

NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAM POLICY

Purpose:

The New Britain Public Library ("the Library"), in order to fulfill its mission of giving every resident the opportunity to become successful and well informed, develops and presents programs that provide information, learning and entertainment. Programming is an integral component of Library services that promotes and complements the Library's other services and collections. It supports the Library's role as the center of the community.

Programs are provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all residents and aim to represent a wide range of varied diverging viewpoints and will provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and educational needs of residents. The Library recognizes the importance of programs as resources for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

This policy provides guidelines for the development, management, and oversight of programs presented by the Library.

Definition of a Program:

A Library program is a free event, virtual or in-person, planned by the Library staff for the benefit of those members of the public who opt to attend. It may involve outside presenters, facilitators or performers and may be presented in cooperation with other entities. Library programs may take place at the library, online, or at off-site locations.

Note: Use of a public meeting room by an organization or individual to hold a public event is not a Library program.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Library programs.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Library Board delegates development, presentation and oversight of programs to the Library Director and staff.

The Head of Adult Services & Community Engagement, Adult Programming Librarian, Head of Children's Services, Assistant Head of Children's Services, Head of Young Adult Services, Jefferson Branch Manager, and Makerspace Coordinator are accountable for the majority of planning, scheduling and implementation of programs.

Designated Library staff are responsible for the development, coordination and supervision of Library programs. The final responsibility for the library program is held by the Library Director, but day-to-day responsibility is shared by library employees throughout the library that are professionally trained to curate and develop programs.

Procedures:

1. Program Selection:

The Library strives to present programs that are educational, informational, cultural or recreational and avoids programs that do not meet these standards. Topics, content and timing of Library programs are developed with consideration of available resources and keeping community needs and interests in mind while supporting the library's strategic goals and reflecting the library's mission, vision, and values. Program selection is based upon the suitability of topic, format and intended audience.

A program will not be excluded because its topic may be regarded by some as controversial. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute or imply an endorsement of the content or of the presenter of the program.

Library programs must have an educational, informational, cultural or recreational value to the community. Programs of a purely commercial nature or those designed for the solicitation of business will not be offered by the Library.

Programs that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure will not be approved or offered by the Library. However, educational programs, such as candidate forums that include invitations to all recognized candidates, may be offered.

Programs that support or oppose a specific religion will not be approved or offered. Programs are planned to be inclusive of all cultures and of all religions and no religion. Library programs may address religious themes to educate or inform, but not to promote, observe or proselytize a particular religious conviction.

2. Program Development, Coordination and Supervision:

The Library draws upon other community resources in developing programs and actively partners with community agencies, organizations, educational and cultural institutions, or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored programs.

Library programs may originate from Library staff, partnering institutions or members of the public. 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.

A co-sponsored program is a mutually beneficial collaboration between the Library and an external organization or individual, where partner contributions provide support for and/or promote activities, services, events, and programs to the public to achieve the Library's goals. Agencies, businesses, or organizations that participate in co-sponsoring a library program receive acknowledgement on the library website and in publicity materials.

Co-sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by participants. The library and its employees will not be liable for the content of any program presented by a third party.

3. Program Access:

Library programs are free and open to the public on a first-come first-serve basis. The Library will make every attempt to accommodate all patrons who wish to attend a program. However, when available resources or safety requires it, attendance may be limited. The Library will not limit attendance due to topic.

When limits are established, attendance will be determined by advance registration through the library's online calendar or in-person via library staff members. A waitlist may be available for some programs. Whether or not a program has a waitlist and how many spots are available on it, are at the sole discretion of the staff member managing the program. If a spot becomes available either before or on the day of the program, patrons on the waitlist will be notified and offered the available spot based on their place on the waitlist.

For programs targeted to a specific audience, e.g. children or teens, and promoted as such, preferential admission may be offered to those groups on a first-come first-serve basis, limited to those individuals as the Library deems appropriate.

Any individual requiring accommodation to participate in a Library program should contact Library Administration two weeks prior to the program.

By attending a library program, attendees agree to abide by the library's Code of Conduct.

4. Virtual Programs: The Library may offer virtual programs. These programs will utilize library approved virtual meeting platforms that patrons may use to access virtual programs from their own devices. Programs may be simultaneously run virtually and at library facilities or solely offered virtually. All library virtual programs will be hosted via the library's virtual meeting account. A designated library staff member will act as "host." Patrons attending virtual programs

are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct while in attendance, and failure to do so during a virtual program may result in immediate removal.

Some virtual programs may be pre-recorded and broadcast via the internet or recorded for later viewing. In the event an interactive program is being recorded, attendees will be informed of that fact at the start of the program. Live virtual programs require advance registration. Information collected during the registration process will be used only to communicate information about that program or to confirm eligibility to participate in that program.

The Library will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the digital security of virtual events, however attendees must understand that all online activity carries some degree of risk. Patrons are required to provide their own equipment and internet connection to attend virtual programs. The Library will make a good faith effort to utilize platforms that will be compatible with the widest array of hardware and software, but makes no guarantee that every patron will be capable of accessing every Library program successfully. Nor can the Library guarantee the quality of the audio, video, or internet connection of program presenters or attendees.

5. Program Materials: At the library's discretion, books, CDs, DVDs or other ancillary materials related to the content of a program may be offered for sale at a Library program by the presenter or through an outside vendor with whom the library has an established relationship. Library staff will not handle the exchange of money or any part of the sales interaction.

6. Program Evaluation: Library programming is developed and delivered by the library to meet its strategic priorities and fill in gaps that exist in the community. When those gaps are addressed elsewhere, the library will focus on new needs. To assess if a program is filling a need, the library looks to multiple points of information to evaluate the alignment with its mission.

A regular cycle of program evaluation will occur within the library's framework. Evaluation will include feedback from staff, participants, and partners. Outputs, such as the number of attendees at a program, will be gathered for all library programs. Outcomes, such as how well the content of a program helped attendees learn about the program's topic, will be gathered at times when such data is required for grant reporting or would be helpful in evaluating a new program topic or format.

The Library always welcomes feedback regarding programming.

7. Patron Concerns:

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from any library patron concerning programming. Patrons questioning a library program's content should first address the concern with a Department Manager or the Library Director.

For those who wish to continue their request for review the Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or programs to individual residents of New Britain. Please see our Reconsideration Policy for further information on this process.

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.