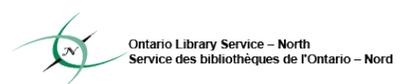


# LIBRARIES ELECTION GUIDE

ONTARIO ELECTION 2018



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# ONTARIO ELECTION 2018

## COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF LIBRARIES

### Ontario is Going to the Polls on June 7, 2018.

The Ontario Provincial Election is a critical opportunity for the library sector to capture the attention of political parties and candidates & secure their support on issues important to Ontario's libraries. The goal of our election engagement is to **share the profound impact that School, First Nations, Academic and Public Libraries have on our communities** and the issues that we as a sector are working on across Ontario.

Libraries are Ontario's **farthest-reaching, most cost-effective resource for empowering positive change** by supporting high-quality education, fostering community economic development and reducing the impacts of poverty. Strengthening what currently works, maintaining existing support and building towards an even more sustainable future are all part of our ongoing engagement with the Ontario Government.

An important part of our engagement in Ontario this year includes connecting with candidates during the upcoming provincial election – many of whom will be part of the next government or legislature – on policies and programs that will ensure that libraries can continue to fulfill their critical role across Ontario.

**Municipal elections in Ontario are also around the corner in October 2018**, making it a double election year! We'll have more resources available later this year to help you with your municipal engagement as well.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**Reaching out to parties and candidates prior to the election** – particularly with your local perspective – will provide a critical foundation to our post-election advocacy and engagement at Queen's Park. Building relationships locally will help us to open dialogue and build a foundation for working together effectively with elected representatives and their staff from both the government and opposition.

There are lots of ways that your library can engage in the upcoming election to make sure that libraries are recognized for their important contributions to our municipalities, First Nations and schools:

- 1. Meet with Candidates or Campaign Staff;**
- 2. Write or email a letter / survey to local Candidates;**
- 3. Engage through social media;**
- 4. Ask key questions at town hall meetings and all-candidates debates**

# IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO ENSURE SUCCESS

DOs	DON'Ts
<p><b>Consult your organization's leadership:</b> Before you engage your library in any advocacy or election-related activity, be sure that your leadership is on board.</p>	<p><b>Focus only on engaging with one candidate or political party.</b></p>
<p><b>Stay focused:</b> We are most effective when we have a clear and unified message on the necessity of increased support for libraries. OLA &amp; FOPL have developed messaging for you to use in all your interactions with local candidates.</p>	<p><b>Instruct or influence constituents as to which candidate or party to vote for.</b></p>
<p><b>Be positive:</b> Libraries are providing critical services to communities across the province. Our engagement should position libraries as contributing to non-partisan solutions to key provincial priorities – no matter where you live in Ontario.</p>	<p><b>Ask for priorities that are outside the scope of the provincial government</b> (federal or municipal government level issues). *See Appendix C for information on how libraries are funded.</p>
<p><b>Stay non-partisan:</b> Invite all candidates to participate, including independent candidates where appropriate.</p>	<p><b>Make partisan statements or endorse a candidate,</b> for example by posting their campaign materials or photos on your website. (It's okay to post pictures of an all-candidates event that you host!)</p>
<p><b>Organize and be inclusive:</b> A well-organized meeting or event should be one where everyone is welcome. When appropriate, think about what people with barriers to participation need – and how you can help address these.</p>	
<p><b>Prepare:</b> Do your homework. Your impact will be most significant when you're able to connect our overall messaging with your local perspective and insight.</p>	
<p><b>Raise the profile of your events through social media:</b> Demonstrate what we already know – libraries get the digital world and new ways of communicating. Using social media is a great way to engage your local community, e.g. Facebook posts and live tweeting.</p>	
<p><b>After a meeting or event, send thank-you letters,</b> including a contact person for further questions.</p>	

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NON-PARTISAN?

