



LET'S GET LOUD FOR MB
LIBRARIES

MUNICIPAL ELECTION TOOLKIT 2026

**Manitoba Library
Association**

**Municipal Election Date
October 28, 2026**

INTRODUCTION

The Manitoba Library Association (MLA) has created this election toolkit to help engage candidates and the public on the topic of support for public libraries.

It's more important than ever to ensure our elected municipal government officials truly understand the value and importance of Manitoba Libraries.

Do you know how much our municipal governments affect our daily lives? It sets policy and direction for your community, it approves budgets, it passes bylaws – all that affect your day-to-day services including roads, water, parks, recreation and **your public library**. What is your role? You can participate in consultations, speak with your local representatives, provide feedback and **VOTE**.

Inside this kit you will find the following helpful tools needed to communicate with candidates:

1. MLA's top priorities for the 2026 municipal and school board elections;
2. an email/letter template for contacting candidates;
3. suggested questions to pose to candidates;
4. social media to share with your social networks;
5. a list of helpful resources related to the value of public libraries.

Whether you are a library worker or a member of the general public, you are encouraged to customize this information to suit the advocacy needs of your library/library system, and/or to assist your support of Manitoba libraries.

What about school libraries?

MLA's toolkit is focused on public libraries and public library services. School libraries are also of pressing interest to Manitobans. Our partners at the Manitoba School Library Association have created the **Advocating For Your School Library guide**, available from the **MSLA website**, which contains questions for candidates pertaining to school libraries. MSLA calls for school board trustees to support equitable education, fully funded school libraries, diverse materials for critical thinking, and protecting child rights. We know that these topics of public education, and response to the rise in 2SLGBTQIA+ discrimination are also pertinent topics for MLA's membership. More information about school board trustee elections can be found on the [Manitoba School Boards Association](#).

OUR ELECTION PRIORITIES

1. **Increase operating funds** for public libraries in Manitoba cities, towns and villages.
2. **Advocate for reliable access to broadband and internet services** to improve communication for all especially those in rural, and First Nations communities.
3. **Support and defend all libraries, librarians, and library workers.** Librarians are trained to carefully curate collections that reflect diverse communities of all ages.

Vote for candidates who...

- **Understand** the work and services of their community's library.
- **Uphold** the value of human rights and intellectual freedom, and embrace diversity.
- **Value** the expertise, knowledge and education of library professionals.

**The average return on \$1
invested in libraries is \$5.38**

*(Canadian Public Library
Impact Studies, 2013-2023)*

**How do public libraries
support communities?**



Vote for candidates with a vision and knowledge of public library services.

Public libraries support the communities they serve by providing:

- **Access to information and technology** including access to a variety of books and a variety of perspectives
- **Literacy and learning** for people of all ages
- **Community gathering** space

EMAIL & LETTER TEMPLATES

These templates are only suggested. Customization is encouraged. Copy and paste the text below, or download and edit our editable template using the links below.

To Candidates

[LINK
TO EDIT](#)

Dear **[insert name of candidate]**,

I write on behalf of **[insert name of library or library board, etc.]** to commend you for running in this year's election and to learn your views about public library service in **[insert name of municipality/community]**.

Public libraries are long-established as important hubs that serve the intellectual, social, economic, and cultural needs of the communities they serve. Access to information, support for early and life-long literacy, and access to an increasing range of technologies are just some of the ways library service supports our community. In addition to these, **[insert name of library]** offers **[describe unique offers or initiatives, share highlights from your most recent annual report, etc.]**.

We are very interested to learn your thoughts on public library service in **[insert name of community/municipality]**. We ask that you take time to review the questions below and respond to us as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
[xxxxxx]

[LINK
TO EDIT](#)

For Library Users and Supporters

Dear **[insert name of candidate]**,

I write to commend you for running in this year's election and to learn your views about public library service in **[insert name of municipality/community/riding]**.

Public libraries are long-established as important hubs that serve the intellectual, social, and cultural needs of their communities. Access to information, support for early and life-long literacy, and access to an increasing range of technologies are just some of the ways library service supports our community. In addition to these, **[insert name of library]** offers **[describe unique offers, initiatives, services, etc. from your library]** which is of personal importance to **[me/my household/my community]**.

I am very interested to learn your thoughts on public library service in **[insert name of community/municipality/riding]**. I ask that you take time to review the questions below and respond to me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
[xxxxxx]

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES AT THE DOOR OR FORUM

Choose whichever questions resonate most with you!

Experience with their local library

- Do you have a library card?
- How often do you or your family make use of the public library?
- Which services offered by the library do you use?
- How have libraries influenced you over your life and career?

Funding

Public libraries are primarily funded by the province and by their municipalities. Growing needs requiring funding support include:

- **Safety and security for staff and patrons** as the library faces the challenges of remaining an open and welcoming space for everyone in our complex and diverse communities.
 - **Digital access and support** for all municipal libraries across the province – even those in rural and remote areas.
 - **Professional development** to keep on top of issues like AI and other digital technologies and trends. The public relies on the library to help them navigate the growing technology advances and to do so safely and securely.
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- What is your knowledge of library funding in **[Municipality name]**?
 - What will you do to ensure that our community members have access to a fully funded public library?

Supporting Rural and Northern Communities

Public libraries often serve as **the only point of access to internet service** for northern, rural, and limited income Manitobans. In turn, public libraries are limited to the commercial internet service options in the service area and costs are a factor in their decisions.

- What would you do to increase access to reliable, high-speed, internet service for northern and rural communities?
- How would you help support public libraries in accessing more cost-effective internet service options to better serve our community members?

Vision for public library service

Edit these questions to use with your school board trustees as well.

- How important is your community's public library system to you and the people you are seeking to represent? And why?
- What is your vision for public library service in [insert community name]?
- How will you support the necessity for diverse, inclusive, and culturally relevant literature and programming in our community's public library?
- How will you ensure all in your municipality, including First Nations communities, have access to equitable public library service?
- How will you support your public libraries if faced with calls to censor/ban LGBTQ+ materials from their library collections?
- As many municipalities struggle to contend with socio-economic issues of poor access to mental health services, addictions, and poverty, how will you assist the library workers who support those who are struggling with these issues on a daily basis?

TAKING ACTION

From now until the Election on **October 28, 2026**, MLA will be posting information that we urge you to share with your networks. You can help spread the word about what Manitobans deserve in terms of their library programs and services, no matter where you live in Manitoba. Help stop the spread of misinformation – support your creative and hard-working library staff by encouraging access to books, information and programs for **all** of our community members.

Municipal Election Checklist

- ☐ Write a letter/email
- ☐ Share info on your socials
- ☐ Attend a community forum
- ☐ Share this toolkit
- ☐ Check out our resource list
- ☐ Vote

Voting Information

Click the links below to learn more.

-  [Eligibility to Vote](#)
-  [Voting Opportunities](#)
-  [Personal Security Protection](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Internet/Broadband Issues in Manitoba

- [Manitoba and a Digital-First Future: The Implications of Connectivity on Tech-Equity and Education](#). Internet Society of Manitoba. “Broadband speeds in Manitoba are among the slowest in Canada” (page 3).
- [Manitoba Rural Broadband Project](#), Brandon University Rural Development Institute.
- [State of Broadband in Manitoba and Canada](#), Brandon University Rural Development Institute. 84% of Canadians have access to CRTC minimum standard broadband, versus 69% of Manitobans, 2020.
- [Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas](#), Auditor General of Canada. 2023.

Economic Impacts

- [The Impact of Canada’s Public Libraries](#) (Canadian Urban Libraries Council 2026)
- The Case for Canada’s Public Libraries (Canadian Urban Institute 2023): https://canurb.org/wp-content/uploads/CUI_Overdue_report_10.04.23.pdf
- [Written Submission in advance of Federal Budget 2025](#) (Canadian Federation of Library Associations)
- [The Canadian Wellness Index: a better way to assess and communicate the benefits of libraries](#) (Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research, vol. 16, no. 2 (2021))
- [Libraries Build Business](#) (Digital Skills for Workforce and Small Business Development) from ALA 2025
- [Libraries Build Business](#) (Business and Career Support for Immigrants and New Arrivals) from ALA 2025

Municipal Governance

- [Residents’ Guide – Your Local Government: A Resident’s Guide to Services, Roles & Good Governance](#) (Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators). This guide provides clear, plain-language explanations of municipal governance, services, and decision-making processes across Canadian municipalities.
- [A Resident’s Guide Toolkit](#) (15 pages)

Elections Legislation

- [The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act](#): Sets out the process for electing members of council for all municipalities and school boards.
- [The Municipal Act](#): Sets municipal election requirements for the 136 municipalities outside of Winnipeg.
- [The City of Winnipeg Charter](#): Sets municipal election requirements for the City of Winnipeg.
- [The Public Schools Act](#): Sets requirements for the election of school trustees.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Winnipeg at a Crossroads – Alternative Municipal Budget 2022, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, public libraries section submitted by the Manitoba Library Association. See pages 87-93 for general language about public library impacts.

Winnipeg Public Library – Library Value Calculator

Manitoba Library Association – Strategic Plan (2026-2030)



**Manitoba
Library Association**

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