![Burlington Public Library logo]

BPL Library Board

Agenda

Thursday, March 26, 2026

Frank Rose Room, Central Branch, 6:30 p.m.

Burlington Public Library acknowledges the Treaty Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as well as the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Anishinabek peoples. We honour the timeless connection that Indigenous communities and Urban Indigenous residents maintain with the land, water, and sky, recognize their enduring stewardship, and acknowledge our shared responsibility to sustain and protect the earth. Through our collections, programs, and partnerships, Burlington Public Library seeks to amplify Indigenous voices and perspectives, providing opportunities for our community to engage in dialogue, education, and healing.

A light dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of the Agenda

3. Welcome and Intent for Gathering

4. Declarations of Interest

5. Presentations:

Board Development: Policy & Documentation Framework

6. Consent Items

6.1 Open Minutes of February 26, 2026
6.2 CEO Report
6.3 Digital Equity Report

7. Decision Items

7.1 BPL Board Succession Plan

8. Discussion Items

8.1. Board Policy Framework Review Report
8.2. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Report

9. Information Items - None

10. Closed Session - None

11. Approval of Motions from Closed Session

12. Other Business - None

13. Next Meeting:

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 6:30 p.m., Frank Rose Room

BPL Board Minutes | February 26, 2026

Attendance

Board: Jason Manayathu, Jennifer Tarnawski, Lindsay Zalot, Akindayomi Odedeyi, Councillor Lisa Kearns (via Zoom)

Staff: Lita Barrie, Nicole Tewkesbury, Meg Uttangi Matsos, Elise Copps, Meg DeForest, Cindy Tchorz

Regrets: Ashley Cameron, Shayne Lemieux

Minutes

A meeting of the Board was held on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at the Central Branch.

1. Call to Order

Jason Manayathu, Library Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The Library Board removed 6.4 Halton Information Service Providers Report from the consent agenda for a brief discussion

Motion 26-10, Approval of the Agenda

MOVED by Lindsay Zalot, SECONDED by Jennifer Tarnawski, that the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

3. Welcome and Intent for Gathering

4. Declarations of Interest – None

5. Presentations:

- Board Development: Halton Information Providers

Meg DeForest, Manager of Outreach and Inclusion, presented on Halton Information Providers' purpose and service access, noting upcoming updates following a 2025 service review and strategic planning process.

Councillor Lisa Kearns joined the meeting at 7:12 p.m. via Zoom.

Following the presentation, the Library Board conducted a brief discussed on the Halton Information Service Providers report.

Meg DeForest left the Library Board meeting at 7:29 p.m.

- Board Development: National Social Impact Study
  Lita Barrie, CEO, presented the key findings from the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) national social impact study. BPL was one of 26 libraries from across Canada that participated in this research.

6. Consent Items:

6.1. Open Minutes of January 22, 2026
6.2. CEO Report
6.3. 2025 Requests for Reconsideration Report

Motion 26-11, Consent Agenda Items

MOVED by Akindayomi Odedeyi, SECONDED by Jennifer Tarnawski, that all items listed under the heading of Consent Items for the Library Board meeting dated February 26, 2026, will be adopted as recommended.

CARRIED.

7. Decision Items - None

7. Discussion Items – None

8. Information Items – None

9. Closed Session - None

10. Other Business - None

The meeting is adjourned at 8:08 p.m. Motion by Lindsay Zalot.

_____   _____
Chair   Secretary-Treasurer

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 26, 2026, 6:30 p.m., Frank Rose Room, Central Branch

6. Consent Items: 6.2 CEO Report - March Update

Table of Contents

Purpose

The CEO report for March 2026 summarizes key activities that support the priorities outlined in BPL's 2026-2027 Strategic Plan. This report covers items that are not part of the Board package.

Enhance community well-being by helping people feel connected, accepted, and empowered to achieve their goals.
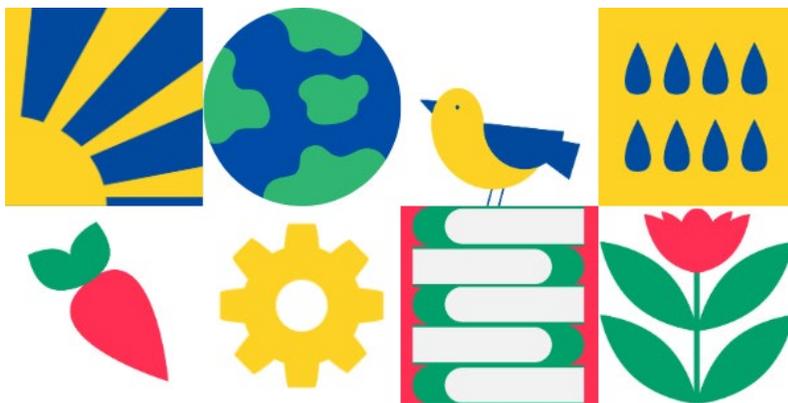
Earth Month

BPL will mark Earth Day, all month long this April with a wide range of free programs for all ages focused on sustainability, nature, and creative reuse. Branch displays throughout will feature staff-curated book bundles on environmental themes, alongside free Government of Canada biodiversity booklets for children while supplies last.

Adult and teen programming includes author talks spotlighting bird-focused titles, a session on herbal medicine, a beginner-friendly gardening workshop with Halton Master Gardeners, a Repair Café for small appliances, and a screening of the environmental film Dark Waters. BPL's Seed Library also reopens April 1 for the growing season.

Children and family highlights include Earth Day Storytime, a Build a Green Village recycled-materials craft activity, STEAM: Earth Day Edition, Spring Songs & Stories with performer Pete Moss, and more.

A Craft Supply Drive runs throughout April, with teens able to earn volunteer hours by helping sort donations on a designated Sorting Day.

March Break

BPL offered a full week of free programming for children and families during March Break across its branch locations. Activities were designed to foster curiosity, creativity, and community connection.

Registered programs included Paint by Sticker, Stretch, Breathe & Create — a yoga and mindfulness craft session, and a Nintendo Switch gaming event. The week is wrapping up with an interactive family magic show at the Central branch on March 21.

Drop-in programming included the March Break Stay-Cation Party, Stuffies Night at the Library, Tech Petting Zoo hands-on tech exploration, Family STEAM Time, and Board Game Drop-ins. Throughout the week, all branches also offered March Break Bingo, encouraging kids to complete a full row of squares for a prize.

Inspire discovery with collections, services, and spaces that reflect our evolving community.

Maker Services Improvements

Beginning March 30, creators of any experience can use BPL's [three creative maker spaces](#) in new ways that are tailored to their skills, needs, and projects.

BPL is introducing a new reservation system for Central's MakerSpace and Alton's MakerStation, which is the same system used for booking free meeting spaces, renting library rooms, or accessing the MakerStudio at the New Appleby Branch.

These updates are intended to accommodate users of all experience levels and ensure BPL's ability to provide reliable access hours.

Burlington Digital Archive

Two new collections have been added to the Burlington Digital Archive:

- Burlington Horticultural Society: The Burlington Horticultural Society (BHS), also known as Gardeners of Burlington, was established in March of 1919. The digitized collection includes a scrapbook documenting the society's history and a selection of newsletters. More newsletters and records are available in the Burlington History Room.
- Burlington Runners Club: The Burlington Runners Club (BRC) began in 1967 as an extension of the local YMCA. The Burlington Runners Club fonds includes issues of their club newsletters and photographs from 1977 to present.

We've also been adding to the BPL collection, with amazing photos of our branches and library staff from years past.

- Burlington Public Library: The Burlington Public Library fonds documents the history of the library and resources, programs and services. The fonds includes photographs, newsletters, published reports and plans, correspondence, meeting agendas and minutes, marketing and promotional materials, scrapbooks, and more.

Nurture a workforce culture driven by our organizational values.

Great Place to Work

The 2026 Great Place to Work Best Workplaces list have been released. BPL has been recognized in the following categories:

- 2026 Best Workplaces™ in Canada
- 2026 Best Workplaces™ for Women
- 2026 Best Workplaces™ Led by Women

Battery Recycling

Both BPL and City of Burlington will cease providing battery recycling collection for the public on March 25th. Unfortunately, BPL was advised that the service will no longer be available for free. After March 25th, staff will be directing customers to retail organizations in the community where they can drop off their batteries for recycling. This information will be added to our website.

Report Author

Respectfully submitted: Lita Barrie, Chief Executive Officer

6. Consent Agenda: 6.3 Digital Equity Progress Report

Purpose

To update the Library Board on the progress and completion of BPL's Digital Equity Plan and provide a summary of activities related to digital equity completed in 2025.

Background

In January 2024, the board received BPL's Digital Equity Plan 2024-2025. The plan mapped out how we will increase access and reduce barriers to achieve digital equity. It is divided into four interconnected parts.

Digital Infrastructure: the hardware and software the library uses to share information, connect people, and deliver our services. This includes software, like Polaris and Freshdesk, and hardware, like our servers, staff computers, and Wi-Fi access points.

Digital Access and Technology: the items we provide for library customers to use. This includes internet access, devices, and online collections.

Digital Literacy and Skills Building: the ability to keep up with changes in technology through knowledge and skills. This exists in our customer-facing service, as well as staff training and confidence.

