

Program Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy shall be to outline the guidelines used by Library Staff for choosing events to run at the Library. The Library recognizes the importance of displays and programs as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents. Library programs should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents; should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints; and should provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of residents.

Definition

A program is defined as an event, virtual or in-person, planned by the Library staff for the benefit of members of the public. It may involve outside presenters or facilitators, and may be presented in cooperation with other entities. Many typical programs will take place at the library. Programs may also take place off-premise when called for, especially in cases of collaboration with other local entities or for local events not based at the Library. Programs may also take place virtually. Any meetings of groups or individuals in the library space that are not arranged by the Library Staff do not fall under this policy.

Program Selection

Goals:

- To provide accurate information about a wide variety of topics, with opportunities for continued learning at all ages
- To embrace quality, creativity, diversity, and enrichment
- To provide entertainment
- To introduce new community members and Library patrons to the richness of experiences available at their Library, to expand and deepen the Library's role as a community resource, and to increase the visibility of the Library within its community
- To operate with a collaborative spirit, and to work with other organizations seeking to fill the needs of the community

Consideration will be given to:

- Community needs and interests, including requests from residents
- Quality of presentation or presenter, including presenter's background, qualifications, and reviews of their work, if available
- Space and budget constraints
- Connection to other community programs or events
- Connection to local history or culture
- Treatment of content for intended audience

Library sponsored programs shall not be used for:

- Commercial purposes
- Religious purposes
- Partisan purposes

Roles and Responsibilities

Development, presentation and oversight of programs is the responsibility of the Library Director and staff. Final responsibility for planning and executing programming lies with the Library Director, who shall assign duties such as planning, scheduling, advertising, and running programs to Library Staff. Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs.

Program Development, Coordination and Supervision

Ideas for library programs may originate from Library Staff, partnering organizations, or members of the public, but further research and development of the best way to offer the program shall be the purview of the Library Director. In the event of a co-sponsored program, supervision of the program may be delegated to the co-sponsoring organization depending upon the timing and venue of the program. All programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the library, however, must abide by this policy regardless of where they are hosted.

The decision to cancel a program lies with the Library Director. Programs may be cancelled for a number of reasons, chiefly: severe weather, absence of the presenter, or low registration. Cancelled programs are not automatically rescheduled.

The Library may promote its in-house programming through fliers, mailings, the library's website, the town's website, and the town's e-newsletter. External organizations or individuals partnering with the Library on programs must coordinate marketing efforts with the Library Director.

Professional performers and presenters that reflect specialized or unique expertise may be hired for Library programs; performers and presenters will not be excluded from consideration because of their origin, background, or views, or because of possible controversy.

Access

All Library sponsored programs are open to the public. The Library shall endeavor to reach a wide audience of potential program participants through its advertising efforts, and to be welcoming to and inclusive of all parts of our community.

Registration & attendance: Registration may be required for planning purposes, or if the style of program calls for it. An attendance limit may be set if there are space restraints, but the Library shall endeavor to include as many interested individuals as possible.

Accommodation: Any individual requiring accommodation to participate in a Library program should contact the Library at least two weeks prior to the program.

The Library's mission of providing open access to information and ideas extends to Library programming, and the Library does not discriminate through its programs. Library sponsored programs may be held onsite at the Library or at community accessible spaces outside of the Library, such as the Town Community Room, Town Green, etc.

Virtual Programs

Selection criteria: selection of virtual programs shall follow the same criteria of selection as in-person programming.

Technology: Virtual programming may be hosted on any virtual meeting platform designated by library staff, but library staff shall endeavor to choose platforms known for professional capabilities and tools, and for being free for, and easily accessible to, members of the public. It is the responsibility of those attending a virtual program to educate themselves regarding the function and navigation of the specific digital platform on which the program is hosted, but Library Staff will make every effort to provide tutorials or educational resources to this effect.

Behavior: Library patrons shall not participate in any virtual program in any manner that violates Library Policy, federal, state or local laws.

In the event that a virtual program is being recorded, notice shall be given to all attendees.

The Library acknowledges that technology changes over time, and Library policies will continue to evolve in accordance with industry standard best practices.

Program Materials

Programs may require different types of materials in order to enjoy or fully participate in the program, such as craft materials, informational printouts, et al. Library Staff shall endeavor to prevent material costs from being an exclusionary point of access to Program participation, and material costs should be considered when budgeting.

Collaborative programming may involve ancillary materials being provided for sale. All such ancillary materials must adhere to Library Programming Policies. All such ancillary materials shall not be the responsibility of the Library Staff to sell or monitor, but shall be the responsibility of collaborating party.

Data Collection & Program Evaluation

Collecting data about all aspects of programming is an important part of the Library being able to plan for future programming decisions. Number of attendees shall be recorded, and attendees are encouraged to give feedback about the program which will be noted. These outputs and outcomes are helpful in evaluating the strength of the Library's programming, and sometimes necessary for grant reporting.

Reconsideration of Library Programming

The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays, or programs to individual residents of the Town of Union. We value the input of our community members, and encourage those with concerns to follow the procedures for reconsideration requests outlined in the Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy.

If a controversy arises over any library program, the program will not be cancelled nor access to it be limited, while the procedures for reconsideration are followed and until a final decision is made by the Library Director.

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

Reconsideration Requests are not confidential patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes.