



Guideline for Elections Policy

Guideline Owner: Strategic Planning

First Approved: August 2013

Approved By: Board

Last Reviewed: New Guideline

Summary

The Guideline for Elections Policy provides additional detailed information to guide Toronto Community Housing staff, Board members and residents in implementing and following the Elections Policy in the following areas - election activities on Toronto Community Housing property, election signs, protection of resident privacy, election-related inquiries, use of Toronto Community Housing resources and workplace conduct during an Election Period, and employees seeking political office.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to help Toronto Community Housing employees and Board members:

- ensure that residents receive timely information during official election campaigns, residents' privacy rights are upheld, and all contact with candidates and/or agents are directed to the Public Affairs division.
- understand how Toronto Community Housing resources can and cannot be used during elections, and determine which requests can be accommodated and which must be denied.
- guide their conduct during official election campaign periods, including when seeking political office.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help Toronto Community Housing residents understand Toronto Community Housing's responsibilities during election campaigns and how its resources can be used during election campaigns.

Scope

These guidelines apply to election activities on Toronto Community Housing property.

The guidelines apply to all Toronto Community Housing employees, Board members, and residents, including those running for political office.

The guidelines apply to all Toronto Community Housing resources including, but not limited to, employees, events, facilities, funds, information and infrastructure.

Guideline Details

1. Election Activities on Toronto Community Housing Property

Toronto Community Housing employees must ensure that:

- election workers provide proper identification and display that identification to gain access to Toronto Community Housing property for election-related work.
- official election workers and candidates or their agents have reasonable access to Toronto Community Housing property to perform their duties (i.e. enumeration of electors, revision of voters' lists, canvassing).

Toronto Community Housing employees will not:

- discard or tamper with election print materials (i.e. pamphlets or voter registration information) delivered by election officials, candidates or their agents.

2. Election Signs

The City of Toronto's Municipal Code provides rules and regulations regarding election signage that candidates must observe for any election in the City of Toronto.

- Signs may not be illuminated or attached to trees.

- No person is allowed to deface or willfully cause damage to a lawfully erected election sign.
- Signs cannot be placed between the curb and the sidewalk.
- Signs cannot interfere with the safe operation of vehicular traffic or with the safety of pedestrians.
- Signs cannot be located adjacent to a voting place.
- Signs may only be erected with the consent of the resident.
- Signs may be higher than two metres above ground level provided they are displayed indoors. They may not be attached to the outside of a balcony or terrace.

Election signs may be erected on Toronto Community Housing property subject to the following conditions:

- Residents are permitted to post election signs anywhere considered to be within their personal unit. This includes in fenced off yards and on fences attached to their unit.
- Election signs may not be posted in common areas.
- Toronto Community Housing employees are required to remove election signs from common or prohibited areas or signs that are in contravention of the City's rules.

3. *Protection of Resident Privacy*

- Toronto Community Housing employees must not provide resident lists to election candidates.

4. *Election-related Inquiries*

- All election-related inquiries to employees or Board members from reporters, candidates or their agents must immediately be directed to the Manager of Media Relations and Issues Management, Strategic Communications. Employees should also inform their managers of the inquiry.
- It is the responsibility of Strategic Communications to coordinate and determine the most appropriate response.

- Information that is provided by Toronto Community Housing employees to one candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election will be provided to all others, either by posting information on the internet or through other means. The sharing of information with a candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election will be coordinated through Strategic Communications.
- Requests by a candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election for personal meetings with the Officers, board members and Executive Management or other Toronto Community Housing employees, and requests for tours for information of Toronto Community Housing facilities may not always be accommodated due to resource and time constraints. If a meeting or a tour is organized for one candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election, all will be invited.

5. Use of Toronto Community Housing Resources during an Election

Toronto Community Housing cannot make a contribution including money, goods and services to any candidate political party, registrant or in support of a question on a ballot during an election or at any other time. This is also stated in the Expense Reimbursement Policy Procedures.

Toronto Community Housing resources cannot be used to promote one candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot over another during an election or any other time.

- Toronto Community Housing supports resident engagement in elections. To facilitate this engagement, all-candidate meetings can be held at Toronto Community Housing facilities provided that all candidates for an office or all registrants are invited to attend.
- Candidates, political party representatives, registrants or supporters of a question on a ballot during an election are

- permitted to attend Toronto Community Housing events, or events held at Toronto Community Housing facilities, as private citizens, but must not solicit votes for themselves, a political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot. No election signs may be posted and no campaign materials may be handed out at Toronto Community Housing events.
- Once the writ is issued for Provincial or Federal elections, MPPs and MPs are no longer elected officials and should not be invited to attend Toronto Community Housing events in their capacity as elected officials.
 - Candidates for municipal or school board election may attend Toronto Community Housing events but may not solicit votes for themselves or display election signs or campaign materials.
 - After August 1 in the municipal election year, Toronto Community Housing will not reference the name of a Member of Council in:
 - Advertising and other communications materials paid for by Toronto Community Housing funds and distributed by Toronto Community Housing.
 - Event signage, including banners and posters.
 - Media releases issued by Strategic Communications.
 - Toronto Community Housing communications materials, including websites or domain names funded or administered by Toronto Community Housing and social media, blogs or other new media created and managed by Toronto Community Housing employees, whether for internal or public distribution, must not:
 - Profile (name or photograph), refer to and/or identify any individual as a candidate in any election or a registrant in a question on a ballot.
 - Profile any slogan or symbol associated with a candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election.

- Advocate for or against a particular candidate, political party, registrant or a supporter of a question on a ballot during an election.
- Photographic or video materials which have been or may be created by Toronto Community Housing employees or with Toronto Community Housing resources must not be used in any campaign materials.
- The Toronto Community Housing logo must not be used in any campaign materials.

6. *Workplace Conduct during Election Period*

Toronto Community Housing employees are not permitted to:

- use or allow the use of Toronto Community Housing resources for campaigning activities. Toronto Community Housing resources include employee time, as well as events, facilities, funds, information and infrastructure.
- canvass or work in support of a candidate or question on a ballot during working hours. Working hours do not include vacation time or time on leaves of absence.
- display election campaign items at work.
- campaign or attend campaign activities while in Toronto Community Housing uniform.
- solicit funds for a candidate from co-workers either at work or outside work.

Executives and senior management of Toronto Community Housing may not take part in municipal campaign activities.

7. *Employees Seeking Political Office*

Toronto Community Housing employees who are running for political office must apply for a leave of absence if their campaign activities will affect their ability to perform their regular job duties. The employee must provide written notice to his/her manager at least two weeks in advance of his or her intention to take unpaid leave.

For municipal and school board elections, the leave must:

- be no longer than 30 days from the beginning of the statutory nomination period to polling day.
- be no shorter than the time from the last day of the nomination period up to and including polling day.
- start the next working day after the employee files their candidacy.

For provincial and federal elections, the leave must be:

- no longer than from the day the election is called to 2 days after polling day.
- no shorter than from the day provided by statute for the nomination of candidates up to polling day.

(i) Conflict of Interest

- Employees on an approved leave of absence from Toronto Community Housing remain employees of the organization and are bound by all Toronto Community Housing policies.
- While campaigning, employees on political leave must clearly state at all times that the views they express are personal views, and not those of Toronto Community Housing.

(ii) Salary and Benefits

- Political leave is unpaid, and benefits can be continued at the employees' expense.
- For management and exempt employees, continuous service and vacation entitlement are not affected by a leave without pay, where the leave is for one month or less.
- Bargaining unit employees are subject to the provisions in their existing collective agreement.

(iii) Election to Political Office

- An employee who is elected to political office must resign from Toronto Community Housing if the political office will interfere with their ability to perform their regular duties.
- The resignation must take effect within two weeks after the election.

(iv) Re-Appointment

- Toronto Community Housing has no obligation to re-hire employees who have resigned their position to take political office.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Strategic Planning: As Policy Owner, Strategic Planning is responsible for the administration of this policy. All issues with respect to this policy and guidelines should be directed toward Public Affairs.
- Division Heads: Division Heads are responsible for the application of this policy and guidelines to Toronto Community Housing resources, facility and employees managed by their Divisions.
- Toronto Community Housing Employees: Employees are responsible for understanding and applying this policy and guidelines and for seeking clarification and advice if required.

Compliance

- Staff will be informed of the policy before and during all elections.

Definitions

Election –

- An election or by-election at the municipal, school board, provincial or federal level of government, or the submission of a question or by-law to the electors

Election Materials –

- Any materials advertising or promoting a candidate in an election that are intended to influence persons to vote for or against a candidate or a question on a ballot. Materials may include literature, banners, posters, pictures, buttons, clothing, etc. Election materials also include materials in all media, including websites or social media.

Election Period –

- The official campaign period of an election.
 - For a municipal or school board election, the election period commences on the first Monday of January of an election year and ends on voting day.
 - For a provincial or federal election, the election period commences the day the writ for the election is issued and ends on voting day.
 - For a question on the ballot, the period commences the day City Council passes a by-law to put a question to the electorate, and ends on voting day.
 - For a by-election, the period commences when the by-election is called and ends on voting day.

Employee –

- Employees include management and exempt employees and all members of TCHC bargaining units.

Political Office -

- The elected offices of a school board or municipal, provincial or federal government.

Reasonable access –

- Reasonable access for election workers is between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Access outside of those hours is not allowed.

Toronto Community Housing Resources-

- Resources including but not limited to employees, events, facilities, funds, information and infrastructure.

Where

- “Events” means events funded or organized by Toronto Community Housing including events that may be jointly organized with residents, community organizations and/or with external sponsors.
- “Facilities” means the common areas or grounds of any facility which is owned or leased by Toronto Community Housing.
- “Information” means any information in the custody and control of Toronto Community Housing, including databases that may be the repository of names, contact information, business records, financial information or other identifiers compiled and used by Toronto Community Housing employees to conduct Toronto Community Housing business.
- “Infrastructure” means any physical or technology systems that support the operation of Toronto Community Housing, including but not limited to fleet vehicles, computer network, telecommunications and GroupWise e-mail system, wireless equipment, computer hardware, software and peripherals, internet and intranet.

Commencement and Review

- These guidelines take effect August 21, 2013
- Next Review Date August 2015