

Policy Title:	CFLA Statement on Third Party Use of Meeting Spaces
Policy Type:	Administration
Policy #:	ADM 13
Policy Authority:	Board
Effective Date:	January 2024
Review Date:	

Purpose

The Clarington Public Library Board endorses the “Position on Third Party Use of Publicly Funded Meeting Rooms and Facilities” from the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA).

Position on Third Party Use of Publicly Funded Meeting Rooms and Facilities

The articles of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques’ (CFLA-FCAB) Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries:

The CFLA-FCAB’s Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries, available at <https://cfla-fcab.ca/en/guidelines-and-position-papers/statement-on-intellectual-freedom-and-libraries/>, consists of explicit declarations of basic principles governing the service of all publicly funded Canadian libraries. However, questions arise regarding the application of these principles to specific library practices.

This document provides an interpretation of the CFLA-FCAB’s Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries concerning third-party use of publicly funded library meeting rooms and facilities. It affirms: “Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.”

The following points are conditional to applying CFLA-FCAB’s position on third-party use of publicly funded library meeting rooms and facilities:

- Publicly funded libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should do so on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

- Allowing the use of meeting rooms or facilities does not correlate to the library endorsing the nature of the free expression of any individual or group using a meeting room or facility.
- Controversial expression is supported in the library. Equally so, a challenge to controversial expression is supported. However, prior restraint is not endorsed as a means to avoid controversy in the library.
- Libraries must work within Canadian law and human rights codes.
- Canadian public libraries are subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which identifies freedom of expression as one of the fundamental freedoms in Canada, subject only to reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.
- Libraries have a wide range of measures available to minimize and correct violations of the law, expecting libraries to exercise due diligence and avoid being wilfully blind to illegal behaviour while ensuring their fundamental commitment to intellectual freedom.
- CFLA-FCAB is mutually committed to intellectual freedom and zero tolerance for discrimination, believing the two principles are mutually reinforcing.

Approved by CFLA Executive Council March 2019