Digital Trust: the level of confidence library customers have in our ability to provide a secure and reliable digital experience.

Discussion

Digital equity is about everyone having access to the information and technology they need to contribute to and succeed in a digital world. BPL's Digital Equity plan outlined ways to assess whether and how the library is meeting our community's digital needs, review current offerings, learn about our own comfort with technology, develop skills, and plan for a digital future that includes everyone. As the timeline for the plan comes to completion, a detailed summary of completed actions and future direction is presented in the Progress Report.

Following best practice, BPL's reporting on digital equity will focus on public-facing actions as it relates to IT infrastructure and staff learning and development. Items that may pose a risk from an organizational IT infrastructure and cyber-security perspective will be addressed through the risk management report.

Financial Considerations

The majority of the work outlined in the Digital Equity Plan is funded through the library's approved Operating and Capital budgets. Participation in Library Impact Ontario (Bridge) is maintained by Toronto Public Library through provincial funding. When applicable, other grant funding, sponsorship and donation opportunities are explored.

Strategic Implications

The Digital Equity Plan was developed under BPL's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan which outlined the importance of planning for a digital future in all three strategic priority areas and continues to be highlighted in BPL's current strategic plan.

Goal 2.2 of BPL's 2026-2027 Strategic Plan clearly aligns with digital equity: "BPL's resources and staff empower customers to participate in our increasingly digital society". Strategic Plan objectives focused on this area include:
- 2.2.1 Expand access to Maker equipment and learning opportunities across Library branches with a focus on digital skill building
- 2.2.2 Provide high quality technology skills programming that meets community learning needs
- 2.2.3 Support tech-curious customers to explore digital formats for books, magazines, and news as print options become less available

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Considerations

Digital equity strives to remove barriers to digital inclusion, especially for groups who have been underserved and underrepresented. The library recognizes that while expanding and growing access and support of new technology, there are many in our community that still seek low-tech ways to interact with library services. We will continue to ensure that alternate options are available to them.

Sustainability Considerations

BPL's Sustainability Plan includes climate change mitigation, adaptation and climate equity considerations. Technology replacement cycles and trends can be harmful to the environment in terms of manufacturing and waste. BPL's processes seek to reduce waste, minimize resource overuse and employ recycling practices while supporting digital access.

Risk Management

BPL's Digital Equity Plan provides an important opportunity for the library to demonstrate our mission and values to the community and serves to respond to community needs. This work strengthens the awareness and skills of staff and library customers with regard to cyber security. Items that may pose a risk from a cyber-security perspective will be addressed through the risk management report.

Policy

The Digital Equity plan and progress align with BPL's Technology Use Policy, Protection of Customer Privacy Policy, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy and the library's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. It also builds on work that is ongoing around developing BPL's values and creating a workforce culture that aligns with these values.

Report Authors

Respectfully submitted: Lita Barrie, CEO and Meg Uttangi Matsos, Director, Service Design & Innovation.

6.3 Digital Equity Progress Report 2025

Table of Contents

Statement of Commitment

Burlington Public Library is committed to providing access to and support for digital tools, services, and resources. The vision for digital equity is that individuals in our community have access to information and technology that is necessary to contribute and succeed in a digital world.

It is important as a public library to address our role in digital equity. Part of BPL's mission aims to support an informed and literate society. Through the digital lens, this looks like creating opportunities for customers and library staff to learn about technology, offering ways to connect and access new technology, and enhancing community wellbeing by building comfort and confidence in the digital environment. Our plan seeks to intentionally assess needs, determine areas for growth and develop actions to address our goals.

BPL's digital equity journey is grounded in our understanding of inclusivity and accessibility through library service, our sense of innovation and engagement in lifelong learning.

Digital Equity Progress Report 2025

This report documents progress in the implementation of BPL's Digital Equity Plan, presented to the library board in January 2024. It also serves as an update on the actions taken to promote and foster a digital future within our organization and community.

Moving from Plan to Operations

In 2025, BPL staff developed a documentation framework to help provide clarity about the role and types of documentation used within the organization. The framework defines a plan as a structured, time-bound document—commonly spanning one to three years—that provides targeted actions, strategies, and anticipated outcomes to accomplish established goals or objectives. In some cases, when the timeline of a plan is complete, the priorities from the plan become embedded into operations. Elements of the Digital Equity Plan have become part of ongoing work in all departments.

Goal 2.2 of BPL's 2026-2027 Strategic Plan clearly aligns with digital equity: "BPL's resources and staff empower customers to participate in our increasingly digital society". Strategic Plan objectives focused on this area include:

- 2.2.1 Expand access to Maker equipment and learning opportunities across Library branches with a focus on digital skill building
- 2.2.2 Provide high quality technology skills programming that meets community learning needs
- 2.2.3 Support tech-curious customers to explore digital formats for books, magazines, and news as print options become less available

Additionally, objectives around digital resource access and staff expertise and skills building incorporate elements of digital equity. Operationalizing BPL's Service Model will also include overlaying key accountabilities identified in the Digital Equity Plan with the service stream framework. As BPL achieves the goals of the Strategic Plan, many of the digital equity outcomes will become part of the work that the library does.

Piloting Technology-Focused Customer Experience Roles

In 2025, BPL had the opportunity to pilot two new full-time positions within the Customer Experience team with a direct focus on digital equity and technology service. Traditionally, technology roles only existed under the Information Technology

department. The intent was to support and assist the work that front-line staff are accountable for, specifically customer-facing technology in service delivery. The outcomes of the pilot will determine how BPL can incorporate digital service roles in the organization.

- Digital Equity Project Support – This 3-month temporary role was part of the Customer Experience team playing a key part in informing priorities within the "Digital Literacy and Skill Building" section of BPL's Digital Equity Plan. The position was responsible for doing research and gathering data to inform this progress report and future directions. The staff member assessed customer technology and made recommendations for service delivery and staff support in collaboration with the Director of Service Design & Innovation, Branch Managers, Makerspace Coordinator and CE team. The final output for this role is an internal written report.
- Customer & Digital Technology Associate – This 1-year temporary position champions service and assistance for a range of in-branch customer-facing technologies, including public computers, print services, and Makerspace equipment. The staff member collaborates and consults with IT, the MakerSpace Coordinator, and other departments to maintain branch technology procedures, assists colleagues with troubleshooting, and ensures customers and staff are encouraged and supported in the effective use of library technology. The role includes delivering programming with a focus on digital literacy.

Launch of One-to-One and Small Group Technology Assistance Programs

One of the areas where BPL wasn't providing service like other comparator libraries was in offering one-to-one or small group technology assistance. Because of the staffing capacity required to deliver this type of service, reintroduction of BPL's volunteer program needed to take place first. This launched in 2025 and BPL recruited Tech Connect volunteers.

Building on the results of BPL's collaboration with McMaster University's Gilbrea Centre for Studies in Aging on a Dementia Friendly Tech Club project, the library introduced two new models for one-to-one technology assistance programming:

- Tech Connect – A four-week, hands-on program designed for older adults to learn to use their own devices. Exploring a different topic each week, such as understanding email, taking photos/videos on a device, and using communication apps like WhatsApp and FaceTime. Each class includes time for hands-on practice, questions, and small-group support from trained volunteers.

- Tech Café - One-on-one support for everyday tech questions offered in a drop-in environment. Through a partnership established with Acclaim Health, trained volunteers help older adults navigate their device, use apps for texting, sharing photos, email, internet basics, online safety, and more. Monthly programs will begin in April 2026.

Survey Results for 2024-2025

The Digital Equity Plan was developed using BPL's results using the Edge 2.0 assessment completed in 2020 and 2023. Edge 2.0 is a U.S. based tool maintained by Urban Library Council and some of the categories focused on health, government and education resources were not relevant to the needs of Canadians. In 2024, BPL joined Library Impact Ontario and began using the Bridge toolkit maintained by Toronto Public Library through provincial funding. As a result, some of the categories and outcomes do not align with the original assessment. Below is a summary of the results gathered using the Bridge Technology Surveys for staff and customers.

Bridge Customer Technology Survey
The survey is designed to measure customer satisfaction and the impact of technology services among library users. BPL launched the survey website in March 2024 and promoted it four times in 2024 and twice in 2025, in alignment with other Bridge-participating libraries.

For 2024-2025, BPL received 328 responses and scored similarly to comparator libraries in most areas. Because of the way the survey is designed the further you get responding to more specialized questions, the lower the total respondents become. While it is difficult to draw conclusions from a small sample size, some noted results are listed below:
- 94.2% of respondents reported they were very satisfied or satisfied with library technology services.
- 48.4% reported that the library gave them access to technology they would not otherwise have had.
- 80.6% reported increased digital comfort because of library services.
- Respondents used library technology to support community connection and access government information, to foster creative expression and to facilitate education and develop employable skills.

Bridge Staff Technology Survey

This survey is an opportunity to gather information about the types of tech support and assistance we offer to customers. The survey is divided into 4 areas: connecting to the internet, equipment and software, digital literacy classes and digital literacy support. Similarly to the customer survey, Bridge reduced the requirement for participation in 2025, so after launching in February 2024, BPL conducted the staff survey four times in 2024 and twice in 2025.

