



## **003 - OPLB      Board Orientation and Continuing Education**

### **Guiding Principles**

To be effective stewards of Ottawa Public Library (OPL), Board members must develop and maintain an understanding of governance and of Board and member responsibilities. They must also develop a high-level understanding of the organization they serve, key interest-holder relationships, and the library sector in general.

The CEO is responsible for developing and implementing processes to orient new Board members, and collectively, members are responsible for developing an ongoing program for the Board's continuing education. Individual Board members are each responsible for developing their own continuing education plan tailored to their needs and interests.

### **Onboarding**

Onboarding consists of both an in-person orientation session for the whole Board and a broader plan to support individual members in their term(s) of service on the Board. Onboarding, including orientation, is coordinated by the CEO and senior staff.

As a public institution, Board-related documents and reports are publicly available, as is background information about the organization. As the first step in the onboarding process, incoming members are expected to review this publicly accessible information prior to and during their onboarding period. This responsibility ensures that the orientation session can focus on understanding the governance framework and key strategic risks and opportunities, and promoting informed discussion, strategic dialogue, and collective understanding. Of note, since the Board is typically appointed shortly before budget tabling, it is essential that orientation prioritizes information about the organization's strategic financial framework.

An orientation session is provided as early in the new term of Board as is practical, and all members are required to attend and participate in orientation. Returning board

members will actively support the onboarding of new members, including at the orientation session.

Onboarding provides additional insights into the organization's key service areas and relationship-building opportunities particularly in the first year of each term of Board. Onboarding incorporates information regarding:

- The Strategic planning process, including the Strategic Priorities and the Board and Corporate Work Plan cycle;
- The Board Document Framework (By-law, position statements, policies, and other key Board-approved governance documents); and,
- A consideration of each members' unique experience and expertise.

## **Continuing Education Practice and Process**

The Board recognizes the need for, and benefit of, a continuing education program for all members. This program shall have two components:

- Board Continuing Education Program: A structured continuing education program delivered for the benefit of the Board as a whole; and,
- Board Member Continuing Education Plans: Ongoing formal and informal support tailored to the needs of individuals, as required.

## **Board Continuing Education Program**

The purpose of this program is to ensure that all Board members are provided with information and insights regarding current trends and key issues in the library sector, and how these are manifest at OPL.

The Board Chair or person delegated with this responsibility, working with the CEO, shall plan and ensure delivery of the annual continuing education program for the Board, with the input of the Governance Standing Committee. The format of the program will be tailored to meet the preferences of the current members of the Board, and could include presentations at regular Board meetings, workshops, or tours / site visits. The CEO will provide the proposed continuing education annual program, including anticipated timings and budget, for Board approval.

## Individual Board Member Continuing Education Plans

Ongoing education for individual members is a collaborative effort reflective of the needs of the organization and incorporating feedback from members about their interests. Board members may express interest in attending relevant library conferences, seminars, and workshops, or in representing OPLB in a library sector association, as part of their continuing education plan.

**Conferences or associations:** Interest in attending conferences or representing the Board at a library sector association will be solicited annually or as required; requests will be reviewed by the Governance Standing Committee before being presented to the Board for approval. Members who wish to speak at a conference on behalf of, or about their involvement with, OPLB, should submit a copy of their proposal with an official request to the Board for consideration prior to submission to the conference.

Conference attendance will be governed by the principle that each member should have the opportunity to attend a minimum of one conference during their four-year term, subject to Board and OPL priorities, and available budget. First consideration will go to members presenting or convening at a conference, or members acting as the Board's representative on a library sector association board or committee at the conference.

**Seminars or workshops:** Seminars and workshops developed and delivered by library sector organizations and associations of which OPL is a member, often available online, are also important learning opportunities and can be included in a Board member's plans without individual Board approval, provided available budget.

**Reporting:** Board members attending any library conference, seminar, or workshop of more than one day will be required to provide a written report to the Board. Such report shall be made available for distribution within two (2) Board meetings immediately following the conference, seminar, or workshop. Board members attending any library conference, seminar, or workshop of less than one day will be required to provide a verbal report to the Board at the board meeting immediately following the conference, seminar, or workshop.

**Expenses:** The level of reimbursement of associated expenses for conferences, association work, seminars, or workshops must be approved by the Board in keeping with applicable OPLB Policies and the City of Ottawa Travel Guidelines.

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