

Special Use of Library Facilities and Grounds Policy

Purpose

Timberland Regional Library (TRL) strives to provide a welcoming environment that encourages all patrons to use its facilities, services, and resources in a safe and respectful manner. Recognizing that portions of TRL's library buildings and grounds may be considered public forums, this policy restricts sales and solicitation activities and imposes reasonable time, place and manner restrictions on signature gathering, political activities and election materials, and other activities or expressions of free speech in accordance with federal and state law and to the extent necessary to prevent unreasonable interference with patrons' enjoyment of the library.

Scope

This policy applies to all TRL facilities, including outdoor spaces. This policy is intended to serve as a guide and is not intended to address every instance. Use of TRL facilities and grounds for political activities is also subject to TRL's "Facility Use for Political Purposes Policy" No. 033.

Policy

Approved areas: Activities shall be conducted in a manner that does not restrict or inhibit patron access to or use of the library and may be outside the facility including parking lots and other areas, or, space permitting, in the lobby area. Some locations may not have adequate space inside or jurisdiction over areas outside of the buildings to allow for these activities. Distributing materials, canvassing, performing, or speaking may be done only during regular operating hours of the library and with advance permission from the person in charge of the branch or the Executive Director or designee.

Standard of Conduct: The conduct of persons speaking, canvassing, performing, or distributing information under this policy must be in compliance with all TRL policies and federal, state, and local laws.

Equity: TRL is committed to providing equitable and open access to its library facilities and grounds regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, political ideology, national origin, sexual orientation, and/or physical, mental, or sensory disability.

Authority: The determination of whether or not the activity or location is appropriate or limits access rests with TRL. The judgment shall be made by the person in charge of the branch.

Identification: Any organization using library property must identify their participants with an organizational ID or name badge that clearly identifies them as other than a TRL employee. It shall be clear that the activity is not affiliated with or sponsored by TRL.

Demand: If more than one advocate or advocacy group wants to conduct a survey, collect goods or signatures, express an opinion, or distribute information, it is up to the person in charge of the branch to provide an orderly process for allowing access to the premises without disrupting service.

Collection of donated goods: Library locations may be asked to serve as collection points for other community organizations to collect donated goods as a public service (excluding monetary donations). Collections of donated goods under this policy include items to be recycled (such as eyeglasses), blood drives, food, clothing, books, and other charitable goods. Due to space limitations and other considerations, and the increased workload such campaigns put upon staff, TRL reserves the right to decline such requests. All requests for the library to serve as a collection point for community drives must be approved by the Library Manager. Abandoned items may be donated to a local charity.

No Responsibility for Donated Goods: TRL is not responsible for any donated goods if left unattended, stolen, or damaged while on premises. TRL only provides a space for collection and does not secure offerings.

Sales, fundraising and commercial activities: TRL prohibits all types of sales, fundraising or solicitation on library property. Exceptions are activities related to the Library or events or partnerships that are pre-approved by TRL's Administration and are in alignment with TRL's mission. TRL libraries are not classrooms or office spaces. The exchange of money for private services (such as for tutoring) on TRL property is strictly prohibited.

Signature gathering, protests and political activity: Except as restricted by RCW 42.17A.555 (which prohibits the use by public officials and employees of public office or agency facilities in campaigns), gathering petition signatures, staging protests and other political activities are permitted on library property within designated areas to be determined by the person in charge of the branch or the Executive Director or their designee. Unmanned campaign posters, banners, yard signs and other outdoor displays (not sponsored by TRL) shall not be posted, exhibited, or left anywhere on TRL property. Such displays will be removed without notice and disposed of by library personnel.

Administration: The Executive Director is responsible for the administration of this policy, for establishing administrative procedures for its implementation and for making the policy available for the public at each branch and via TRL's web site.

Severability: The Board of Trustees hereby declares its intention that the provisions of this policy are declared to be separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, chapter, title or other portion of this policy, or the invalidity of the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the policy, or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

Violations: Organizations or individuals that violate the terms of this policy may be refused future use of TRL facilities for public speech under this policy.

Definitions

Political activity: Campaigning, petitioning, ballot proposal promotion, lobbying, public information campaigns, protests, and other activities associated with political campaigns, causes or concerns.

Sales: Any wholesale, retail, service, or similar activity that could result in the exchange of money or offer monetary gain to the person(s) distributing the product or service.

Solicitation: The act of requesting money, credit, goods, or merchandise for any purposes including promotion, vending, peddling, panhandling, testing or product sampling on library property.

No Endorsement

Permission for a group to exercise free speech or engage in public expression on TRL property under the terms of this policy does not in any way constitute or suggest endorsement of the expressed beliefs, policies, or programs by TRL, any library official, or the Board of Trustees.

References

RCW 42.17A.555

Effective 2/22/2023

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Policy Number: 038

By the enactment of this policy the Board of Trustees of Timberland Regional Library is concurrently rescinding any prior policy or procedure within TRL that is either in conflict with or expansive of the matters addressed in this policy.