Partisan political activity is the direct or indirect promotion of a political candidate or party, or the direct or indirect opposition to a political party or candidate. As representatives of the library sector, we want you to talk about and share information about our non-partisan issues - which do not favour or criticize a specific political party or candidate - and foster discussion about these important matters. We believe strongly that libraries positively impact a broad cross-section of Ontarians in every community across the province. As a sector, we have and will continue to work collaboratively and constructively with representatives of all political parties to achieve meaningful change benefitting our libraries and communities. It's important to be aware of the rules around partisanship (see our Rules section below), but don't let these hinder your enthusiasm or participation. Your voice is very important!

# ENGAGING DURING ELECTIONS

You should reach out to and engage with candidates from all major parties in your [local ridings](#). There are many ways to do this before and during the election period, including:

1. **Meet with Candidates or Campaign Staff**
2. **Write or email a letter / survey to local Candidates**
3. **Engage through social media**
4. **Ask key questions at town hall meetings and all-candidates debates**

**Remember, all politics is local.** When meeting with your local candidates, focus on the key messages to convey the importance of your public, school and First Nations libraries to the community, and give a local perspective about how maintaining sustainable funding and recent investments will benefit your libraries and community.

## QUICK TIPS!

- Consider organizing all-candidates events as part of an existing community network or team up with like-minded organizations.
- Write your letter to the local candidates **before** the official election period starts (“the writ is dropped”). Responses are usually more detailed, outlining both the candidate’s and the parties’ positions.

## Meet with Candidates or Campaign Staff

Meeting with candidates and campaign staff before and during the election period is a great way to build a relationship and to educate them on the positive impacts of libraries and issues confronting the sector. Candidates want to get to know the important stakeholders in their communities – that’s you – and will appreciate your local perspective and the opportunity to learn about how they can be a champion for your local libraries at Queen’s Park.

### Engaging with local candidates and campaign staff will:

- Provide an opportunity for more focused and in-depth conversations with a local perspective.
- Gauge how well candidates understand the issues facing libraries and respond to questions they may have.
- Build relationships with candidates that can continue to develop post-election, including developing champions for ensuring ongoing provincial support for libraries..

### Ask

- Ask in person, call, email, or send a letter to each local candidate (or their key campaign staff) of each party introducing yourself, your role and the importance of libraries.
- Request a meeting to discuss further. Candidates often have campaign staff dedicated to engaging with constituents during election campaigns.

### Schedule

- Follow up with a phone call or visit to the campaign office. The campaign manager may handle the

request or may refer you to another staff member.

- Negotiate a date, time, and location for the meeting. Let the campaign staff know how much time you would like (shorter meetings are always more practical than longer ones) and be prepared to shorten the session if need be.

### **Prepare**

- Once the meeting is confirmed, put together a team to attend the meeting. The larger the team, the more organized you'll need to be at the meeting. It's helpful to have a mix of staff, board members, and, if possible, beneficiaries of your service or activities who can provide personal stories of how key issues impact them and how solutions are supporting or will support people.
- Review OLA and FOPL's key messages included in this guide and decide who will chair the session and who will speak to which item. The size of the group will guide how long individuals can speak. In general, keep the individual presentations to a maximum of three minutes each. More experienced members can help others to organize what they will say.
- Ask for a volunteer to take notes and complete the [Meeting Worksheet](#) when it's over so everyone has the results of the meeting on paper.
- Also familiarize yourself with your local candidate, include biographical information and any recent media coverage, especially if you do not have an existing relationship.
- Stories strengthen your message. Think of your own examples to convey the impact of libraries on individuals and families in the candidate's own community and schools.
- Review the [Meeting Worksheet](#) and bring copies of the OLA/FOPL Ontario Libraries Election Brief and the Value of Libraries postcard.

### **Inform**

- Tell the campaign staff who will attend the meeting.
- Let OLA and FOPL know about your meeting, either by emailing Sarah Roberts ([sroberts@accessola.com](mailto:sroberts@accessola.com)) OR by [filling in this form](#).

