



Confidentiality and Library User Records Policy

Section: Library Operations

Approved: 07/16/2015*

Reviewed: 05/20/2021

Revised: 08/20/2018, 6/15/2023, 12/18/2025

The Board of Trustees of Ames Public Library is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of library users and patron records in accordance with the Code of Iowa and the American Library Association's statement of professional ethics. Confidentiality of library records is central to intellectual freedom and directly relates to the rights and abilities of people to use library materials and pursue information without fear of scrutiny or intimidation. The Board of Trustees believes that public access to names of persons who hold Ames Public Library cards could discourage use of the Library.

Confidential Information

The Library will not reveal library records which contain the identities of individual users, regardless of age, for private, public or commercial use. Personal information and mobile numbers collected through opt-in will not be shared, sold or rented with third parties for marketing purposes. The Library will hold confidential personally identifiable information such as name, library card number, address, phone number, and e-mail address, and personally identifiable uses of Library resources, including but not limited to:

- information sources consulted;
- information sought or received;
- reference interviews;
- materials used or borrowed;
- interlibrary loan records; and
- Internet and database search records.

All parties with authorized access to Library User Records are required to uphold confidentiality as specified by Library policies and applicable provisions of the Iowa Code, unless excepted below.

Exceptions

- The Library Director may authorize specific uses of the data contained in the Library's User Records by the Library in order to conduct Library business.
- The Library Director may authorize use of Library Users Records contact information by Ames Public Library Friends Foundation for such purposes as fundraising, marketing, or advocacy.
- The Library interprets possession of a card (or card number) as consent to use it, unless it has been reported lost or stolen, or there is reason to believe that consent has not been given.

- Library User Records may be revealed to a collection agency or law enforcement personnel in the course of attempting to recover property or collect charges.
- Library User Records may be accessible by third party support personnel while providing routine software maintenance or troubleshooting.
- The Library contracts with third party vendors that distribute electronic content through licensing agreements. The Library cannot guarantee the confidentiality of information gathered by vendors. Customers using these resources are subject to the individual third-party terms and privacy policies.
- Contact information provided by the user to book a meeting room is considered public information.
- Illegal activity is not protected and Library Users have no expectation of privacy as to activity that violates the law. The Library may review User Records when a violation of law or Library policy is suspected.
- Library User Records shall be released to a criminal or juvenile justice agency when pursuant to a valid search warrant, subpoena or court order, or when otherwise authorized by law. Library staff will consult with the City's Legal Department in the event of such request for release of Library records, and will respond to the request according to the advice of counsel.
- The Library Director is the legal custodian of library records and is responsible for responding to any request for library records or information about a library patron. The Director may designate one or more library employees to serve as person(s) responsible for responding to any request for library records or information about a library patron when the director is unavailable.

References

This policy has been developed in concert with:

[Code of Iowa Chapter22, "Examination of Public Records \(Open Records\)"](#)

[Code of Ethics of the American Library Association](#)

[Circulation and Customer Accounts Policy](#)

* Adopted upon removal of Confidentiality of Library Records and Use of Patron Database Policies.