

**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

**TAB: Patron Services**

**DOCUMENT NUMBER: 20-80-20**

**SECTION: Facility Usage**

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC FORUM AND NON-PUBLIC FORUM AND DISPLAY SPACES**

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**SUMMARY**

This regulation sets forth rationale and criteria on which designation of public and non-public spaces and displays therein are based. As part of its mission, Johnson County Library makes available in all branch locations handout, display and exhibit areas and bulletin boards. The use of these areas is intended to increase public awareness of the broad range of information available in the library collection and to make available information created by and of interest to the local community. However, display and distribution areas are subject to designations as public forum or non-public forum spaces with specific criteria for use.

**Effective Date:**

April 12, 2014

**Reviewed:**

October 4, 2017  
February 11, 2021  
November 9, 2023

**DESIGNATIONS**

**Public Forum Spaces**

- a. Public forum spaces are those spaces created by government designation for the use of the public at large for assembly or communication. Materials displayed or distributed in such areas may advocate a position, but the display and distribution do not constitute endorsement of the material's content by the library. Materials cannot be excluded from public forum spaces based on content unless the exclusion is necessary to serve a compelling governmental interest which cannot be served by less restrictive action.
  - 1. Public Forum: All meeting rooms booked for public use and community information spaces such as handout areas and non-governmental bulletin boards are public forum spaces.

2. Public forum space is available for use by government agencies and non-profit groups engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities within policies set forth in regulation and within procedures established by the County Librarian.

Non-public Forum Spaces

b. Pursuant to ARM 20-80-27, all study rooms and conference rooms are non-public forums. All displays, exhibits, and exhibitions are designated as non-public forum spaces. The Library offers no public forum spaces for displays and exhibits.

DEFINITIONS

Displays

c. Displays are defined as presentations on open shelves or fixtures of materials from the library collection which are available for lending, and/or materials or information about materials created or on loan to the Library by government units or from private citizens or groups. Displays are often topical in nature. and are covered by the intellectual freedom policies of the Library and are not a public forum.

Exhibits

d. Exhibits are more formal presentations of Library and governmental materials and/or regalia. Exhibits and exhibit cases are covered by the intellectual freedom policies of the library and are not a public forum.

Art Spaces

e. The Library offers limited space for displays of works of art. These spaces are designated by the County Librarian and constitute a library program and are not a public forum.

Community Information Spaces

f. In accordance with ARM 20-80-23, community information spaces for handouts, posters, and other information relevant to the local community are available in most libraries as a public forum. The exception to this is during election time if the Library Branch is a polling place. No election material will be displayed

within 250 feet of the entrance.

## PROCEDURES

- g. The Library maintains a current list (reviewed annually) of its display, exhibit, handout and bulletin board areas accompanied by the designation "public forum" or "non-public forum." The designation as a non-public or public forum space may be changed at any time by the County Librarian, pursuant to written procedures that the County Librarian adopts to implement this policy.
- h. The County Librarian will establish criteria and procedures as guidelines for implementing non-public forum displays, exhibits, and art displays.

## AUTHORITY

- i. i. Final authority for all materials displayed and made available in public forum and non-public forum spaces rests with the County Librarian, or their designee. The County Librarian is directed to adopt written procedures to implement the terms of this policy. The County Librarian is directed to develop guidelines and criteria to assist with the execution of powers granted herein.

**November 9, 2023**

**ARM 20-80-20 END**