



Petitions and Solicitation

The Hampshire County Public library has a content-neutral restriction of conduct involving passing out literature. The public sidewalks around the library property 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 Constitution of the United States. As such, the library allows people to circulate petitions and distribute leaflets outside library facilities, subject to the following rules and regulations:

- Persons circulating petitions for signatures or leafleting may stand on library property at least 20 feet from entrances and exits; however, they may not engage in collecting signatures or distributing leaflets inside library buildings
- Persons circulating petitions or leafleting shall not block, hinder, interfere, or otherwise impede patrons and staff wishing to enter or exit library buildings or to use book returns, nor seek to intimidate patrons or staff into signing a petition or accepting a leaflet
- Persons circulating petitions or leafleting shall not occupy areas designated as fire or emergency lanes and shall not occupy parking spaces
- Persons circulating petitions or leafleting are not allowed to place or erect tables, chairs, or signs on library property
- Only one person at a time is permitted to solicit signatures for a single petition or leaflet
- No work or petitioning on behalf of candidates for elected office is allowed in library buildings or on library property
- No leafleting or distribution of literature, or solicitation, is permitted for the purposes of selling items, merchandise, tickets, or other for-profit activities
- Panhandling is not permitted on library property
- The 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

Any person wishing to solicit signatures for a petition or leaflet shall inform the library of his or her desire and intent to solicit signatures for a petition or to distribute leaflets along with his or her name, address, and a copy of the petition or leaflet to library staff. 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 distributing leaflets, or by those who are signing a petition. The presence of persons circulating petitions for signatures or distributing leaflets outside a library facility does not constitute the library's endorsement of any candidate, nor does it constitute support or opposition of the subject matter of any initiative or referendum. The presence of a person circulating petitions or distributing leaflets outside a library facility does not constitute the library's endorsement of the policies, beliefs, or political affiliations of any person or group circulating petitions for signatures or distributing leaflets.