

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The West Shokan (Olive Free Library) recognizes and strives to follow the practices of the American Library Association Code of Ethics, Article III. "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted," to the fullest extent of our abilities. The Library also supports the rights and privacy of our patrons with "Civil Practice Laws and Rules Section 4509 Library Records."

Civil Practice Laws and Rules Section 4509 Library Records, states" Library records, which contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of public, free association, school, college, and university libraries and library systems of this state, including but not limited to records related to the circulation of library materials, computer database searches, interlibrary loan transactions, reference queries, requests for photocopies of library materials, title reserve requests or the use of audio-visual materials, films of records, shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except that such records may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such library and shall be disclosed upon request or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, a court order or where otherwise required by statute."

The Library Director has been designated as the person responsible for handling law enforcement requests. All library staff should understand that it is lawful to refer the agent or officer to an administrator in charge of the Library and that they do not need to respond immediately to any request. Staff should call the Director or the Board President, if appropriate.

During a visit:

1. If anyone approaches a staff member alleging to be a law enforcement official requesting information DO NOT DISCLOSE ANY INFORMATION.
2. Ask for identification and then immediately refer the agent or officer to the Library Director. If she/ he is not available the Board President or the Board Vice President should be contacted. Photocopy identification or take a business card.
3. Director or other officer will meet with the agent and ask to see the court order(s) (for example, search warrant, subpoena, National Security Letter) authorizing law enforcement.
4. If the agent or officer does not have a court order compelling the production of records, the director or officer should explain the Library's confidentiality policy and/or the state's confidentiality law (NYS 4509) and inform the agent or officer that users' records are not available except when a proper court order in good form has been presented to the library.
5. If there is no court order presented the FBI and /or local law enforcement has no authority to compel cooperation with an investigation or require answers to questions (other than the name and address of the person speaking to him/her) If the agent or officer makes an appeal to patriotism, the Director will explain that, as good citizens, the

Library staff will not respond to informal requests for confidential information, in conformity with professional ethics, First Amendment freedoms, and state law.

6. If the agent or officer does present a court order the Director should immediately refer the court order to the Library's legal counsel for review.

Olive Free Library Legal Counsel Opinion:

If the court order is in the form of a subpoena, Counsel will examine the subpoena for any legal defect including the manner in which it was served on the library, the breadth of its request, its form, or an insufficient showing of good cause made to a court. If a defect exists, counsel will advise on the best method to resist the subpoena.

Through legal counsel the Director will insist that any defect be cured before records are released and that the subpoena is strictly limited to require release of specifically identified records or documents.

The attorney will require that the agent, officer or party requesting the information submit a new subpoena in good form and without defects.

The Attorney will review the information that may be produced in response to the subpoena before releasing the information. He or she will follow the subpoena strictly and will not provide any information that is not specifically requested in it.

If disclosure is required, the Library's attorney will draft a request to the court to enter a protective order keeping the information confidential and limiting its use to the particular case. The document will ask that access be restricted to those persons working directly on the case.

If the court order is in the form of a search warrant:

Search warrants are executable immediately. However, ask to have Library counsel present before the search begins to allow counsel to examine the warrant and assure that the search conforms to the terms of the warrant. This request may not be granted.

Gather records identified in the warrant and present them rather than allowing non-library personnel to go through the Library's databases or records.

If the court order is a search warrant issued under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) (USA PATRIOT ACT amendment):

The recommendations for a regular search warrant still apply. However, a search warrant issued by a FISA court also contains a "gag order". That means that no person or institution served with a warrant can disclose that the warrant has been served or that records have been produced pursuant to the warrant. The Library and its staff must comply with this order. No information can be disclosed to any other party, including the Director if not present at the time warrant is served and the patron whose record is the subject of the search warrant.

The gag order does not change a library's right to legal representation during the search. The Library can still seek legal advice concerning the warrant and request the Library's legal counsel be present during the actual search and execution of the warrant.

If the court order is a National Security Letter:

The procedure is the same as for a search warrant. However, a gag order applies. The Director will contact Library counsel. If the Director is not available, contact the Board President or Vice President. She/he may request that the Library's legal counsel be present during the search and that the search be delayed until counsel examines the court document. If law enforcement chooses to proceed, the Library must comply.

The Board recognizes that it is only through continued public confidence in the fact that these guidelines are being upheld that the public can maintain its confidence in the Olive Free Library.

Approved and adopted by the Olive Free Library Board of Trustees January 2021