For 2024-2025, 153 responses were collected and varied from comparator libraries in the three areas of equipment and software, digital literacy classes and digital literacy support. The variance can be attributed to the different types of services, programming and resources offered by every library, which results in staff responding to questions based on what is available. Connecting to the internet in the library or using a borrowable device was consistent with other libraries. Some noted results are:

- Top technology assistance was provided for Wi-Fi access at the library (using their own device or library computer), borrowing laptops and tablets, and digital literacy classes about digital resources and computer basics.
- Staff rated high level of comfort, either comfortable or very comfortable, answering questions about connecting to the internet (96%), equipment and software (86%), and digital literacy classes (95%)
- No BPL staff responded to questions in the section about digital literacy support. This may be because the questions appeared to be about booking appointments with library staff to receive one-on-one assistance. BPL staff offer support in-branch at service points. Enabling appointment bookings is a staff intensive way to provision digital literacy support and BPL has developed the Tech Connect and Tech Café programs to address this need. In future surveys, we will clearly identify how this section should be approached.

Digital Equity Plan Actions

The Digital Equity Plan identifies actions that are based on key objectives in four interconnected areas: infrastructure, access and technology, literacy and skill building, and digital trust. The list below is based on suggested actions included in the Digital Equity Plan and only shows work that was done in 2025. For prior completed work, refer to the Digital Equity Progress Report for 2024.

COMPLETED IN 2025

- Explore options for service continuity in the rest of the city during Central power outages.
    - BPL is included in advance communication from Burlington Hydro when power shutoff needs to occur. When possible, BPL will advocate for power shutoff during closed hours.
    - The recommendation to purchase a generator as a back-up power source is outside of BPL's budget and will not be pursued at present. Staff continue to monitor for grant opportunities.
    - Continue to use cloud-based software products, when applicable, to create less dependency on on-premises network and resources.
- Develop consistent tracking methods for in-library usage and circulation, including Makerspace technology.
    - Built a standard booking system for Maker Services at Central, New Appleby and Alton branches. This will be launched in Spring 2026.
    - Tracking detailed database usage statistics, including cost analysis, resulting in more effective spending and targeted marketing campaigns to increase awareness and use.
    - Moved annual Count Week statistics gathering to a digital recording system, creating increased accuracy, system-wide efficiency and sustainability long-term.
    - Updated how Wi-Fi data is gathered using a new service provider to access statistics that are aligned with provincial reporting requirements.
- Develop a plan for offering structured one-on-one and small-group tech help.
    - Development and delivery of the Tech Connect program for older adults, offered in conjunction with the launch of BPL's Volunteer Management project.
    - Established a collaboration with Acclaim Health to offer monthly Tech Café drop-in programs starting in April 2026.
- Complete a digital literacy audit of library services.
    - Using the [Digital Literacy Audit Tool](#) developed by Calgary Learns in 2022, BPL scored highly in almost all sections of the audit.
    - Identified some areas for improvement such as avoiding complex words or terms when talking about digital services, having a system in place to support customers with accessing library services, and knowing where to refer customers for help addressing digital barriers that are beyond library assistance.
- Explore options to offer programs about online safety, privacy, and discerning misinformation.

- In 2025, 20 programs were delivered with an overall attendance of 1665 attendees. These included Monthly Tech Talks, Dating in the Digital Age, and Tech Connect programming.
- Developed a mechanism to tag and track programs about information literacy about technology.
- KPI 1.1.1a in the 2026-2027 Strategic Plan, identifies a target of 50% more attendees in programs that focus on information literacy and critical thinking. This includes programs about online safety, privacy and misinformation.
- Build awareness about the library's digital tools and resources with community leaders and local organizations.
  - In 2025, BPL attended 11 outreach events with local organizations and highlighted the library's digital services and resources. These included Centre for Skills Development, Burlington Centre Market, and newcomer and older adult groups.
  - With the opening of New Appleby Branch at Robert Bateman Community Centre, BPL staff offer tours for shared facilities partners, including Tech Place small businesses. Tours include introduction to new technology services such as MakerStudio.
  - Publish monthly articles on the BPL website featuring digital resources and how to use them. These are shared with local media when relevant. For example, [Watch Your Online Steps](#) and [LinkedIn Learning for Makers](#).
  - Shared BPL's experience and knowledge about internal digital practices and tools through a successful OLA Superconference session, *From Information Chaos to Communications Clarity: Leveraging Existing Tech Tools to Build Effective Organizational Collaboration*
  - Actively working with local media to raise awareness of Maker services with the community.
  - Actively pursuing submissions for digitization to expand digital archive items from local organizations and community groups.

IN PROGRESS/ONGOING
- Define clear roles and responsibilities for technology products in terms of developing training, ongoing maintenance and troubleshooting accountabilities.
  - Piloting two new Customer Experience positions focused on digital service and support. Outcomes will determine how BPL can incorporate digital service roles in the organization.

- o Clearly defined areas of responsibility for staff within the Information Technology department.
  - o Handover processes developed between IT and DRC for borrowable technology that is part of the circulating collection.
  - o Developed a Technology Rollout Checklist that will continue to refine roles as it is being piloted with 2026 projects.
- Develop a staff skills training program that addresses initial onboarding and additional on-the-job training and refreshers. Staff to participate in skills assessment and quarterly surveying to assess needs and skills gaps.
  - o Introduction of a learning management system is a 2026 system project. A key deliverable for this project will be developing onboarding pathways for Customer Experience staff and will include technology skills training.
  - o Digital Equity Project Support role identified areas of training need based on surveying and feedback from front-line staff. Recommendations will be built into 2026 training plans and onboarding project.
  - o 18 staff completed a 3-week intensive AI training program that included hands-on, real-life application with different types of AI tools. Participants included members of senior leadership and management, as well as librarians and department staff who would actively use AI in their workday.
  - o Launched Co-Pilot access for select staff after training. Training provided by ENGR AI Solutions.
  - o Digital literacy training provided to all programmers addressed teaching techniques, skills transfer and peer-to-peer learning aspects of digital literacy programming. Training provided by Chris Bint from Tech Coaches.

COMPLETED IN 2024 (continuous improvement work done in 2025)
- Redesign print management system for easier access that includes cashless options and more streamlined wireless printing access.
  - o Updated website information and in-branch signage and handouts to make printing instructions easier to use for customers.
  - o Developed communication mechanisms within Microsoft Teams for staff to provide anecdotal feedback about service experience outside of the technical ticketing system. Along with a staff survey in July 2025, this resulted in further service improvements, including configuration changes and bandwidth upgrades.
- Survey customers to determine specific technology needs. AND
- Survey customers and staff to assess the need for additional and alternate access based on trends and use.

- Continue to promote the Bridge Technology Survey twice a year.
- Technology-themed questions in the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey provide year-over-year comparison.
- Evaluation of digital literacy programs included post-session surveying.
- Implementation of advance free room booking through an online platform was based on responses to community engagement responses from the New Appleby relocation.

- Expand multi-factor authentication implementation and coordinate it with security training for staff. Grow staff knowledge of digital safety in general through testing and training.
  - Changed training providers to offer targeted and integrated training for different groups of staff based on their use of technology. Training provided through Microsoft Learn.
  - Phishing and cybersecurity training is done through live email tests and followed up with training and practice.
  - Continuously improving BPL's cybersecurity landscape by exploring new technologies and recommended safety measures.
  - In 2026, staff will participate in Democracy@Work training through TMU's the Dias. This training includes critical thinking in digital environments as well as dis/misinformation.

Conclusion

Burlington Public Library remains committed to the principles outlined in the Digital Equity Plan. BPL has made progress in implementing most action items and has added in-progress actions to 2026 projects due to project complexity.

The Digital Equity Plan has served its purpose to prioritize initiatives and place a spotlight on the library's role to bridge the digital divide and remove barriers to digital access in Burlington. As we move forward, digital equity concepts will be embedded in departmental work, strategic goals and BPL's Service Model.

Respectfully submitted by: Lita Barrie, CEO and Meg Uttangi Matsos, Director, Service Design & Innovation

7. Decision Items: 7.1 Board Succession Plan Report

Recommendation

That the Burlington Public Library Board approved this Board Succession Plan.

Purpose

This report is to seek Board's approval the Succession Plan for the 2027-2030 term of the Burlington Public Library Board.

Background

As the Board approaches the end of term, consideration needs to be made regarding the next term of the Board. To that end, there are several activities the Board undertakes to support the Library Board succession process and inform and advise City Councilors who will be tasked with recommending Board appointments as part of the start of the new term of City Council beginning in November 2026.

Discussion

The Burlington Public Library Board has typically taken a proactive approach to succession, engaging in the work ahead of the City of Burlington's Clerk's Department finalizing plans for the 2027-2030 Local Board and Advisory Committee volunteer application process. This allows the Library Board to carefully consider all aspects of recruitment and succession.

It is anticipated that the City will follow a similar process and timeline to 2022-2023 with the call for volunteer being posted in November after the first meeting of the new term of City Council. For many of the City's Committees there are staggered terms whereas the Library Board is in a unique position where the Library Board term is the same as the term of City Council as per the Ontario Public Libraries Act. City Council appoints six Library Board volunteer members and two-three alternate positions.

