666	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Waterloo Public Library	121436	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Thunder Bay Public Library	108843	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Brantford Public Library	104688	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Chatham-Kent Public Library	104316	5500	100001-150000	5500	0
Clarington Public Library	101427	1500	100001-150000	5500	
Pickering Public Library	99186	3250	75001-100000	3500	250
Niagara Falls Public Library	94415	3250	75001-100000	3500	250
Newmarket Public Library	87942	3250	75001-100000	3500	250
Kawartha Lakes Public Library	79247	3250	75001-100000	3500	250
Caledon Public Library	76581	3250	75001-100000	3500	250
Sault Ste. Marie Public Library	72051	3250	50001-75000	3000	-250
Aurora Public Library	62057	3250	50001-75000	3000	-250
Halton Hills Public Library	61161	3250	50001-75000	3000	-250
Belleville Public Library	55071	2000	50001-75000	3000	
Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library	49864	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Georgina Public Library	47489	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Woodstock Public Library	46705	2000	40001-50000	2100	100

Cornwall Public Library	46589	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Haldimand County Public Libraries	45608	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Lincoln Pelham Public Library	44566	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
New Tecumseth Public Library	43948	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Innisfil Public Library	43326	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
St. Thomas Public Library	42918	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library	42880	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Timmins Public Library	41788	2000	40001-50000	2100	100
Brant County of Public Library	39474	2000	30001-40000	1700	-300
East Gwillimbury Public Library	34637	2000	30001-40000	1700	-300
Fort Erie Public Library	32901	2000	30001-40000	1700	-300
Stratford Public Library	32095	2000	30001-40000	1700	-300
Orangeville Public Library	30167	2000	30001-40000	1700	-300
King Township Public Library	27333	900	20001-30000	900	0
Clarence-Rockland Public Library	26505	900	20001-30000	900	0
Wasaga Beach Public Library	24862	900	20001-30000	900	0
Collingwood Public Library	24811	900	20001-30000	900	0
Essa Public Library	23426	900	20001-30000	900	0
Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library	21612	900	20001-30000	900	0
Huntsville Public Library	21147	900	20001-30000	900	0
Springwater Public Library	20783	900	20001-30000	900	0
Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library	19088	900	15001-20000	750	-150
Port Colborne Public Library	18306	900	15001-20000	750	-150
Russell Township Public Library	17956	900	15001-20000	750	-150
Midland Public Library	17817	900	15001-20000	750	-150
Selwyn Township of Public Library	17732	900	15001-20000	750	-150
Port Hope Public Library	17294	900	15001-20000	750	-150
Petawawa Public Library	17175	900	15001-20000	750	-150
Bracebridge Public Library	16010	900	15001-20000	750	-150
North Perth Public Library	13130	900	5001-15000	750	
Severn Township Public Library	15848	150	5001-15000	750	600
Kenora Public Library	15096	150	5001-15000	750	600
West Nipissing Public Library	14364	150	5001-15000	150	0
Mississippi Mills Public Library	14153	150	5001-15000	150	0

Clearview Public Library	14151	150	5001-15000	150	0
Trent Hills Public Library	13983	150	5001-15000	150	0
West Grey Public Library	13131	150	5001-15000	150	0
Carleton Place Public Library	12301	150	5001-15000	150	0
Gravenhurst Public Library	12055	150	5001-15000	150	0
Brock Township Public Library	12046	150	5001-15000	150	0
Perth East Public Library	12000	150	5001-15000	150	0
Meaford Public Library	11485	150	5001-15000	150	0
Brighton Public Library	11340	150	5001-15000	150	0
Cavan Monaghan Public Library	10967	150	5001-15000	150	0
Elliot Lake Public Library	10741	150	5001-15000	150	0
Grey Highlands Public Library	10424	150	5001-15000	150	0
Rideau Lakes Public Library	10184	150	5001-15000	150	0
Leeds & The Thousand Islands Public Library	10154	150	5001-15000	150	0
Tay Township Public Library	10033	150	5001-15000	150	0
Temiskaming Shores Public Library	9920	150	5001-15000	150	0
Arnprior Public Library	9629	150	5001-15000	150	0
Ramara Township Public Library	9488	150	5001-15000	150	0
Alfred et Plantagenet TWSP Public Library	9373	150	5001-15000	150	0
Penetanguishene Public Library	9354	150	5001-15000	150	0
Smiths Falls Public Library	9254	150	5001-15000	150	0
Shelburne Public Library	9126	150	5001-15000	150	0
West Perth Public Library	9041	150	5001-15000	150	0
Southgate Public Libaray	8924	150	5001-15000	150	0
Renfrew Public Library	8223	150	5001-15000	150	0
Kirkland Lake / Tech Centennial Public Library	7981	150	5001-15000	150	0
Hanover Public Library	7967	150	5001-15000	150	0
Dryden Public Library	7749	150	5001-15000	150	0
Fort Frances Public Library	7739	150	5001-15000	150	0
Douro-Dummer Public Library	7608	150	5001-15000	150	0
St. Marys Public Library	7595	150	5001-15000	150	0
Blue Mountains Public Library	7396	150	5001-15000	150	0
Edwardsburgh Cardinal Public Library	7270	150	5001-15000	150	0
Muskoka Lakes Public Library	7110	150	5001-15000	150	0

Otonabee-South Monaghan Public Library	7087	150	5001-15000	150	0
Augusta Township Public Library	7083	150	5001-15000	150	0
Alnwick/Haldimand Public Library	7007	150	5001-15000	150	0
Parry Sound Public Library	6879	150	5001-15000	150	0
Wainfleet Township Public Library	6794	150	5001-15000	150	0
Tweed Public Library	6044	150	5001-15000	150	0
Oliver Paipoonge Public Library	5922	150	5001-15000	150	0
Sioux Lookout Public Library	5737	150	5001-15000	150	0
Gananoque Public Library	5553	150	5001-15000	150	0
Cochrane Public Library	5390	150	5001-15000	150	0
Espanola Public Library	5364	150	5001-15000	150	0
Stirling-Rawdon Public Library	5191	150	5001-15000	150	0
Powassan & District Union Public Library	4797	150	5001-15000	150	0
Seguin Township Public Library	4090	150	5001-15000	150	0
Tudor and Cashel Public Library	5460	75	0-5000	75	0
East Ferris Public Library	4896	75	0-5000	75	0
Centre Hastings Public Library	4801	75	0-5000	75	0
Greenstone Public Library	4636	75	0-5000	75	0
Prescott Public Library	4284	75	0-5000	75	0
Asphodel-Norwood Public Library	4151	75	0-5000	75	0
Madawaska Valley Public Library	4123	75	0-5000	75	0
Deep River Public Library	4109	75	0-5000	75	0
Red Lake Public Library	4107	75	0-5000	75	0
Hastings Highlands Public Library	4078	75	0-5000	75	0
Bancroft Public Library	4039	75	0-5000	75	0
Marmora & Lake Public Library	4018	75	0-5000	75	0
Callander Public Library	3863	75	0-5000	75	0
Bonnechere Valley Public Library	3787	75	0-5000	75	0
Lake of Bays Public Library	3759	75	0-5000	75	0
Casselman Public Library	3548	75	0-5000	75	0
Blind River Public Library	3314	75	0-5000	75	0
Marathon Public Library	3273	75	0-5000	75	0

Burk's Falls, Armour & Ryerson Union Public Library	3259	75	0-5000	75	0
Carlow Mayo Public Library	3090	75	0-5000	75	0
South River/Machar Union Public Library	3082	75	0-5000	75	0
Laurentian Hills Public Library	2961	75	0-5000	75	0
Grand Valley Public Library	2956	75	0-5000	75	0
Wawa Public Library	2905	75	0-5000	75	0
Merrickville Public Library	2850	75	0-5000	75	0
St. Charles Public Library	2796	75	0-5000	75	0
Sables - Spanish River	2788	75	0-5000	75	0
Atikokan Public Library	2753	75	0-5000	75	0
Perry Township Public Library	2540	75	0-5000	75	0
Addington-Highlands Public Library	2534	75	0-5000	75	0
Greater Madawaska Township of Public Library	2518	75	0-5000	75	0
French River Public Library	2514	75	0-5000	75	0
Georgian Bay Township of Public Library	2499	75	0-5000	75	0
Markstay-Warren Public Library	2442	75	0-5000	75	0
Black River-Matheson Public Library	2411	75	0-5000	75	0
Killaloe & District Public Library	2400	75	0-5000	75	0
Sundridge-Strong Union Public Library	2370	75	0-5000	75	0
North Kawartha Public Library	2335	75	0-5000	75	0
Bonfield Public Library	2016	75	0-5000	75	0
Chapleau Public Library	1964	75	0-5000	75	0
McGarry Public Library	1824	75	0-5000	75	0
Deseronto Public Library	1774	75	0-5000	75	0
Terrace Bay Public Library	1657	75	0-5000	75	0
Nipigon Public Library	1631	75	0-5000	75	0
Englehart Public Library	1479	75	0-5000	75	0
Thessalon Union Public Library	1469	75	0-5000	75	0
Whitestone-Hagerman Public Library	1386	75	0-5000	75	0
Emo Township Public Library	1333	75	0-5000	75	0
St. Joseph Township Public Library	1233	75	0-5000	75	0

Ignace Township Public Library	1202	75	0-5000	75	0
Moonbeam Public Library	1159	75	0-5000	75	0
Cobalt Public Library	1144	75	0-5000	75	0
James Township Public Library	1094	75	0-5000	75	0
Assiginack Public Library	1030	75	0-5000	75	0
Hornepayne Public Library	980	75	0-5000	75	0
Kearney & Area Public Library	901	75	0-5000	75	0
Red Rock Public Library	895	75	0-5000	75	0
Ear Falls Public Library	817	75	0-5000	75	0
Larder Lake Public Library	667	75	0-5000	75	0
White River Public Library	607	75	0-5000	75	0
Bruce Mines and Plummer Additional Union Public Libr	552	75	0-5000	75	0
Fauquier-Strickland Public Library	513	75	0-5000	75	0
Dorion Public Library	316	75	0-5000	75	0
Armstrong Township Public Library	193	75	0-5000	75	0
TOTALS		244400		267350	9100

NOTE: This is not a complete list of the membership - a sample of members was taken for this exercise. Union and contracting libraries were removed.

Population Range	Fee				
0 – 5000	75				
5001 - 15,000	\$150				
15,001 – 20,000	\$750				
20,001 – 30,000	\$900				
30,001 – 40,000	\$1,700				
40,001 – 50,000	\$2,100				
50,001 – 75,000	\$3,000				
75,001 – 100,000	\$3,500				
100,001 – 150,000	\$5,500				
150,001 – 250,000	\$6,500				
250,001 – 500,000	\$8,000				
500,001 – 1,000,000	\$11,000				
1,000,001 - 3000000	\$12,500				
3000001 +	\$20,000				

Member Engagement Review

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 11, 2026

BACKGROUND

At the February 27, 2026 Q1 Board Meeting, the Board discussed concerns regarding membership retention, non-member engagement, and the sustainability of the current membership fee structure. The Board noted that several libraries had declined membership or shifted to donation-based participation due to financial pressures and affordability concerns. Board members requested the development of a comprehensive member engagement plan and agreed that a committee should be established to review both membership engagement strategies and the current fee structure, recognizing that the two issues are closely linked. A motion was approved to establish a committee for membership review and engagement planning.

MEETINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Member Engagement Review Committee met to discuss current member engagement practices, communication strategies, onboarding opportunities, and approaches to improving member and non-member participation within FOPL. Discussion focused on identifying opportunities to strengthen awareness of FOPL services, advocacy work, and membership benefits among library CEOs, library boards, and non-member libraries.

The committee discussed a number of engagement initiatives, including enhanced communication tools, improved feedback opportunities through caucus meetings, onboarding resources for new CEOs and board members, advocacy and governance training opportunities, regional information sessions, and the creation of concise promotional and orientation materials outlining the value of FOPL membership. Additional discussion focused on improving direct engagement with members through newsletters, presentations, workshops, and performance indicators to better evaluate outreach effectiveness.

The committee also discussed the development of a mentorship initiative intended to connect newer library CEOs with experienced library leaders to support leadership development, advocacy knowledge-sharing, and stronger sector relationships. A formal mentorship program proposal has been developed and is attached for Board review alongside the Member Engagement Plan.

An updated Member Engagement Plan has been developed based on the committee's discussion and recommendations and is attached for Board consideration. Additions from the committee to the plan are highlighted in purple.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the FOPL Board receive and approve the Member Engagement Plan as presented.

AND THAT the FOPL Board approve the proposed Advocacy Mentorship Program for implementation in 2026.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared by Dina Stevens

Purpose

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) represents and advocates on behalf of Ontario's public libraries. Effective engagement with member libraries is essential to ensure that advocacy priorities reflect the needs of the sector and that members remain informed, connected, and engaged with FOPL's work.

This Member Engagement Plan establishes a structured approach to communication with members, outlining engagement objectives, communication channels, frequency, and performance indicators.

Engagement Objectives

FOPL's member engagement strategy is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Ensure members are informed about advocacy efforts, policy developments, and sector issues affecting public libraries.
2. Gather timely input from members to guide FOPL's advocacy priorities and policy positions.
3. Strengthen relationships and member retention with member libraries and library leaders across Ontario.
4. Encourage member participation in advocacy campaigns and consultations.
5. Demonstrate the value of membership through transparent communication of FOPL's work and impact.

Target Audiences

Primary engagement audiences include:

- Public Library CEOs and Directors
- Library Boards
- Member Library Staff engaged in advocacy, members of FOPL working groups
- Non-member libraries (for recruitment and outreach)

Engagement Channels and Activities

FOPL utilizes a multi-channel approach to ensure consistent communication with members.

Email Communications

Email remains the primary direct communication channel with members.

- **Member Newsletter**
Provide regular updates on advocacy, sector developments, and FOPL initiatives.
Content includes: Government relations updates, advocacy campaigns, sector news and announcements, funding and grant opportunities, member highlights, upcoming events and consultations
Frequency: Monthly or as needed.
- **Targeted Member Communications**
Targeted email communications are distributed when urgent or specific information needs to be shared. Examples include: Calls to action related to advocacy campaigns, government policy

updates, survey requests, invitations to consultations or meetings, announcements of new initiatives, awards, or resources
Frequency: As required.

Website

The FOPL website serves as the central repository for member information and advocacy materials. The blog also serves as a landing page for announcements, updates, and sharing stakeholder information such as communications from the CFLA.

Key functions include:

- Posting advocacy submissions and policy statements
- Sharing news releases and sector updates
- Providing campaign information and toolkits
- Maintaining organizational updates and resources
- [Policy database](#)

Update Frequency: Ongoing as information becomes available.

Social Media

Social media platforms are used to amplify FOPL messaging and highlight member achievements.

Objectives:

- Increase visibility of advocacy work
- Promote sector achievements
- Share timely policy updates
- Support advocacy campaigns

Platforms may include:

- LinkedIn

Frequency: Multiple posts per month depending on advocacy activity.

Webinars and Virtual Member Briefings

FOPL hosts virtual briefings and webinars to provide members with deeper insight into sector issues and advocacy initiatives.

Topics may include:

- Legislative or policy updates
- Sector challenges and trends
- Campaign launches
- Member consultations (caucus meetings)
 - [Use enhanced metrics tools such as mentimeter and slido to provide anonymity](#)
 - [ED to leave during open discussion to promote participation](#)
- [Annual pre-SuperConference workshops](#)
- [New board advocacy sessions after municipal elections](#)
- [One-page “fopl value” document for new boards](#)

Frequency:

Caucus Meetings: once per year in the spring

Webinars and info sessions: 3–6 sessions per year or as needed.

Member Surveys and Consultations

Surveys are used to gather data and feedback from members to inform advocacy work and policy submissions.

Survey topics may include:

- Operational challenges facing libraries
- Funding pressures
- Policy impacts
- Feedback on FOPL initiatives

Survey results directly inform:

- Government submissions
- Advocacy priorities and strategic planning
- Campaign messaging

Frequency: As needed.

Direct Member Outreach

Direct outreach strengthens relationships and ensures FOPL remains connected to the needs of member libraries.

This includes:

- Individual meetings with library CEOs or Directors
- Regional conversations
- Informal check-ins with members
- Outreach to non-member libraries to encourage participation

Frequency: Ongoing throughout the year.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM serves as the primary annual forum for member engagement and organizational accountability.

Key components include:

- Executive Director report
- Advocacy and policy updates
- Financial reporting
- Strategic direction updates

Frequency: Annually.

Board Member Engagement

FOPL Board members play an important role in strengthening connections with the broader membership.

Board members contribute by:

- Sharing FOPL updates within their regional networks
- Communicating member concerns to the organization
- Supporting advocacy initiatives
- **Participate in a mentorship program**

Advocacy Engagement

Members are engaged in advocacy through:

- Calls to action directed at local MPPs
- Participation in government consultations
- Sharing local impact stories
- Coordinated sector campaigns (deputations to the Standing Committee and Ministry of Finance, meetings with MPPs)
- Providing data to support advocacy submissions

This engagement ensures that FOPL’s advocacy work reflects real experiences from libraries across the province.

Member Recognition and Sector Promotion

FOPL highlights member achievements to strengthen engagement and demonstrate sector impact.

Activities may include:

- Member spotlight stories (previously on facebook and Instagram)
- Awards and recognition programs
- Promotion of innovative library initiatives (yearly judges panel for Minister Awards)
- Sharing success stories during advocacy campaigns

Performance Indicators

To ensure the effectiveness of member engagement activities, FOPL tracks the following indicators:

Indicator	Measurement
Newsletter engagement	Open and click-through rates (will be available with website update)
Member participation	Webinar attendance, AGM participation, Data Dashboard usage
Survey participation	Response rates from member libraries
Advocacy engagement	Member participation in calls to action
Membership retention	Annual membership renewal rates
Membership growth	New member recruitment

These PIs are currently tracked internally and will be compiled annually for board review.

Continuous Improvement

FOPL will regularly review and refine its engagement strategies through:

- Feedback from member surveys
- Informal feedback from library leaders
- Communication analytics
- Board review of engagement outcomes (as suggested above)

This is currently done internally by administrators.

ADVOCACY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Overview

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) Advocacy Mentorship Program is designed to strengthen advocacy capacity across the province by connecting library CEOs with experienced FOPL Board members.

This program will provide both new and established CEOs with direct access to mentorship, practical guidance, and peer support to enhance their ability to advocate effectively at the municipal and provincial levels.

By leveraging the expertise of Board member CEOs, FOPL can build a more confident, coordinated, and impactful advocacy network across Ontario.

This program directly supports FOPL's Strategic Plan (2025–2029), particularly:

Advocacy leadership and sector alignment

Capacity-building across member libraries

Strengthening the voice of Ontario's public libraries

Program Objectives

The Advocacy Mentorship Program aims to:

- Build advocacy confidence and skills among library CEOs
- Support CEOs in advancing local and provincial advocacy priorities
- Strengthen alignment between local advocacy efforts and FOPL's provincial strategy
- Facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and leadership development
- Increase overall sector impact through more consistent and effective advocacy

Program Structure

Mentorship Model

- One-to-one matching between:
 - A participating library CEO (mentee), and
 - A FOPL Board member CEO (mentor) and participating member CEOs
- Flexible, needs-based engagement, including:
 - One-time consultation (e.g., preparing for a key meeting)
 - Short-term mentorship (e.g., 2–3 meetings over a few months)
 - Ongoing informal connection (as appropriate)

Mentorship discussions may include:

- Preparing for meetings with mayors, and council
- Developing local advocacy strategies and messaging

- Navigating political environments and stakeholder relationships
- Advancing specific initiatives (e.g., funding requests, capital projects, safety issues)
- Aligning local advocacy with FOPL priorities (ODPL, PLOG, connectivity, safety & security)
- General information-sharing and leadership development

Eligibility

Mentees: Open to all FOPL member library CEOs (or designates, where appropriate). Particularly beneficial for new CEOs, CEOs in smaller or rural systems, CEOs preparing for specific advocacy initiatives.

Mentors: FOPL Board member CEOs

Participation for FOPL board members is voluntary. Mentors may indicate areas of expertise (e.g., municipal advocacy, provincial engagement, capital projects)

Matching Process

FOPL will coordinate intake and matching through a short expression of interest form for mentees and a mentor profile form for Board members. Matches will be based on advocacy needs and goals, Library size/type (where relevant), specific expertise or experience.

Program Coordination

FOPL staff will administer intake and matching, provide orientation materials and guidance, share optional templates/tools (e.g., meeting prep guides, messaging frameworks), monitor participation and gather feedback, report back to the Board on program outcomes.

Roles and Expectations

Mentors (Board Member CEOs)

- Share practical insights, strategies, and experiences
- Provide guidance in a supportive, non-prescriptive manner
- Commit to at least one meeting per match
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism

Mentees (Participating CEOs)

- Identify clear goals or areas of support
- Come prepared with questions or discussion topics
- Take ownership of scheduling and follow-up

Program Phases

Phase 1: Pilot Launch (Year 1)

- Launch as a pilot program (6–12 months)
- Limit initial cohort (e.g., 5-10 mentees) to ensure quality

- Collect feedback and refine structure

Phase 2: Evaluation

Gather feedback from mentors and mentees

Assess participation levels, satisfaction and perceived value, impact on advocacy confidence and activity

Phase 3: Expansion

- Adjust program based on pilot findings
- Expand participation and potentially:
- Include past Board members or sector leaders as mentors
- Offer group sessions or topic-specific roundtables
- Integrate with FOPL training and advocacy programming

Success Measures

The program's success will be evaluated through:

- Number of mentorship matches completed
- Participant satisfaction and qualitative feedback
- Increased engagement in advocacy activities (e.g., MPP meetings, council engagement)
- Improved alignment with FOPL advocacy priorities
- Anecdotal success stories and outcomes

Caucus Meetings Feedback

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Diana Chiavaroli and Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 13, 2026

CAUCUS MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE

Caucus meetings were held in April of this year to gather feedback from our members. Feedback regarding our current priorities and direction is critical to inform our strategic direction. Though attendance was variable, we were still able to have productive conversations about proposed next steps for FOPL and current challenges our libraries are facing.

Francophone Caucus – 5 attendees

Northern Caucus - 10 attendees

Rural Caucus - 10 attendees

Small Medium Caucus - 33 attendees

Large Urban Caucus (including Toronto) – 21 attendees

First Nations Caucus – discussions will taken place at the upcoming Spring Gathering

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOPL's caucus engagement sessions revealed **a sector experiencing significant pressure, rapid change, and growing complexity**, while also demonstrating strong support for FOPL's overall advocacy direction and leadership. Across all caucuses, members consistently emphasized that Ontario public libraries are increasingly being asked to do more with limited and often stagnant resources, while simultaneously responding to broader societal challenges that extend well beyond traditional library service delivery.

The strongest and most consistent theme across every caucus was the **urgent need for increased and sustainable provincial funding**. Members repeatedly identified PLOG increases, long-term operational funding stability, capital funding, and support for digital collections as the advocacy priorities that would make the greatest local impact. Libraries of all sizes described growing pressure from staffing costs, population growth, infrastructure needs, and rising service expectations, while municipal funding remains constrained and increasingly unpredictable. Several members expressed concern that municipal governments continue to view libraries as discretionary services rather than essential community infrastructure.

At the same time, caucus members strongly reinforced that public libraries are **increasingly functioning as frontline social infrastructure**. Across urban, rural, northern, and small-medium systems, respondents

described growing impacts from homelessness, addictions, mental health crises, food insecurity, and social disorder within library spaces. While the scale and visibility of these issues vary across communities, there was broad agreement that libraries are increasingly **filling gaps created by insufficient social supports elsewhere in the system**. Members emphasized repeatedly that library staff are not social workers, healthcare professionals, or security personnel, and that libraries require stronger partnerships, clearer referral pathways, and upstream investments in mental health, housing, addictions, and community services.

One of the clearest pieces of feedback was the **importance of carefully framing FOPL's Safety and Security campaign**. While there was strong support for the campaign overall, members cautioned that messaging must avoid stigmatizing vulnerable populations or portraying libraries as unsafe spaces. Libraries continue to be viewed as trusted, welcoming, and inclusive community institutions, and caucus members stressed that advocacy messaging must preserve that public trust while still communicating the realities staff are facing. Respondents also expressed concern that fear-based messaging could unintentionally reinforce political narratives that libraries are incapable of managing their spaces independently, particularly in the context of Strong Mayor powers, governance changes, and broader provincial restructuring conversations.

Strong Mayor powers, governance concerns, and the Alberta intellectual freedom legislation emerged repeatedly throughout the discussions as growing sources of anxiety across the sector. Members are increasingly concerned about the erosion of local library autonomy, the weakening of independent library board governance, and the possibility of censorship-related legislation emerging in Ontario. **Alberta's Bill 28 was frequently referenced as a major warning sign for Ontario libraries.** Members repeatedly called for **stronger intellectual freedom advocacy, proactive preparation, crisis communications planning**, and clearer provincial leadership on these issues. Concerns about amalgamation, municipal overreach, school board restructuring, and regional governance changes further amplified fears about the long-term independence of public libraries.

Another major takeaway from the caucus feedback was the significant difference in realities between library systems across Ontario. **Rural, northern, and small-medium libraries consistently noted that many provincial conversations feel heavily urban-focused, particularly around safety and security.** Members acknowledged that while larger urban systems are experiencing highly visible incidents, smaller communities are facing different but still important challenges, including staffing shortages, poverty, aging infrastructure, governance issues, limited social supports, and capacity constraints. **There was a strong request for FOPL advocacy and communications to better reflect the diversity of library realities across Ontario and ensure rural and northern perspectives are represented more visibly in advocacy work.**

The caucus discussions also highlighted the growing **importance of evidence-based and financially grounded advocacy**. Members consistently reported that municipal councils and local MPPs respond most strongly to messaging focused on return on investment, efficiency, cost savings, partnerships, economic development, and measurable community impact. Libraries increasingly feel pressure to quantify their value through metrics, usage statistics, ROI data, and evidence-based storytelling. At the same time, many respondents expressed frustration that despite increased usage, expanded programming, and stronger public support, funding is not

keeping pace with demand. Several members described a disconnect between strong public support for libraries and political willingness to invest in them.

Emerging trends identified across the caucuses point to a **sector undergoing rapid transformation**. Libraries reported increased usage overall, rising demand for digital literacy support, growing reliance on library spaces due to affordability pressures, and expanding expectations around social supports, programming, and community services. AI and emerging technologies were repeatedly identified as both opportunities and concerns, particularly related to staff capacity, training, misinformation, and digital literacy. Staffing shortages, labour pressures, burnout, recruitment challenges, and organizational fatigue were recurring concerns across nearly every caucus.

Despite these pressures, the overall tone of the caucus discussions remained supportive of FOPL's advocacy work and direction. Members expressed appreciation for FOPL's leadership, campaigns, and growing advocacy presence. **However, caucus members also emphasized the need for stronger communication loops between caucuses, the Board, and membership; greater transparency in decision-making processes; and more opportunities for member input earlier in advocacy development.** Members want FOPL to continue acting as a strong, united provincial voice while ensuring advocacy reflects the diversity of experiences across Ontario's public library sector.

SURVEY

This year Slido was used during the meetings. Slido is an audience interaction platform used to crowd-source questions through live polling. This allowed us to gather anonymous feedback with a set of questions that was consistent for each caucus meeting, allowing us to compare the results. The anonymity allowed attendees to be more forthcoming with their answers and encouraged conversation. Overall, using Slido was a success and promoted discussion from each person participating and resulted in a huge increase in feedback over previous years.

