

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

The Pitkin County Library (Library) is committed to protecting patron privacy with the understanding that privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. Library patrons have the legal right to privacy in their use of the Library as provided for in Colorado Library Law (CRS 24-90-119). This law prohibits the Library from divulging any record or other information that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific library materials or services or as otherwise having used the library. Pursuant to the law, the Library may only disclose patron records in the following instances: when necessary for the reasonable operation of the library; upon written consent of the user; pursuant to a subpoena, upon court order, or where otherwise required by law; to a custodial parent or legal guardian who has access to a minor's library card or its authorization number for the purpose of accessing by electronic means library records of the minor. By using the Library, you acknowledge and agree to abide by this policy to ensure the privacy and security of both library users and staff.

The Library is a public space accessible to all members of the community during our operating hours. We welcome everyone to use our public areas; however, certain areas within the Library are restricted and are not open to the public. These staff-only areas are essential to the Library's operations and are for authorized personnel only.

No individual is permitted to enter staff-only areas without explicit authorization. Access to these restricted areas will only be granted by the Library Director or designee for library-related purposes or in accordance with legal requirements, such as a valid warrant or subpoena. Unauthorized entry into staff areas will be considered a violation of library policy and may result in legal action.

In order to receive library services, such as registering for library cards, registering for programs, receiving personal responses to questions, or being added to specific mailing lists, patrons choose to submit their names, email addresses, postal addresses, and telephone numbers. This personally identifiable information given to the Library will be kept confidential and will not be sold, licensed, or disclosed to any third party except those working under contract with the Library or as required by law. The Library will take reasonable measures to ensure the confidentiality of each patron's library card account and library use by securing and limiting access to these records to approved staff members only. The Library will only collect and store personally identifiable information when needed for business purposes or to conduct informational campaigns. Information overheard by persons not employed or volunteering at the Library is not considered confidential.

All patrons registering for a library card account will automatically be added to the Library's newsletter email list, and a digital system that provides hold, overdue, and billed notices will be sent via email. Some patrons may also choose to take advantage of notices sent via text messages. These systems send personally identifiable information related to library use via public communication networks. Patrons are cautioned that any electronic communication utilizing the Internet or a wireless network may be intercepted. At any time, patrons may "opt-out" or "unsubscribe" from further email or text contact from the Library.

It is the patron's responsibility to notify the Library immediately if the patron's card is lost or stolen or if the patron believes that someone is using their card or card number without permission. The Library encourages patrons to protect library cards and card numbers for privacy and security. Patrons may access their own

personally identifiable information held by the Library and are responsible for keeping their information accurate and up-to-date.

Library Law protects the privacy of all patrons, no matter their age. Parents or guardians of a minor who wish to obtain access to their child's library records, including the titles of materials checked out or overdue, must provide their child's library card number. Information about overdue or billed books that are accruing fines may be provided to the adult who is financially responsible for the juvenile's account.

When paper or electronic documentation containing personally identifiable information is no longer needed, staff will destroy or arrange for the destruction of such paper and electronic documents by shredding, erasing, or otherwise modifying the information to make it unreadable.

Patrons may conduct only legal activity while using library resources and services. Nothing in this policy prevents the Library from exercising its right to enforce its Patron Behavior Policy, protect its patrons, staff, facilities, network, and equipment from harm, or prevent the use of Library facilities and equipment for illegal purposes. Staff is authorized to take immediate action to protect the security of patrons, staff, facilities, computers, and the network. This includes contacting law enforcement authorities and providing information that may identify individuals (s) suspected of a violation.

Requests made by subpoena or court order must be served upon the Library Director or authorized designee, who may then consult legal counsel. Records may only be disclosed pursuant to subpoena, upon court order, or where otherwise required by law. As a governmental agency, we are governed by open records laws. Additionally, the Library is obligated to comply with the information disclosure requirements of the USA Patriot Act.

This policy was last reviewed on March 12, 2025 by the Pitkin County Library Board of Trustees.