

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

The Pitkin County Library (Library) is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all patrons. Privacy is a foundational element of intellectual freedom and is essential to the rights of free speech, free thought, and free association. The Library upholds these values by ensuring the confidentiality of personally identifiable information and by aligning with applicable federal, state, and local laws, including the Colorado Library Law (C.R.S. 24-90-119) and SB25-276 – Protect Civil Rights Immigration Status.

Legal Protections

Under Colorado Library Law, library records that identify a person as having requested, used, or obtained specific materials or services are confidential. These records may only be disclosed under the following circumstances: when necessary for the reasonable operation of the Library; with the written consent of the patron; pursuant to a subpoena, court order, or as otherwise required by law; or to a custodial parent or legal guardian who has access to a minor's library card or authorization number for electronic access to that minor's records.

In accordance with SB25-276, the Library will not inquire about, collect, or share information regarding immigration or citizenship status. All individuals, regardless of status, are entitled to use Library services freely and without fear. Staff will not assist in federal immigration enforcement activities or release personal information for immigration-related purposes unless legally compelled to do so through a valid judicial process.

Law Enforcement and Access to Library Spaces

The Library is a public institution open to all during operating hours. However, staff-only areas are restricted and accessible only to authorized personnel. Law enforcement officers may access public areas while performing official duties but may not enter non-public staff areas unless there is an emergency; they present a valid warrant, subpoena, or court order; or they are granted permission by the Library Director or designee.

As a courtesy and to minimize disruption, law enforcement is requested to notify the Library Director in advance of activities that may impact normal operations. Library staff will not provide personal patron information or assist in locating individuals unless legally required to do so. Staff may consult with legal counsel before responding to such requests.

Patron Information and Confidentiality

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 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.

Retention and Destruction of Information

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.

Compliance and Legal Requests

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 are 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 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 laws regarding open records. Additionally, the Library is obligated to comply with the information disclosure requirements of the USA Patriot Act.

This policy was last reviewed on August 13, 2025, by the Pitkin County Library Board of Trustees.