In 2022-2023, the City received 41 applications for the Burlington Public Library Board volunteer position. Once the Mayor's Office Appointments to Boards and Committees was approved, Library Staff worked with the City Clerk's department to coordinate Library Board volunteer interviews in January and February. The interview process was

completed and the Library Board membership was approved by City Council. The Library Board transitioned to the new Board in April 2023.

There are four key parts of the Library Board's succession planning process:
- Promoting the Library Board as a volunteer opportunity to residents
- Preparing and approving resources to assist in the recruitment process (skills matrix & interview questions)
- Planning the orientation program for the incoming Board
- Preparing and approving a transition brief for the incoming Board

The following is a proposed timeline to complete this work in 2026:

Proposed Timeline
- **June Board meeting**
  - Review and approve Library Board Open House presentation, marketing plan & dates
  - Review and approve Board Skills Matrix & draft interview questions
- **July/August**
  - Staff update Board orientation & training materials
- **October Board meeting**
  - Host 1 virtual and 2 in person Library Board Open House events (Central branch and Tansley Woods branch)
  - Review and approved 2027 Library Board Orientation plan and training materials
  - Review draft Board Transition Brief (2023 Transition Brief included as Appendix A)
- **November Board Meeting**
  - Approve Board Transition Brief
  - Appoint adhoc committee to interview Library Board volunteer applicants

Financial Considerations

The one-time funding for the Board succession related work will be funded through the Operating budget.
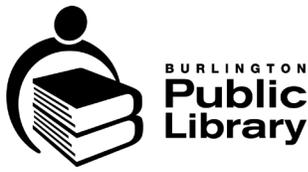
Strategic Implications

One of the Library Board core functions in oversight of the Strategic Plan. A strong Board succession plan supports and aligns with that key role.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Considerations

The 2027-2030 Board recruitment & orientation provides an opportunity increase awareness among diverse community members to ensure representation on BPL board, reducing barriers to Board participation and the strengthen of the equity, diversity and inclusion lens in Board orientation.

Sustainability Considerations

BPL's Sustainability Plan includes climate change mitigation, adaptation and climate equity considerations those key considerations will be embedded into the Board's training materials.

Risk Management

Board recruitment is an opportunity to increase awareness of the library's role in the community and the function of the Library Board in its governance. Transparency and clarity are critical throughout, as the Library Board seeks to support a process that is the decision of City Council.

Policy

[BPL's Board Bylaw](#).

Final Remarks

Outlining a timeline for Library Board succession planning related activities at this time provides an opportunity for associated work to be distributed over the course of the year allowing for fulsome Board input and reflection.

Lita Barrie will communicate with the Community Clerk's group at the City of Burlington with regard to the application process and timelines for the incoming term of the Library Board and update the Library Board accordingly.

Report Authors

Respectfully submitted: Lita Barrie, CEO

Appendix A: 2023 Transition Brief

Burlington Public Library Board 2022

Catharine Benzie, Chair
Jennifer Tarnawski, Vice Chair
Brian Kenny
Jason Manayathu

Nawaz Noormohamed
Lindsay Zalot
Councillor Shawna Stolte

This transition brief highlights the 2019 to 2022 term of the Library Board and provides information to the incoming Library Board to assist in setting the context and providing an expectation on what lies ahead for your term on the Library Board.

The Library Board was delayed in completing the Strategic Plan due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The work was started prior to the pandemic however public health guidelines and government mandates forced the Library Board to close Library doors on March 13, 2020. Despite the closure, work on the Strategic Plan continued and at the end of 2020, the Library Board released the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan detailing the focus of the current Library Board and the continued direction for the immediate future.

Burlington Public Library Board Accomplishments 2019 to 2022

Community Impacts

- Beginning as a project in 2019 to bring more open hours across the system, the Library Board has optimized library hours through 2022 as follows:
    - Sunday hours at all locations, except Kilbride
    - More evening open hours (excluding Friday evenings)
    - 7 day a week service, year-round, at all locations, except Kilbride

- Fines Free: BPL stopped charging overdue fines in March 2020 to help reduce barriers to accessing library collections during pandemic-related closures. After assessing the impact to fine revenue, the Library Board went "Fines Free" indefinitely in June 2021. A focus on "Pay it Forward" was initiated to ask customers for a donation to the library in lieu of fines. Lost, damaged and items kept beyond 30 days continue to have fees applied.

- Covid-19 Response: throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Library continued to offer uninterrupted service by quickly adapting to the physical closure of branches (due to regulatory requirements) and redirecting library budgets to digital collections and programs. As soon as it was safe to do so, the library offered holds pick up service and modified library spaces and services adhering to public health guidelines.

- In 2020, the Library Board committed to addressing racism. The Board developed Together Against Racism Statement and outlined an action plan that included Anti-Racism training for all staff and a review of all BPL policies.

- Burlington Literary Festival
  - Launching in 2021, Burlington Literary Festival is a month-long event, held annually, celebrating literature, literacy and writing in Burlington. A wide range of events held over 30 days include author visits, panel discussions, writing workshops and more. The full calendar of events is available online.

- BPL 150th
  - Celebrating 150 years of service, BPL created and hosted events to celebrate reading and literacy in the community since 1872. Events featured Library Board members present and past culminating in a Birthday Party in September and a sold out "After Dark" event in November.

Partnership Developments:
- More to Borrow: This partnership was initiated by BPL and facilitated through Overdrive. Library systems from Mississauga, Hamilton, London and Ottawa came together with BPL to give our library members access to a wider range of materials to read, listen to, and watch
  - The partnership gives priority to each community's digital collection but allows holds, access and borrowing on any available item in the Overdrive digital collection to the other partner communities.
  - This proved to be an excellent way to increase access to collections while managing costs.

- Borrow Around the Bay: A partnership between Hamilton Public Library and BPL expanded the borrowing capability for all members of our two communities. BPL customers now have expanded borrowing at HPL for all physical collections (up to 50 items at a time) and for the Overdrive digital collection (up to 10 at a time).

- StoryWalk: Presented in partnership with the City of Burlington's Recreation, Community and Culture department, StoryWalk® launched in 2019 as a fun and engaging opportunity for community members to read a story and enjoy the outdoors at the same time. Pages of a book are posted along a trail, path, or park in each Ward across the City.

- Community Fridge Partnership with Food for Life:
  - Aldershot branch, in partnership with Food for Life, is Burlington's first community fridge location to complement four other Food for Life

community program sites in the city. Twice weekly, Food for Life volunteers stock the fridge at Aldershot Branch with fresh food items for residents to take what they want when they need it.

To: Burlington Public Library Board 2023-2026

From: Burlington Public Library Board 2019-2022

Congratulations on your appointment to the Burlington Public Library Board. You have been entrusted with responsibility for governance of this vital community service. It has been our privilege to serve the community as members of the Burlington Public Library Board and we wish you well in your stewardship of our wonderful library system.

In addition to providing a copy of the highlights and achievements from our term, we wanted to share a list of topics and issues with our successors. Good governance is a continuum and ensuring a smooth transition is our priority. We offer these comments as advice for your consideration.

While partnerships are an important area of focus in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, Library Board members are not responsible for building partnerships with individuals, organizations or businesses in the community. Library Staff are responsible for the day to day operations which includes building partnerships to grow library services. The Board is kept abreast of developments and has the opportunity to provide direction and approval where appropriate. Where the Board may be asked to build relationships is when funding or fundraising is required. The Library Board may need to delegate to City Council or be instrumental in making community connections for fundraising needs.

Governance
- It is important that the incoming Library Board have clarity about your role, as a governing body and that you are prepared to continually invest in honing your governance skills and knowledge.
- Monitoring the Board's performance annually and taking the time to reflect on the Board's effectiveness is a valuable exercise that informs changes and improvements in the way the Board operates.

- There are many professional opportunities for training and networking with other public library trustees through the provincial Library Associations.

Community Engagement

- Burlington Public Library is the community's library and as a representative of the community, it is essential you are engaged in dialogue with, and data about, the

community to anticipate demographic changes and emerging interests that will guide your decision-making and priority setting.

Strategic Planning
- The Board is responsible for ensuring that a Strategic Plan is developed, approved and that appropriate measures are established to gauge success in achieving strategic priorities.
- Consideration of the City of Burlington strategic priorities is recommended.

Return on Investment and Impact
- The Board is responsible for articulating both the quantitative and qualitative measures of the value that the community is gaining through library spaces, resources, services and programs. Performance measures and appropriate monetization of the value and return on investment of the library's services and programs needs to be a priority focus.
- Continue to work with Library staff to implement performance measures that reflect not only activity but also outcomes of library services and programs.

- Since 2015, Burlington Public Library has produced an annual Economic Impact summary based on the model developed by the Martin Prosperity Institute of the Rotman School of Business of the University of Toronto and the Toronto Public Library. The summary expresses in dollars the economic impact of the Library and is published as part of the Annual Report.

Fiscal Oversight
- The Board has fiduciary responsibility to oversee and present the financial needs of the Library to City Council and is an advocate to City Council on all budgetary issues.
- As part of Library Board orientation, it has been requested that City of Burlington Finance provide an overview of the City of Burlington's Capital planning and Development Charge Study process and requirements to assist the Board in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility.

