

# Communication with the Public

## Policy Statement

The Pierce County Library System is dedicated to communicating with the public to provide services to help meet the needs of the communities it serves. The Library's Board of Trustees recognizes in order to meet the needs of communities and fulfill the responsibilities as Trustees, the Board and Library staff, acting on behalf of the Board, must maintain adequate and effective opportunities for and methods of collaborative communication with the public.

## Definitions

*Communications:* the act or process of providing or exchanging thoughts, opinions, or information through various written, spoken, visual, or other collaborative forms.

*Public:* the people constituting a community.

*Confidential information:* material that is internal to the organization for operational purposes, such as operational planning, marketing plans, technology plans, etc. about members of the organization or the organization, which without authorization, staff is not authorized to communicate,

## Policy

### Public Audience

The Library communicates and collaborates with people living in its service area, as well as those who have an influence upon people in its service area.

The Library communicates and collaborates with people who use or who may use its services, as well as individuals who have an opportunity to support the use of library services.

The Library communicates and collaborates with the communities it serves and the individuals and organizations that influence those communities.

### Purpose of Communication

The Library welcomes the opportunity to respond to requests from the public. The Board affirms it is important for the Library to develop and maintain communications through participation in community activities and by seeking opportunities to collaborate with individuals and organizations to plan and evaluate library services and align those services with community priorities.

### Staff Communications to the Public

The Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for the coordination and release of information to the public. Library staff authorized to communicate with the public on behalf of the organization within the scope of their position may use talking points or other Library prepared materials. Internal, confidential information may not be released to the public without prior authorization from the Library.

Library staff not authorized to communicate to the public on behalf of the Library should avoid identifying themselves as a Library employee in public statements or must clearly state they are speaking in their personal capacity and not in their official capacity as a Library employee. Use of personal social media to conduct Library business can trigger application of the Public Records Act and other laws governing the conduct of municipal government. For that reason, staff should not use personal social media to conduct Library business. Staff assigned to conduct social media on the Library's platforms use their

personal social media accounts as entrance to the Library's social media accounts, and this policy allows that entrance practice for the purpose of conducting Library social media business.

The Library's external social media and other public information channels are intended for authorized Library communications to the public. Staff is encouraged to use internal communication resources for internal questions, concerns, or other communications.

### **Communication Tools**

The Library uses a variety of communication tools including, but not limited to, written materials, online content, recorded videos, and in-person or online presentations. The Library solicits advice and opinions from Friends of the Library groups, the Pierce County Library Foundation Board, and people living in the communities the Library serves.

### **Related Policies Procedures**

[Public Records Request](#)

[Public Records Request Process](#)

#### **Board Policy 1.17**

**Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Pierce County Rural Library District on March 13, 1997.**

**Revised February 17, 2000. Revised February 10, 2010, Revised October, 13, 2021**

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