### **Meet**

- Arrive on time and go in as a team.
- Have the chair open the meeting, thank the candidate and briefly outline the purpose of the meeting and the agenda. All participants should introduce themselves. From there, the chair should manage the agenda, making way for the speaker for each item. The candidate or campaign staff may ask questions of individual speakers and the chair should be able to subtly keep the agenda on track.
- Stick to the key messages! Draw upon your own personal experiences to enhance these and use local examples.
- Be passionate and respectful, not argumentative and confrontational.
- Be prepared to be flexible. The candidate or campaign staff may not have time or want to go through the full agenda. The chair should be able to cut to the chase so that the most important items are discussed.
- Finish by thanking the candidate or campaign staff and providing a contact person for further questions or information.
- Focus on conveying the importance of Ontario's libraries in a local context, and the key messages.
- It is important to remember that it's okay to say "I don't know" if you're asked a question that you can't answer. You can offer to follow-up with the information after the meeting. OLA & FOPL are happy to help you find the answers to any such questions.
- Leave behind a copy of the OLA/FOPL Ontario Libraries Election Brief and the Value of Libraries postcard, along with your contact information.
- Thank them for their time and indicate that you will be following up.
- Wish them luck!

### **Follow Up**

- Send a thank you letter, attaching a copy of the OLA/FOPL Ontario Libraries Election Brief and include any follow up information that you promised
- You may be asked in the future to follow up by email and phone with the local Candidate (and ultimately, potential MPP) to seek additional support or to request further information.
- Complete the [Meeting Worksheet](#) to let us know how your meeting went.

## MAKING THE MOST OF INFORMAL MEETINGS AND ENCOUNTERS

If you run into a candidate at your library, or a local event, be sure to take the opportunity to engage and educate them on the role libraries are playing in your community.

These informal meetings are invaluable for fostering a positive, personal relationship with an individual who may become your next MPP – and a champion for libraries at Queen’s Park.

Be sure to get their contact information and follow up afterwards to share OLA/FOPL’s Ontario Libraries Election Brief. Make sure they know you’re always available to answer questions!

## Write or Email a Letter / Survey to Local Candidates

If you can’t meet directly with a local candidate, you also have the option of sending a letter directly to them, outlining our key messages for the Ontario Election.

The most effective letters to candidates include a survey or question for the candidate to answer. These allow you to get a better sense of where the candidate stands on issues important to libraries and will be very useful should the candidate be successfully elected.

We’ve provided a template in Appendix D that you can customize and send to your local candidates. Email is often easiest during the pre-election period, but most candidates will have a physical office open during the campaign period where a letter can be dropped off or mailed. Sending your letter as early as possible gives you the best chance of a response. Be sure to share any response you receive with Sarah Roberts ([sroberts@accessola.com](mailto:sroberts@accessola.com))!

## Engage Through Social Media

Whether you meet with your candidates directly or not, you can help raise the profile of Ontario’s libraries this election by taking the conversation online. A tweet or a Facebook post can be used to share the impact of libraries in your community, to demonstrate your support for libraries, or raise awareness of the issues confronting the sector.

- Use OLA/FOPL’s key messages to inspire your tweets and Facebook posts
- Be sure to tag your local candidates, and share local examples
- Don’t forget to use the hashtags #ILoveOnLibraries and #ONPoli – it helps make sure that local candidates will see your tweets and encourages them to show their support!

### QUICK TIP!

Think before you tweet! If you’re not sure about something you want to tweet, don’t hesitate to ask OLA/FOPL for feedback.

### Sample tweets

- Had a great conversation today with [insert twitter handle of Candidate] about the importance of Ontario’s libraries. #ILoveOnLibraries #ONPoli
- Ontario’s public libraries matter! [tag candidates] Did you know that there are 296 visits to Ontario public libraries every minute? #ONpoli #ILoveONLibraries
- [tag candidates] Did you know that every year in Ontario, there are 175 million visits to public libraries online and in person! Make the commitment to support sustainable, predictable provincial funding for all public and First Nations libraries #ONpoli #ILoveONLibraries
- Ending the 20-year funding freeze means that Public Libraries now have sustainable funding to continue making positive local impacts. [tag candidates] show your support for our library! #ILoveONLibraries #ONPoli

- Ontario’s Digital Public Library will provide access high-quality digital resources to all of the province’s 300 public libraries, including 46 First Nation public libraries, to, serving over 99 per cent of the population [tag candidates] #ONpoli #ILoveONLibraries
- [tag candidates] School libraries are critical to student success. We need to protect school library funding so all students have access to libraries and teacher-librarians! #ONpoli #ILoveONLibraries

You can check out [our Twitter story](#) from Library Day at Queen’s Park for an example of how you can engage local politicians online in a non-partisan way.

## Ask Key Questions at Town Hall Meetings and All-Candidates Debates

During the election, candidates will participate in several community events where members of the public may have the opportunity to ask questions. You may also have a chance encounter with a candidate or be speaking with them at an event you’ve organized.

Whichever is the case, these are great opportunities for you and library supporters to find out where candidates stand on the issues important to school, public and First Nations libraries and library staff.

**We have provided three questions for your consideration and use.** These reflect the issues identified in OLA and FOPL’s Ontario Libraries Election Brief.

1. Public libraries continue to serve more members of the community and evolve to meet changing needs, but provincial base funding for public libraries was frozen for over 20 years. This year, public and First Nations libraries received a much-needed increase of \$17 million to their annual provincial base funding. This investment is vital for ensuring that our libraries – in rural communities, small towns and cities alike – are sustainably funded.

### **Do you support maintaining this critically important provincial funding for public and First Nations libraries?**

2. Access to online resources is an increasingly important part of the mix of services that public and school libraries provide. Ensuring that students and the public have equitable access to accurate, comprehensive online resources is more important than ever with the growth of misinformation, questionable sources and “fake news”. But these resources are expensive. Ontario is following the proven lead of other provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan by investing \$28 million over three years for the creation of the Ontario Digital Public Library of high-quality resources, accessible to all public and First Nations libraries in the province.

### **Will you support the creation of Ontario’s Digital Public Library, and maintaining the critical investment needed to make this a reality?**

3. Qualified teacher-librarians and properly resourced school libraries are a critical part of student success. However, the flexibility of spending decisions by many school boards has led to money earmarked for teacher-librarians and libraries being diverted to other uses. Many school boards in Ontario, including the Ottawa Catholic District School Board, have eliminated teacher-librarians and libraries from their schools altogether. We are already witnessing the negative impact that this is having for preparing students for success in university, college and the skilled trades.

### **Will you support changes to the education funding formula to protect and ensure that all students will have access to teacher librarians and school libraries?**

## **INTERESTED IN HOSTING AN ALL CANDIDATES MEETING?**

Consult our document on [Supporting Civic Engagement in Your Library](#) for details on how to plan and execute an All-Candidates Meeting at your library.

# ABOUT US

This document was produced by the [Ontario Library Association \(OLA\)](#) and the [Federation of Ontario Public Libraries \(FOPL\)](#). OLA and FOPL work with [Ontario Library Service - North \(OLS - N\)](#), and [Southern Ontario Library Service \(SOLS\)](#) to support excellence in public and First Nations libraries across Ontario. This document was adapted with permission from the [Elections Toolkit](#) produced by the Ontario Non-Profit Network (ONN).

The **Ontario Library Association (OLA)** is the oldest continually-operating non-profit library association in Canada, with over 5,000 members comprised of library staff and supporters from public, school, academic, and special libraries.

The **Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL)** represents 246 public library systems in Ontario, including 45 First Nations public libraries, in communities throughout the Province.

Together, OLA and FOPL are committed to ensuring that libraries are able to continue to play a critical role in the social, education, cultural and economic success of our communities and schools.

The provincial government funds two public library support agencies: the **Ontario Library Service - North (OLS - N)** and the **Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS)**. OLS-N and SOLS provide a wide range of support services to public libraries throughout northern and southern Ontario. Their mandate is to deliver programs and services on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport by increasing co-operation and co-ordination among public library boards and other information providers, and to promote the provision of library services to the public by assisting public library boards with services and programs that reflect their needs, including consulting, training and development services.

# APPENDIX A: OLA AND FOPL'S ELECTION KEY MESSAGES

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MODERNIZED, SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR ONTARIO'S LIBRARIES

### Ontario's libraries play a **critical role** in communities and schools across Ontario

- Ontario's libraries and library staff are **helping millions of Ontarians** improve their well-being, reach their potential, and gain meaningful social connections and learning experiences.
- Libraries are **Ontario's farthest-reaching, most cost-effective resource for empowering positive change on provincial priorities** by supporting high-quality education, fostering community economic development and reducing the impacts of poverty.
- Whether in their schools or in their communities, **libraries reach millions of Ontarians through a wide range of impactful resources and programs.**
- Libraries and librarians in communities, schools, universities and colleges throughout Ontario are an essential resource for helping residents and students succeed.

### Ontario's libraries need a modern, comprehensive funding model

- Funding for libraries has fallen far below what is needed to maintain a modern and innovative library system across Ontario. A sharp and steady decline in provincial support over the past 20 years was at the root of this growing crisis.
- Until recently, the provincial funding approach to libraries threatened the long-term sustainability of libraries across Ontario.
- Insufficient funding and an ineffective, patchwork approach left many libraries struggling to keep up, leaving many communities and schools at risk of falling further behind.
- Libraries across the province have to make tough decisions about how they can continue to support the needs of their community.
- Recent provincial investments in annual base funding for public and First Nations libraries, as well as Ontario's Digital Public Library, are crucial for ensuring the sustainability of these libraries across Ontario.
- While provincial priorities may be similar, local implementation and needs are diverse. **Predictable and flexible funding will let libraries make sustainable decisions** that best respond to the needs of their local communities and users.
- **There are still significant challenges confronting school libraries, teacher-librarians, and library staffing in Ontario**, based largely on how the Ministry of Education allocates funding to school boards for library resources.

## KEY PRIORITIES FOR ONTARIO'S LIBRARIES

### 1. SUSTAINABLE, PREDICTABLE PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR ALL PUBLIC AND FIRST NATIONS LIBRARIES

- Public libraries continue to serve more members of the community and evolve to meet changing needs, but provincial base funding for public libraries was frozen for over 20 years.
- Over that time, the value of Ontario's investment in public libraries decreased by nearly 60%.
- This year, **public and First Nations libraries received a much-needed increase of \$17 million to their annual base funding from the Province.** [See press release here.](#)
- **This investment is vital** for ensuring that our libraries – in rural communities, small towns and cities like – are sustainably funded.

- **Maintaining annual base funding increases for public and First Nations** libraries will empower libraries across Ontario to address immediate issues, as well as support long-term planning to address the evolving needs of our communities

## 2. CREATING ONTARIO'S DIGITAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

- Ensuring that students and the public have **equitable access to accurate, comprehensive online resources** is more important than ever **with the growing presence of misinformation, questionable sources and "fake news"**.
- Ontario is **following in the footsteps of other provinces** – Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia – in recognizing that a provincially-managed digital library is the most cost-effective and efficient way to provide all Ontarians with equitable and seamless **access to a suite of high quality databases and learning resources**, no matter where they live in the province.
- Available resources will include **e-books, music and audiobooks; research databases; special collections; and accessible and alternative format** materials across a common web platform.
- The **Digital Public Library** will support the province's 300 public libraries, including 46 First Nation public libraries, which **serve over 99 per cent of the population**.
- **Stable, ongoing funding is necessary to ensure that Ontario's Digital Public Library is professionally managed and responsive to new technology and emerging resources.**
- That's why Ontario has committed \$28 million for the start-up and initial operations of Ontario's Digital Public Library.
- **Ensuring that students are able to access the Digital Public Library through their school library is an important next step.** We look forward to working with the Ministry of Education to make this a reality.