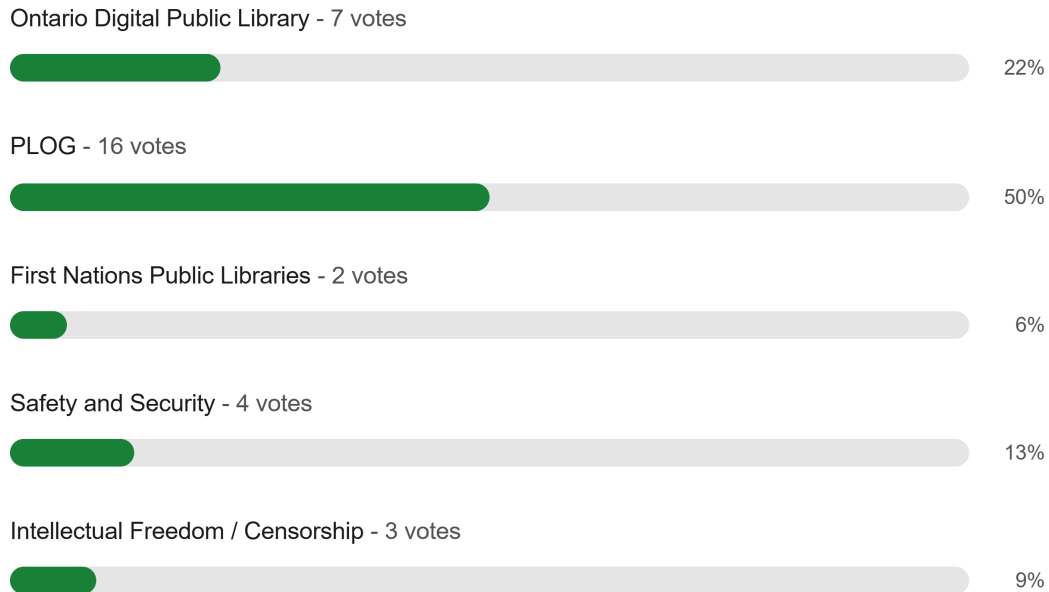
A few notes to consider:

- We have provided the results collated by question for comparison purposes.
- No one from the Francophone Caucus answered any of the Slido questions.
- The slido will be shared in advance with the membership ahead of the caucus meetings to allow for more time to consider and answer the questions. This will help prompt open discussion as well.
- I have highlighted pieces of feedback that are of particular interest.
- Caucus feedback will be distributed to members after the board meeting.

Question #1: Strategic Priorities - If FOPL could only advance ONE priority this year, what should it be?

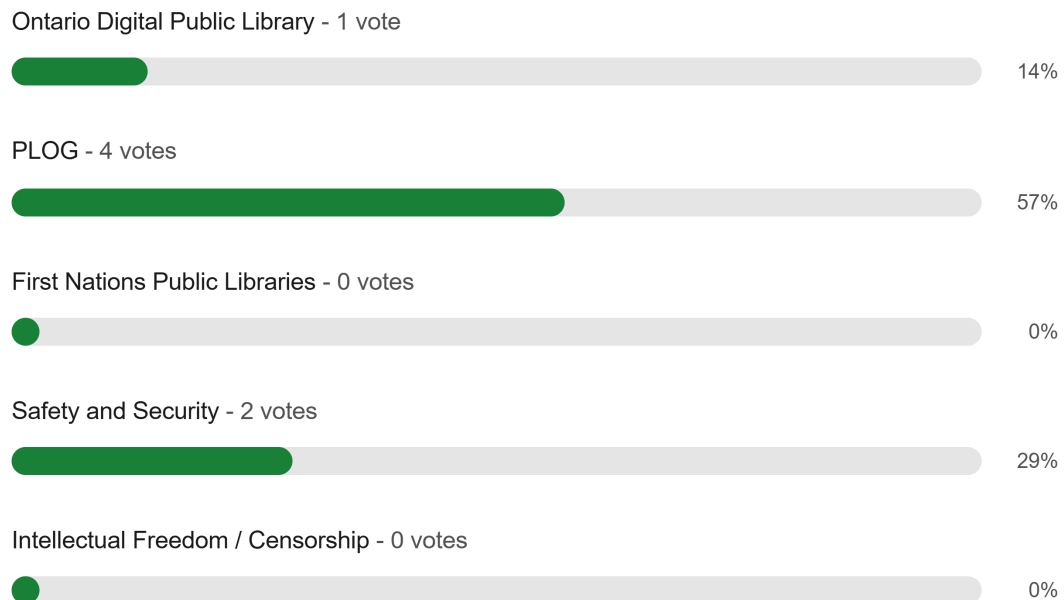
Small Medium Caucus

Multiple Choice Poll  32 votes  32 participants



Northern Caucus

Multiple Choice Poll  7 votes  7 participants



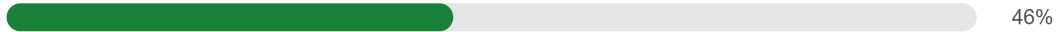
Rural Caucus

Multiple Choice Poll 13 votes 13 participants

Ontario Digital Public Library - 7 votes



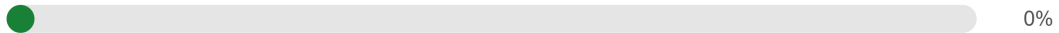
PLOG - 6 votes



First Nations Public Libraries - 0 votes



Safety and Security - 0 votes



Intellectual Freedom / Censorship - 0 votes



Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses

Multiple Choice Poll 19 votes 19 participants

Ontario Digital Public Library - 3 votes



PLOG - 7 votes



First Nations Public Libraries - 1 vote



Safety and Security - 4 votes



Intellectual Freedom / Censorship - 4 votes



Question 2: Strategic Priorities - Where will provincial advocacy make the biggest difference locally?

Small Medium Caucus

- Strong consensus around the need for increased and stable provincial funding:
 - PLOG increases and long-term predictable funding
 - Reducing pressure on municipal budgets
 - Supporting staffing, programming, and long-term planning
 - Greater support for small, rural, and growing communities
- Significant support for the Ontario Digital Public Library (ODPL):
 - Reducing digital collection costs
 - Improving equitable access to digital resources across Ontario
 - Supporting digital literacy and skills development
 - Allowing libraries to redirect funds to programming and services
 - Opportunity for coordinated public awareness campaigns
- Concerns about increasing pressures on libraries:
 - Safety and security challenges
 - Mental health and social issues impacting staff and services
 - Libraries increasingly serving as frontline community spaces
- Concerns related to municipal governance and policy:
 - Strong Mayor powers and unpredictable funding decisions
 - Development Charges and sustainable funding for growing communities
 - Need for clearer provincial expectations around municipal library support under the Public Libraries Act
- Support for provincial coordination and advocacy:
 - Shared provincial resources and service coordination
 - Digital equity and connectivity
 - Stronger advocacy for intellectual freedom, library independence, and anti-censorship efforts

Northern Caucus

- Increased provincial funding was the dominant priority:
 - Higher PLOG funding
 - Reducing financial pressure on municipalities
 - Expanding library service options and capacity
- Strong concern about limited municipal support:
 - Perception that libraries are not a municipal priority
 - Municipalities expecting greater provincial responsibility for funding
- Need for clearer communication and advocacy tools:
 - Simplifying information for municipal officials
 - Increasing understanding of the Library Act and library governance
 - Improving awareness of library needs among local decision-makers

Rural Caucus

- Strong support for increased provincial funding:
 - PLOG increases

- Concerns about municipalities clawing back provincial increases
- Importance of sustaining municipal funding alongside provincial support
- Digital access and equity were major priorities:
 - Support for the Ontario Digital Library/ODPL
 - Increased funding for digital resources
 - Concern about growing service gaps between rural and urban libraries
- Strong emphasis on advocacy and awareness-building:
 - Raising awareness of the value and impact of libraries
 - Keeping libraries visible to municipal councillors and decision-makers
 - Reinforcing libraries as essential community services
- Concern that rural libraries are falling behind larger urban systems:
 - Perception of a growing “two-tier” library system in Ontario

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses

- Increased and sustainable provincial funding was the top priority:
 - PLOG increases
 - Operating and capital funding
 - Funding for collections, e-books, and e-audio
- Strong concern about growing societal pressures impacting libraries:
 - Mental health and addictions
 - Homelessness
 - Safety and security issues
 - Need for upstream provincial investment in social supports
- Provincial policy decisions impacting libraries locally:
 - Development Charges (DCs)
 - Strong Mayor powers
 - Reduced education funding increasing reliance on libraries
- Strong support for intellectual freedom advocacy:
 - Concerns about censorship legislation similar to Alberta
 - Protecting independent library governance and collection management
- Desire for stronger, coordinated provincial advocacy:
 - Need for a united provincial voice
 - More proactive leadership from FOPL
 - Support for municipalities in advocacy efforts
- Other recurring themes:
 - Communicating the value of libraries to stakeholders
 - Recognition that advocacy priorities are interconnected and cannot be addressed individually

Question 3: Campaigns - Safety and Security: What are you experiencing that would strengthen this campaign?

Small Medium Caucus

- Increasing impacts from homelessness, mental health and addictions
 - Overdoses and substance use in and around libraries
 - Escalated and unpredictable behaviour
 - Growing need for housing and food security supports
 - Theft and damage to technology and library property
- Strong message that libraries are not social service agencies:
 - Staff are not social workers or security guards
 - Libraries are serving as frontline community spaces without adequate supports
 - Need for upstream provincial investment and systemic solutions
- Increased need for staff support and training:
 - De-escalation training
 - Mental health first aid
 - Emergency response protocols
 - Preparation for emerging issues, even in smaller/rural communities
- Importance of partnerships and coordinated community responses:
 - Better collaboration with shelters, social services, police, and first responders
 - Desire for community agencies to work within library spaces, not rely on libraries as stop-gap supports
 - Cross-departmental municipal collaboration seen as valuable
- Recognition that impacts vary by community:
 - Larger and urban libraries experiencing more visible incidents
 - Smaller and rural libraries reporting fewer issues currently, but concern that challenges are growing and could emerge locally
 - Some local decision-makers still view these as “urban” or “health” issues rather than library issues
- Support for the campaign approach and messaging:
 - Support for framing libraries as partners, not replacements, for social services
 - Recognition that this is a multi-sector issue requiring systemic solutions
 - Interest in sharing real-life stories and involving community organizations in advocacy efforts

Northern Caucus

- Increasing impacts from homelessness, addictions, and vulnerable populations:
 - Drug use and drug selling in libraries
 - Patrons using libraries as safe/warm spaces or temporary shelter
 - Seasonal increases in visible homelessness and encampments
- Safety concerns for staff:
 - Staff working alone
 - Requests for panic buttons and funding for minimum two-staff coverage
 - Concerns that situations could escalate quickly without supports in place
- Strong message that library staff are not social workers:

- Staff frequently approached by individuals in crisis
- Uncertainty around where to direct people for appropriate supports
- Need for better community resource connections and referral tools
- Desire for upstream and preventative approaches:
 - Focus on addressing root causes of addictions and trauma
 - More resources for children, families, and community resiliency
- Importance of community and municipal partnerships:
 - Municipal and community support seen as valuable where it exists
 - Recognition that local collaboration helps libraries manage challenges more effectively

Rural Caucus

- Increasing impacts from mental health, addictions, and homelessness:
 - More patrons presenting with visible mental health or substance use challenges
 - Libraries increasingly serving as safe spaces for vulnerable populations
 - Issues occurring in both larger rural hubs and small villages
- Growing strain on library resources and operations:
 - Significant staff time diverted away from core library services and strategic priorities
 - Concerns about patron discomfort and loss of traditional library users
 - Increasing security costs, including hiring security guards
- Need for more training and support resources:
 - Positive feedback on de-escalation and homelessness training
 - Concern that smaller libraries cannot afford adequate training resources
- Desire for stronger municipal awareness and support:
 - Need for mayors and municipal leaders to better understand library pressures
 - Recognition that libraries are managing broader community challenges
- Mixed perspectives on advocacy approach:
 - Some support for broader social service investment and upstream solutions
 - Others concerned increased social funding could come at the expense of library funding
 - Interest in framing libraries as safe spaces while also advocating for direct library resources and supports

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses

- Significant increase in safety and security incidents:
 - High levels of substance use in and around libraries
 - Drug paraphernalia regularly found in branches
 - Increasing conflicts between patrons
 - Growing pressures related to homelessness, mental health, and food insecurity
- Rising operational and financial pressures:
 - Increased need for security staff and facility safety upgrades
 - Frozen provincial funding making it difficult to sustain responses
 - Police and security services often lack sufficient capacity to assist
- Strong need for mental health and community supports:
 - Desire for dedicated mental health partners and upstream supports
 - Concern about the impacts of provincial decisions, including safe consumption site closures

- Recognition that libraries are increasingly filling gaps in the social support system
- Importance of effective messaging and advocacy framing:
 - Support for updated campaign language and framing
 - Concern that safety and security messaging could be misused politically to challenge library board governance or autonomy
 - Need to clearly communicate realities to stakeholders and government
- Interest in storytelling and evidence-based advocacy:
 - Desire for more real-life examples and anecdotes
 - Importance of sharing experiences with MPPs and stakeholders to strengthen understanding of the issue

Question #4: Campaigns - Safety and Security: What would success look like for your library in 12 months?

