

SUBJECT: PETITIONING

EFFECTIVE: MARCH 1, 2018

SUPERSEDES: 5/2015

1. PURPOSE:

- A. The Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library (THPL) allows petitioning and canvassing on library property in support of its mission of promoting an informed citizenry by providing a forum for citizens to address community needs and respond to community growth and change.

2. POLICY:

- A. Petitioning, canvassing, and similar types of citizen initiatives designed to contact, survey, gather signatures, share information, and or/inform citizens about various topics are only allowed within a [designated area](#) outside the library building. No petitioning, canvassing, or similar types of citizen initiatives are allowed inside the library building. No solicitation or fundraising is permitted.
- B. The space for petitioning, or similar citizen initiatives, shall be designated by the Library Regional Manager, or designee. Requests are handled on a first-come, first-served basis, and must not impede access to the building. Organizations, groups, or individuals shall be refused space if the designated areas meeting the location requirements above have been filled.
- C. Petitioners must provide contact information for themselves and for the group for which they are working for emergency, safety, and liability purposes.
- D. Organizations, groups, or individuals are responsible for bringing their own equipment and furniture.
- E. Signs and posters cannot be affixed to the building.
- F. Sound amplification and/or other equipment cannot be used.
- G. The organization, group, or individual petitioning or conducting similar citizen initiatives is responsible for the information presented. Permission to use THPL property does not imply that THPL or Hillsborough County endorses the purposes, policies, or contents of the organization, group, or individual.
- H. Petitioners must not impede or interfere with customers' access to library facilities and are subject to the [Library's Code of Conduct, LS502](#).

3. PROCEDURE:

- A. When an organization, group, or individual sets up to petition or perform a similar action on library property, the Branch Supervisor:
 - 1) Determines whether or not the activity remains in compliance with the above THPL Petitioning Policy.

- 2) Notifies their Library Regional Manager of the contact information of the organization, group, or individual utilizing the library property.
- B. The Library reserves the right to refuse individuals, groups, or organizations space for petitioning. Refusal can be based upon, but is not limited to: 1) disruption of normal library business operations such as obstructing entrance and exit of library facilities; 2) conducting petitioning outside of normal business hours. Refusal cannot be of an arbitrary or capricious nature in accordance with this policy. Individuals, groups, or organizations may ask for reconsideration of a denial by taking the following steps:
- 1) The individual, group, or organization should first seek resolution from the branch or department supervisor.
 - 2) If unsatisfied with the response of the branch or department supervisor, the individual, group, or organization may complete and send an [Appeal for Use of Library Petitioning Space form](#) to the Director of Libraries requesting review of petitioning space denial. The form must be received no later than 15 days after the initial complaint to the branch or department supervisor.
 - 3) The Library Director or designee appoints a panel of three Managers to review the petitioning space denial and address the party's complaint. The panel reviews the appeal form request and any relevant policies and informs the party in writing of its decision within fifteen days of receipt of the group/organization's complaint.
 - 4) Within seven days of receipt of the review panel's decision, the party may send a letter to the Director of Libraries asking for rescission of the denial and the reasons for the requested rescission. The Director has seven days to review the panel's decision and respond to the group/organization in writing.
 - 5) Within seven days of receipt of the Director's decision, the party may send a letter to the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library Board requesting review of the denial. The Library Board reviews the decision at their next regularly scheduled Board meeting and informs the party of their decision in writing. The decision of the Library Board is final.

4. AUTHORITY:

Pursuant to Section 5 of [Chapter 84-443](#), Laws of Florida, the Public Library Board (the Library Board) has the duty and the responsibility, among others, to serve in a recommending capacity to the Director of Library Services and to the County Administrator in respect to all matters pertaining to the Public Library System of Hillsborough County (the Library System) and library services.

Approved:

Andrew Breidenbaugh, Director