## 3. PROTECTING AND ENSURING STUDENT ACCESS TO SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND TEACHER-LIBRARIANS

- **Qualified teacher-librarians and properly resourced school libraries are a critical part of student success.**
- However, flexible spending decisions made by many local school boards have seen money earmarked for teacher-librarians and libraries diverted to other purposes.
- Across the province, **we estimate approximately 50% of funds that are recommended for teacher-librarians are being otherwise allocated by school boards.**
- **Many school boards in Ontario have eliminated teacher-librarians and libraries from their schools altogether.**
- We are already witnessing the negative impact that this is having for preparing students for success in university, college and the skilled trades.
- Ontario's Ministry of Education must update the education funding formula to **mandate the allocation of adequate funding for school libraries to protect and ensure that all students will have access to teacher librarians and school libraries.**
- This represents the equivalent of a critical injection of **an estimated \$100 million in annual funding** to school libraries across Ontario **without requiring any new provincial spending.**
- This represents the equivalent of a critical injection of **an estimated \$100 million in annual funding** to school libraries across Ontario **without requiring any new provincial spending.**

# APPENDIX B: RULES TO BE AWARE OF THIS ELECTION SEASON

Don't be intimidated by rules and regulations about what you can do during elections. Get informed! You should be aware of the following laws, which regulate activities during and between elections.

## LOBBYIST REGISTRATION ACT [ONTARIO]

Note: If your organization is volunteer led and run, this does not apply to you. Lobbyists are paid staff. You only need to consider registering if your organization has paid employees (or consultants) who engage in lobbying (as defined in the Lobbyist Registration Act). This Act requires lobbyists to report their activity to the Integrity Commissioner.

A change to the Lobbyists Registration Act (LRA) went into effect in July 2016 that reduced the registration threshold to 50 hours a year spent on lobbying activity across an organization. It also gave the Integrity Commissioner investigative powers and created penalties for noncompliance.

Given the significant changes and new enforcement powers, many charities and non-profits will have to review their practices and record-keeping to determine how many hours they are spending on lobbying.

**Tip:** You may want to keep a record of how many hours your organization spends on lobbying.

### 50 HOURS

Non-profits that interact **50 hours a year** or more with the government in their work may need to register (that's less than an hour a week).

The definition of lobbying is "activities intended to influence a public office holder with respect to changes to legislation, regulations, programs, privatization, and awarding of grants, contributions or financial benefits."

At the same time, other activities do not qualify as lobbying under the LRA: "Submissions made with respect to the enforcement, interpretation, or application of any act, policy, program, directive, or guideline." Registration is not required for submissions to legislative committees that are a matter of public record, submissions regarding the implementation or administration of any act, policy, program, directive or guideline, or if responding to the government's request for advice or comment.

Track your organization's lobbying hours and register once you hit 50 hours in one year.

**For more information about lobbying, please refer to the following resources:**

1. Read [ONN's briefing note](#) and [issues paper](#) that outlines the issues and what you need to know.
2. Visit the [Ontario Lobbyists Registration webpage](#) to register your organization.

*\* The federal government and several municipalities also have lobbyist registration requirements. Check your local government website for details.*

## **ELECTION FINANCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016 (BILL 2)**

Bill 2 updates the rules on third-party spenders in elections. The bill includes not only partisan but also issue-based nonpartisan advocacy in its definition of political advertising. This has the potential to create unintended consequences for non-profits that participate in democratic debate during election campaigns.

If your organization spends money advocating for or against a policy that a candidate or party takes a position on, even if your advocacy is non-partisan, you may need to register as a third-party advertiser. The rules apply to the election period itself, and the six-month period before general election periods. Check with [Elections Ontario](#) for clarification.

Non-profits are required to register as third-party political advertisers if they spend over \$500 engaging in public policy debate on issues that a candidate happens to address during the prescribed election period. There are also new financial tracking and reporting requirements.

