

Muskoka Lakes Township Public Library LIBRARY BOARD POLICY

Policy Type: Governance Foundation	Policy Number: GF-07
Policy Title: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Policy Approval Date: 06/10/25
Chairperson: V. Duke	Policy Review Date: 06/29

Intent:

The Muskoka Lakes Public Library (herein after referred to as the Library) understands the need to recognize and embrace the diversity of our community and strives to be a truly inclusive place which creates a sense of belonging.

The Library is committed to diversity and inclusion which is the right of people in the community to have equal access and to enjoy the benefits of the Library's services and facilities.

The Library believes in the dignity and worth of every person and that each person has the equal right and opportunity to enjoy and benefit from the Library services in an environment free of discrimination.

Regulations:

The Library supports and is compliant with human rights legislation including, but not limited to, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadian Human Rights Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Library endorses the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CLFA)'s *Position Statement on Diversity and Inclusion* (Appendix A).

Definitions:

1. **Equity:** Equity focuses on the ideals of justice and fairness. Whereas equality means providing everyone with the same number of resources regardless of whether everyone needs them, equity is when resources are shared based on what each person needs to adequately level the playing field.
2. **Diversity** promotes the understanding that each person is unique, and the recognition of individual differences. Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, economic status, physical/mental/cognitive ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, education and political beliefs, many of which are listed within the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.
3. **Inclusion** recognizes the worth and dignity of all people through involvement and empowerment. Inclusion is the act of creating environments and spaces in which any individual or group feels welcomed, valued, respected, supported and can fully participate.

An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

Declaration

The Library is committed to fostering an environment which makes equity, diversity, and inclusion a priority in planning and decision making for staffing, collections, services, and spaces.

To ensure that diversity and inclusion are a priority in planning and decision making for Library services and facilities and that discrimination and harassment are not encouraged or tolerated, the Library will:

1. Train Board members, staff and volunteers on policies, procedures and mechanisms which are designed to ensure that every person can access and use Library services and facilities and is treated without discrimination or harassment. Training will include information on accessibility, anti-racism and cultural awareness.
2. Review its policies and practices to assess and eliminate barriers in accessing services and facilities
3. Seek opportunities to involve people of diverse backgrounds in the governance, design, use and evaluation of Library services and facilities.
4. Promote equal participation by working toward the elimination of bias, prejudice and discrimination (which can be intentional, unintentional or systemic) and by promoting awareness of the benefits of a diverse community through its services.
5. Encourage members of the public to provide feedback to the Library related to any barrier experienced while using the Library and its services.

Collections

The Library will provide diverse collections relating to cultures, languages, religious traditions, and peoples, in all our formats from books to audio and video materials. A broad range of authors, content creators and experiences will be included and highlighted in our collection. The bibliographic database will use subject headings and descriptors which are more inclusive, including the use of Indigenous Subject Headings as they become available.

Services and Programming

The Library will:

1. work with our many communities to develop inclusive consultation and engagement processes and to develop services in appropriate ways
2. seek to understand how diverse community groups define and describe themselves
3. listen to and learn from communities rather than relying on indirect sources.
4. welcome the exhibit of displays and provision of programs and services that reflect and fit within the communities it serves (e.g., displays during various religious holidays, culturally significant dates, etc.)

Spaces

The Library will provide welcoming spaces for all, which will be inclusive with areas free of bias (e.g. gender neutral, universal washroom facilities, collection arrangement, etc.)



Related Documents:

MLPL ACCESS-01 – Accessibility in the Library

MLPL GF-01 – Mission Statement

MLPL GF-02 – Vision Statement

MLPL GF-03 – Statement of Values

MLPL GF-04 – Intellectual Freedom

MLPL GF-05 – Respect and Acknowledgement Declaration and Indigenous Peoples

MLPL OP-01 – User Code of Conduct

MLPL OP-22 - Programming

MLPL OP-24 – Collection Development

MLPL OPHR-02 – Human Resource Management

MLPL OPHR-06 – Workplace Discrimination and Harassment

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canadian Human Rights Act

Ontario Human Rights Code

Appendix A

Canadian Federation of Library Associations *Position Statement on Diversity and Inclusion*

“The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA-FCAB) believes that a diverse and pluralistic society is central to our country’s identity. Libraries have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that recognizes diversity and fosters social inclusion.

Libraries strive to deliver inclusive service. Canada’s libraries recognize and energetically affirm the dignity of those they serve, regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental capabilities, or income.

Libraries understand that an acceptance of differences can place individual and collective values in conflict. Libraries are committed to tolerance and understanding. Libraries act to ensure that people can enjoy services free from any attempt by others to impose values, customs or beliefs.”