Operating Budget:
- The Board presents the operating budget needs to the City each year and submits business cases for any required costs above the guidelines set by City Council.
- The Board is a member of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (a non-profit organization devoted to being a collective voice for public libraries). Continue to work on advocacy through the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries to increase the provincial level of funding for public libraries.

Capital Budget:

o The Board presents the capital budget and a 10-year capital forecast to the City reflecting major infrastructure repair/replacement and funding for future service development and strategic initiatives.

o Explore unexpected partnership opportunities (i.e the partnership in Aldershot with Halton Community Housing Corporation, the Alton Branch partnership with Halton District School Board and the City of Burlington, and the partnership with City of Burlington and Brock University for New Appleby Branch) to gain efficiencies and growth in library service levels across the City and in underserviced wards.

o The New Appleby Branch lease expires in 2024. Library Staff have been working with the City of Burlington to develop a solution for the permanent location of New Appleby Branch. The City of Burlington recently announced its purchase of Robert Bateman High School from Halton District School Board. This property will be renovated to include a learning center for Gary Allen (HDSB), a community hub including the existing pool, community rooms, a triple gym, the relocation of TechPlace, Brock University's Teachers Education and Applied Disabilities Studies Programs and a permanent home for the New Appleby branch of Burlington Public Library. Updates on the project will be brought forward to the Board at monthly meetings.

o The Strategic Initiatives capital budget line was introduced to provide for the implementation of initiatives from the Strategic Plan. Preserving this budget line will be important.

Public Access
- Plan for changes and growth that will happen in the community as the City of Burlington works to finalize the mobility hubs and execute the Official Plan. Access to information and knowledge is increasingly digital and plans and spaces need to be flexible in anticipation of new technologies.
- Public Libraries are essential repositories of knowledge, books and information. Public Libraries have been evolving as essential community hubs and gathering places for learning and connection. It is the Board's responsibility to ensure that there is adequate funding to support library spaces and services as community needs, technology and information formats continuously change and evolve.

Investing in our People
- Staff is the most important resource of Burlington Public Library and being a desired employer and having an engaged staff is a high priority. It's the Board's responsibility to ensure there is adequate funding to invest in continuous improvement and training opportunities for Library Staff

- Be prepared to consider the compensation as it relates to the retention and recruitment of staff.

Accountability
- The Board is accountable to City Council, the community, Library staff and Library partners. It is important that all business of the Board be conducted with transparency and integrity.
- The Library Board holds the Library CEO responsible for the efficient operation of the Library. The CEO is the Board's only employee and the Board's main point of contact with regard to the operations of the organization, its achievement and conduct.

Advocacy
- Advocacy was identified as an area for continued development on the part of the Library Board. Advocacy may take many forms depending on the needs of the community, the Library, funding pressures and environmental factors (eg. Cost of digital collections)

Intellectual Freedom
- The protection of intellectual freedom is foundational to the Burlington Public Library system. As an independent body, the Library Board has the authority and responsibility to make decisions to ensure policies, collections, services and programs are unfettered by censorship or those wishing to impose restrictions contrary to the principals of intellectual freedom.

Sincerely,

Catharine Benzie, Chair

On behalf of the 2019-2022 Burlington Library Board

Burlington Public Library Board 2022

Catharine Benzie, Chair   Nawaz Noormohamed
Jennifer Tarnawski, Vice Chair   Lindsay Zalot
Brian Kenny   Councillor Shawna Stolte
Jason Manayathu

8. Discussion Items: 8.1 Board Policy Framework Review Report

Table of Contents

Purpose

This report supports Board discussion on the Policy Framework Review, outlining a recommended approach and a proposed process as identified in the 2026 workplan.

Background

As part of the 2026 workplan, staff recommended that the Library Board conduct a comprehensive review of its policies in this final year of the Board's term. While individual policies have been regularly updated to reflect the library's values, mission, legal accountabilities and best practices, the review aims to ensure the overall policy framework aligns with the Board's objectives and is accessible to both staff and the community.

In Q4 of 2026, library staff developed a Policy and Documentation Framework. This framework was drafted to support consistent behavior and business practices throughout the organization, helping staff create and use documents that are relevant,

clear, and compatible with related files and workflows. It defines the overall structure of Burlington Public Library's (BPL) documentation, providing a definition and function for each type of document to ensure everyone understands its purpose. An overview of the Framework will be presented as a Board Development Presentation at the March meeting. The following excerpt outlines the guiding principles from this document:

BPL's Policy & Documentation Framework

Guiding Principles

BPL is committed to creating clear and easy-to-understand documentation. The core principles that guide our documentation framework are:

- **Simplicity:** Simple rules and processes are more likely to be consistently followed and effectively communicated than complex ones.
- **Clear Language & Presentation:** All documents will be written in plain language that is easy to understand. Whenever possible, we use lists, headings, visual aids, and other formatting tools to make information scannable and accessible to all users. Avoid library jargon—define acronyms and specialized terms if they are required for the document.
- **Accessibility:** All documents must be created using accessible formats and practices to ensure they can be used by everyone. BPL documents exceed AODA standards and use organization templates.
- **General Rule (80/20 Rule):** Documentation should offer clear guidance for common situations, covering about 80% of cases. Attempting to address every exception reduces clarity and makes important information harder to find. The 80/20 rule also applies to using and modifying templates. In some cases, documents that are legislated or that originate externally may use a different naming convention. We will try to align documents that are within our control.
- **Consolidation:** Related information should be kept in the same document when possible. When updates are required, revise existing documents rather than creating new ones to reduce duplication and make information easier to find.

Discussion

Staff have identified the following desired outcomes for the Board Policy Framework Review:

- Ensure that Board policies are consistent with the guiding principles of the BPL's Policy & Document Framework.
- Employ clear and accessible language in all service-related policies.
- Minimize the use of jargon to enhance trust between the library and the community.
- Confirm alignment of policy language with the BPL's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

As part of BPL's commitment to plain language, staff will ensure these elements are applied:
- Findability: Users can quickly locate needed information.
- Understandability: Information is clear on first reading.
- Actionability: Required actions for users or the library are obvious.
- Tone: Language remains welcoming and helpful, not punitive.
- Active voice: use active voice, say "You may borrow up to 50 items" rather than "Up to 50 items may be borrowed by the customer."
- Direct address: Speak directly to readers with pronouns like "we," "you," or "the library" for a conversational style.
- Logical Structure: Organize information using clear headings and bullet points instead of long, dense paragraphs.
- Common Vocabulary: Choose everyday words over complex ones.
- Grade 8 Rule: Aim for a reading level between Grade 6 and Grade 8.

Library staff recognize that the library's legal obligations and fiduciary responsibilities may necessitate more formal language be applied in some policies. To help clarify that distinction, staff are proposing that Board policies be organized into 2 categories:
- Library Services
- Governance & Oversight

Proposed Timeline
- **May Board meeting**
  - Review audit of existing board policies, the audit will include staff recommendations for:
    - Potential merging of policies
    - Order of review
- **June to November Board meeting**
  - One or two revised policies will be presented to the Board review and approval at each meeting:

- Feedback from each review will inform updates to subsequent policies
- Policies related to Library Services will receive priority in the review process.

Library staff are seeking the Board's input on the desired outcomes, approach and proposed timeline for this work.

Strategic Implications

Clear policy aligns with BPL's value of inclusion and clarifies our commitment to providing library services to everyone in the community regardless of their ability.

BPL's 2026-2027 Strategic Plan includes goals related to outreach and engagement with equity deserving groups. To reach our goal of increasing library use we must be clear and consistent in policies to ensure they demonstrate our commitment to inclusive service.

This policy review also supports *Strategic Priority 3: Nurture a workforce culture driven by our organizational values goal 3.1 Staff are equipped with the tools and skills to reinforce BPL values in interactions with customers, collaborators, and colleagues.*

## Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Considerations

This process will ensure that the Library Board's policies prioritize and affirm dignity, equity, diversity and inclusion both in their structure and content.

Sustainability Considerations

Not applicable

Risk Management

By providing clear expectations for every topic covered under Board policy, we reduce the risk of failing to consistently provide an inclusive library experience.
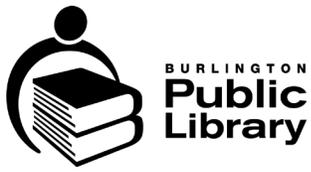
Related Policy

- [Board Bylaw](#)
- [Development and Review of Policy](#)

Report Author(s)

Respectfully Lita Barrie, CEO.

8. Discussion Items: 8.2 2025 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report

Table of Contents

Recommendation

That the BPL Board receive this report for information and discuss the draft EDI Framework.

Purpose

This report is to update the Library Board on progress completed under BPL's 2023-2025 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Plan, outline staff's recommendation for an integrated EDI approach, and introduce the draft EDI Framework.