# APPENDIX C:

## HOW DOES THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IMPACT ONTARIO'S LIBRARIES?

**School Libraries:** Municipal Jurisdiction: School Trustees (elected), and Provincial Jurisdiction: Ministry of Education.

The Ontario Ministry of Education administers the system of publicly funded elementary and secondary school education.

School boards receive money in two ways. First, some of the property taxes collected in your community go to your local school board. Second, the province tops up this amount to bring the total for each board up to the amount set out by the provincial funding formula. The provincial funding formula takes into account the many factors that make each school board unique. Funding for individual schools is the responsibility of the school boards. Occasionally there are increases to the funding formula for certain initiatives. Currently, the Ministry funding formula funds 1 Elementary Teacher-Librarian per 763 Elementary pupils and 1 Teacher-Librarian per 909 Secondary pupils. However, not all school boards allocate the recommended funding to support their school libraries, as the current funding formula provides school boards with significant flexibility to choose how to spend these funds.

**Public Libraries:** Municipal: Public Library Trustees (appointed and includes some municipal councillors who are elected), Provincial: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport administers the Public Libraries Act and statutory grants under the Act and develops provincial policies for public libraries. Municipal councils are responsible for appointing public library boards and they provide most of the funding for libraries (municipal tax dollars). A funding formula consists of a mix of provincial and municipal funding based on population sizes. The provincial allocation of funds was not changed for more than 20 years. The 2018 Ontario Budget ended this funding freeze and announced an increase to annual base funding under this allocation, as well as funds to support the Digital Public Library.

**First Nations Public Libraries:** Band Councils (usually in-kind), Provincial: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Federal (Education funds).

The traditional source of tax revenue for non-native public libraries does not exist for public libraries in First Nations communities. Instead, provincial funding for these libraries is administered by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport through the Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) and the First Nation Salary Supplement Grant (FNSS). These funds provide on average \$15,000/year to each of these existing libraries.

Federal funding for these libraries is taken from funds that are allocated for on-reserve education. Funding levels for on-reserve education are more than 30% lower than off-reserve, leaving little left to establish new libraries.

Band Councils are therefore tasked with providing essential support such as rent, hydro, internet, fax and telephone service.

**Academic Libraries:** Provincial: Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities.

The Minister of Education and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities are responsible for the administration of laws relating to education and skills training. The ministry is responsible for distributing funds allocated by the provincial legislature to colleges and universities. Colleges and Universities are also fee-based. The funding of academic libraries is at the discretion of the academic institution.

# APPENDIX D: TEMPLATES

These are sample letters that you can send to your local candidates – **just remember to remove all italicized placeholders and replace them with the appropriate information!**

## Template – Candidate Meeting Request Email

[DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE HERE](#)

**Subject: Meeting Request - [local library name]**

Dear **[name of Candidate or staff person]**,

On behalf of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL), and in my capacity as **[role]** of the **[local library name]**, I would like to request a meeting to update you on issues and opportunities impacting public and school libraries here in **[COMMUNITY]**.

Libraries are Ontario's farthest-reaching, most cost-effective resource for empowering positive change in education, poverty reduction and community economic development and poverty reduction. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss the importance of a modern, sustainable funding approach for libraries that reflects the needs of an innovative and integrated library system in Ontario, and how your support will help make this happen.

OLA is the oldest continually-operating non-profit library association in Canada, with over 5,000 members comprised of library staff and supporters from public, school, academic, and special libraries. FOPL represents 246 public library systems in Ontario, including 45 First Nations public libraries, in communities throughout the Province. Together, OLA and FOPL are committed to ensuring that libraries are able to continue to play a critical role in the social, education, cultural and economic success of our communities and schools.

Please feel free to contact me to coordinate or if you have any questions: **[email]** or **[phone]**.