Small Medium Caucus

- Stronger external social and health supports:
 - Increased housing, shelter, and mental health resources
 - Better healthcare intervention and crisis supports
 - More community agencies available to assist vulnerable individuals
 - Libraries no longer acting as replacements for social services
- Stronger partnerships and coordinated responses:
 - Closer collaboration with municipal and community partners
 - Support services operating within libraries
 - Clear referral pathways for people in crisis
 - Continued reliable support from city and community partners
- Safer and more welcoming library environments:
 - Reduction in incidents, theft, and unsafe behaviour
 - Libraries remaining welcoming and family-friendly
 - Patrons feeling safe, secure, and comfortable using library spaces
- Increased staff support and preparedness:
 - Comprehensive staff training
 - Clear safety policies and protocols
 - Staff feeling confident and supported when responding to incidents
 - Clear boundaries around the role of library staff versus social workers or medical professionals
- Increased funding and infrastructure support:
 - Funding for security, specialized staff, and facility upgrades
 - Improvements to library spaces and washrooms
 - Resources to implement new or enhanced services
- Recognition of broader societal challenges:
 - Greater public awareness of the root causes impacting libraries
 - Understanding that safety and security issues are community-wide and systemic, not solely library issues

Northern Caucus

- Increased staffing and funding supports:
 - Funding to ensure two staff are working at all times
 - Reduced instances of staff working alone
 - Increased wage funding to improve staffing coverage during evenings and weekends
- More staff training and safety supports:
 - Additional training on de-escalation, safety, and responding to challenging situations
 - Staff feeling safer entering and leaving work, particularly during winter evenings
 - Interest in grants for improved lighting and safety infrastructure
- Stronger addictions and social service supports:
 - Better local access to addictions and mental health services
 - Increased engagement and responsiveness from social service agencies
 - Reduced need for police involvement related to substance use incidents in libraries
- Desire for libraries to return focus to core services:
 - More funding directed toward children's resources and library programming
 - Reduced operational strain caused by safety and security incidents

Rural Caucus

- Fewer incident reports
 - Fewer challenging patron interactions in-person and over the phone
- Stronger supports in rural communities:
 - Increased local social and community services
 - More equitable funding for rural municipalities
 - Reduced pressure on libraries in small communities with limited resources
- Increased staff preparedness:
 - All staff completing safety and de-escalation training
- Greater public understanding of underlying issues:
 - Increased awareness of root causes related to homelessness, addictions, and mental health
- Improved housing and shelter supports:
 - More shelter and housing options for unhoused individuals using library spaces

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses

- Reduction in incidents and security concerns:
 - Fewer monthly incidents and security reports
 - Reduced mental health-related safety issues
 - Less staff time spent responding to and documenting incidents
 - Safer and more welcoming library spaces
- Increased external supports and wraparound services:
 - More embedded social services and community supports
 - Improved intake, outreach, and treatment programs for vulnerable populations
 - Better local and provincial funding for social supports
 - Governments working collaboratively on solutions
- Increased funding and operational capacity:
 - Dedicated funding for safety and security measures

- Funding for staff or specialized safety-related roles
- Stronger municipal supports to reduce immediate pressures on libraries
- Stronger collaboration and coordinated responses:
 - Closer partnerships between libraries, human services, and municipalities
 - Shared community approaches and coordinated problem-solving
- Staff training and empowerment:
 - Training that is practical and empowering rather than fear-based
 - Continued focus on staff preparedness and confidence in handling incidents

Question 5: Safety and Security: What risks should we be aware of in how we're framing this issue?

Small Medium

- Strong concern about stigmatizing vulnerable populations:
 - Avoid profiling people experiencing homelessness, addictions, or mental health challenges
 - Avoid portraying certain patrons as “the problem”
 - Recognize that these issues are complex and not always visible
- Importance of maintaining libraries as welcoming spaces:
 - Libraries must continue to be seen as safe, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone
 - Concern about messaging making libraries appear unsafe or “drug dens”
 - Need to balance safety with compassion and inclusivity
- Concern about shifting responsibility onto libraries:
 - Libraries should not be positioned as the solution to broader social crises
 - Risk of normalizing unsustainable expectations on library staff and services
 - Need to reinforce that libraries require resources and external supports
- Importance of collaborative and multi-sector framing:
 - Messaging should emphasize partnerships with municipalities, social services, and community organizations
 - Avoid alienating organizations already doing this work
 - Reinforce that this is a community-wide issue, not solely a library issue
- Concern about political and public perception:
 - Risk that advocacy could be interpreted as libraries stepping outside their mandate
 - Concern about public narratives that libraries should “stay in their lane”
 - Need to avoid fear-based or punitive messaging
- Importance of supporting staff while maintaining morale:
 - Acknowledge real staff safety concerns without sensationalizing the issue
 - Ensure messaging supports staff wellbeing and realistic workplace expectations

Northern Caucus

- Careful to not frame the library as unsafe
- The More Than Books title doesn't speak to the actual meat of the campaign

Rural Caucus

- Strong concern about public perception:
 - Libraries must continue to be viewed as safe spaces

- Risk of discouraging patrons from visiting libraries if messaging is overly fear-based
- Concern about reinforcing perceptions that libraries are unsafe
- Importance of balanced messaging:
 - Avoid overstating incidents in ways that overshadow the broader value of public libraries
 - Need to balance safety concerns with messaging about inclusion, community, and library services
- Concern about unintended impacts on vulnerable populations:
 - Risk of unhoused individuals feeling targeted or becoming agitated by public discourse
 - Importance of framing the issue compassionately and carefully
- Concern about operational and funding impacts:
 - Risk that funding could be redirected away from libraries toward other priorities
 - Concern that expectations for increased security measures could become normalized across all libraries
- Awareness of broader community perceptions:
 - Recognition that highly visible security responses in some systems may influence public expectations province-wide

Large Urban and Toronto Caucus

- Importance of recognizing differences between communities:
 - Safety challenges vary significantly across library systems
 - Messaging should reflect diverse local realities and experiences
 - Avoid presenting the issue as uniform across Ontario
- Strong concern about public fear and perception:
 - Libraries must continue to be positioned as safe, welcoming, and comfortable spaces
 - Concern about messaging making libraries appear dangerous or unmanageable
 - Risk that fear-based framing could discourage library use
- Need for careful and balanced messaging:
 - Avoid appearing unsympathetic toward vulnerable populations
 - Recognize the issue extends beyond homelessness to include mental health, addictions, and incivility
 - Maintain focus on compassion and community support
- Concerns about campaign messaging and narrative control:
 - Desire to avoid slogans or framing that could be misunderstood
 - Concern that libraries could appear ill-equipped to manage services and spaces
 - Risk of losing control of the public narrative or media interpretation
- Concerns about government response and advocacy outcomes:
 - Skepticism about whether the current government will fund meaningful solutions
 - Some members felt the greater risk would be avoiding the issue altogether
- Importance of trust and credibility:
 - Messaging should build trust with the public, partners, and stakeholders
 - Libraries should continue to be viewed as reliable and community-centered institutions

Question 6: Gaps and Blind Spots - What is FOPL not talking about that we should be? Use one or two words.

Caucus	Main Themes
Small Medium	- Library boards and governance - Strong mayor powers impacting libraries - Challenges facing rural libraries - Diversity in rural public libraries - Safety and security campaign framing - Libraries as essential community infrastructure - Base provincial funding for libraries - Municipal clawbacks of PLOG increases - Libraries' community partnership networks - Pressure on library spaces and facilities - Strengthening the Public Libraries Act - Supports for CEOs and library boards - Rural access to library services - Library board recruitment and training - Overemphasis on digital infrastructure funding - Political pushback against library investment - Support for library professionals - Challenges with volunteer library boards - Increased and sustainable PLOG funding
Northern	Artificial intelligence
Rural	- Strong mayor powers and library governance - Rural poverty and rural library challenges - Public awareness of library value - PLOG compared to other government priorities - Development charge changes and library growth - Library space and infrastructure needs
Large Urban/Toronto	- Strong stance on provincial decisions - Strong mayor powers and development charges - Intellectual freedom and censorship - Alberta Bill 28 concerns - Funding pressures and municipal support - AI and emerging technologies - Declining library use - Municipal support for libraries - Safety and security operational impacts - Development charges and community benefit funding - FOPL governance and decision-making clarity

Question 7: Where is FOPL least aligned with your reality right now?**Small Medium Caucus**

- Rural and small library realities:
 - Perception that advocacy is often focused on large/urban systems
 - Smaller and rural libraries feel less represented in some provincial conversations
 - Safety and security concerns are not impacting all libraries equally
- Need for stronger municipal advocacy support:
 - Desire for more support building relationships with municipal councils
 - Interest in advocacy tools that help libraries locally
- Funding pressures remain a major concern:
 - Continued emphasis on PLOG increases
 - Pressures related to growth, amalgamation, and municipal funding challenges
- Different local realities across Ontario:
 - Some libraries are not currently experiencing significant safety and security issues
 - Recognition that provincial priorities may not reflect every community equally
- General alignment with FOPL priorities:
 - Several respondents indicated FOPL is generally aligned with their needs
 - Positive feedback on current campaigns and strategic direction

Northern Caucus:

- ODPL and digital resource priorities:
 - Some smaller libraries do not heavily rely on e-resources
 - Perception that ODPL may not benefit all libraries equally
- Northern and rural representation:
 - Concern that advocacy is often centered on southern and urban realities
 - Recognition that safety and security issues manifest differently in smaller and northern communities
 - Concern that urban-focused narratives dominate provincial conversations because they attract more public attention and media coverage

Rural Caucus:

- ODPL and digital resource priorities:
 - Some smaller libraries do not heavily rely on e-resources
 - Perception that ODPL may not benefit all libraries equally
- Northern and rural representation:
 - Concern that advocacy is often centered on southern and urban realities
 - Recognition that safety and security issues manifest differently in smaller and northern communities
 - Concern that urban-focused narratives dominate provincial conversations because they attract more public attention and media coverage

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses:

- Concerns about ODPL as a priority:
 - Preference for increased PLOG funding over ODPL
 - Skepticism about ODPL's value or viability, particularly for urban libraries

- Perception that safety and security funding is a more urgent priority
- Funding and infrastructure pressures:
 - Calls for PLOG recalculation based on population growth
 - Concerns about capital costs and infrastructure funding
 - Recognition of libraries as essential municipal infrastructure requiring greater investment
- Intellectual freedom and censorship concerns:
 - Desire for stronger focus on Alberta Bill 28 and censorship issues
 - Interest in advocacy related to intellectual freedom
- Governance and decision-making transparency:
 - Desire for clearer consultation and feedback processes
 - Concern that member feedback is sought too late in decision-making
 - Questions about the role of caucus representatives and board communication
- Emerging issues and future priorities:
 - Interest in AI and its impacts on libraries
 - Some respondents indicated no major concerns with alignment at this time

Question 8: Political Strategy - What messaging resonates the most with your local MPPs or councils?

Small Medium Caucus

- **Return on investment (ROI)**
 - Cost savings and efficiency
 - Low taxes and responsible spending
 - Competition for limited municipal resources
 - Requests for increased provincial funding support
- **Strong interest in measurable impact:**
 - Use statistics, metrics, and evidence
 - Demonstrate community impact and positive outcomes
 - Showcase partnerships and shared service models
 - Highlight efficiencies and reduced duplication
- Community-focused messaging is effective:
 - Libraries as essential community infrastructure
 - Support for education, literacy, and access to services
 - Community wellbeing and support for vulnerable populations
 - Libraries as drivers of economic development and community growth
 - Messaging focused on benefits to local residents
 - Importance of libraries as community amenities that attract residents and support quality of life
 - Councils respond to messaging tied directly to local impacts
- Safety and security messaging is increasingly resonating:
 - Concerns around safety, homelessness, food insecurity, and mental health are becoming more important to councils
 - Cost and safety messaging seen as particularly effective with conservative elected officials

- Concerns around safety, homelessness, food insecurity, and mental health are becoming more important to councils
- Cost and safety messaging seen as particularly effective with conservative elected officials
- Importance of positive storytelling and promotion:
 - Celebrate successes and what libraries are already doing well
 - Increase awareness of the often unseen services libraries provide
 - Celebrate successes and what libraries are already doing well
 - Increase awareness of the often unseen services libraries provide
- Mixed views on ODPL and PLOG messaging:
 - Some members believe ODPL resonates more strongly because PLOG increases may be clawed back municipally
 - Others emphasized the importance of direct provincial operational funding support
 - Some members believe ODPL resonates more strongly because PLOG increases may be clawed back municipally
 - Others emphasized the importance of direct provincial operational funding support

Northern Caucus

- Financial impact and funding remain the strongest messages:
 - Return on investment and social return on investment (SROI)
 - Importance of demonstrating measurable community value
 - Strong support for increased PLOG funding
- Data and local impact resonate with councils:
 - Presenting library usage statistics and outcomes
 - Showing the importance of libraries within the community
 - Evidence-based advocacy strengthens municipal relationships
- Municipal funding pressures are a major concern:
 - Interest in how provincial funding models affect local municipalities
 - Concerns about fringe or non-resident populations using municipal services without corresponding funding support
 - Interest in how provincial funding models affect local municipalities
 - Concerns about fringe or non-resident populations using municipal services without corresponding funding support
- Need for greater awareness and visibility:
 - Some members noted limited awareness of FOPL among local councils
 - Desire for stronger recognition of library funding needs at the municipal level

Rural

- Value-for-money messaging resonates strongly:
 - Efficiency and responsible spending
 - Cost-sharing, partnerships, and eliminating duplication
 - Demonstrating strong return on investment
- Libraries' broad community impact is important:
 - Early literacy, accessibility, seniors' services
 - Programming, activities, and community supports

- Community wellbeing and quality of life
- Rural community messaging is effective:
 - Importance of libraries as community hubs in rural areas
 - Recognition that rural communities rely heavily on library services
- Funding sustainability remains a major concern:
 - Long-term decline in the relative value of PLOG funding
 - Municipal and county councils focused on sustainable funding models
 - Safety and wellbeing strategies increasingly aligning with library advocacy
- Political engagement varies locally:
 - Some MPPs perceived as disengaged or difficult to influence
 - Councils more responsive to practical, financially grounded messaging

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses

- Community impact and affordability messaging resonates:
 - Libraries supporting affordability through books, entertainment, passes, and shared resources
 - Digital literacy and programming valued by communities
 - Libraries recognized as important community assets
- Data and evidence-based messaging are effective:
 - Councils respond well to numbers, metrics, and measurable impacts
 - Interest in quantifying safety and security pressures where possible
- Recognition that libraries are addressing broader social needs:
 - Libraries increasingly supporting civic and social wellbeing
 - Libraries filling gaps in local social infrastructure
 - Acknowledgement that some issues extend beyond traditional library mandates
- Safety and security messaging is resonating:
 - Councils and municipalities are experiencing similar pressures
 - “Lighten the load” messaging seen as effective in some communities
 - Interest in increased provincial support to reduce downloading onto municipalities
- Solutions-focused advocacy is preferred:
 - Emphasis on practical solutions and positive outcomes
 - Balance between communicating challenges and sharing success stories
- Political and local context matters:
 - Opposition parties may be more receptive to messaging tied to social services and housing
 - Libraries seen as trusted, non-political champions for literacy, education, and community programming

Question 9: Political Strategy - Where are you getting traction or pushback?