2023-2025 EDI Plan Report

The Burlington Public Library Board approved the 2023-2025 EDI Plan to establish priorities and actions to foster inclusion in the BPL workforce and in our services and spaces. The EDI Plan followed BPL's Anti-Racism Action Plan, which was approved in 2022 after considerable reflection and discussion. This process involved BPL's Anti-Racism Working Group, which was renamed EDI Working Group in 2023. Both

documents guided BPL's work to address systemic racism and discrimination through staff training, trust building, and outreach to equity-deserving groups.

Inclusion is one of BPL's core values. It is fundamental to providing library service that benefits everyone in the community. This value continues to be a priority in our strategic plan and in departmental work, informing our operations and services so people of all backgrounds and experiences feel reflected in and welcome at their library.

Statement of Commitment

Inclusion is one of BPL's core values. It is fundamental to providing library service that benefits everyone in the community. BPL's 2023-2025 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Plan represents a commitment to making the library more inclusive and providing opportunities for community members to connect with and learn about diverse cultures and experiences. It identified actions to foster EDI practices, create a more inclusive workplace culture, and address systemic barriers to accessing library services.

EDI Plan Progress Report

Nearly all the actions in the plan were completed entirely in the 2023-2025 period. A few are still in progress, and many are ongoing actions that will continue to be part of our work. The details of each action are described below.

The plan also included several short and medium-term outcomes to be assessed using indicators. While these outcomes were chosen with good intention, we had to reflect on whether we could accurately and ethically assess if we had achieved them. Some outcomes were tied to indicators intended to assess or measure the experiences of BIPOC staff specifically. While we make progress on our methods for capturing data related to demographics and EDI, we were unable to assess several indicators without drawing generalized assumptions about survey responses or risking the privacy of survey respondents due to a low staff sample size.

Data Advancements

We implemented improvements over the course of the plan to improve our capacity to capture and use EDI-related data to assess progress and inform decisions. These included:

- Participation in the annual Great Place to Work employee survey, which measures trust, sentiment, and invites participants to answer optional demographic questions
- Addition of optional demographic questions to annual Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Development of a Performance Measurement Framework which embeds EDI ethics and standards into data processes
- Improved tagging processes for Communico Events module to identify and track events, outreach, and support service drop-ins that focus on equity-deserving audiences and/or topics

In 2026, BPL staff will present an Integrated Community Engagement Framework to the Board under the strategic plan. It will include principles and standards to ensure the library can capture community input in a way that is accessible to and reflects the diversity of Burlington residents.

Using the new data collection methods noted above, staff will also be able to measure participation in programs, outreach, and support service drop-ins that focus on equity deserving audiences and/or topics.

Workforce Culture and Training

Under the EDI Plan, BPL joined the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion as a member organization. This membership is ongoing and staff continue to use the CCDI Knowledge Repository for resources and learning. All staff participated in EDI training that was developed using CCDI resources and included peer-to-peer reflection conversations. This training continues to be provided to new staff. In collaboration with Indigenous community members, BPL developed a new Land Acknowledgement Framework and provided training to all staff. Continuing development opportunities are provided to staff through participation in conferences and online tutorials.

Shared language and understanding from these training modules have been embedded in organizational documents to include EDI considerations as a part of ongoing conversation and process.

Human Resources updated recruitment, onboarding, and accommodation processes to reduce barriers and improve supports for applicants and staff.

Library Services

Several initiatives were launched in the duration of this plan to improve or increase services that benefit equity-deserving groups.

BPL now offers support service drop-in sessions with eight different organizations that provide direct client service in the library for low-barrier access. Programs and events have been reviewed and updated to reflect a broad range of identities and better meet accessibility needs. And under the library's new Outreach Framework, BPL staff will increase connections to equity-deserving groups to learn about their needs and orient them to library services.

Summary of 2023-2025 EDI Plan Actions

COMPLETED

- Train staff in core Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion concepts and practices
  - BPL EDI Training launched to all staff and added to onboarding training
  - Continued membership with Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion for ongoing staff training and resources
  - Ongoing participation in EDI and Accessibility workshops and conferences
  - Staff development training provided on accessible formats and services and assistive devices

- Host peer-to-peer chats periodically to build organizational trust aligned with significant dates calendar
  - EDI Working Group and EDI Training peer discussion groups completed
  - Participation in City of Burlington Advisory Groups
  - Outreach Framework completed to guide ongoing staff involvement in community engagement
  - Significant Dates process moved under Manager, Outreach & Inclusion for ongoing oversight

- Expand diversity of applicant pool in recruitment process (targeted approach and focus on lived experiences)
  - Implemented accessible recruitment practices including accommodations in the application, interview, and job testing

- o   Optional self-identity questions in applications

- Develop a plan for outreach efforts and identify specific underrepresented and equity-deserving groups and organizations in Burlington
  - o   Completed Outreach Framework to guide engagement with equity-deserving groups
  - o   Completed Collaboration Strategy to develop and maintain partnerships
  - o   Support Service Drop-in Collaborations with community organizations in key areas including: newcomers, housing, employment, legal services, family and child support
  - o   Ongoing participation in regional working and networking groups

- Incorporate EDI elements in programs (Different formats, sign language, different languages, etc.)
  - o   Storytime, STEAM, and children's book club templates and materials updated to reflect diverse stories and experiences within our community
  - o   Program accommodation process developed and implemented
  - o   Program Accessibility Standards completed and implemented
  - o   Upgraded amplification (microphones, speakers) at all branches
  - o   Collaboration inquiry process updated to consider diverse representation and lived experience
  - o   Land Acknowledgement Framework completed and implemented

- Develop a system for collecting and analyzing demographic data
  - o   Customer Satisfaction Survey updated with optional demographic section
    - o   Demographic data analyzed for service improvement
  - o   Practices for ethical use of demographic data included in EDI Framework and Performance Measurement Framework
  - o   Optional demographic data section in Great Place to Work Survey (limited sample size)

- Foster open communication throughout the organization
  - o   Regular performance check points to address challenges and opportunities
  - o   Improving scores in Great Place To Work survey
    - o   Follow up staff survey responses in review to guide staff engagement initiatives

- Ensure targeted programming to underrepresented/equity-deserving groups in Burlington
    - Significant Dates Framework establishes calendar of dates to recognize with programming and other activities
- Work closely with groups and organizations to promote/facilitate programs, ensuring that they are accessible and welcoming to all members of the community
    - Outreach Framework includes pop-up programming process to orient underserved groups to library programs

- Work closely with underrepresented and equity-deserving groups and organizations to provide feedback on programs, to gain a better understanding of specific needs and how the library can best serve them
    - Increased participation in City of Burlington Advisory Committees for consultation on library services and initiatives

- EDI report (Divided by department: HR, Collections, Programs, CE, etc.)
    - EDI Report delivered to BPL Board annually under EDI Plan
    - Going forward, rather than create a distinct EDI report, EDI is included as a section in BPL Reports template. EDI Considerations also included on other planning and process templates.

IN PROGRESS/ONGOING

- Create organizational tool to highlight and share EDI efforts
    - Intranet refreshed in early 2026, EDI Resources highlighted
    - Outreach & Inclusion Intranet page launching March 2026

- Work closely with underrepresented and equity-deserving groups and organizations to provide feedback on programs, to gain a better understanding of specific needs and how the library can best serve them
    - Integrated Community Engagement Framework to be presented to Board in 2026 under Strategic Plan
    - Increased participation in City of Burlington Advisory Committees for consultation on library services and initiatives
    - Strategic Plan 2026-2027 includes target increase for outreach and survey participation among equity-deserving groups

- Incorporate EDI elements in programs (Different formats, sign language, different languages, etc.)
    - Audiovisual upgrades to Central Branch's large event spaces currently in Request for Proposal stage with installation planned for 2026
    - Program accessibility project included in 2026-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

- Develop a plan for outreach efforts and identify specific underrepresented and equity-deserving groups and organizations in Burlington
    - Outreach Framework implementation in progress, procedures and outreach calendar launching next quarter

Discussion

This plan was developed with good intent and enabled BPL to accomplish significant EDI work including staff learning and cultural awareness. Over the past three years, we have reflected on the library's role in fostering EDI—both our potential and our limits. We remain committed to ensuring everyone in our community has access to information, resources, and support, free from judgement and fear of discrimination. However we also recognise that our original commitment to a future free from racism and discrimination reaches beyond what we can accomplish as a single organization. We want the library's EDI commitment to be clear, sustainable, and deeply connected to our purpose as a community service.

With the conclusion of BPL's 2023-2025 EDI Plan, staff recommend a transition to an integrated EDI Framework that establishes how EDI practices are reflected in all areas of the organization. In the past several years, BPL has made substantial progress establishing foundational practices and shifting workforce culture. Values, particularly inclusion, have been embedded in plans, processes, and templates so equity and accessibility are a core part of our decisions and routines—not an afterthought. This shift towards integration was intentional. It has set us up to share responsibility and accountability for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility at BPL.

Under the EDI Framework, everyone at BPL will share clear expectations for what it looks like to put the value of inclusion into action. The framework outlines mechanisms for consultation, including a merger of two employee advisory groups into one. The EDI Working Group and Voice of the Employee Team will become Employee Voices, an

integrated employee advisory and engagement group that embeds representation of diverse staff perspectives. The framework also formalizes BPL's consultation and engagement approach with City of Burlington Advisory Committees.

