

May 19, 2022

Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee  
Chair, Laura McPhie  
Secretariat Contact: Nancy Fiorentino  
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee:

*Re: Toronto Public Library Response to [21-EX26.14 - Reviewing City of Toronto Policies Governing the Use of Libraries and City Facilities](#)*

This letter is in response to the following request that was approved by City Council at its October 1 and 4, 2021 meeting:

*6. City Council request all City Agencies and Corporations that oversee the use of spaces or facilities that are made available to the public to align their facility booking policies, procedures, guidelines, terms/conditions and complaints processes with the City's Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination and Hate Activity Policies ("Human Rights Policies") and other relevant corporate policies of the City and of their Board, as appropriate.*

*7. City Council request the Toronto Public Library Board to request the City Librarian, Toronto Public Library to consult with the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee as necessary, through the implementation process and to report their progress on implementing Part 6 above to the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee by the second quarter of 2022.*

The Toronto Public Library (TPL) facility booking policies, procedures, guidelines, terms/conditions and complaints processes have been reviewed by City Legal and are confirmed to be aligned with and implemented in accordance with the City's *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination and Hate Activity Policies*.

The following are details of the actions taken by TPL:

- In December 2017, the Toronto Public Library Board approved a revised *Community and Event Space Rental Policy*. The revisions incorporated the City of Toronto's *Hate Activity Policy* language regarding not tolerating discrimination, contempt and hatred in the use of its public facilities. Language was also added requiring that individuals and groups renting TPL spaces confirm that they will not conduct any business or activities that are in violation

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of the *Community and Event Space Rental Policy*, the *Criminal Code of Canada*, or the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

- The main objectives of TPL's *Community and Event Space Rental Policy* are to provide equitable access to library services, consistent with TPL's legislative obligations under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and to maintain a welcoming and supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment. To reflect this, the policy statement was reinforced to articulate that:
  - decisions about room bookings are based on the purpose of the booking, not the individual or group making the booking; and
  - appeals about decisions are made to the City Librarian who is the final decision maker on room booking matters.
- The Purpose statement of the policy was also strengthened in 2017 to promote TPL's objectives of providing equitable access to services and maintaining "a welcoming and supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment" (this statement is important and appears in TPL's mission statement). It means TPL welcomes diversity, and supports equity and inclusion by welcoming everyone without judgement to pursue their interests at the library. Staff maintain a welcoming and supportive environment free of discrimination and harassment by using the guidance provided in TPL's *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy* and the tools provided in TPL's *Rules of Conduct*.
- New procedures added to TPL's *Community and Event Space Rental Policy* also provide TPL staff more information about the stated purpose behind each room rental application, allowing staff to make better-informed decisions about room rental applications and to ensure that room rentals comply with TPL's policies. Language was also added to the rental contract that requires individuals and groups renting TPL spaces to confirm that they will not conduct any business or activities that are in violation of the *Community and Event Space Rental Policy*, the *Criminal Code of Canada* (including hate propaganda laws) or the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

The Toronto Public Library Board is committed to the principles outlined in the City of Toronto's *Vision Statement on Access, Equity & Diversity*, and its *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy*. This commitment is reflected in TPL's Mission and Values statements, and in specific policies, including TPL's *Community and Event Space Rental Policy*, TPL's *Rules of Conduct Policy* and TPL's *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy*, which is modelled on the City's *Human Rights and Anti-Harassment/ Discrimination Policy*. TPL's

*Community and Event Space Rental Policy* is also aligned with obligations outlined in the City's *Hate Activity Policy*, TPL's obligations under the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), and is in line with the Canadian Federation of Library Association's position on third-party use of publicly funded library meeting rooms and facilities.

Vickery Bowles.

Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

**Additional Resources:**

- [Community and Event Space Rental Policy – Revisions](#). Toronto Public Library Board. December 17, 2017.
- [Rules of Conduct Policy](#). Toronto Public Library Board. January 21, 2013.
- Toronto Public Library [Vision, Mission and Value Statements](#).
- [Human Rights and Anti-Harassment Discrimination Policy](#), Toronto Public Library Board. December 12, 2016.
- [Position on Third-Party Use of Publicly Funded Library Meetings Rooms and Facilities: An Interpretation of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#). Canadian Federation of Library Associations. March 2019.