Small Medium Caucus

- Funding and staffing pressures remain the largest challenge:
 - Rising staffing costs and budget pressures
 - Need for expansion funding and maintaining library assets
 - Population growth increasing service demands without matching funding
- Municipal understanding of library pressures varies:

- Some municipalities do not recognize safety and security as a library issue
- Libraries often viewed as a business unit rather than a community partner
- Shared-use facilities can complicate responsibility for safety concerns
- Strong emphasis on demonstrating value:
 - Usage statistics, ROI, and community impact resonate with councils
 - Increased visibility and strategic communication seen as important
 - Preparing strong briefing materials and advocacy information is effective
- Concerns about sustainability of service models:
 - Pushback on maintaining multiple small branches
 - Staffing shortages despite increasing community demand and library usage
- Importance of partnerships and collaboration:
 - Positive experiences with collaborative roundtables and partnerships
 - Libraries increasingly recognized as hubs for social service support
 - Partnerships helping strengthen local government relationships
- Governance and organizational issues:
 - Board recruitment and governance processes identified as ongoing challenges
- Some respondents reported positive municipal relationships:
 - Councils and local MPPs generally supportive of libraries
 - Main barriers identified as funding limitations and space constraints rather than political opposition

Northern Caucus

- Ongoing funding and budget pushback:
 - Municipal resistance to increasing library budgets
 - Concerns about inflation and rising operating costs not being reflected in funding
 - Questions about where library funding is being spent
 - Reliance on municipal funding remains a major pressure point
- Misunderstanding of library funding responsibilities:
 - Perception from some municipalities that schools should help fund libraries
 - Need for clearer understanding of library funding structures and mandates
- Positive traction through community impact:
 - Community engagement efforts resonate positively
 - Digital resources and services viewed as valuable by local stakeholders
 - Some libraries reporting improved conversations and relationships with councils
- Challenges around revenue generation expectations:
 - Pushback related to libraries' inability or limited ability to generate significant revenue independently

Rural Caucus

- Continued need to demonstrate library relevance:
 - Persistent perception that libraries are less necessary in the digital age
 - Importance of highlighting digital literacy, internet access, and public education roles
- Significant funding and infrastructure pressures:
 - Difficulty securing funding for facility upgrades and modern accessible spaces

- Concerns about long-term budget sustainability despite population growth and increased usage
- Councils wanting expanded services while expecting reduced budget requests
- Strong traction through data and value demonstration:
 - ROI and VOLT data helping demonstrate value for dollar
 - Showing statistics, outcomes, and usage data generating positive traction
 - Some skepticism from councils when impact data appears exceptionally strong
- Governance and legislative concerns:
 - Some councils lack understanding of the Public Libraries Act
 - Concerns about municipal attempts to weaken or dismantle library boards
- Challenges around social issues recognition:
 - Some municipalities minimizing or denying local homelessness and social challenges
- Positive support for library services, but less for infrastructure:
 - Municipal support often stronger for programs and services than for physical library spaces
 - Staffing approvals sometimes supported where service demand is clearly demonstrated

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses:

- Mixed traction on provincial funding advocacy:
 - Increased PLOG funding resonates more than ODPL messaging
 - Some elected officials remain uninterested in library funding increases or library issues generally
 - Varying levels of engagement between local MPPs
- Challenges around understanding the library mandate:
 - Misunderstanding of the role and mandate of public libraries
 - Concerns about mission drift and sustainability of expanded responsibilities
 - Confusion around intellectual freedom issues and censorship conversations
- Safety and security discussions generating mixed reactions:
 - Community members increasingly raising concerns about safety
 - Some board members worried messaging could make libraries appear unsafe
 - Concern about impacts of safety conversations on staff perceptions and morale
- Strong traction around libraries as essential social infrastructure:
 - Messaging around community impact and essential services resonating positively
 - Campaigns generally well received politically and within communities
- Local coordination challenges:
 - Multi-tier municipal structures making coordination with social services more difficult
- Cost and funding remain the primary pushback themes:
 - Financial pressures continue to be the main source of resistance to library advocacy efforts

Question 10: Emerging Trends - What's changed the most in your library in the past year?

Small Medium Caucus

- Significant growth in library usage and demand:
 - Increased community engagement and visitation

- Growing demand for programs, outreach, makerspaces, and digital literacy services
- Increased use of digital resources and streaming services
- Greater demand for meeting and community space
- Changing community demographics and needs:
 - Increased usage by marginalized and vulnerable populations
 - Growing diversity within communities
 - New clientele with different expectations and service needs
 - Increase in difficult patron interactions
- Growing pressure on space and infrastructure:
 - Reduced space for collections, study areas, and programming
 - Increased need for expansion and capital funding
 - Population growth driving demand for larger and more flexible spaces
- Staffing and workforce challenges:
 - Staffing turnover and reduced staff resiliency
 - Increased expectations on staff without corresponding resources
 - Growing need for specialized staff skills and expertise
 - Labour and COLA pressures in unionized environments
- Financial and governance pressures:
 - Risk of reduced municipal funding
 - Concerns about Strong Mayor powers and municipal restructuring
 - Budget pressures despite increased service demand
 - Need for stronger local advocacy capacity
- Technology and AI emerging rapidly:
 - Increased focus on AI and emerging technologies
 - Growth in digital services and technology-based programming
- Mixed service trends:
 - Some libraries seeing declines in traditional circulation and program attendance despite overall increased usage and engagement

Northern Caucus

- Increased public support and community appreciation:
 - Stronger public advocacy for libraries
 - Increased donations, sponsorships, and local business support
- Expanding demand for non-traditional library services:
 - Increased interest in circulating tools, sewing machines, and other non-traditional items
 - Growing expectations for broader community-based services
- Growing technology support needs:
 - Increased demand for tech help, particularly from seniors
 - Continued growth in digital literacy support
- Staffing and recruitment challenges:
 - Difficulty recruiting qualified applicants
 - Ongoing staffing changes and workforce instability
- Increased impacts from affordability and cost-of-living pressures:

- More families relying on library services
- Increased use of library spaces and resources due to rising living costs
- Increase in transient and vulnerable populations using libraries

Rural Caucus

- Rising incivility and public tension:
 - Increased hostility related to issues such as drag queen story times and book challenges
 - Vocal opposition groups becoming more visible
 - Growing staff challenges related to public behaviour and entitlement
- Continued growth in digital resource demand:
 - Electronic resources and eBooks increasing in popularity
 - Frustration from patrons over wait times and limited digital collection budgets
- Increased demand for inclusive and community-based services:
 - Growing need for newcomer services
 - More residents relying on library spaces due to affordability pressures
 - Libraries increasingly functioning as community hubs
- Strong growth in programs and community use:
 - Increased attendance and participation in programming
 - Expansion of services and greater recognition of libraries' community role
- Some stabilization after post-pandemic growth:
 - A couple libraries reporting usage levels beginning to level off after significant growth between 2022–2024

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses

- Increased safety and security concerns:
 - More complaints from patrons feeling unsafe
 - Significant rise in drug-related incidents and police involvement
 - Increased security occurrences becoming a major operational issue
- Growing focus on capital and infrastructure pressures:
 - Ageing facilities requiring major renovations
 - Expansion projects and capital planning increasing
 - Ongoing uncertainty around development charge (DC) changes and funding predictability
- Intellectual freedom and censorship concerns intensifying:
 - Alberta legislation influencing the national conversation
 - Growing concern about differing approaches to intellectual freedom across Canada
 - Increased attention to censorship and public discourse issues
- Financial pressures continue to grow:
 - Tight budgets alongside increasing service and infrastructure demands
 - Continued fiscal uncertainty despite progress on capital needs
- AI and technology emerging rapidly:
 - AI becoming a significant topic of discussion and concern
 - Increased technology use and expansion of digital tools and services
- Libraries increasingly connected to social service issues:
 - Greater interaction with social services and community support needs

- Libraries continuing to respond to broader societal pressures and community challenges

Question 11 – Emerging Trends: What’s keeping you up at night?

Small Medium Caucus

- Funding / budgets / growth pressures (7)
- Elections / political climate / governance changes (5)
- Staffing / HR / pay increase pressures (4)
- Safety, theft, and staff mental health (3)
- Censorship / defending libraries and intellectual freedom (3)
- Managing new priorities and emerging community needs (2)
- AI and technology concerns (2)
- Training and staff preparedness (1)
- IT support issues (1)
- Space and facility expansion needs (1)
- Municipal overstepping / council relations (1)
- Maintaining free and accessible programming (1)
- Fear of stagnation due to limited resources (1)

Rural Caucus

- Funding / budget pressures / future sustainability (6)
- Capital infrastructure and accessibility needs (1)
- Governance and board role clarity (1)
- Lack of provincial understanding of small/rural libraries (1)
- Food insecurity and broader community pressures (1)
- Incivility and disrespect toward staff/libraries (2)

Northern Caucus

- Staffing and training capacity (2)
- AI and rapidly changing technology demands (1)
- Balancing digital and physical collection budgets (1)
- Staff safety concerns (1)
- Funding for additional staffing (1)

Large Urban Caucus

- Alberta legislation / intellectual freedom / censorship concerns (7)
- Funding / fiscal sustainability / budget pressures (4)
- Staffing, training, and organizational capacity (4)
- Safety and security / worsening social issues (3)
- Strong mayor powers / governance changes / amalgamation concerns (3)
- AI, technology, and digital literacy challenges (3)
- Space and infrastructure pressures due to growth (2)
- Declining use and labour unrest (1)
- Public awareness of library value (1)
- Missed opportunities due to lack of coordination (1)

IN CONVERSATION FEEDBACK

The Executive Director exited the meeting to allow the opportunity for frank discussions amongst the caucus members. Notes were provided by caucus representatives.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Small Medium Caucus

Overall the mood was in favour of everything FOPL is doing. Discussion was limited to only a few. One noted there is a lack of communication between service providers and the library – such as telling clients the library can give out bus tickets, but not informing the library of this. It was also mentioned that municipalities, particularly recreation facilities, don't align with library mandates for public service. That instead of de-escalation or considering mental health, they just boot people out of the facility. There was uncertainty about how to advocate appropriately for safety and security since not all libraries are experiencing it yet. There was discussion on how to raise the issue with MPPs without fear-mongering especially in areas where they aren't experiencing unmanageable concerns. Different options were discussed including approaching it from an awareness priced, providing local content (where it's an issue or non-issue) while informing them of the concerns experienced in other public libraries. In Owen Sound one mayor utilized Strong Mayor powers to override the library agreement, whereas the other two mayors did not. Lots of concern about Strong Mayor powers, and how they will work after the election. There was a specific request for or a legal opinion on library board authority under the Public Libraries Act, specifically how board responsibility for the library budget is affected when Strong Mayor Powers are used. CEOs were worried about the ripple effect on libraries with regards to long-term budgeting, and if the Mayor could veto the Board's ability to sign off on Collective Agreements etc.

Large Urban and Toronto Caucuses

In the future, it would be appreciated if Slido questions were provided ahead of time, with the opportunity to answer ahead of time as well. There needs to be a formalized feedback loop with the caucus and the Board. The caucus would please like visibility between caucuses as well to understand shared priorities and local priorities. Continue to focus on security and please add proactive IF preparations. Please ensure all security messaging is respectful and aware of what is already happening, strong mayors, conversation amalgamation, health networks, school boards and regional chairs. Library messaging needs to reinforce we are welcoming, effective, efficient, trusted and capable of managing the services we provide in the community. Local control of Libraries is paramount, without autonomy we are limited in how libraries support their communities. Advocacy needs to be the focus with funding as a second priority. Regarding intellectual freedom, please connect with CAPL to learn more about the work they did to prepare for IF advocacy. Public survey about PL trust with polling firm proactive. Please be prepared for crisis communications and public relations, who will support this work with FOPL and what additional resources are needed? Please create a shared agreement on IF advocacy (service to the diversity of the community without discrimination, opposition to censorship, user's rights to privacy.) Please ensure all messaging is aligned with and work when appropriate is done in collaboration with CULC and CFLA. A CFLA statement to support CAPL is coming soon. FOPL should prepare a statement of support for CAPL too please

Northern Caucus

Not a lot of further conversations were had. Most of the discussion was on different priorities of ODPL vs PLOG.

Francophone Caucus

Brief conversation was had with only a couple of notes. The info-graphics have 2020 numbers and should be updated. There has been new talk about development charges being reduced to encourage more building of homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the FOPL board receives this report as information.

ED Recommendations:

- Investigate a legal option or white paper concerning strong mayors powers. Further information sessions and learning opportunities for members navigating Strong Mayors powers.
- Possible economic value study of Ontario Libraries that highlights return on investment and affordability proposition of libraries.
- In depth Rural and Northern Caucus consultation to assess how FOPL can be more responsive and inclusive to these member libraries' unique needs.

Safety and Security Campaign Feedback and Review

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 15, 2026

BACKGROUND

At the Q1 board meeting in February of this year, the safety and security campaign key messages and subsequent rollout plan was approved by the board. An information session for members was held in March and the rollout plan with key messaging was distributed.

CAMPAIGN FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS

Feedback from members and board members via email and at the information session expressed concerns with some of the key messages. In particular, the phrasing “we are more than books” did not land with members as they felt it did not accurately represent the sentiments of the campaign and perpetuated an idea that was not in line with current philosophies.

The first phase of the campaign is underway as myself and campaign spokespersons have begun meeting with key provincial stakeholders. Members have already initiated contact and started meeting with local MPPs as well. However, the public rollout of the campaign has been paused until further direction and consensus from the board is acquired. Key messages were taken back to the communications team at Counsel Public Affairs with member feedback in mind. Revised messages were previewed by some of members and board to gauge alignment.

The original rollout plan, campaign primer created for boards and councils and revised key messages are attached to this report for your review.

Doc 12a – Safety and Security campaign feedback and review report

Doc 12b – 2026 Advocacy Plan – Member Brief (sent to members ahead of webinar)

Doc 12c – 2026 Advocacy Campaign Primer (sent to members to share with boards)

Doc 12d – Revised Key Messages

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Approval of revised key messages.
- Resume the public rollout of the campaign.



