

ACLS- Social Media Policy

As part of the 2020 - 2022 Allegany County Library System Strategic Plan, a major priority that was established was to invest in “Sharing our Story” and invest in marketing and outreach efforts. As an important communication tool, social media plays a large role in this strategy. The following is an excerpt from the Marketing and Communications plan completed in February 2020.

As our recently completed ACLS strategic plan recommends, moving forward we must invest in telling the library’s story, embrace the role of serving as a “community hub,” fully engage community members and key stakeholders as our advocates, and tell the contemporary library story in a proactive way. As the role of public libraries continues to change from a “book repository” to community gathering places and education institutions, the ACLS must position itself as a vital and integral part of the community it serves. **We must educate our customers, as well as our non-customers, about how our library system can help lead them on a path to success.**

Alllegany County Library System offers social media outlets for educational, cultural, civic and recreational purposes. Library social media tools provide a limited (or designated) public forum to facilitate the sharing of ideas, opinions and information about library-related subjects and community information. Library social media is intended to create a welcoming and inviting space where library users will find useful and entertaining information and can interact with library staff and other library users. Comments are moderated by library staff and the library reserves the right to remove comments that are unlawful or do not follow the rules of conduct of this policy or the rules of conduct of the library. .

Definition of Social Media

Social media is defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonld) as “forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).” The primary use of social media for the Allegany County Library System is to communicate information about library services and resources, and to engage with our community. Social media websites have their own terms of service, privacy, acceptable behavior, and stated consequences for violating those terms of service. Users can post their own content or respond to something that has been posted by other users or organizations.

FOR THE PUBLIC

Public Rules for Commenting and Interacting on ACLS social media sites

Posts containing the following are against library rules of conduct and will be deleted or removed by library staff:

- Copyright violations
- Commercial material/spam
- Duplicate posts from the same individual
- Obscene posts or photos
- Specific and imminent threats
- Libelous comments

The comments expressed on any library social media platform do not reflect the views or positions of the library, its officers, or its employees. Social media users should exercise their own judgment about the quality and accuracy of any information presented.

By choosing to comment you agree to these rules.

Protect Your Privacy

The library may occasionally refer to public comments made on social media. However, it will not collect, sell, or knowingly transfer to any third party any personally identifiable information related to social media engagement with the library. Please be advised that each social media platform has its own privacy policies and should be carefully reviewed. Do not post personally identifying information. Young people under age 18, especially, should not post information such as last name, school, age, phone number, address.

FOR ACLS EMPLOYEES

Library Social Media Management

Social Media Ambassadors

Each branch has at least one designated social media ambassador who is responsible for representing ACLS on social media platforms. Ambassadors may post library related content. Ambassadors may also direct ideas or requests for content promotion to the Marketing and Outreach Department. While employees are encouraged to share content from the ACLS accounts to their personal accounts, employees may not speak in an official capacity for ACLS (please see “Employee Personal Social Media Accounts” section). All social media ambassadors must read and sign the [ACLS Social Media Guidelines](#) document.

Branches or departments may not create their own specific social media accounts without the permission of the Marketing and Outreach Department, as they can dilute the reach and engagement of ACLS channels. All social media should be directed through official ACLS platforms by sending content ideas or requests for content promotion to a social media ambassador or the Marketing and Outreach Department.

Some ACLS social media platforms have a shared login. These logins are changed twice a year for security purposes. Social media ambassadors have access to this login to post. Social media ambassadors must be with the ACLS for 6 months before gaining access to shared social media accounts.

The ACLS shall form a social media advisory group composed of social media ambassadors, the Marketing and Outreach Department members, and other interested staff. Within the social media advisory group, members have the opportunity to collaborate and coordinate content, ask questions, and learn best practices from each other. Members will receive access to group chat, shared Google Drive, and access to view the promotions editorial calendar. The Director of Marketing and Outreach shall act as the chair for the group.

The social media advisory group shall create and maintain the hosting schedule for shared social media accounts.

Requests to Share External Content on ACLS Social Media Platforms

ACLS is approached on a regular basis to promote the services and events of external organizations through our social media platforms. To preserve the integrity of our platforms, all external requests for sharing information must be evaluated by the Department of Marketing

and Outreach. Evaluation of external information will be based on the Library Display Space policy and treated as a request for a “Community Posting” to the Community Bulletin Board.

Volunteers Posting to Social Media

Volunteers that wish to create content for ACLS social media platforms may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Volunteers will coordinate with the branch social media ambassadors to plan and strategize the creation and posting of content. Volunteers may not receive login credentials for ACLS social media accounts, but must depend on branch social media ambassadors to post content created by volunteers. Volunteers must adhere to the entirety of the ACLS Social Media Policy. Volunteers may not act as a representative or ambassador of the ACLS when interacting with ACLS social media content and other users. Volunteers are to refer any questions regarding ACLS services, policies, and programs to ACLS staff.

ACLS Friends’ Social Media Accounts

Responsibility for maintaining Friends of the Library social media accounts lie with the individual Friends organizations. ACLS can provide training to Friends’ members assigned to manage their social media accounts and assistance in the promotion of content in accordance with the “Requests to Share External Content on ACLS Social Media Platforms” policy.

Social Media Advertising

Advertising on social media platforms shall be managed by the Marketing and Outreach Department. For ideas and inquiries, please contact the Director of Marketing and Outreach.

Crisis Response

In the event of a community, institutional, or other crisis, the Department of Marketing and Outreach will respond or release an official statement or post. If you believe that we should respond to an incident or would like to know more about a plan for response, please contact the Director of Marketing and Outreach.

Staff Personal Social Media Accounts

Article V of the American Library Association’s Code of Ethics states “We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.” This can be broadened to the online social environment. When communicating online, library workers should be cognizant of who may see or share their posts. Individuals should take responsibility for any and all online behaviors.

Library workers have an ethical responsibility to represent themselves and their colleagues, institutions and associations, in both their professional and personal lives, with respect,

courtesy, sensitivity and fairness. Losing sight of this responsibility can lead to ethical violations in the form of social media interactions that are inappropriate and insensitive to colleagues which may damage the reputations of those involved.

Library workers are often recognized beyond their libraries as community helpers and leaders, and what they post on their personal social media accounts may be associated with their professional position regardless of their intention. If ACLS staff identify their employment at the ACLS on a personal social media account, they must have a disclaimer in their bio or profile stating that the content found on their personal account is representing their personal opinions and views rather than library system opinions and views, for example, "Tweets my own" for a Twitter bio. Please reach out to the Director of Marketing and Outreach for resources on methods to separate personal and professional identities on social media.

The following are brief guidelines for employees to determine if content is respectful and appropriate when commenting on ACLS' social media platforms or about ACLS on other social media platforms using their personal account or identities:

- Sharing thoughts, ideas, or news about books, music, eBooks, videos and all other items from ACLS is an excellent way to help share our story.
- Sharing positive stories and information about ACLS and events engages with our communities. Please ensure that you are not posting in an official capacity for ACLS and that confidential and privileged information is preserved. Examples of privileged information that should not be posted include:
 - Posting a photo of the site of a new branch before the new branch has been announced/opened.
 - Posting that ACLS will change its DVD loan periods before it is announced to the public by one of the official ACLS platforms or on the ACLS website. .
 - Posting about an announcement, campaign, or initiative before ACLS has publicly announced it.
 - Posting a photo that violates a patron's privacy (please see ACLS Social Media Guidelines)
- Maintain awareness that social media is a media source, and it has become commonplace for the media to pull comments and pictures from social media to support news stories.

Staff members may not:

- Use the ACLS logo for profile images in social media, except in cases where the social media site (i.e., LinkedIn) automatically pulls the logo to associate it with employment in your personal profile.
- Use personal online identities and accounts to represent ACLS in an official capacity. Due to the difficulty in separating official and individual personas online, ACLS staff should be cautious to avoid representing ACLS inappropriately to the public.

Allegany County Board of Library Trustees

Allegany County Library System
Approved 2/8/2022

Thanks to the Multnomah County Library, the Howard County Public Library, and American Library Association resources for their assistance in developing this policy.