



POLICY ON SALES, SOLICITATION, PETITIONING AND DEMONSTRATIONS

“Library property” refers to the library building – including meeting rooms – and surrounding outdoor space – including public and staff parking lots, patios, lawn and garden areas. The following restrictions apply for direct sales, solicitations and petitions on City of Austin public library property:

SALES

No products, services or memberships may be advertised, solicited or sold by library staff members, library volunteers, library patrons or the general public on library property.

Exceptions:

- Invited authors - or a book seller designated by the author - may sell books as related to a library program or event.
- The Friends of the Austin Public Library, Ladies Floral Club or other library-related organizations may conduct sales as approved by the Library Director within the limits of the library’s available time and space.
- Sales are allowed in meeting rooms that have been reserved according to the library’s meeting room policy.

SOLICITATIONS:

Solicitations and fund-raising efforts by members of the public are not permitted on library property, other than posting information on the bulletin boards or free materials areas of the library as outlined in the Policy on Bulletin Board Postings and Distribution of Community Information. Not-for-profit fundraising activities are not permitted in library buildings or on library property by any person or organization when the purpose is to benefit a group or organization other than the Library or the Friends of the Austin Public Library.

Exception:

Library staff may engage in passive, occasional solicitations (such as fundraising sales), by leaving information in the staff lounge for a period up to one week; staff members may not directly solicit individual staff members, volunteers or members of the public.

PETITIONING:

No petitioning or gathering of petition signatures may take place inside the library’s facilities or on library property within 25 feet of the library doorways. The following guidelines and conditions for petitioning on library property are established to protect both the free exercise of individual rights, as well as maintenance of a safe and welcoming environment for all patrons while visiting the library.

1. Persons circulating petitions for signatures and/or leafleting shall not:
 - a. Block, hinder, interfere, or otherwise impede persons and staff wishing to enter or exit the library building, or to use book returns, nor seek to intimidate patrons or staff into signing a petition or accepting a leaflet.
 - b. Occupy areas designated as fire or emergency lanes, shall not occupy parking spaces, and must stay clear of traffic lanes and vehicular entrances.
 - c. Place or erect tables, chairs, or signs on library property.
 - d. Place leaflets or materials on vehicles in the library’s parking lot.
 - e. Block doorways, prevent patrons from getting in or out of cars, use abusive language, or behave in any way which is harassing or intimidating.

2. Only one person at a time is permitted to solicit signatures for a single petition or distribute materials.
3. No work or petitioning on behalf of candidates for elected office is allowed in library buildings or on library property.
4. No leafleting or distribution of literature, or solicitation is permitted for the purposes of selling items, merchandise, tickets, or other for-profit activities and services.
5. The Library has the right to ask any person circulating petitions or leafleting to provide their legal name and/or their supervisor's name, address, and a copy of the petition or leaflet to library staff.
6. The library staff, Friends of the Austin Public Library, and members of the Library Board of Trustees are exempt from the above constraints in promoting library activities and issues.

Persons who fail to comply with any of the above policies or procedures will be asked to leave the library premises and may be barred from the right to circulate petitions or distribute leaflets in the future. The Library will not assume responsibility for any harm or injury suffered by persons circulating petitions or leaflets, or by those who are signing a petition.

The presence of a person circulating petitions or distributing leaflets outside a library facility does not constitute the Library's endorsement of any candidate, initiative or referendum, policies, beliefs, or political affiliations of any person or group circulating petitions or distributing leaflets.

DEMONSTRATIONS:

People have a constitutional right to demonstrate on the public sidewalk and other public spaces not controlled by the Library, as long as demonstrators do not interfere with patrons entering the library. The library building is not a public square, and therefore demonstrations may not take place that interfere with patrons' quiet use and enjoyment of the library.

The Library Director (or designee) will make every effort to communicate with leaders of the group(s) demonstrating or protesting and maintain an open line of communication with them. Group leader(s) will be asked to establish a tone of respect and civil discourse during the protest. Group leader(s) will also be reminded to consult with local government regarding the permitting process for any organized protest/demonstration.

Library staff will notify local law enforcement if a protest becomes violent, if there is the chance that a protest will become violent, or if protestors interfere with patrons entering the library. The Library Director (or designee) will consult local law enforcement about proper procedure.

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