FOPL 2026 Advocacy Campaign – Briefing Note

Purpose

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) is launching an Advocacy Campaign focused on raising government and public awareness about the added pressure facing public libraries across the province.

Beginning in early April, we will launch a public facing campaign that will include media engagement with key spokespeople from FOPL, in addition to published op-eds and a social media push.

Additionally, over the next couple of months, FOPL will be engaging in government meetings with local MPPs and key ministers to highlight the challenges libraries and library staff are experiencing, particularly due to the mental health, housing, and addictions crisis.

Objectives

The proposed advocacy campaign seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

- **Outline** the real pressures that public libraries face among both government decision-makers and the public.
- Frame FOPL as a **partner to the government** and a voice of reason during this time of crises.
- **Strengthen public awareness** of the pressures facing public libraries and library staff and highlight the need to ensure that libraries remain safe, welcoming spaces for everyone — especially families, children, and seniors.

The Core Narrative

Every day, libraries open their doors to everyone: families, newcomers, job seekers, students and increasingly, people in crisis with nowhere else to go.

Because, when mental health, addiction, housing, and other supports fall short in the midst of Ontario's mental health and opioid crises, it's libraries and library workers who are filling the gap.

At the same time, rising levels of public incivility resulting in hostile and aggressive behaviour have become part of the daily reality for library workers.

Librarians care deeply. And libraries are more than books. They sit with someone who's cold, help someone find a bed, call for help when someone is in distress. But that kind of caring comes at a

cost. There's a point where empathy meets exhaustion, where doing your best isn't enough. It's time we lighten the load.

If we want our libraries to remain places of learning, safety, and belonging for all Ontarians, the government must step up not with more training, but with a system that catches people *before* they end up at the library's front desk.

Key messages for the Campaign and Government Engagement can be found in the appendix.

Proposed Roll-Out

Action	Timeline
MPP Briefings	Late March
Campaign Launch	April
Publish Op-Ed	April
Media Interviews	Late April

How Local Libraries can help

- Like and share FOPL social media on campaign
- Share campaign messaging within own community circles
- Speak to FOPL about getting campaign materials for local events
- Engage with FOPL about meeting with local elected officials

APPENDIX A - Key Messages

Campaign Key Messages — “WE ARE MORE THAN BOOKS”

1. Libraries are social infrastructure — and are worth protecting.

- Libraries hold our communities together.
- Ontario’s library workers have done their part, with care and compassion.
- It’s time for the rest of the system to do its share.
- **We carry more than books. It’s time to lighten the load.**

2. Libraries are welcoming and trusted community spaces.

- Ontario’s public libraries remain among the most trusted, inclusive spaces in our communities.
- Every day, libraries open their doors to everyone families, newcomers, students, job seekers, and increasingly, people with nowhere else to go.
- That openness is what makes libraries special and what makes it essential to protect them.

3. Libraries are more than books:

- When mental health, addiction, and housing systems fall short, it’s often library workers who see the impact first.
- Librarians aren’t social workers, but they’re showing care and compassion where the system has left a gap.

4. Libraries can’t fix what’s broken elsewhere.

- Libraries were built to lend books, foster learning, and bring people together — not to replace health care, housing, or crisis services.
- Expecting librarians to fill those roles is a symptom of a system under strain.

5. The solution is systemic.

- Ontario is in the midst of mental health and opioid crises. We’re asking for the government to strengthen health, community, and housing supports so people can get help before they end up at the library’s front desk.
- We are working in partnership with organizations such as the Canadian Urban Libraries council to share this message with other levels of government as well.
- That means coordinated investments across ministries and funding for municipalities to build real crisis response capacity in the community.

Government Engagement Key Messages

1. Public libraries are a vital public space in all communities, connecting people including youth, seniors, and newcomers, to essential supports and opportunities that help them learn, participate, and thrive.

- We appreciate the Ontario government's continued support for public libraries, including in small, northern, and rural communities, and we welcome the \$50 million increase to the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund. This program provides critical funding to remote public libraries.
- In addition, the Ontario government's expansion of the Internet Connectivity Grant, including \$660,000 in new funding to ensure all First Nation public libraries and additional rural libraries can provide free and reliable internet, demonstrates a clear commitment to strengthening the social infrastructure that communities rely on every day.

2. Libraries are welcoming and trusted public spaces. It is important to ensure they have the right support and community resources to remain safe and drug-free.

- Ontario is facing real pressures in mental health, addictions, and housing. This has resulted in public spaces, including libraries, becoming a place for vulnerable individuals to go when they have no other alternatives.
- FOPL appreciates the Ontario government's annual funding through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), which plays an important role in ensuring people can access the supports they need before reaching a point of crisis.

3. FOPL is launching a public awareness campaign ("WE ARE MORE THAN BOOKS") to bring attention to the added burden faced by libraries in providing support for vulnerable individuals.

- As pressures in mental health, housing, and addictions grow, library staff are increasingly encountering situations they are not trained or equipped to manage.
- Librarians are trained to foster literacy, learning, and community connection, not to provide mental health, addictions, or crisis response services.
- Library workers continue to respond with care and compassion, but they want to be able to focus on what they do best: supporting literacy, learning, digital access, and community engagement.

- Continuing to strengthen supports in health, housing, and community services will ensure vulnerable individuals can access the help they need from qualified professionals and not rely on libraries with limited resources that should be directed to providing the services that Ontarians expect.

Appendix B – MPP Outreach List

Name	Role
Hon. Stan Cho	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy	Minister of Finance
Hon. Greg Rickford	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic
Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Hon. Michael Parsa	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Dave Smith	Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance
Michelle Cooper	Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance
Effie Triantafilopoulos	Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and
Hon. Graydon Smith	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Charmaine Williams	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opp
Natalie Pierre	Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and
George Darouze	Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and
Sandy Shaw	Critic, Tourism, Culture and Gaming
Jessica Bell	Finance and Treasury Board Critic
Catherine McKenney	Critic, Housing
Tom Rakocevic	Critic, Public and Business Service Delivery, Procurement
Sol Mamakwa	Critic, Indigenous and Treaty Relations and Critic, Northern
Robin Lennox	Critic, Mental Health, Addictions and Primary Care
Lisa Gretzky	Critic, Children, Community and Social Services
Rob Cerjanec	Critic, Tourism, Sport and Culture
<i>Secondary List</i>	
Name	Role
Stephanie Bowman	Critic, Finance and Treasury Board
Lee Fairclough	Critic, Addictions and Homelessness
John Fraser	Liberal Party Leader and Critic, Education
Karen McCrimmon	Critic, Public Safety, Cybersecurity and Crime Prevention
Adil Shamji	Critic, Housing Critic for the Indigenous Affairs
Stephanie Smyth	Critic, Northern Affairs



FOPL 2026 Advocacy Campaign

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) is launching a province-wide advocacy campaign in April 2026 to:

- Raise awareness among government and the public about growing pressures on libraries
- Reinforce libraries as essential social infrastructure
- Position libraries as partners—not replacements—for social services
- Advocate for stronger provincial investment in upstream supports

The campaign includes media outreach, social media, op-eds, and direct engagement with provincial decision-makers.

Why This Matters to You

Public libraries are among the most trusted and heavily used municipal services. As elected officials and board members, you play a critical role in ensuring libraries remain safe, welcoming, and sustainable community spaces.

Across Ontario, libraries are experiencing increasing pressure as they respond to complex social challenges linked to mental health, addictions, and housing. These pressures are directly impacting staff capacity, service delivery, and the overall library environment in your communities.

The Core Issue

Libraries are open to everyone—and increasingly, they are serving individuals in crisis. When systems fall short, libraries often become:

- De facto warming/cooling spaces
- Points of first contact for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Safe spaces for those facing mental health or addiction challenges

While library staff respond with compassion, they are not trained or resourced to provide crisis intervention or social services.

Key Campaign Messages

- Libraries are essential social infrastructure worth protecting
- Libraries are welcoming, trusted spaces for everyone
- Libraries are doing more than ever—but are not social service providers
- System gaps in mental health, housing, and addictions are showing up in libraries
- The solution requires coordinated, system-wide investment



The Provincial Ask

FOPL is calling on the province to work with all levels of government to strengthen housing, health, and community supports so people can get help before they end up at the library's front desk.

All Ontario communities are experiencing the impacts of Canada's mental health, addiction and housing crisis first-hand. Every day, libraries open their doors to everyone—families, newcomers, students, job seekers, and increasingly, people with nowhere else to go.

While public libraries have worked hard to build partnerships and connect community members in crisis to supports, public libraries are at the limit of what they can do on their own.

Public libraries are not frontline crisis centers, yet they are being forced to take on parts of that role due to gaps in the available supports. If housing, mental health, and addiction systems fall short, library workers see the impact. Librarians aren't social workers, but they're showing care and compassion where the system has left a gap.

Public libraries have had to redirect limited budgets away from their core mandates to provide frontline crisis training for staff, increase security measures, stretching public library budgets to the limit.

A province-wide strategy is needed to address the intersection of public safety, mental health, and its impact on community infrastructure, with coordinated investments across all levels of government and funding for municipalities to build real crisis response capacity in the community.

What Advocacy Will Be Happening

- Meetings with local MPPs and provincial ministers
- Coordinated media outreach including interviews and opinion editorials
- Province-wide social media campaign amplifying library voices
- Engagement with sector partners to reinforce shared messaging
- Local outreach opportunities for libraries to connect with elected officials

How You Can Support the Campaign

As a municipal councilor or board member, you can help.

- Champion the role of libraries in council discussions and decisions
- Support advocacy efforts with your local MPP
- Amplify campaign messaging through your networks
- Ensure local awareness of pressures facing your library system
- Advocate for integrated community solutions at the municipal level

Libraries are doing more than ever—but they cannot do it alone.

Sustaining safe, welcoming libraries requires coordinated action across all levels of government. Your leadership is essential to ensuring libraries can continue to serve their communities effectively.

Campaign Key Messages

1. Libraries are social infrastructure — and are worth protecting.

- Libraries hold our communities together.
- Ontario's library workers have done their part, with care and compassion.
- It's time for the rest of the system to do its share.
- **It's time to lighten the load.**

2. Libraries are welcoming and trusted community spaces.

- Ontario's public libraries remain among the most trusted, inclusive spaces in our communities.
- Every day, libraries open their doors to everyone families, newcomers, students, job seekers, and increasingly, people with nowhere else to go.
- That openness is what makes libraries special and what we want to protect.

3. It's time to lighten the load:

- When mental health, addiction, and housing systems fall short, it's often library workers who see the impact first.
- Librarians aren't social workers, but they're showing care and compassion where the system has left a gap, **it's time to lighten our load.**

4. Libraries can't fix what's broken elsewhere.

- Libraries were built to lend books, foster learning, and bring people together — not to replace health care, housing, or crisis services.
- Expecting librarians to fill those roles is a symptom of a system under strain.

5. The solution is systemic.

- Ontario is in the midst of mental health and opioid crises. **We're asking all levels of government** to strengthen health, community, and housing supports so people can get help before they end up at the library's front desk.
- We are working in partnership with organizations such as the Canadian Urban Libraries council to share this message with other levels of government as well.
- That means coordinated investments across ministries and funding for municipalities to build real crisis response capacity in the community.

Advocacy Priorities Review

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 12, 2026

BACKGROUND

The FOPL Board annually reviews advocacy priorities ahead of the fall legislative session. Taking into account feedback from members, the current political landscape, emerging trends affecting public libraries, and the progress of current advocacy initiatives, the Board is being asked to review and reaffirm FOPL's advocacy priorities and strategic focus areas for the remainder of 2026 and into 2027.

Current provincial advocacy priorities have included:

- Increased investment in the Public Libraries Operating Grant (PLOG)
- Support for an Ontario Digital Public Library (ODPL)
- Expansion of provincial broadband and connectivity funding
- Increased support for First Nations Public Libraries
- Safety and Security advocacy (awareness) campaign

Secondary advocacy priorities, highlighted at municipal and board level, include:

- Intellectual freedom and censorship
- Promoting the value of public libraries

In addition to these established priorities, members have identified several emerging concerns requiring continued monitoring and potential advocacy response, including intellectual freedom challenges, increasing incidents related to safety and security in libraries, staffing and infrastructure pressures, municipal governance changes, public awareness of library value, AI literacy and technology capacity, and concerns regarding library governance and consolidation trends.

This review provides the Board with an opportunity to assess whether FOPL's current advocacy priorities continue to reflect member needs, align with the provincial political environment, and position the organization to effectively advocate on behalf of Ontario's public libraries.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

The following factors are recommended for consideration during the Board's review of advocacy priorities:

- Feedback gathered through recent caucus meetings and member engagement sessions
- The current provincial political climate and government priorities
- Emerging legislative concerns, including developments related to intellectual freedom and governance in Alberta and Ontario

- The increasing prevalence of safety, security, mental health, addictions, and homelessness-related pressures within public libraries
- Ongoing municipal financial pressures impacting library staffing, infrastructure, and service delivery
- The capacity and resources required for FOPL to effectively undertake advocacy initiatives
- The status and progress of existing advocacy initiatives and government relationships

RECOMMENDATION

As Executive Director, I recommend that the Board approach this review strategically and with a balance of both responsiveness and focus. FOPL has successfully built momentum and credibility with government and sector partners through sustained and consistent advocacy on a defined set of priorities. While it is important that we remain responsive to emerging issues identified by members, there is also significant value in maintaining clear and focused advocacy objectives that align with our organizational capacity and strategic plan.

Recent member engagement has demonstrated strong concern regarding safety and security pressures, intellectual freedom challenges, governance changes, staffing and infrastructure pressures, and the increasing complexity of social issues impacting library environments. These concerns are significant and warrant continued attention; however, they also intersect with many of FOPL's existing priorities related to funding, digital equity, public awareness, and provincial support for libraries as essential community infrastructure.

I encourage the Board to consider advocacy priorities through the following lens:

- Which issues are most consistently impacting members across all library types and regions;
- Where FOPL is best positioned to have influence at the provincial level;
- Which initiatives align most strongly with current government priorities and political realities;
- What advocacy efforts will provide the greatest value and measurable outcomes for members; and
- How FOPL can continue to position public libraries proactively rather than reactively within broader provincial discussions.