Thank you,

**[name and role]**

## Template – Direct Email/Letter to Candidate with Survey on Library Issues

[DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE HERE](#)

**DON'T FORGET TO ENCLOSE THE OLA / FOLP ONTARIO LIBRARIES ELECTION BRIEF DOCUMENT.**

[Date]

[MPP]

[Office address]

Dear [name of MPP or staff person],

My name is [name], [title/organization]. On behalf of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) [indicate which of the two organizations you belong to], please find our Ontario Libraries Election Brief attached for your review and consideration.

OLA and FOPL are focused on ensuring that public and school libraries are sustainable and can continue to be Ontario's farthest-reaching, most cost-effective resource for empowering positive change in education, poverty reduction and community economic development and poverty reduction. As outlined in the attached brief, recent changes in Ontario's funding approach are addressing imminent issues that threatened the long-term viability of libraries across the province.

As [title/role] of [organization/library], I've seen firsthand how provincial decisions have impacted the well-being of our public and school libraries here in [electoral district]. [Provide any local examples if appropriate] Ontario's support for libraries must reflect the need for a modern, innovative library system that is responsive to diverse and evolving communities.

The information in this brief reflects a fiscally-responsible approach for both school and public libraries, which will ensure that all Ontarians will benefit from equitable, world-class resources in their local community – including the tens of thousands of Ontario students and First Nations communities who currently lack access to libraries and library services.

As we enter the critical election period, we at [insert library] are interested to learn your position on key issues impacting libraries and library staff here in [electoral district] and across Ontario:

1. Public libraries continue to serve more members of the community and evolve to meet changing needs, but provincial base funding for public libraries was frozen for over 20 years. This year, public and First Nations libraries received a much-needed increase of \$17 million to their annual provincial base funding. This investment is vital for ensuring that our libraries – in rural communities, small towns and cities alike – are sustainably funded.

**Do you support maintaining this critically important provincial funding for public and First Nations libraries?**

2. Access to online resources is an increasingly important part of the mix of services that public and school libraries provide. Ensuring that students and the public have equitable access to accurate, comprehensive online resources is more important than ever with the growth of misinformation, questionable sources and "fake news". But these resources are expensive. Ontario is following the proven lead of other provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan by creating an Ontario Digital Public Library of high-quality resources, accessible to all public and First Nations libraries in the province.

**Will you support the establishment of Ontario's Digital Public Library, and maintaining the critical investment needed to make this a reality?**

3. Qualified teacher-librarians and properly resourced school libraries are a critical part of student success. However, the flexibility of spending decisions by many school boards has led to money earmarked for teacher-librarians and libraries being diverted towards other uses. Many school boards in Ontario, including the Ottawa Catholic District School Board, have eliminated teacher-librarians and libraries from their schools altogether. We are already witnessing the negative impact that this is having for preparing students for success in university, college and the skilled trades. **[INSERT IF APPLICABLE: (budget/ letter reference)]**

**Will you support changes to the education funding formula to protect and ensure that all students will have access to teacher librarians and school libraries?**

**[I or We]** thank you for your interest, support and passion for Ontario’s libraries. **[I or We]** hope **[I or We]** can rely on your support for the sustainability of local public and school libraries in communities across Ontario.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My phone number is **[your telephone number]** and my email is **[your email address]**.

Sincerely,

**[Insert your name]**

## Template – Candidate Meeting Worksheet

[DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE HERE](#)

Use this worksheet to take notes that will help you prepare for your meeting and ensure that your information is stored in one place.

After your meeting, please share your meeting notes with OLA/FOPL. You have the option of submitting this by email to Sarah Roberts ([sroberts@accessola.com](mailto:sroberts@accessola.com)) or online using [this form](#).

<b>Meeting Details</b>	<b>Name of Meeting Target:</b> <b>Riding:</b> <b>Party:</b> <b>Supporting staff in attendance:</b>
<b>Meeting Attendees from OLA / FOPL</b>	
<b>Meeting Tone (Positive/Negative; Supportive/Not Supportive)</b>	
<b>Summary of Meeting Discussion</b>	
<b>Questions from Meeting Target / Staff</b>	
<b>Commitments made by Meeting Target / Staff</b>	