



∴ ontario library association

## The Intellectual Freedom Fund

### Background:

As a registered charity, OLA received The Intellectual Freedom fund upon dissolution of the Canadian Library Association. The criteria for disbursement of this fund to eligible recipients was reviewed in consultation with the [Canadian Federation of Library Associations](#).

This fund provides financial assistance in cases involving intellectual freedom. Funding will be disbursed up to \$5,000. Some exceptions will be considered at the discretion of the review committee.

### Eligibility/Criteria

The fund is available to public libraries serving populations under 29,999, or libraries (for example, an academic library in a small college or university) that would encounter undue financial hardship when defending intellectual freedom.

The fund will provide supports to libraries that may require funds in the following types of situations:

- Equitable access to library service to the public is at risk including the freedom to read, listen, view and create at the library.
- The need for the library to resist attempts to censor or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view, listen or participate by demanding the removal of, or restrictions to library information sources in any format including events.
- To defend the library in instances where a claim or accusation has been made that speech or displays have been used in a way that is unlawful. This includes the need to access this fund to determine if these instances are unlawful.

It is anticipated that the Intellectual Freedom fund will provide some financial support for legal-related fees including such actions as a legal defense, legal consultation and/or legal opinion. This fund may also support fees related to policy and procedures development and revisions, communications and marketing support, and other logistical concerns.

The fund is available to library applications from across Canada.

### Definitions:

*Revision History*  
V1: June 14, 2023

The Intellectual Freedom Fund is aligned with the [Ontario Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual](#). The introduction of the statement includes the following: 'The Ontario Library Association and its divisions are committed to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Ontario Libraries have the important responsibility to facilitate expressions of knowledge, creativity, ideas, and opinion, even when viewed as unconventional or unpopular.'

**Procedure:**

**Application Procedure:**

The application form can be completed at <https://awards.accessola.com/intellectual-freedom-fund/>

The following information is required:

- Individual and organization name and contact
- Senior Leadership Contact/Signing Authority
- Population served
- Description of the specific situation that this fund is being used to support. This description should include how intellectual freedom is being challenged.
- Demonstrated need for funding
- Amount of funding requested
- Timeline for funding request
- Agreement to share an outcomes summary or report.

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis.

**Selection Procedure:**

- Eligible proposals are received on an ongoing basis.
- The decision to approve applications and to disburse funds will take up to three weeks. Some exceptions may apply, and the process may take longer.
- The OLA executive director will convene an OLA selection committee of 3 – 5 representatives to include representation from the CFLA-FCAB Intellectual

Freedom Committee, the OLA Board and/or the OLA Fund Development Committee.

- The committee will meet, review and assess the application according to the established rubric for this fund.
- The executive director or designate will:
  - notify applicants about the status of their application.
  - request a report from successful applicants upon the conclusion of their issue.
  - Include a summary in an OLA Fund Development Committee/Board report.

### 2.1 Rubric:

Successful applications will have a score no less than 28 out of 40. Some criteria will be scored on a fixed-point application and some criteria provides a point range.

The following rubric will be used to assist the committee in awarding funds:

#### **1. Eligibility of applicant (type of library, size of community served):**

##### 10 points:

The applicant is a public library serving populations under 29,999 or a library (for example, an academic library in a small college or university) that would encounter undue financial hardship when defending intellectual freedom.)

Or

##### 5 points:

The applicant is a library or an affiliated organization that has described how they would encounter undue financial hardship when defending intellectual freedom but serves a population over 29,999.

Or

##### 0 points

The applicant does not fully or partially meet this criteria.

#### **2. Case for support for financial need:**

The library: (any of the following)

- Does not have access to any funds required to defend intellectual freedom.
- Some funds are available but are insufficient and additional support is required.

##### 0 - 10 points:

Clear case for support for financial need. This may include a short description of other potential sources, or reasons why some financial funds are not available through their organization.

### **3. Relevancy to fund criteria:**

The funds are required for one or more of the following situations:

- Equitable access to library service to the public is at risk including the freedom to read, listen, view and create at the library.
- The need for the library to resist attempts to censor or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view, listen or participate by demanding the removal of, or restrictions to library information sources in any format including events.
- To defend the library in instances where a claim or accusation has been made that speech or displays have been used in a way that is unlawful. This includes the need to access this fund to determine if these instances are unlawful.

#### 10 points:

- It is clear that intellectual freedom has been threatened in relationship to the situations described in these terms of reference.

#### 5 points:

- It is moderately clear that intellectual freedom has been threatened in relationship to the situations described in these terms of reference and this fund is required to help clarify or resolve.

#### 0 points:

There is no indication that this is an Intellectual Freedom issue as described in the Eligibility/Criteria section of the terms of reference.

### **4. Reporting**

The library/organization agrees to share an outcomes summary or report

#### 10 points:

The applicant agrees to submit a report that includes the issue, the process taken to address the issue, and the conclusion.

#### 0 points:

The applicant cannot submit a report that includes the issue, the process taken to address the issue, and the conclusion.

### **Award Procedure:**

- Upon approval, the funding proposal will be awarded to the applicant.

- The recipient will be required to submit a report on the use of the funds at the culmination of the defense.

### **History of this fund**

The following motion was approved at the June 2016 OLA Board Meeting:

Motion to receive restricted charitable funds from CLA due to the dissolution and to be disbursed in accordance with CRA rules and regulations.

OLA received The Intellectual Freedom fund upon dissolution of the Canadian Library Association. The criteria for disbursement to eligible recipients was reviewed in consultation with the Canadian Federation of Library Associations.

Details of this fund were further revised for clarity and approved on June 14, 2023, by the OLA Fund Development Committee and the OLA Board.

### **Appendix: Further References and Resources:**

[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[Centre for Free Expression](#)

[Canadian Civil Liberties Association](#)

[Community Legal Education Ontario](#)

[Definition of a legal opinion](#)