I also recommend that the Board continue to support a dual approach to advocacy:

1. Maintaining long-term strategic priorities such as PLOG increases, ODPL creation, and First Nations public library supports; and
2. Responding to emerging sector issues through targeted campaigns, member resources and education, government engagement, and sector partnerships.

Finally, I recommend that the Board reaffirm the importance of member engagement in shaping advocacy direction. The recent caucus meetings have provided valuable insight into the realities facing public libraries across Ontario and have reinforced the importance of maintaining strong communication channels between FOPL and its membership as the organization continues to evolve its advocacy strategy.

Advocacy Policy

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 15, 2026

BACKGROUND

FOPL does not currently have an advocacy policy or position statement to guide decision making processes on advocacy priorities or inform members as to how these decisions are made. A comment from the caucus meeting feedback sessions asked for greater transparency on how advocacy priorities were made and requested a stronger feedback loop between the board and membership.

Going through our internal archives, the best example of this I was able to find dates back to an Advocacy Plan document from 2009. I have attached it to this report for your review. Organizations such as [Toronto Public Libraries](#) and the [Ontario Library Association](#) have clear policies and procedures that detail advocacy specifically.

As FOPL's advocacy work has expanded significantly in recent years, including increased government relations activity, public campaigns, member consultations, and issue-based advocacy, there is an opportunity to formalize the organization's approach through the development of a modern advocacy policy or advocacy position statement.

The purpose of such a policy would be to:

- Clearly articulate the principles that guide FOPL's advocacy work;
- Establish a transparent process for identifying, evaluating, and approving advocacy priorities;
- Clarify the respective roles of the Board, Executive Director, working groups, and membership in advocacy development;
- Ensure advocacy efforts remain aligned with FOPL's strategic plan and organizational mandate;
- Strengthen governance and continuity in advocacy decision-making;
- Provide the Executive Director with clear operational direction on the implementation and execution of approved advocacy priorities; and
- Increase transparency and accountability to members by publicly outlining how advocacy priorities are developed and advanced.

The development of a formal advocacy policy would also support consistency when responding to emerging issues, public statements, campaigns, and government consultations. It would create a framework through which member feedback, caucus discussions, environmental scans, sector trends, and government priorities can be evaluated and incorporated into FOPL's advocacy agenda.

It is anticipated that once developed, the policy or statement would be posted publicly on the FOPL website as part of FOPL's commitment to transparency, member engagement, and good governance.

RECOMMENDATION

At present, FOPL's advocacy priorities are informed through a variety of mechanisms, including member feedback, caucus meetings, working groups, strategic planning exercises, government relations opportunities, and emerging sector issues. While this process has allowed FOPL to remain responsive and agile, it has largely evolved organically over time and is not formally documented within a governance framework.

The development of an advocacy policy would provide a more structured and transparent process while still allowing flexibility to respond to urgent or emerging matters impacting Ontario public libraries. The policy could include:

- Guiding principles for advocacy;
- Definitions of advocacy categories (provincial priorities, emerging issues, reactive advocacy, campaigns, etc.);
- A framework for how advocacy priorities are proposed and assessed;
- Criteria for evaluating advocacy opportunities and risks;
- Board approval and reporting mechanisms;
- Member consultation and feedback processes;
- Roles and responsibilities of the Board, Executive Director, caucuses, and working groups; and
- Processes for reviewing and updating advocacy priorities on an ongoing basis.

The policy would also strengthen governance by creating clearer boundaries between strategic direction established by the Board and operational execution carried out by the Executive Director. This would help ensure consistency in messaging, advocacy approaches, and organizational decision-making over time, including through changes in Board composition or leadership transitions.

I recommend that the FOPL board direct administration to develop a draft Advocacy Policy and/or Advocacy Position Statement and work with a committee of the board for input and review. The draft policy should include a framework for advocacy priority development, member engagement, governance roles, and operational implementation aligned with FOPL's Strategic Plan and organizational mandate. I also suggest that we consult with sector partners and review comparable advocacy governance models in the development of the draft policy.

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Advocacy Plan for 2009 & 2010

June 19, 2009

1. Introduction

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries Advocacy Plan was approved by the Board on June 19, 2009. The plan will provide direction for the advocacy activities of the Federation during the period 2009 and 2010. A working document which contains the information and analysis considered in preparation of the plan is available on the Federation's member website.

Federation members were consulted on advocacy priorities initially in the spring of 2008, and again in the autumn. They also had an opportunity to review and comment on a first draft Advocacy Plan during January to March 2009 and on a second draft during May 2009.

2. Advocacy Goals

The advocacy goal contained in the strategic priorities approved by the Federation Board is "to advance public library policy, programs and funding with government and other stakeholder organizations". The desired outcome is to create an awareness of the benefits of public libraries, and to translate this awareness into favourable decisions on policy, programs and funding, based on input from members.

Public libraries in Ontario serve hundreds of communities – from the very small to the very large – each with its unique needs. A successful advocacy plan will contain a package of initiatives that benefit all members and the provincial system of public libraries as a whole, plus targeted initiatives where there is general agreement among members.

The advocacy activities of the Federation will take a positive approach in which we demonstrate to government how advancing public library policies and programs will also further its own goals and priorities. We will encourage supporters to become advocates in their own communities to increase awareness of the value of the public library and to influence the decision making process of government. An important element of advocacy will be to build alliances and partnerships to promote shared interests. Where appropriate, advocacy will also involve promoting the development of new government policy and legislation to respond to changing circumstances in the library world.

3. Priority Issues and Target Audiences

Public libraries face many more policy, program and funding challenges than it is possible for the Federation to address effectively at any one time. The advocacy plan attempts to ensure that the Federation's advocacy priorities are realistic in relation to its own resources, and to the policy and fiscal goals of government and other stakeholders.

The following statement of priorities (listed in order of importance) is meant to provide the basis for an appropriate set of advocacy initiatives for 2009 and 2010:

"Within the policy frame of equal access for all citizens to information, knowledge, culture and learning resources:

- a. **Base/Municipal Funding:** *Secure adequate and sustainable base funding for public library operations;*
- b. **Provincial Operating Funding:** *Increase the provincial portion of operating budget of all public libraries;*
- c. **Capital Funding:** *Increase access to capital funding sources for updating and expanding physical facilities;*
- d. **Literacy and Learning:** *Enhance library programs including children's literacy, family literacy, digital literacy, and support for learning in a digital age;*
- e. **First Nations (including Urban First Nations):** *Expand library capacity;*
- f. **Targeted Initiatives:** *Increase capacity to address the needs of specific user groups, with an initial focus on newcomers, and later as resources permit on persons with disabilities (ie. accommodating AODA requirements), francophones and youth;*

- g. **Electronic Information and Infrastructure:** *Ensure equal access for all citizens to electronic information and infrastructure resources; and*
- h. **Funding for Sector Development and Innovation:** *Secure increased allocations for the development and innovation of services across the public library system in Ontario.”*

These priorities will be addressed in different ways to the various target audiences in accordance with the mandate they have with respect to public libraries. The potential audiences for each priority are identified in the advocacy initiatives in Section 7.

4. Positioning Statement

This section sets out the elements of a positioning statement which expresses the fit between the core business of public libraries and the perceptions of decision makers and supporters about the public library. The concepts in the positioning statement will serve as the basis for formulating key messages in the Federation's advocacy materials. Please note that this document focuses on the concepts that shape the advocacy plan – the messaging will occur during implementation of the advocacy initiatives.

Positioning Statement – Key Concepts
The public library is: • the one community gathering place, • both physical and virtual, • which provides equal access for all • to information, knowledge, culture, and learning resources in print and electronic format, • along with advice, assistance, and connections • to transform individuals, communities, and the economy, • in the 21st century of a digital, globalized world.

The two overarching concepts are that the public library transforms individuals, communities and the economy, and that it is highly relevant in the digital, global world of the 21st century. Public library services are indispensable. Without them communities are at a significant disadvantage in terms of future growth.

The value of public libraries is particularly relevant during economic recessions, when they experience increased usage and become an essential community resource for residents with reduced incomes. Increased investment in public libraries supports faster recovery of communities that are now, more than ever, dependent on the knowledge economy for their future development. These points will be highlighted in our messaging to funders, especially in response to recently announced economic stimulus programs of the federal and provincial governments.

5. Advocacy Strategy

The advocacy strategy consists of a number of general directions, and also specific approaches tailored to each of the provincial, municipal, and federal governments.

General Approach

- a. The Federation will undertake a package of advocacy initiatives to benefit all members and the provincial system of public libraries as a whole, plus targeted initiatives where there is general agreement among members.
- b. The advocacy initiatives will be realistic in relation to the policy and fiscal environment in which they will be implemented.

- c. The Federation will target its advocacy activities to the level of government and stakeholders most relevant to each of the advocacy priorities.
- d. The Federation will work closely with other advocacy organizations such as OLA, CLA and ALA (and its PLA division) to avoid duplicated effort, and to demonstrate to funders that our efforts are organized and coordinated.
- e. The Federation will make direct representation to provincial governments and provincial level stakeholder organizations, and the federal government as appropriate.
- f. At the community level, the Federation will provide methodologies and materials to member libraries to assist them to mobilize supporters, and to make representation to local government and stakeholders, and area MPPs, on member and Federation issues and opportunities.
- g. The Federation will prepare general materials and messages on the benefits of public libraries that can be adapted as circumstances require.
- h. As well, the Federation will prepare a package of initiatives related to the advocacy priorities, which it will advance with government and stakeholders. The level of detail will be sufficient to ensure that the initiatives are understandable and workable.
- i. The Federation will create a vision of the library of the future – to be used along with the annual "state of the public library" report – to identify issues and opportunities that will become part of the advocacy message.
- j. The Federation will address current issues as they arise, consistent with the overall advocacy plan.
- k. Regarding political activity, during an election campaign the Federation will advocate to all political parties; after the election it will work with the elected party to advance public library policy, programs, and funding. We will offer the same information to all parties.

Municipal/Local Government

Within the general approach described above:

- a. The Federation will frame the advocacy materials that it provides to members in the context of the broader value of public libraries to the community (e.g., as a community gathering place and a key part of the municipal infrastructure, provider of various types of literacy programs, and provider of support services to newcomers and the unemployed, etc.).
- b. In recognition of the important role of municipalities in funding public libraries, the Federation will build strong and supportive working relationships with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership and the association française des municipalités de l'Ontario.
- c. The Federation will provide materials on province-wide issues and opportunities which member libraries will be able to promote at the local level.

Provincial Government

Within in the general approach described above:

- a. Advocacy activities will be framed in the context of:
 - how public libraries can contribute to government policies and priorities in a way that is relevant to the digital, global world of the 21st century, (e.g., Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy) and demonstrates excellent return on investment,
 - equal access for all citizens, and
 - the need for the province to boost its funding for the ongoing operation of libraries to levels representing a much higher share of total costs.

The target audiences within the provincial government will include the Ministry of Culture, and other relevant Ministries, e.g., Infrastructure, Education, Research & Innovation, Municipal Affairs, Francophone Affairs, Community & Social Services, Finance, etc..

- b. The Federation will promote a package of program and funding initiatives to the relevant Ministries, including development and innovation, system-wide initiatives, e.g., Knowledge Ontario, specific target groups, and infrastructure.
- c. The Federation will address new policies and legislation for public libraries as the occasion arises, after consultation with members, time permitting.

Federal Government

The Federation will identify relevant sources of funding and promote access by public libraries.

Stakeholders

The approach with regard to each of the stakeholders is described in the advocacy initiatives in the following section.

6. Advocacy Action Plan

Summarized in the following table are the advocacy initiatives that the Federation will undertake in 2009 and 2010 in order to address its advocacy priorities. Each initiative sets out the target audiences, key messages, and approach. Additional detail of the advocacy initiatives may be found in the Advocacy Plan Working Document.

Highest immediate priority will be given to tapping into the various government programs involving economic stimulus funding for capital/infrastructure. With the recent LSDF grant received, another immediate opportunity is building our case for support in the area of literacy and learning by studying the scope of library-based literacy programs across the province.

The expected outcomes and timelines for each initiative must remain flexible so that the Federation can respond quickly and effectively to issues as they arise. While the Advocacy Plan focuses on proactive initiatives, significant time and effort will be required for “just-in-time” responses to defend the interests of members (eg. potential implications of Bill 128).

Several of the initiatives in the Action Plan include the development of guidelines, resources and training opportunities in preparation for the municipal elections that will occur in the Fall of 2010.

