

## Program Policy

**Effective:** Feb 1, 2025

**Next Review:** Feb 2029

### PURPOSE:

To establish our commitment to develop and deliver high quality, inclusive, community-based programming at the Library that supports our commitment to providing universal access to lifelong learning opportunities and to enriching the community.

### SCOPE:

This Policy applies to all Programs, including Collaborations, online, internal and external Programs. It does not apply to Library events developed for special purposes such as fundraising, media and Library Board events, and/or events where Library space is rented by groups or individuals under the terms and conditions of the Library's *Rental of Meeting Space Policy*.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Collaboration:** means a mutually beneficial agreement between the Library and an external organization, individual or business where the parties work in close cooperation to achieve the Library's goals. This can include shared space arrangements, shared resources, and service delivery partnerships.

**Program:** means a coordinated activity that is delivered/facilitated by a Library employee expert that has been developed according to clearly defined learning objectives and outcomes.

### POLICY STATEMENT:

The Library is committed to providing inclusive and accessible programming that meets the needs of our community and is aligned with the Library's Purpose Statement and Values.

The Library develops and delivers Programs that:

- Encourage reading, literacy, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and a deeper understanding of the diverse cultures reflected in the broader community;
- Attract new Library users and introduce library services and collections;
- Are inclusive and accessible, considering the needs of all community members;

- Utilize a community-based approach to Program development by recognizing the diversity of our citizens and communities, and collaborating with local stakeholders;
- Build an awareness of existing community assets and opportunities for improvement;
- Meet clearly-defined learning objectives and outcomes based on community interests, needs and trends;
- Foster social inclusion and connection;
- Are consistent in content, scope, evaluation and delivery on a system-wide basis, and
- Uphold the principle of intellectual freedom as reflected in the Library's *Intellectual Freedom Policy* and support the rights of individuals to read, speak, view and exchange differing viewpoints on any subject provided that they do not contravene the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* or Library policy

The Library may partner with not-for-profit or for-profit organizations in providing programming content.

Programs will be developed and delivered in compliance with all applicable Library policies.

Programs delivered by partners will be open to and accessible by all community members.

The Library endeavours to provide programming for free. Participation fees may be charged to offset above-standard costs associated with the Program.

Statements made or positions taken by presenters during Programs, events and meetings do not necessarily reflect the views or values of the Library

### **SELECTION CRITERIA:**

Programs and events offered by the Library will be consistent with its purpose and values, will contribute to the Library's safe, supportive and welcoming environment, and be responsive to the community's current interests and needs. Programs may be tailored to meet the specific needs of communities being served by individual branches.

Individual Programs must also meet at least one of the following additional criteria:

- Promote cultural understanding;
- Create and promote community Collaborations;
- Encourage literacy, including the enjoyment of reading and lifelong learning;
- Encourage other literacies, such as digital, financial, etc.;
- Highlight materials and services available at the Library, and assist customers in the effective use of those resources;

- Offer training and assistance with new technologies used to offer Library services;
- Celebrate local history;
- Foster a sense of community connection and belong, and
- Attract new audience members to the Library.

## **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:**

To determine community needs and interests, the Library reviews suggestions for Programs and events, and uses various mechanisms to gather community input to assist in establishing programming priorities and plans.

Programs will embrace the principles of diversity, accessibility, equity and inclusiveness so that all members of the community are welcomed and able to participate regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental capacity or economic status.

Programs will be delivered at times and locations and through channels that maximize convenience and encourage attendance by the target audience.

Library Programs may cover a range of topics and ideas of current interest and possible future significance, including topics and ideas which reflect current conditions, trends and issues that may be controversial.

As with other Library services, children's access to and participation in programming is the responsibility of parents and guardians.

The Library accepts proposals for Programs from external organizations and individuals, and evaluates them according to the criteria in this Policy. The Library may not respond to all proposals. Approval of a previous Program proposal does not guarantee acceptance of future proposals.

## **DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:**

Content may be developed and presented by Library Employees or by experts outside the organization including:

- Authors and illustrators (by whom book sales are permitted);
- Performers (by whom sales of recordings are permitted), and
- Agencies, professionals and community members with expertise relating to the programming topic. These presenters may share their business/professional affiliation, but may not sell or promote their products or paid services;

All paid and unpaid external performers are required to obtain a Vulnerable Sector Police Reference Check before delivering Programs to children, youth under the age of 18, or people with disabilities.

In order to ensure a quality Program experience for participants, the Library reserves the right to:

- Limit Program attendance based on considerations such as space, customer experience etc.;
- Set age guidelines or limit Program attendance to ensure the safe use of space, suitability of content and optimal group size for instruction;
- Review its Program offerings regularly and make changes, based on the Library's values, purpose statement, strategic plan as well as community demand and interest, and
- Cancel or terminate Programs that, in the opinion of the Library, are misrepresented by the Program provider, do not ensure the dignity and safety of the public or Library Employees, are incompliant with any provision of this or other Library policies, or which place at risk any Library Employees, participants, equipment, materials, property and/or space. Should Programs be cancelled, the Library will make every effort to notify the public of this decision in a timely fashion.

#### **PROGRAM EVALUATION:**

Programs developed and delivered by the Library will meet its strategic priorities and service delivery standards, and will have clearly defined goals, target audiences, descriptions, outcomes and objectives. Data collected for all Programs will be reviewed regularly.

All Programs are designed with measurable outcomes. Evaluation will include feedback from Employees, participants, and external partners (if applicable).

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Accountability for the development and management of the Library's Programs is vested in the office of the CEO & Chief Librarian, which delegates this professional activity to qualified and knowledgeable Employees.

This includes assuring that:

- The policy is applied in the context of the governance policy framework of the Library;
- The terms of the policy are applied,
- Program processes, procedures and guidelines are followed; and,
- The Library has acted in accordance with the policy and follows due process in the Program reconsideration process.

Persons from the community with concerns may address the Library Board through the delegation process.

**INQUIRIES:**

- Manager Customer Services & Branch Operations responsible for Programming
- Director of Customer Service & Branch Operations
- CEO & Chief Librarian