This shift to an integrated approach is supported by Imagine Canada's Equity as Practice from Audits to Actions research. It would formally embed EDI in all aspects of BPL's work, reinforcing that it is a continuous practice and is never complete. It would increase shared accountability, improve sightlines to EDI goals and priorities, and clarify expectations for engaging equity-deserving groups in consultation. To maintain the momentum established under BPL's AARP and EDI Plan, a sustainable approach is necessary. Embedding EDI through a framework that is applied to all system and department planning and service will make this work more resilient.

EDI Framework

The draft EDI Framework aims to:
- Embed EDI as everyone's responsibility—integrate these principles into everything from daily practices to major strategic projects
- Reinforce continuous improvement and learning
- Advance EDI in each of our service streams and in BPL's business operations

It is built around an equity practice, which uses a continuous cycle of reflection and action to create incremental improvement and maintain long-term drive for the depth of change needed in much equity work.

Consultation

Staff have informed EDI Working Group and Voice of the Employee Team members of the transition. The draft EDI Framework has been shared with EDI Working Group members and City of Burlington Inclusivity Advisory Committee for review and input.

Next Steps

The draft framework will be revised based on this input and a final version will be presented to the Board in April. Employee Voices will meet as a unified group in April.

Strategic Implications

EDI applies to all priorities under the 2026-2027 Strategic Plan:
- Enhance community well-being, helping people feel connected, accepted, and empowered to achieve their goals.
- Inspire discovery with collections, services, and spaces that reflect our evolving community.
- Nurture a workforce culture driven by our organizational values.

Under the draft EDI Framework, EDI goals will be embedded into strategic planning and department initiatives. This establishes an expectation that future strategic plans, like this one, will include goals to improve equity and inclusion at BPL. Progress towards these goals will continue to be monitored and reported under the strategic plan.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Considerations

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion are fundamental values to BPL. Adopting an equity practice affirms that EDI is a collective accountability throughout the Library, rather than a responsibility placed disproportionately on staff with lived experiences of marginalization. We should consider EDI when creating and evaluating all our services so everyone can access and benefit from them. Part of that work is appropriately engaging with staff and community advisors in ways that minimize the burden and emotional labour that consulting can cause, while maximizing the improvements to our services. It continues to be vital to listen to diverse voices so that we can address systemic barriers to accessing the Library.

Risk Management

Setting and measuring specific EDI goals and targets can sometimes undermine the true intentions of this work. In reviewing potential data sources for the EDI Plan, BPL staff determined they could not ethically and reliably use available data to measure progress towards the stated goals due to limited sample size, privacy, and direct relevance to the stated goals.

In shifting towards an EDI Framework from an EDI Plan, BPL is addressing this risk by encouraging continuous improvement and reflection and limiting the use of demographic data and consultation to circumstances when it can be used ethically and transparently to benefit the equity-deserving groups providing the data.

However, less focus on targets specific milestones can present its own risk: potential for complacency and less visibility for EDI initiatives. Staff will remain conscious of this risk by requiring consideration for EDI and accessibility in service development and planning and continuing to directly address EDI considerations in all Board-level reporting.

Related Policy & Documents

Outreach Framework
EDI Policy
Performance Measurement Framework
EDI Framework (draft)
Equity as a Practice - From Audits to Actions (Imagine Canada)

Final Remarks

Staff are grateful for the Board's advocacy for and commitment to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility at BPL and for the role all staff have played to date under the Anti-Racism Action Plan and EDI Plan. The value of this work has been questioned in political conversation recently, but BPL's commitment to it has not wavered.

We will continue to advance our mission by providing opportunities to discover diverse stories and learn about different perspectives and identities whether in books, shared spaces, or programs. Under the structure of our EDI Framework, these elements will combine to advance equity at BPL and in the broader community.

Report Author(s)

Respectfully submitted by: Elise Copps, Director, Communications & Engagement, Meg DeForest, Manager, Outreach & Inclusion

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Framework

Table of Contents

Purpose

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework represents Burlington Public library's commitment to:

- Providing equitable employment opportunities and an inclusive work environment
- Offering library services and spaces everyone can access without judgement or discrimination
- Fostering understanding and connection among people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives

The principles in the EDI Framework apply to all our policies, procedures, consultation, business operations, and services.

Background

This framework builds on work the library has been doing for many years, including BPL's Anti-Racism Action Plan and EDI Plan. This framework defines how we integrate that work across all services and operations.

Guiding Principles

Values give us a direction to aim for and our principles are the rules and practical steps that we take towards those values. These BPL values are expressed in how we embody equity, diversity, and inclusion in our work:

Accountability: we create a culture of trust, responsibility, and authenticity. We follow through on our commitments to EDI to the best of our ability and communicate our plans and progress transparently. We acknowledge harms and take responsibility for our missteps.

Collaboration: everyone at BPL contributes to equity and inclusion. We work together, include voices of lived experience at the table, and consider the intersectional nature of identity.

Inclusion: people from all backgrounds feel reflected and respected at BPL. We connect with community groups that represent diverse identities and prioritize relationship building. We treat everyone with dignity.

Intellectual Freedom: we provide a wide range of resources and experiences and invite people to explore unfamiliar topics and concepts. We respect everyone's right to choose what they do and don't participate in.

Learning: we listen to people and learn from their experiences. We are continuously improving—there is no finish line for this work.

Objectives

Under this framework, we aim to:
- Embed EDI as everyone's responsibility—integrate our principles into everything from daily practices to major strategic projects
- Reinforce continuous improvement and learning
- Advance EDI in each of our service streams and in BPL's business operations

Service Development and Delivery

Service standards for new and existing services will reflect the EDI Framework. All library services must consider EDI principles in their creation, implementation, and

evaluation. When creating and updating services, Managers use the Structured EDI Practices to reflect and act on these questions:

- Does this service reflect the EDI principles? Make sure staff know how to put these principles into practice in this service.
- Can we determine if this service is effectively reaching a diverse range of people who may need or want it? How?
  - Is improvement needed? How can we improve and validate that improvement?
- Should this service reflect the diverse range of identities in our community?
  - How can we achieve that?
- Who has provided input on this service? Were people affected by or reflected in this service (community members, collaborators, staff) considered or consulted?
- Do we need learning or training to help people provide this service effectively to Equity-Deserving Groups?

Library Collections & Resources

- Collections are inclusive, accessible, and diverse and offer a wide array of authors, content, and formats;
- anchored in intellectual freedom—BPL's collection invites customers to expand their perspective while respecting their right to choose what they do and don't access.

Digital Services & Technology

- Digital offerings remove barriers to access, especially for underserved and underrepresented groups;
- provide a variety of technology offerings that reflect the needs and interests of all groups within our community.

Programming

- Programming varies in theme, time/date, and format to reach and appeal to a variety of audiences;
- follows universal design principles to ensure people with different abilities can participate in a way that meets their needs.

Spaces

- Spaces offer a welcoming environment for people from all walks of life and provide opportunity for connection and belonging;
- meet or exceed AODA standards with a focus on universal design.

Staff Expertise

- Customer service uses a human-centered approach that respects the dignity of all people.

Business Operations

- Staff are treated fairly, and everyone's unique identity is respected and accepted;
- management has the skills to guide honest and ethical conversations around EDI principles
- staff continue to have training on EDI concepts and practices and can openly discuss these topics with colleagues and supervisors when needed.

Structured EDI Practices

BPL uses an equity practice to drive EDI work. This is a continuous cycle of reflection and action that helps us integrate equity into the actions and plans of all our services at the library. We find small and long-term actions that address issues of equity and build relationships with equity deserving groups as we make progress. We are striving for equity because we want to serve our entire community and welcome them to access our services.

Throughout this practice it is important to be transparent, communicate and build relationships with community partners, equity-deserving groups and colleagues. This is a long-term effort and equity practice focuses on inner drive of the organization as it emphasizes the importance of returning to our why when there can be resistance or

fatigue.
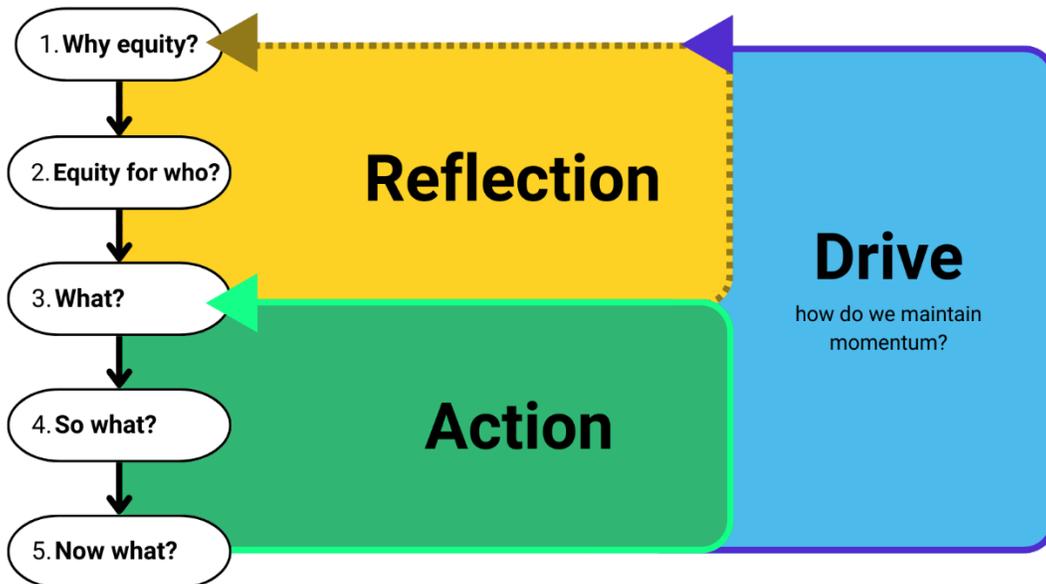
1. Why Equity?

