

Petitioning and Solicitation Policy

Dyer Library/Saco Museum has an obligation to both protect the safety of library and museum users and to ensure that all users can freely access the services provided. Free and unimpeded access to DLSM buildings is a necessary precondition for meeting this obligation. This policy sets forth guidelines and conditions for circulating petitions on DLSM property to protect both the free exercise of individual rights as well as maintenance of a safe and welcoming environment for all patrons while visiting the library or museum.

Allowed Activities

- Petitioning, leafleting, and passive citizen engagement initiatives designed to survey, gather signatures, share information, and inform citizens are allowed on library/museum grounds during open hours.
- Petitioners conducting such activity shall be at least ten feet (10') from the public entrances.
- Petitioners must adhere to the DLSM Use Policy for behavior and may not actively pursue, harass or intimidate library/museum patrons or staff. Individuals who are reported to engage in improper behavior will be asked to leave the premises.
- Individuals engaging in petitioning, leafleting, and passive citizen engagement initiatives shall inform staff during normal business hours of their desire and intent to engage in such activities. Each such individual shall provide their name, address, and a copy of the petition or leaflet to DLSM staff.
- Candidates with nomination papers may canvas for signatures outside of the buildings as long as it is done in a reasonable and unobtrusive manner. Canvassing is prohibited inside library or museum buildings.
- DLSM staff and members of the Library Board of Trustees are exempt from the above constraints in promoting DLSM activities and issues.

Prohibited Activities

- Soliciting, selling, or circulating petitions for signatures inside DLSM buildings is prohibited.
- Petitioners shall not occupy areas designated as fire or emergency lanes.
- Petitioners shall not occupy parking spaces or disrupt the flow of vehicular traffic by standing in traffic lanes, drop off areas, or entrances.
- Petitioners shall not block, hinder, interfere or otherwise impede patrons and staff wishing to exit or enter the building or utilize the book drop.
- Petitioners shall not use sound amplification and/or other equipment.
- No monies or donations may be collected, solicited, or accepted.
- No leafleting or distribution of literature, or solicitation is permitted for the purposes of selling items, merchandise, tickets, or other for-profit activities.

- Persons circulating petitions or leafleting are not allowed to place or erect tables, chairs or signs on DLSM property.
- Individuals may not place leaflets or materials on vehicles in the parking lot.
- Not-for-profit fundraising activities are not permitted in the Library or Museum buildings or on DLSM property by any person or organization when the purpose is to benefit a group or organization other than DLSM. Exceptions may be permitted with approval of the Executive Director and Board of Trustees.
- With approval of the Executive Director and Board of Trustees, the passive solicitation and collection of donations by community-based, non-profit organizations may be permitted. Notices may be posted to a public bulletin board and bins placed in approved areas to collect items for this purpose. Use of these resources is subject to the approval of the Executive Director. DLSM assumes no responsibility for contents collected or donated. DLSM does not permit any exchange of monies or funds for this purpose. Space is limited and not all requests can be approved.

First Amendment Rights

Dyer Library/Saco Museum, as a limited public forum, has the authority to make reasonable rules that are universally applicable regarding the allowed use of DLSM buildings and property, including content-neutral restriction of conduct involving petition gathering, passing out literature, and other passive engagement. As such, DLSM allows such petition and passive engagement outside of our facilities. It is expected that individuals engaging in these activities will conduct themselves with civility and respect toward DLSM visitors and staff. The public sidewalks around DLSM 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. City and State regulations will apply to actions on public property.

Administrative Concerns

The Executive Director shall make the final determination as to whether a solicitation is permitted under this policy. The presence of any individual or group petitioning or conducting similar citizen initiatives is responsible for the information presented. Use of DLSM property does not imply that Dyer Library/Saco Museum endorses the purposes, policies, or contents of the organization, group, or individual. Any requests for appeal may be brought to the Board of Trustees.