



REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

FROM: Natalie Marlowe, Manager of Library Services

DATE: November 28, 2023

SUBJECT: Elgin County Library Membership and Circulation Policy Adoption

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the report titled “Elgin County Library Membership and Circulation Policy Adoption” from the Manager of Library Services dated November 28, 2023 be received and filed; and,

THAT the Elgin County Library Membership and Circulation Policy attached to this report as “Appendix A” be hereby adopted.

INTRODUCTION:

This report recommends the approval of a policy to govern membership and circulation services offered by Elgin County Library and its ten branches.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Staff recommend that County Council adopt a policy to govern how membership and circulation services offered by Elgin County Library are defined, organized, and delivered to the communities of Elgin County.

This new policy combines existing policies “Policy: Patron Registration for the Purposes of Issuing a Library Card” (2009) (see attached pdf) and [“Interlibrary Loan Policy” \(2019\)](#). This policy also formalizes current library circulation services, as a policy governing these services does not currently exist.

Membership and circulation services are a part of the key pillars of library service and support literacy, lifelong learning, and intellectual freedom through access to collections, programs, and technology. These intersecting services govern the parameters of library membership as well as principles and guidelines for access and responsible use of library collections, programs, and services, as a member.

Therefore, it is sensible to develop a policy that combines the existing policy on patron registration and thus membership (“Policy: Patron Registration for the Purposes of Issuing a Library Card”) and another existing policy on supplementary circulation service (“Interlibrary Loan Policy”), while at the same time articulating current library circulation services.

Attached to this report is a Membership and Circulation Policy which integrates the following considerations (among others):

- Methods of managing library membership in an equitable and inclusive way. It is important to be responsive and reflective of community needs, while maintaining operational needs;
- Endorsement of a statement on intellectual freedom to ensure that all points of view are respected;
- Ways to mitigate use of library membership and circulation relative to population served and established reciprocal borrowing partners. This is becoming an increasingly important consideration as the cost of digital library resources continues to climb;
- A commitment to eliminating barriers such as cost and accessibility to ensure that all County residents have the ability to use the library regardless of financial means and housing security. Membership and circulation are free services, however in instances where a cost is necessary, such as replacing a library card or replacing a library item, the policy outlines how the cost is determined. Also, fines are subject to the library’s fine-free plan to eliminate overdue fines on all library materials by December 31, 2024;
- Endorsement of a statement on information privacy and patron information confidentiality when providing personal details or offering identification for the purpose of registration;
- Criteria for creating a library card and parameters for responsible library use. Also, library and branch contact information is available for inquiries;
- A commitment to evaluating membership and circulation procedures for up to date information and policy efficiencies;
- Guidelines for all-in-one-place reference for library staff;
- An available and accessible document for communities with membership and circulation parameters including application forms for reference or interest in creating a library card.

A thorough review of policies and best practices from other public library systems in Ontario was conducted in drafting this policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Elgin County Library’s membership and circulation services are free to Elgin County Library cardholders so there is no direct financial impact in adopting this policy. Annual budget considerations now mitigate the costs of the library going fine free and receiving

less yearly revenue from cardholders on overdue fines paid. Library fines are subject to the library's fine-free plan to eliminate overdue fines on all library materials by December 31, 2024.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Serving Elgin	Growing Elgin	Investing in Elgin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth. <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhancing quality of place.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to deliver programs and services now and in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.

LOCAL MUNICIPAL PARTNER IMPACT:

None.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS:

This policy will be posted on the library's website and will be made available in all ten branches.

CONCLUSION:

The adoption of a policy to govern membership and circulation services offered by Elgin County Library provides updated information on existing membership policy content, as well as articulates circulation policy information, and will fill an existing gap in the library's policy and procedure manual.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

Natalie Marlowe,
Manager of Library Services

Don Shropshire,
Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk