

# Patron Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

## Hillside Public Library

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### Purpose

The Hillside Public Library is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all library users in accordance with applicable laws and ethical guidelines. This policy outlines how the library collects, uses, and safeguards patron information to ensure that individuals feel secure in using library services.

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### Policy Statement

The Hillside Public Library affirms that the privacy of library users is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. The library adheres to the American Library Association (ALA) Library Bill of Rights, which states: “All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess the right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use.”

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### Library Records Confidentiality Act

The Library Records Confidentiality Act, 75 ILCS 70/1, mandates the confidentiality of all library registration and circulation records containing personally identifiable information relating to an individual’s use of the library and its resources, facilities, and services. Confidentiality includes, but is not limited to, circulation of materials, electronic resource searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference requests, and use of audio-visual materials, as well as information and documentation provided by an individual when registering for a library card or library program. The library will not sell, lease, or disclose confidential information to outside parties unless required to do so by law.

Library records may only be disclosed to the following:

- Library employees performing job duties.
- The account owner, upon presentation of their library card or proof of identity.
- Others authorized by the account owner to pick up requested materials. Any person in possession of a physical library card or a library card number is assumed to be the account owner or have the permission of the account owner to access the account.

Unless otherwise required by law, library records containing personally identifiable information will not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government unless a warrant, court order, or other investigatory document is issued by a court of competent jurisdiction that shows good cause and is in proper form. The Board of Trustees has authorized only the Library Director and their designees to receive or comply with requests from law enforcement officers. The Library Director and their designees will confer with legal counsel before determining the proper response to a subpoena, search warrant, or

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other request for information from law enforcement in accordance with the Library Records Confidentiality Act.

#### *Requests from Law Enforcement*

Information about library users and library staff are not made available to law enforcement agencies under any circumstances unless a proper court order in good form has been presented to the library. Without a court order, neither the FBI nor local law enforcement has authority to compel cooperation with an investigation or require answers to questions, other than the name and address of the person speaking to the agent or officer. In compliance with privacy regulations and in conformity with professional ethics, First Amendment freedoms, and state law, the library will not respond to informal requests for confidential information in the absence of a court order.

#### *Law Enforcement Emergency Exception*

The library will comply with all provisions of the Library Records Confidentiality Act. This includes 75 ILCS 70/1(a)(2) regarding emergency information requests from law enforcement officers, without a court order or search warrant, in emergency situations, provided all of the following conditions are met:

- The information is requested by a sworn law enforcement officer who represents to the library that it is impractical to get a court order as a result of an emergency;
- The officer has probable cause to believe there is an imminent danger of physical harm;
- The information requested is limited to identifying a suspect, witness, or victim of a crime; and
- The information requested does not include registration or circulation records that would indicate materials borrowed, resources reviewed, or services used at the library.

Law enforcement officers who seek the emergency release of information must sign an acknowledgment form when requested to do so by the library. Only the Library Director is authorized to release information to law enforcement officers and may require consultation with legal counsel before releasing information. Under this provision, only information identifying a suspect, witness, or victim of a crime may be disclosed to a law enforcement officer without a court order; all other information remains confidential.

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### Collected Information

The library collects patron information only as needed to provide services and fulfill its mission. The library may collect the following personal information to allow for and manage access to library services, including issuing library cards, borrowing and account activity for circulation purposes, program registration details, and computer usage or internet session data to manage technology resources.

- Name
- Date of birth
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Library barcode number

- Library materials currently checked out or requested
- Fee and payment history
- Event registration
- Demographic information

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## Third Parties

Any technology employed in the provision of library services will be designed to collect or maintain the minimum possible amount of personally identifying information, with such information residing only in a secure electronic environment, not subject to intentional or accidental exposure to unauthorized individuals.

The library uses third-party vendors to provide digital content, including digital books and audiobooks, digital movies and music, and other online resources. Some of these vendors may collect and share personally identifiable information that patrons choose to provide them in order to use their services. Patrons have the option not to use these third-party vendors.

The library cannot guarantee the privacy of online activities, transactions, or communications accessed via the library's computers or via the library's internet network. Given that the library is a public place, each user should exercise caution when using library computers or the internet network to avoid unauthorized or accidental disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal information. Internet users should not expect or treat their online activity as confidential or private. The library is not responsible for and does not guarantee the privacy of its patrons when using library technology resources, even those owned by or linked from the library's website, or recommended for use by its employees.

The library participates in reciprocal borrowing and interlibrary loans. It is sometimes necessary for libraries to share information with each other to be able to provide service to the patron and to collect outstanding materials owed. The library will honor requests from other libraries that need this information for legitimate purposes. Implicit in a patron's agreement to participate in the reciprocal borrowing program is the patron's consent for the various libraries involved to exchange pertinent information as may be necessary to retrieve library materials.

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## Records Retention

The library minimizes the retention of personally identifiable information. Records are deleted or anonymized when no longer necessary for library operations, subject to legal requirements.

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## Library Website Privacy

The Hillside Public Library is the sole owner of the information collected on the library website. We will

not sell, share, or rent this information to others in any way that departs from this policy. The library collects information from our patrons at several points on our website.

#### *Website Interactions*

In order to use some features of the library website, patrons must enter contact information, including their name and email address. This information is used to contact patrons about the topics on our website for which they have expressed interest.

#### *Cookies*

The library uses cookies to facilitate patron access to our online catalog and electronic resources. Cookies are small data files that are sent to an individual's web browser that are then stored on an individual's computer or device. These cookies do not collect, store, or maintain a library patron's personally identifiable information. Patrons have the option of disabling or not accepting cookies by changing the preferences on their browsers. If patrons disable cookies, they will still be able to use the library's website and online resources, but certain features and functions may be limited.

#### *Website Statistics*

The library uses IP addresses to analyze trends and gather broad demographic information to assess aggregate use for reporting purposes. IP addresses are not linked to personally identifiable information by the library.

#### *Links to Other Websites*

The library website contains links to other websites not maintained by the library. The library is not responsible for the privacy practices of any other websites. The library encourages individuals to become familiar with these privacy practices of other websites and be mindful when asked to disclose personal information.

#### *Choice/Opt-In*

Library patrons are given the opportunity to opt in or out of electronic communication and certain library account functions.

#### *Correcting or Updating Personal Information*

If a patron's personally identifiable information changes or if a patron no longer desires contact or service from the library, it is the patron's responsibility to provide the library with updated information or request the deletion of information from the library's database.

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## Compliance

Violations of the provisions of this policy by employees of the Hillside Public Library shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

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## Approval

Approved by the Hillside Public Library Board of Trustees  
February 19, 2025

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## Emergency Release of Information Request

The Library Records Confidentiality Act, 75 ILCS 70/1, et seq., (the Act) requires a court order before a library may release identifying information or records unless the information is requested by a sworn law enforcement officer who represents that it is impractical to secure a court order as a result of an emergency where the law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe that there is an imminent danger of physical harm.

The release of identifying information under these emergency circumstances is restricted as follows:

- The information requested must be limited to identifying a suspect, witness, or victim of a crime.
- The information requested without a court order may not include the disclosure of registration or circulation records that would indicate materials borrowed, resources reviewed, or services used at the library.
- If requested to do so by the library, the requesting law enforcement officer must sign a form acknowledging receipt of the information. The library may seek subsequent judicial review to assess compliance with Section 1(a)(2) of the Act, 75 ILCS 70/1(a)(2).

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## Officer's Acknowledgement

I am a sworn law enforcement officer. As a result of an emergency where I have probable cause to believe there is imminent danger of physical harm, it is impractical to secure a court order for certain identifying information I have requested from the library. I acknowledge receipt from the library of the information I have requested.

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Officer's Printed Name

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Officer's Employing Agency

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Officer's Badge Number

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Officer's Signature

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Date Signed