

Schertz Area Senior Center Policy: Political Campaign Activities

Purpose

The Schertz Area Senior Center is a welcoming, inclusive space designed to serve all older adults and community members in a respectful and comfortable environment. In order to maintain a neutral setting for participants, the Senior Center does not permit political campaigning, electioneering, or partisan activity inside the facility, except as specifically outlined in this policy.

This policy is intended to:

- Protect the comfort and privacy of Senior Center participants
- Ensure fair and equal access for all candidates
- Prevent disruption of daily programs and services
- Maintain the Senior Center's neutral and nonpartisan environment

General Policy

Individuals who are running for public office are not permitted to openly campaign at the Senior Center. This policy applies to all candidates, including sitting elected officials who are seeking re-election or running for a different office.

The Senior Center is not an appropriate venue for campaigning, political solicitation, or influencing voting decisions during regular operations, programs, or events.

Prohibited Activities

The following activities are not permitted at the Senior Center at any time:

- **Open political campaigning or electioneering**, including requesting votes or public support
- **Soliciting donations**, fundraising, or collecting campaign contributions
- **Campaign-related speeches, presentations, or group addressing**, including use of microphones or making building-wide announcements
- **Distributing, posting, displaying, or leaving behind campaign materials**, including:
 - Flyers, brochures, postcards, and mailers
 - Yard signs, banners, posters, or table displays

- Stickers, buttons, shirts, or promotional giveaways intended for campaign purposes
- **Campaign-related messaging during Senior Center programs**, activities, or classes
- **Disrupting scheduled activities** by engaging members in political conversations that interfere with programming or participant enjoyment
- **Schertz Area Senior Center does not endorse any political candidate.** Use of the Center’s name or logo in any way that suggests endorsement or affiliation is not permitted.

Permitted Activities

The following activities are allowed **only if all guidelines are followed** and the activity does not interfere with Senior Center operations:

1. Individual Visits

Candidates may sign in as a guest and visit with Senior Center members on an individual and informal basis.

Guidelines:

- Visits must remain respectful, non-disruptive, and conversational
- Candidates may not approach members in a way that feels pressuring or solicit votes
- Candidates may not distribute campaign materials during individual visits

2. Program Sponsorship (Bingo)

Candidates may sponsor and host Bingo events.

During these events:

- Candidates may briefly introduce themselves by name and office they are running for
- Candidates may participate in the event and interact with members respectfully
- **Campaigning, political speeches, fundraising, or promotion of platforms using a microphone or addressing the group is not permitted**
- No campaign materials may be displayed, distributed, or left behind

3. Possible Meet the Candidates Event

The Senior Center may host a Meet the Candidates event in cooperation with other community organizations interested in voter education such as League of Women Voters or local chambers.

- All candidates for a specific office are invited
- Candidates are given equal opportunity to participate
- The event is structured and facilitated by Senior Center staff to remain neutral

Guidelines:

- The event will follow a set format (time limits, question structure, equal speaking time)
- Candidates may discuss their platforms and answer questions in a respectful manner
- Disruptive behavior, personal attacks, or harassment will not be allowed
- No fundraising or solicitation is permitted during the event

Scheduling & Approval

All candidate visits beyond informal individual attendance (including sponsorships or participation in special events) must be coordinated in advance with Senior Center staff.

The Senior Center reserves the right to:

- Limit the frequency or timing of visits to avoid disruption
- Deny requests that conflict with programming, capacity, or member comfort
- Require candidates to follow additional guidelines as needed

Enforcement

Senior Center staff reserve the right to enforce this policy to ensure compliance and to maintain a neutral and respectful environment for all participants.

Failure to comply may result in:

- A verbal reminder of the policy
- Immediate removal from the facility
- Denial of future access during the campaign period
- Cancellation of scheduled sponsorships or participation opportunities