

Saturday

High: 77
Low: 56
10%

Sunday

High: 76
Low: 63
16%

Monday

High: 74
Low: 49
76%

Tuesday

High: 68
Low: 47
6%

Wednesday

High: 71
Low: 48
15%

Thursday

High: 76
Low: 58
06%

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Free library cards and services for unincorporated Travis County residents

By Vicki McFarland

Residents living in unincorporated areas of Travis County or Austin extraterritorial jurisdictions will now have access to a library card that allows them to utilize all Austin Public Library services and materials. The free access is based upon the adoption of a new city ordinance at the February 29 Austin City Council meeting.

According to the ordinance, if you reside at an address in the Austin full-purpose jurisdiction or in an extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) within five miles of Austin's city limit that is not within the city or ETJ of another city, you qualify for a free library card. The service area includes Travis, Hays, Williamson and Bastrop counties.

Before the ordinance, only residents of Austin could access library services for free. Non-residents were required to pay an annual \$120 fee.

The City of Austin has twenty-one public libraries. In addition to checking out books, other services that are now available include reading programs, community events, study rooms and passport service.

If you wish to confirm that your address qualifies before you begin the application process, please call Library Customer Service at (512) 974-7475 or send an email to circ.link@austintexas.gov.

You can visit any of the 21 libraries to apply for a library card. Photo identification and proof of residence address are required upon application. Once the required documentation is presented and an application has been signed, library staff will issue a library card.

Most library items are loaned for three weeks with up to two renewals. If an item is lost or damaged, the account is billed for the cost of the item. Items can have holds placed on them and can be sent to a specific Austin Public Library location for pick up.



Get your APL library card today. | Photo by Austin Public Library

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Manor Birth Sanctuary offers midwife services in Manor

By Vicki McFarland



The Manor Birth Sanctuary provides a quiet and calm atmosphere for new mothers. | Photo by Staff

An alternative to having a child born in a hospital has recently opened in Manor. The Manor Birth Sanctuary, located at 109 West Lane Ave, is an open model birthing center providing prenatal, birth and postpartum care to low-risk birthing women and their families. Clients may birth in their own home or choose a birth center birth at the sanctuary.

There are ninety-one birthing centers in Texas, with most of them located in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Only a handful of birthing centers accept Medicaid. The Austin area has 12 centers and the recently opened Manor Birth Sanctuary accepts Medicaid. The birth center is now in network with Medicaid STAR Superior Health Plan and Ambetter Health Insurance.

The Sanctuary's director, Victoria Meinhardt, LM, CPM, offers natural birth, water birth and experienced midwifery care. Newborn care is provided up through six weeks and basic well-

woman care is also available. Full prenatal care means the client will be seen monthly until 28-30 weeks, then seen bi-weekly until 36 weeks and then once a week until the child is delivered.

Home visits for home-birth clients are provided at the 37th week visit and the first postpartum visit after birth. Throughout the pregnancy, 24/7 access to a midwife is provided. The cost for private pay services is \$5,500. Births at home and birthing centers are often denied by most major insurance companies. Meinhardt is currently partnering with Joan Doglio Smith, CNM of Abundance Midwifery Service, to provide a full scope of midwifery service at other locations including in north Austin at 13805 Ann Place and in south Austin at 1711 Fort View Road.

Meinhardt holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and graduated from the Association of Texas Midwives Midwifery Training Program in 2004. She became licensed as a midwife in Texas in April, 2005 and began her career with a private homebirth practice in Austin.

From 2010 until 2016, Meinhardt served as a staff midwife at the Austin Area Birthing Center and from 2016 until 2020, she served as its Clinical Director. She opened the Manor Birth Sanctuary in a 400-square foot cottage on her five-acre property in September 2022, and then moved to the 1,500 square foot facility on West Lane Ave in March 2024. Birthing centers are licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and midwives must earn twenty continuing education units every two years to renew their license.

With the opening of the Manor Birth Sanctuary, Meinhardt achieved her career dream of becoming a Medicaid provider to offer access to midwifery services for low-income, low-risk mothers who desired a community birth. Two midwives are present at every birth to monitor the condition of both the mother and the child and Meinhardt has standing delegated orders from a medical doctor to utilize medications if needed. If birthing complications occur, an ambulance would be called to transport the patient to a hospital for further treatment.

Meinhardt has delivered more than 1,500 babies in her nineteen-year career. She is a member of the American Association of Birth Centers. She is married and all three of her daughters were delivered by a midwife. She has one grandson and one of her daughters works with her at the Manor Birth Sanctuary.

For more information regarding Midwife and birth center services, please contact Victoria at 512-653-7892 or email her at victoria@manorbirthsanctuary.com



Manor Birth Sanctuary Director Victoria Meinhardt is a licensed midwife. | Photo by Staff

Manor Arts Council invites you to our community event

SIDEWALK CHALK ART FESTIVAL

Saturday, April 13th | 10-2pm
SHADOWVIEW SHOPPING CENTER

ALL AGES
Welcome

Manor Arts Council

Chalks will be provided on site, but participants are encouraged to bring their own chalks!

FREE

Artists wanting larger space for the day, please RSVP at admin@manorartscouncil.com
For more info please visit us on Facebook or www.manorartscouncil.com