FOPL Advocacy Initiatives

Issue	Target Audience	Messages	Approach
Adequate and Sustainable Base/Municipal Funding	Direct Targets— local governments, (through member libraries) Indirect Targets – potential local supporters like Chambers of Commerce and Social Planning Councils.	Public libraries build/transform individuals, communities and local economies in the electronic, global world of the 21st century.	- Provide information and materials to members on current funding issues, e.g., uncertain economic times - Produce materials for members to advocate directly with local governments, build awareness/support of local stakeholders, and show comparisons with peers. - Send broadcast letters to all local politicians (via local libraries) explaining the potential of public libraries and consequences of not funding them - Provide local library trustees with training on advocacy in partnership with OLBA. - Find champions to promote our message.
Increased Provincial Portion of the Operating Funding of all Public Libraries	Direct Target – provincial government (Ministry of Culture) Indirect Target – as a potential champion (Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing)	- Ontario libraries have experienced a 73% decline in provincial funding over the last 10 years. - Ontario's share of library funding is the lowest (4% of total revenue) of all provinces with municipally funded library systems and is 100% less than the closest comparator. - Provincial government should become a stronger partner with municipalities (who shoulder disproportionate funding responsibility) in providing sustainable operating grants to Ontario's vital public libraries. - A renewed, innovative, library system plays a key role in furthering the goals and priorities of the provincial government. - Public libraries face pressure similar to those faced by other sectors in Ontario related to service demands, technological capability, and workforce maintenance. - Demographic changes require public libraries to provide specialized niche services to many groups, while still providing day-to-day support to all Ontarians. - While one-time, year-end financial support has helped, all public libraries need an increase in ongoing provincial operating grants to effectively plan for and meet current and future service demands.	- Promote a general increase in the current provincial portion of the operating budgets of all public libraries restoring it to a level that warrants provincial legislation and voice. - Identify and promote future improvements acceptable to members that may be made in the provincial operating funding mechanism that will provide an increase in the provincial portion of the operating budgets of all public libraries. These improvements being studied by a special FOPL committee may include (but are not limited to) the following elements: 1) The issue of population growth and loss in individual library systems 2) The unique needs of individual or groups of libraries and unique/exceptional user requirements 3) Inflationary pressures 4) The issue of per capita funding

Issue	Target Audience	Messages	Approach
Capital Funding to Update/Expand Physical Facilities	Municipalities Provincial government (Ministries of Energy & Infrastructure, Municipal Affairs & Housing) Federal government (Infrastructure Canada) Corporations and foundations	- Public libraries are vital public places that provide information and resources to strengthen individuals, communities and local economies in the globalized world. - Public libraries have a considerable need for <u>sustainable</u> capital/infrastructure funding.	- Document/analyze need for capital/infrastructure funding across Ontario. - Promote access by public libraries to infrastructure funding sources. - Include capital/infrastructure funding as part of the methodologies and materials provided to members to address adequate base funding.
Literacy and Learning	Provincial government primarily (Ministries of Education, Child & Youth Services, Culture, Community & Social Services, Training Colleges & Universities, Government Services, and Health) Federal government secondarily (Human Resources and Social Development Canada) Research community School boards, if support for formal education is to be an initiative - TBD.	- Libraries have always had an important role in literacy and learning. - Public libraries provide important community spaces for learning. - Public libraries play a critical role in bridging the digital divide. - Public libraries are at the leading edge of developments in public access to digital information.	- Inventory library-based literacy programs in Ontario using LSDF grant - Engage in dialogue with relevant government departments regarding policy and program development. - Identify sources of provincial and federal funding and seek eligibility for public libraries. - Develop packages of initiatives for support and funding by the province, tailored as appropriate. - Find champions from the research community. - Engage school boards as partners, if initiatives include support for formal education – TBD.
First Nations (including Urban First Nations)	Federal government (Indian & Northern Affairs Canada, FedNor's Community Futures program, Privy Council) Provincial government (Ministries of Aboriginal Affairs, Culture, Ontario Trillium Foundation) Potential champions	- Public libraries provide equal access for all to information, culture, literacy and learning. - Public libraries provide opportunities for personal and career development.	- Seek eligibility to relevant sources of government funding. - Find champions to promote our message - Develop packages of initiatives and/or proposals to gain funding from governments, tailored as appropriate. - Support initiatives by First Nations to promote greater provincial and federal funding.
Targeted Initiatives – Newcomers	Federal government (Citizenship & Immigration Canada) Provincial government (Ministries of Citizenship & Immigration, Culture, Ontario Trillium Foundation) Municipalities Potential champions	- Public libraries provide equal access for all to information, culture, literacy and learning. - Public libraries contribute to the successful adaptation of newcomers to their community and to Canadian society.	- Consult with other providers of settlement services to identify areas for effective involvement by the Federation. - Identify relevant sources of government funding and seek eligibility for public libraries. - Find champions to promote our message - Develop proposals for federal and provincial funding, tailored as appropriate.

Issue	Target Audience	Messages	Approach
Electronic Information and Infrastructure	Provincial government (Ministries of Energy & Infrastructure, Culture and Research & Innovation, Agriculture & Rural Affairs, and Government Services) Federal government (Infrastructure Canada, Industry Canada)	- Libraries are important public places - physical and virtual - that provide print and electronic resources to equip individuals and communities for the 21st century. - Libraries assist users develop electronic information skills, which help to closing the digital divide. - Public libraries require ongoing investments in electronic resources to ensure their continued leadership in public access to digital information.	- Support existing initiatives, e.g., Knowledge Ontario. - Illustrate the benefits electronic resources by contrasting "have" and "have-not" communities. - Develop a package of initiatives for support and funding by the provincial government. - Communicate needs to municipalities as part of initiatives for adequate base funding.
Funding for Sector Development and Innovation	Provincial government (Ministries of Culture, Research & Innovation) Federal government (Industry Canada) Corporations and foundations	Public libraries have an important role in finding leading edge solutions for making information technology that is relevant to the 21st century, available to the public.	- Seek eligibility for public libraries for federal and provincial funding. Broaden targets beyond Ministry of Culture. - Promote the success story and future potential of Knowledge Ontario. - Develop initiatives to seek developmental and innovative funding. - Promote a larger role for the provincial gov't in ongoing funding for development and innovation.

Governance Review

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: May 14, 2026

BACKGROUND

As FOPL continues to evolve, it is important that the organization's governance structure, policies, and practices remain current, transparent, and aligned with the organization's strategic direction and operational realities. During a recent review of archival organizational documents, several historical governance and policy documents were identified that indicate FOPL previously maintained a broader suite of governance and operational policies than are currently active or regularly utilized. Through leadership transitions, organizational change, and evolving priorities over time, a number of these policies and governance practices appear to have become stagnant, outdated, or fallen out of regular review and implementation.

While FOPL has continued to function effectively and advance significant advocacy work on behalf of Ontario's public libraries, the absence of a structured and current governance framework presents potential risks related to organizational continuity, board orientation and succession, role clarity, accountability, policy consistency, and decision-making processes.

A comprehensive governance review would provide the Board with an opportunity to:

- Review and modernize existing governance policies and procedures
- Identify policy gaps or outdated governance practices
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board, Executive, caucus representatives, committees, and Executive Director
- Ensure governance practices align with FOPL's Strategic Plan and current organizational structure
- Strengthen organizational transparency and accountability to members
- Support long-term sustainability and continuity during future leadership transitions
- Establish a formal schedule and process for ongoing policy review and governance maintenance

Given the scope of the work, it is recommended that the Board establish a Governance Review Committee to guide the process. The committee could be tasked with reviewing existing governance documents, identifying priorities for revision or development, consulting with the Board and membership as appropriate, and bringing recommendations forward for Board consideration.

I have attached a previous framework control document that was found in our archive records. I have also attached a sample review template to give you an idea of the review process. I would recommend resources and documents from the Ontario Non-Profit Network are used during the review process.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the FOPL Board approve the initiation of a comprehensive governance review process;

AND THAT the Board establish a Governance Review Committee comprised of Board members and admin support to oversee the review and development of governance policies, procedures, and related recommendations;

AND THAT the committee report back to the Board with a proposed work plan, timeline, and identified governance priorities for consideration.

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries				
	Approved by Membership/or Board of Directors	Effective Date	Review Date	Notes:
Key Governance Policies				
1 - STRATEGIC DIRECTION				
.1 - Vision, Mission and Core Values				
.2 - AGM Resolutions	28-Jan-09	28-Jan-09		
.3 Action Plan				
.4 Calendar of Commitments and Events				
2 - GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK				
.1 - Roles and Responsibilities of Board of Directors				
a) Collectively				
b) Individually (including conflict of interest)				
c) Meeting Management	03-Apr-09	03-Apr-09		
d) Governance and Service Agreement with OLS-N Re: Accreditation Council	03-Apr-09	30-Apr-09		
.2 - Terms of Reference of Committees/Task Forces				
a) General template	18-Aug-05	18-Aug-05		
b) Executive				
c) Advocacy	18-Aug-05	18-Aug-05		
d) Marketing	18-Aug-05	18-Aug-05		
e) Research and Development	18-Aug-05	18-Aug-05		
f) CELUPL	03-Apr-09	03-Apr-09		
g) Ontario Public Libraries Guidelines, Monitoring and Accreditation Council				
h) Ad Hoc	23-Sep-09	23-Sep-09		
i) Membership Fees Review				
ii) Advocacy Plan Work Group	10-Oct-08	10-Oct-08		
iii) Provincial Funding Committee	23-Sep-09	23-Sep-09		
j) Nominating Committee	23-Apr-10	23-Apr-10		
.3 - Role of Officers				
a) Chair				
b) Vice-Chair				
c) Secretary				
d) Treasurer				
.4 - Board Member Recognition				
3 - FINANCIAL CONTROL				
.1 - 2009 Operating Budget	21-Oct-08	01-Nov-08		NOTE: UPDATE

	Approved by Membership/or Board of Directors	Effective Date	Review Date	Notes:
Key Governance Policies				
.2 - Expense Claims Reimbursement	23-Sep-09	23-Sep-09		Notes: Supersedes Policy 17 Aug 06
.3 - Signing Authorities	27-May-08	27-May-08		
.4 - Investment Policy				
.5 - Procurement Policies and Leases	23-Sep-09	23-Sep-09		
4 - MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT				
.1 - CEO Job Description	24-Jan-08	05-May-08		
.2 - CEO Performance Evaluation Process				NOTE: Where is this?
5 - MEMBER SERVICES				
.1 - Sharing Products with Non-Members	13-Jan-09	13-Jan-09		
.2 - Refunding Membership Fees	26-Feb-08	26-Feb-08		
6 - PUBLIC RELATIONS				
.1 - Advocacy Plan		19-Jun-09		
.2 - Marketing Plan				
.3 - Position Statements				
a) Defining the Public Library				
b) Recommended Allocation of \$15 Million Grant		20-Aug-08		
c) Key Messages for Queen's Park Reception		21-Oct-08		
d) Public Library Utilization in Tough Economic Times		29-Oct-08		
e) Role of Public Libraries in Literacy Development		04-Jun-08		
f) Proposed OADA Information and Accessibility Standard		06-Feb-09		
g) Bill 128 - Acceptable Use of Internet		24-Feb-09		
.4 - Communications Policy				
7 - REFERENCE DOCUMENTS FOR BOARD POLICY MANUAL				
.1 - Public Libraries Act				
.2 - By-Laws #1 and By-Laws #2 of the Federation				
.3 - Board Member Contact Information				
.4 - Membership List by Caucus				
.5 - 2008 Audited Financial Statements				
.6 - Directors and Officers Liability Insurance				

NOT FOR PROFIT (NFP) GOVERNANCE REVIEW TEMPLATE Prepared for use in Canada

This template is designed to help your Not For Profit organization conduct a comprehensive review of your governance practices. It will assist you in identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and ensuring compliance with Canadian legal and regulatory standards.

Organization Name: _____

Date of Review: _____

Prepared by (Name & Title): _____

SECTION 1: ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

1.1 General Information

Legal Name of Organization: _____

Registered Charity Number (if applicable): _____

Incorporation Number & Jurisdiction (Federal/Provincial): _____

Fiscal Year-End Date: _____

Organization's Mission Statement: _____

SECTION 2: BOARD STRUCTURE & COMPOSITION

2.1 Board Composition

Number of Board Members: _____

Minimum and Maximum Board Members as per bylaws: _____

Current Board Member Terms (length & renewal process): _____

Are board member roles and responsibilities clearly defined in writing? (Yes/No): _____

Is there a clear policy for board member recruitment, selection, and orientation?
(Yes/No): _____

2.2 Board Meetings

Frequency of Board Meetings: _____

Are meeting minutes consistently recorded and maintained? (Yes/No): _____

Do board members regularly attend meetings? (Yes/No): _____

Are agendas and supporting documents distributed in advance of meetings?
(Yes/No): _____

SECTION 3: GOVERNANCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Indicate whether the following governance policies exist, are current, and reviewed regularly:

Policy Type	Exists (Yes/No)	Date Last Reviewed	Comments/Action Required
Conflict of Interest Policy			
Code of Conduct/Ethics			

Confidentiality Policy			
Financial Management & Controls			
Risk Management Policy			
Privacy Policy			
Human Resources Policies			
Volunteer Management Policy			
Fundraising & Donations Policy			

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & OVERSIGHT

4.1 Financial Reporting

Are financial statements prepared regularly and reviewed by the board?
(Yes/No): _____

Are annual financial statements independently audited or reviewed?
(Yes/No): _____

Is there a clear budget approval and monitoring process?
(Yes/No): _____

4.2 Financial Controls

Are there clear procedures for approving expenditures and signing authority?

(Yes/No): _____

Is there adequate segregation of financial duties to prevent fraud or errors?

(Yes/No): _____

SECTION 5: LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

5.1 Compliance Checklist

Compliance Area	Compliant (Yes/No)	Comments/Action Required
Annual filings with CRA (T3010, etc.)		
Annual corporate filings (Federal/Provincial)		
Compliance with applicable employment laws		
Compliance with privacy legislation (PIPEDA or provincial equivalent)		
Compliance with fundraising regulations		

SECTION 6: STRATEGIC PLANNING & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

6.1 Strategic Planning

Does the organization have a current strategic plan?

(Yes/No): _____

Date last updated: _____

Is progress regularly reviewed and reported to the board?

(Yes/No): _____

6.2 Performance Management

Are clear performance indicators established for evaluating organizational effectiveness?

(Yes/No): _____

Are regular performance reviews conducted for senior management/executive staff?

(Yes/No): _____

SECTION 7: RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Risk Identification & Mitigation

Has the organization conducted a formal risk assessment in the past year?

(Yes/No): _____

Are identified risks documented and mitigation strategies implemented?

(Yes/No): _____

Is there adequate insurance coverage in place (liability, directors & officers, etc.)?

(Yes/No): _____

SECTION 8: STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

8.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Does the organization communicate regularly with stakeholders (members, donors, community)?

(Yes/No): _____

Are annual reports and key organizational information publicly accessible?
(Yes/No): _____

SECTION 9: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & ACTION PLAN

9.1 Governance Strengths Identified

9.2 Areas for Improvement

9.3 Recommended Actions & Timelines

Recommended Action	Responsible Person(s)	Target Completion Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

SECTION 10: BOARD APPROVAL & SIGN-OFF

This Governance Review has been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors:

Board Chair Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

NEXT STEPS

- Complete all sections thoroughly and accurately.
- Engage key stakeholders and board members in the review process.
- Implement recommended improvements promptly and document clearly.
- Regularly revisit this Governance Review template annually or as required.

DISCLAIMER: This template is provided by Canada Business Lawyers as a general resource for Not For Profit organizations in Canada. It does not constitute legal advice. For specific legal guidance tailored to your organization's unique circumstances, please consult a qualified Canadian business lawyer.