

Petitions, Electioneering, and Leafleting Policy

(Adopted February, 2023)

The Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library has the authority to make reasonable rules that are universally applicable regarding the allowed use of library buildings and property, including content-neutral restriction of conduct involving passing out literature and the collection of signatures for petitions. The sidewalks around the library are a traditional public forum subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on those wishing to use them for purposes protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. As such, the library allows people to circulate petitions, electioneer for political candidates, and distribute literature outside library facilities subject to the following rules and regulations:

1. Persons circulating petitions for signatures, electioneering for political candidates, or leafleting may stand on library property; however, they may not engage in collecting signatures, electioneering activity or distributing leaflets inside the library building.
2. Electioneering for political candidates is limited to the dates and times that the library serves as an active polling location.
3. Campaign materials and signs may be displayed by political candidates on library property only on an election day when the library is used as a polling place subject to legal guidelines governing such displays.
4. Petition circulating, electioneering or leafleting must take place outside the library building at least twenty feet (20') from entrances and exits.
5. Persons circulating petitions, electioneering for political candidates, or leafleting shall not block, hinder, interfere, or otherwise impede patrons and staff wishing to enter or exit the library building or to use book returns, nor seek to intimidate, pressure or harass patrons or staff into signing a petition, accepting electioneering materials, or accepting a leaflet.
6. Persons circulating petitions, electioneering, or leafleting shall not occupy areas designated as fire or emergency lanes and shall not occupy parking spaces.
7. The use of sound amplification equipment or methods is prohibited.
8. No monies or donations can be collected, solicited, or accepted.
9. Persons circulating petitions, electioneering, or leafleting are not permitted to erect tables, chairs, or affix signs to library property.
10. Only one person at a time is permitted to solicit signatures for a single petition, electioneer for a single political candidate, or distribute leaflets.
11. No leafleting or distribution of literature, or solicitation is permitted for the purposes of selling items, merchandise, tickets, or other for-profit activities.
12. Panhandling is not permitted on library property.
13. Any person wishing to solicit signatures for a petition or leaflet shall inform Library Administration in advance of their desire and intent to solicit signatures for a petition or to distribute leaflets. Each such individual shall provide their name, address, and a copy of the petition or leaflet to Library Administration.
14. Library Staff, Friends of the 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 this and other general library policies or with any of the above rules and regulations 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, electioneering for candidates, or distributing leaflets, or by those who are signing a petition or by receiving electioneering materials or leaflets.

The presence of persons circulating petitions, electioneering for candidates, or distributing leaflets outside the library does not constitute the Library's endorsement of any candidate, nor does it constitute support or opposition of the subject matter of any petition or leaflet.

The presence of a person circulating petitions, electioneering materials, or leaflets outside the library does not constitute the Library's endorsement of the policies, beliefs, or political affiliations of any person or group circulating such petitions, electioneering materials, or leaflets.