



Partnerships

Operational

Purpose

To fulfill its mission, the Brantford Public Library develops and maintains a broad range of relationships. This policy addresses relationships between the Brantford Public Library and institutions, organizations, businesses, community groups or individuals that are not covered by the Library's Donations and Sponsorships Policy.

The purpose of the Partnerships Policy is to define under what circumstances the Library may enter into partnership and to provide guidance in the development of those relationships. Recognizing that each relationship and circumstance is unique, application of this policy will depend on the identified needs of the target group to be impacted as a result of the partnership.

Defined Terms

“Partnership” A partnership is a mutually beneficial collaboration between the Library and an institution, business, non-profit organization, community group, or individual. Partnerships are formed for a wide variety of reasons, but are consistent in that they share authority, risk, responsibility and accountability. Partnerships enable the Library to fulfill its mission and roles in the community in new or expanded ways.

“Partner” A partner is an institution, business, non-profit organization, community group, or individual that collaborates with the Library to promote, support or provide activities, services, events and programs to the public in ways that are mutually beneficial and without the contribution of funds, products or services of a defined value.

Policy

We Work in Partnership

The Library recognizes that it cannot achieve its mission and vision without working with others and holds “we work in partnership” as a core value. Library staff have certain knowledge and skills, but it is not feasible to have expertise in all areas required to serve the community. Forming partnerships allows the Library to share opportunities, and enables groups to do more by sharing resources, skills, knowledge, and ideas. Further, through partnering, partners can eliminate overlap and duplication of effort.

As a public institution, the Library is responsible to the community to work in partnership when possible. Working with others will provide a variety of perspectives resulting in decisions and projects that are more reflective of community needs and values. Combining respective skills, resources, and experiences of different institutions creates better results than are produced by institutions working alone.

In consideration of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA), working in partnership is important to understand various community needs and expectations. Engaging purposefully and meaningfully with diverse communities in particular is important to build trust with underserved communities. Conversations about the Library's services can lead to challenging one's assumptions and to ask oneself questions that allow for staff to improve or develop new services to better meet the community's needs and expectations.

Partnership Principles

Each potential partner will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. An existing or past relationship with the partner will be considered but does not guarantee a new or continued partnership.

Existing and potential partnerships with the Library will be assessed and guided by the following principles:

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

The Library recognizes that due to past and existing systemic barriers, some partners will have competing priorities that may limit their capacity within partnerships. Library staff will explore ways to adapt practices in order to support partnerships that advance IDEA within the Library or community.

Where expectations or understanding of value differ, the Library will work with partners to understand the disaccord and strive for a satisfactory outcome.

Careful planning and preparation

Library staff will be efficient and effective in all they do in order to provide quality service in a welcoming environment. This includes planning adequately before executing a joint initiative to ensure that all aspects have been considered and planned for.

Engaging all segments of the community

In providing services, the Library believes in access for all and recognizes that results cannot be achieved for those who are not part of the conversation and planning. Partnerships will be inclusive and involve demographically diverse groups and organizations from multiple sectors.

Shared purpose and complementary resources

There should be compatibility in vision, goals, and values between partners. As well, partners should each be able to add value in their own way to the partnership. The Library will seek out opportunities with partners which have knowledge, experience and strengths that it lacks.

Transparency and mutual accountability

Each partner has multiple accountabilities to a variety of stakeholders. Relevant information must be shared in order to develop expectations and commitment to remain accountable to each other and stakeholders.

Open and responsive communication

Partners need to continually share information to keep each other up-to-date on matters relating to the partnership. Each partner will commit to addressing concerns as they arise.

Ongoing evaluations and learning

Partners will jointly determine the desired results of a partnership and commit to evaluating progress on an ongoing basis. The partnership's activities will be adjusted as needed based on evaluations and as partners learn about each other. Evaluation methods will be planned together. Annually, Library staff provide a report to the Board about current partnership commitments.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities

To ensure expectations are met, roles and responsibilities will be jointly decided. This includes responsibilities related to decision-making and problem-solving. Each partner will recognize the other as autonomous and independent outside of the partnership agreement.

Types of Partnerships

Partnerships vary in scope, depth, maturity, and length. The Library will develop a variety of partnerships, each with their own objectives and parameters. Within each partnership, the Library and involved partners will jointly make decisions and shape the partnership depending on need and context. Below is a non-exhaustive list of basic partnership types.

Consultative (more common)

Partners provide input, share expertise, or exchange information in order to support the other's services.

Operational (more common)

Partners provide support through resource sharing such as space use, cross-promotion, or staff involvement in service delivery.

Decision-making (less common)

Partners participate in planning and evaluate and make decisions about service delivery.

System change (less common)

Partners, usually from multiple sectors, work together to create a system- or community- wide change.

Roles and Responsibilities

All Library departments have a responsibility for identifying new partnerships and nurturing existing ones. All staff engaged in partnerships are responsible for supporting effective communication and coordinating partnership activities. The Library will ensure that at least one designated staff person is responsible for a partnership.

The Chief Librarian/CEO, supported by the management team, is responsible for ensuring the Library Board is informed of and supports major partnership activities and initiatives. The CEO and administration team will work to seek out and advance potential partnerships consistent with this policy, however, when long term or major commitments involving staff time, space or financial obligations are involved, Library Board approval will be required before finalizing agreements.

The Library may consider advocacy opportunities in support of partners relating to issues that align with the Library's values, goals and vision. At all times, however, the Library maintains an independent position on issues and concerns.

The Library will not:

- endorse any organization, product, or service;
- sell or provide access to patron records.

Recognition

The Library will recognize each partner proportionate with the level of the partnership. Recognition methods will be mutually agreed upon by partners.

The Library reserves the right to immediately terminate an existing partnership if the partners use the Brantford Public Library's name outside the parameters of the agreement without prior consent. The Library may also cancel a partnership if a partner develops a public image that may negatively impact the Library's image in the community.

Exclusionary Criteria

Organizations are judged by the relationships they form. The Library will not associate with organizations that may affect the Library's reputation or ability to fulfill its mission. The Library will not consider or enter into partnership with any organization or individual that produces goods or services that may be considered harmful or illegal for certain members of the community, nor from organizations that, in the judgement of the Library, exploits certain members of the community in its product lines, advertising, marketing, and workforce or in any other way.

Partnership will not be formed with an organization or individual that has a claim, or has instituted a legal proceeding against the Brantford Public Library Board or the Corporation of the City of Brantford, or against who either the Board or the Corporation has a claim or instituted legal proceeding.

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: Not applicable

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