

Policy Name: Distribution of Free Materials and Public Posting Policy
Adoption Date: October 19, 2022
Supersedes: Distribution of Free Materials and Public Posting Policy, #10.02

## **BACKGROUND**

Tacoma Public Library (TPL) has bulletin boards and other designated display areas (such as literature racks, tables, countertop space, etc.) available for use by the public at some locations. These spaces are available for the public to distribute informational materials to the general community.

These areas may be used by community organizations and individuals if the posting meets the requirements of this policy and space is available.

## **POLICY INTENT**

Materials that fall outside the scope of this policy may not be posted or distributed on Library premises. These spaces are available to organizations and individuals engaged in civic, educational, cultural, and charitable activities. Public use of bulletin boards and display space is limited to not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-commercial exhibits.

The provision of display space for public use does not constitute TPL's endorsement of the contents of notices, literature being distributed, or the beliefs of organizations/individuals using these spaces.

All posting and placement of materials in distribution areas shall be done by Library staff. Individuals requesting the posting or distribution of materials shall not post or leave materials in distribution areas without TPL's approval.

TPL reserves the right to approve materials displayed or distributed with priority given to materials that are Tacoma/South Sound oriented.

The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection of materials. The Library is not responsible for restocking or saving materials and may limit the time materials are displayed due to factors such as, location square footage and capacity to house the display or space needs of the organization. TT. Materials that include an expiration date will be pulled after this listed date. Materials that have no expiration date are pulled within 2-4 weeks of placement.

Materials left for posting or distribution without authorization from the Library will be discarded.

Display spaces in TPL locations (i.e., spaces other than community boards), including but not limited to enclosed display cabinets, shelves, and wall spaces, are for the use of the Library only; the content of these displays is at the discretion of TPL. All displays must be approved by the location's Neighborhood Services Manager, the Library Director, or the Assistant Director. Library staff may at

times invite individuals or community groups to provide displays or exhibits for the educational benefit of the public.

Failure to comply with the terms of this policy may result in the denial of future access to public posting spaces at all TPL locations.

**Items prohibited from display at TPL locations**

- Materials related to endorsements or opposition of political candidates or specific ballot measures – **RCW 42.17A.555**
- Petitions or letters that request a signature from Library users
- For-profit company product advertisements
  - In general, the Library does not display materials that are purely commercial in nature, unless they have a special educational, informational, or cultural value to the community
- Events that charge fees and are not sponsored by the community, a non-profit, or neighborhood organizations
- Materials promoting private events such as yard sales and “services provided”
- Items that display images or representations of violence, weapons, or obscenity

**Appeals**

Groups or individuals that would like to appeal the Library’s decision to not display or distribute an item may do so in writing (via email, US mail, or delivered to any TPL location’s circulation desk). Appeals must include contact information for the appellant and additional details regarding the materials they would like posted. The final decision will be made by the Library Director or Assistant Library Director and delivered in writing within 30-business days of receiving the appeal The Library Director or Assistant Library Director’s decision is final.

Contact information for the Library Directors can be found on [tacomalibrary.org](http://tacomalibrary.org).

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

This policy supports the following library strategic priorities:

**Cultivate and Engage Community**

The adaption of this policy ensures there are guidelines for who, what, where, and when materials provided by the public may be permitted to be displayed or distributed at TPL locations. Dedicating space for the posting of community and public events and other materials, allows the community space to be an active part of the Library system. Engaging with the community in such a manner can also foster trust and help TPL move closer to the vision set forth in its values. Public postings also allow Library users access to other community resources outside the Library.

<p><b>Equity and Access</b> We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma’s diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.</p>	X	<p><b>Cultivate and Engage Community</b> We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.</p>
<p><b>Learning, Creativity, and Innovation</b> We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.</p>		<p><b>Responsible and Resilient</b> We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.</p>
<p><b>Investment in Youth</b></p>		

We believe that youth are the future and will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS & LINKS

[RCW 42.17A.550](#)

## POLICY HISTORY

Action	Date	Notes
Revision Adopted	July 2017	
Revision Adopted	October 19, 2022	