

Middletown Library Public Display Space Policy and Procedures

Bulletin Boards, Tables in Lobby, Collection Drives, Exhibits

Purpose

The Middletown Library exists for the purpose of providing library services for the residents of Middletown, Rhode Island. The library has limited public display space available which is used primarily for library related programs and information, but may be used by civic, cultural, charitable, and educational non-profit groups and organizations that have a substantial connection to the Middletown community and for the benefit of the Middletown community.

A group or organization is considered to have a substantial connection to the Middletown community if its activities enrich the local community and connect local residents. This includes a primary focus on Middletown residents, community impact, and a non-commercial, community-centric purpose.

Display space available at the Middletown Library for the public includes the bulletin boards, the tables in the lobby, the brochure rack in the lobby, the walls in the Meeting Room, and any space in the lobby that could fit a box for a collection drive that isn't already mentioned. All other spaces, including, but not limited to, the library lawn and outside building, all other hanging spaces like walls and doors, and the tops of tables, counters, desks, and shelves are considered library display space only.

Policy

The public display space is subject to the policies and procedures outlined below, and in accordance with the principles set forth in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which states, "Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

Use of the Middletown Library's public display space does not imply endorsement, support, or co-sponsorship of the content, activities, information, or beliefs of the group using the display space by the Middletown Public Library, the Board of Library Trustees, or the Town of Middletown. Groups or individuals using the public display space may not imply that it is sponsored, co-sponsored, or endorsed by the Library or the Town in any advertising or publicity.

The Library Director reserves the right to refuse the use of the display space or remove any materials when the Director deems it to be in the best interest of the Middletown Public Library.

When the public display space is not being used for library related programs and information, the Middletown Library welcomes non-profit groups whose primary clientele are Middletown residents to use the display space. There is no charge for use of the public display space, nor an expected donation.

The Public Display Space will be approved according to the following priorities:

1. Library related programs or information
2. Friends of the Middletown Library events and activities
3. Municipal events or information
4. Agencies or officials of County, State, or Federal governments events or information
5. Local organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities
6. Local businesses only if it is for a free event, or an event to support a local beneficiary
7. Local artists (for the hanging wall space in the Meeting Room)

Items that do not meet the above criteria such as commercial, personal, or political materials are prohibited.

Any items that are not approved by the Library Director or their designee will be removed and disposed of.

Procedures by Public Display Space

BULLETIN BOARD:

Space permitting, the library will post notices for local and area nonprofit organizations on its community bulletin board.

1. Since requests for postings are frequent and numerous, the library requires that acceptable notices for the public bulletin board not exceed 8½" x 11" in size.
2. All postings must be delivered to the library staff and will be dated with the drop off date and a date not to exceed one month for removal. Postings will go up as space permits, according to the priority list, and depending on the number of requests on file at any one time.
3. All postings must be printed and hand delivered. The library will only print postings for town meetings. There are several public computers and color printers available for use for anyone needing to print their postings.
4. The Library reserves the right to remove approved postings as necessary, in order to make space for new postings requested by the library, the town, or other non-profit community organizations.
5. Notices from local business organizations will need approval from the Library Director or their designee.
6. All notices must be for Middletown residents and from a local nonprofit organization or local business with a substantial connection to Middletown residents. Notices must be about an event or service that is free of charge, or raising money or goods for a local cause or local benefit.

SMALL TABLE IN ENTRANCE LOBBY AND BROCHURE RACK:

The library maintains a small hightop table in the lobby and a brochure rack in the lobby for the distribution of free brochures and fliers from local and area non-profit organizations. The small table and the brochure rack are meant for library and community information for the patrons of the library.

1. Requests to place items on the table must be made to the library staff, who will date the items for time dropped off and preferred date for removal (not to exceed more than a month).
2. No items may be left on the table without permission. Any items left on the table or elsewhere in the library without going through the proper procedure and receiving library permission will be summarily discarded.
3. All items must be printed and hand delivered. There are several public computers and color printers available for use for anyone needing to print.
4. The library reserves the right to remove brochures and fliers due to timeliness and / or limited space.
5. Literature from local business organizations will need approval from the Library Director or their designee.
6. All literature must be for Middletown residents and from a local nonprofit organization or local business with a substantial connection to Middletown residents. Literature must be about an event or service that is free of charge, or raising money or goods for a local cause or local benefit.
7. Brochures on the brochure rack only can be from for-profit businesses, if they are having to do with things to do and amenities on the island.

REGULAR TABLE IN ENTRANCE LOBBY / COLLECTION BOXES - see rules and procedures below

The library maintains a table in the lobby for primarily library or town information. From time to time, it does become available for other displays. Please note, this is on a table in the busy entrance lobby, and is therefore not secure from items being touched or handled. Underneath the table is where any collection drive boxes will be placed if on top of the table is already being used.

HANGING / WALL DISPLAYS - see rules and procedures below

The library has available wall space for hanging art exhibits in the Meeting Room. Hanging wall space is available for special collections from town departments and committees, community organizations, or local residents. Please note, this is in the one community Meeting Room that is used for both library programs and community meetings, and is therefore not secure from items being touched or handled.

For the table in the entrance lobby, collection drives, and hanging displays, the following rules and procedures will apply:

1. Hanging displays, displays on the table, and collection boxes should:
 - a. Contribute positively to the Library's environment.
 - b. Enrich the life of the Middletown community.
 - c. Create a means of strengthening partnerships between the Library and the wider community.
 - d. Highlight, whenever possible, the collections, resources, and services of the Library.
2. Requests for booking display space will generally be considered in the order in which they are received, with possible exceptions being made for vital timeliness of a particular display or exhibit.

3. The dates of any display, exhibit, or drive will be agreed, arranged, and established in advance with the exhibitor, for a maximum of one month. Library displays, exhibits, and drives will have priority, and the Library Director shall have the right to cancel, reschedule, or transfer scheduled dates that conflict with library sponsored displays, exhibits, or drives. In such cases, the Library will make its best effort to give advance notice.
4. All requests to use the table in the entrance lobby, have a collection drive, or use the hanging wall space in the Meeting Room must be made in advance by: anyone aged 18 or above; who is a resident of or works in Middletown or on Aquidneck Island; who takes responsibility for compliance with the Library's policies and procedures.
5. The Library reserves the right to limit the size, the number of items, the schedule of any display, and the frequency with which any one individual, artist, or community organization may place a display in the Library.
6. Exhibits of a pornographic, polemic, or discriminatory nature will be refused. If elements of a display are judged inappropriate by the Board of Library Trustees or the Library Director, the sponsoring individual or organization will be required to remove those elements immediately. Appropriateness here is defined as following the Middletown Library Collection Development Policy and Middletown Library Use Policy and Behavior Guidelines.
7. All displays, exhibits, and drives must include a credit line, i.e. a sign stating the sponsorship of the display, exhibit, or drive.
8. Installation and removal:
 - a. Transporting, unloading, hanging, and/or setting up exhibits, displays, or drives, as well as the later dismantling of the same, are the responsibility of the exhibitor, with and under the supervision of the library staff.
 - b. If the exhibitor requires assistance in this effort, it is their responsibility to bring someone to assist them.
 - c. Both installation and dismantling must conform to the exhibit dates approved in advance.
 - d. Exhibitors are responsible for bringing all necessary supplies, such as picture wire, corner pads for art, or other supplies. No tape or other adhesives will be allowed to be affixed on the walls, moldings, or furnishings. Similarly, the use of nails, tacks, or staples will not be permitted.
9. The library does not have space, nor will it accept responsibility, for storage of the property of exhibitors in the Library building. Therefore, exhibitors are required to deliver and pick up their materials according to the dates established in advance. A penalty of \$1.00 per item per day will be assessed for materials not picked up by the preapproved designated time.
10. Insurance coverage for the value of the exhibited items is the responsibility of the exhibitor. Prior to approval of any exhibit, the library will require the exhibitor to sign a disclaimer releasing the library from any and all responsibility and liability for loss or damage to the items in the exhibit. The Library assumes no responsibility for the safety of any items placed on exhibit. Exhibitors must sign the "Exhibit Agreement and Release Form".
11. An inventory of pieces will be submitted to the library staff when the exhibit is set up, and should be checked again upon dismantling of the exhibit.
12. Though the library may be providing space for a display, exhibit, or drive, this does not indicate an endorsement by the Middletown Public Library, the Board of Library Trustees, or

the Town of Middletown of the particular display, nor of any statement or position promoted by the exhibit, display, or drive.

13. Responsibility for any damage to Library property caused by the installation, display, or dismantling and removal of an exhibit will rest with the sponsoring individual or organization.
14. Collection drives must be approved by the Library Director or their designee. Collection drives of books or other items collected or sold by the Middletown Friends of the Library may only be for the Friends of the Library unless they give their explicit permission otherwise. Other collection drives must be for a local cause or local benefit.
15. With prior approval by the Library Director or their designee, some exhibits may include materials that are for sale for a local cause or local benefit. All other sales are prohibited.
 - a. If materials are for sale, the exhibitor may leave a price list or business cards for people who express an interest. Under absolutely no circumstances may individual price cards be affixed to the wall adjacent to the artwork.
 - b. The Library does not and will not enter into sales negotiations or transactions, or take a percentage of any sales that may result from the exhibit.

Approved by the Middletown Board of Library Trustees on: May 20, 2025