The question, "why equity" is core to the equity practice. The answer to this question at a system-wide level is:
- The library should serve the entire community, therefore
  - We must understand who we are not serving and why
    - To achieve equity, we must address gaps or barriers preventing some groups from using library services

2. Equity for Who?

When we look at reasons why equity is important to us, we can see who we need to build equity with: equity-deserving groups that are underrepresented among library users. Based on BPL data and community demographics, Indigenous Peoples, Newcomers, Individuals with Disabilities, 2SLBTQI+ Individuals and Youth are who we need to centre in our equity practice.

3. What?

Next, we identify "what" we need to do to build equity with these groups by gathering information about their experiences. This process will differ depending on the group, the

service, and many other factors. We are aiming to identify experiences and barriers impacting these equity-deserving groups. The approach must suit the circumstances and may include internal review, consultation, research, peer discussion, and other tactics. Consultation must be done with respect and caution to avoid causing further harm.

4. So What?

Make sense of the information about these experiences and explore themes and patterns. If something is missing or confusing, go back and get more information. Consider actions to address the themes you've discovered. There may be competing needs for library resources, including between different equity-deserving groups. Reflect on how the actions you're consider could affect other groups as well. If an action could cause unintended harm to another group, reflect on alternatives that address competing needs or even benefit both groups. Reflect on the information you have (this may include returning to a group to validate your insights) and decide which actions(s) to do.

5. Now What?

Prioritize your actions in order and create a flexible strategy to implement them. Then act, observe, and reflect. Were we successful in putting the decisions into action? Did the actions or changes have the effect we were aiming for? If we haven't made progress, we consider why: did we do enough consultation? Do we need to try a different action? Do we need to continue building trust and relationships?

Equity practice looks at changes in terms of proving a hypothesis: we identify a change we want to make, gather information and try to predict what will address the issue. We test our hypothesis by acting and then reflecting on whether it actually addressed the issue. If it didn't, we have learned something and can we try again to address the issue with a new action.

This cycle reinforces that equity is not linear. When we expect a complete result after our action, we can lose momentum and motivation to continue our practice. Viewing it as a cycle of continuous reflection and action helps us to focus on learning and remain committed to equity as an integral part of our work. This overview of equity practice draws from Equity as a Practice – From Audits to Actions, a guide by Imagine Canada.

Applications

The principles in this framework are applied in all of BPL's service streams and in our business operations.

Strategic Direction and Measurement

- BPL Vision & Mission align with our commitment to EDI.
- EDI goals will continue to be achieved through specific and measurable targets set in our Strategic Plans.
- We gather demographic data only when it will help us to improve services or experiences for equity-deserving groups. It must always be:
  - Optional to provide this information
  - Clear why and how we will use the information
  - Respectful of privacy and intersectional identity.
- We use existing data and research as well as consultation to reflect the needs of our community in our planning and decision making.
  - Demographic data is validated to ensure it is relevant and accurate in the context in which it is being used.

Consultation and Input

- The library seeks diverse perspectives and feedback from customers, community members, collaborators, and staff, without creating burden or additional labour for equity-deserving groups.
  - We consult when we can meaningfully make changes based on feedback.
  - We use already available information when possible.
  - We trust and respect the lived experience of those providing input.
- Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey responses are reviewed for trends and comments related to EDI.
- BPL is an active participant in the City of Burlington Inclusivity Advocacy Committee, City of Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee, City of Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee.
  - COB advisory groups are consulted on:
    - Strategic planning
    - Policies related to EDI and accessibility
    - Development of new core services and facilities
- Library staff do outreach to underserved equity-deserving groups regularly.

- Our internal employee advisory group has diverse representation of BPL staff to ensure a variety of lived experiences are shared to Senior Leadership as a part of decision making.

Indigenous Communities

Burlington Public Library acknowledges the Treaty Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as well as the Traditional Territory of the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Anishinabek peoples. We honour the timeless connection that Indigenous communities and Urban Indigenous residents maintain with the land, water, and sky, recognize their enduring stewardship, and acknowledge our shared responsibility to sustain and protect the earth. Through our collections, programs, and partnerships, Burlington Public Library seeks to amplify Indigenous voices and perspectives, providing opportunities for our community to engage in dialogue, education, and healing.

- When engaging with Indigenous community members, BPL will respect their cultural practices, customs, and approaches
- BPL recognises the distinctiveness of each Indigenous person and group and affirms that every one is worthy of acknowledgment.
- In support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Final Report's 94 Calls to Action, BPL commits to providing opportunities for learning and connection that highlight Indigenous experiences and stories

Inclusive Workplace Culture

- EDI principles are embedded in our Human Resources, from our recruitment processes to attract a diverse workforce and through our internal practices to then retain them. BPL is committed to a respectful and safe workplace for all staff.
- Staff consider EDI and intersectional identities when reflecting on customer experiences. In doing so, we uphold human rights and our commitment to equitable, respectful service free from discrimination and harassment. EDI concerns from staff and customers are taken seriously and considered an opportunity to learn and improve processes through our Structured EDI Practice.
- The library continues to value EDI learning through training for all staff. EDI training is a standard part of new employee onboarding and additional training

and learning opportunities are offered to staff regularly.

Recognizing Significant Dates

- Each year the library recognizes a diverse range of significant dates, including literacy initiatives, awareness dates, and cultural occasions.
- The library uses these dates to connect our community with specific collections and programs through displays, book lists, and communication to library staff and customers.
- Dates are selected annually to represent a variety of equity-deserving groups, identities, and topics. This process considers current events, community input, and our values of inclusion and intellectual freedom.

Roles & Responsibilities

Fostering equity is an integral part of everyone's role at BPL.

Library Staff
- Participate in continuous EDI learning and engagement
- Support a safe working environment for all staff
- Apply procedures and services with an equity mindset
- Develop new services, policies, and procedures with EDI principles in mind
- Considering and discussing EDI when addressing challenges and opportunities

Employee Voices
- Contribute perspectives to Senior Leadership on items that impact themselves and other staff

Manager, Outreach & Inclusion
- Support and provide resources for staff to address EDI and Accessibility questions or issues
- Act as BPL liaison for consultation with City of Burlington Advisory Committees
- Oversee and report on Outreach to equity-deserving groups

Manager, Human Resources
- Oversee all Human Resources processes to attract and retain a diverse workforce. BPL is committed to a respectful and safe workplace for all staff.

- Responsible for dealing with reported harassment and/or discrimination in the workplace

Manager, Marketing & Communication
- Oversee standards for representation, accessibility, and inclusion in public and internal communication

Senior Leadership
- Ensure EDI principles are considered in service development, Strategic Plans, and all future planning for the library.
- Respond to emergent issues around diversity and inclusion that impact library staff and customers.

Oversight, Reporting, & Support

The Manager, Outreach & Inclusion reviews new or updated policies and procedures to ensure EDI principles are appropriately reflected. The Manager, Outreach & Inclusion and Manager, Human Resources are available to provide support or address questions about EDI in training, new services, workplace interactions, or customer concerns.

Specific actions and progress on EDI goals are reported to the Library Board as a part of the Strategic Plan, key performance measurement, and Customer Satisfaction Survey outcomes.

Approved by:
Date:
Amended Dates:
Associated Documents:
 Related Policies:
 Other:
- Equity as a Practice - From Audits to Actions (Imagine Canada)

Definitions[1]

2SLGBTQIA+

Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and others. The symbol "+" in the abbreviation 2SLGBTQI+ represents people who use other terms to refer to their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Ally

A person who actively seeks to learn about the challenges of a person or group of people experiencing discrimination and who works in solidarity with them to fight against oppression.

Allyship

A process in which a person becomes involved in efforts to end the discrimination and oppression experienced by a group of people to which the person does not belong.

Diversity

The variety of identities found within an organization, group or society.

Equality

The principle of treating everyone in the same manner by ensuring they have access to the same resources and opportunities.

Equity

The principle of considering people's unique experiences and differing situations, and ensuring they have access to the resources and opportunities that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.

Equity-Deserving Group

A group of people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.

Inclusion

The practice of using proactive measures to create an environment where people feel welcomed, respected and valued, and to foster a sense of belonging and engagement.

---

[1] Guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology All definitions come from the Government of Canada guide on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Terminology.

Oppression

The act of subjecting a person or group of people to undue authority in an unjust or cruel manner.

Systemic/Institutional Discrimination

Discrimination created and maintained by the seemingly neutral practices, policies, procedures and cultures of organizations and government structures.