



## **BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMMING POLICY**

### **Library Mission and Policy Statement:**

The Mission of the Bridgeport Public Library is to provide open access to free resources and programs through knowledgeable staff, promote literacy in all its forms – written, digital, financial and civic, connect communities, enable lifelong learning, enrich lives and cultivate curiosity. Programming is provided by the library to promote and complement other services offered by the library. In addition, programming is provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all residents and aims 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 programming as a resource for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections set forth in section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes. This policy applies to all library programs.

### **Definitions:**

- 1) A **Public Library staff member** means a staff member of a public library. Staff members include but are not limited to Librarians, Library Assistants, and any staff member whose assignment is in the public library or any individual carrying out or assisting with the functions of a public library.
  
- 2) A **Library Program** is a free event, whether virtual or in-person, planned by 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. Note: Use of a public meeting room by an organization or individual to hold a public event is not a library program.

### **Purpose and Goals for Programs:**

Bridgeport Public Library offers programming to present information and entertainment related to issues of current and local interest, including a wide variety of programming about history of the City of Bridgeport. Library programming facilitates the sharing of the community's "people resources" – their hobbies, skills, collections, knowledge and expertise. Library programming may provide early literacy experience and education, introduce patrons and visitors to library resources, both digital and physical, encourage the health and well being of community members, coordinate with other city departments and resources to promote civic initiatives, expand the library's role as social connector, commemorate holidays and events that reflect the City of Bridgeport's diverse community, promote cultural enrichment and foster a lifelong passion for reading and learning.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Bridgeport Public Library Board of Directors acknowledges that librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop library programming. The Library Board delegates development, presentation and oversight of programs to the Library Director and staff. While the general public may recommend topics or speakers for consideration, The Library Director delegates the authority for program management to lead staff for Youth Services (children & teens), Adult Services, and the Bridgeport History Center. Library staff who present or help present programs do so as part of their regular job and are not hired as outside contractors for programming.

All program attendees are responsible for complying with the Bridgeport Public Library's *Rules of Conduct Policy*.

**Presenter Responsibilities:**

Performers and musicians who use music, movies, or other copyrighted materials in library programs should only use material for which they have permission to use, however they intend to use it. The Library expects that performers and musicians will obtain any necessary copyright permission and/or license for any non-original works used for any library event. This includes works performed live and/or use of recorded music. Animals that are part of Library sponsored programs must be accompanied at all times by their handler and/or trainer.

**Program Selection:**

Library programs must have a special educational, informational or cultural value to the community. Non-library sponsored programs of a purely commercial nature or those designed for the solicitation of business will not be offered by the library. Examples of programs that would be considered of a commercial nature include, but are not limited to, presentations offered for free but with the intention of soliciting future business. (Further questions on this topic will be discussed in the Fees and Sales section below). This does not mean, however, that representatives of businesses and for-profit enterprises cannot be presenters in library-sponsored events. Any information must be of general interest. The library permits presenters to have business-related brochures, flyers, or other information available for attendees to pick up if interested. Presenters cannot distribute such materials as part of the event.

Programs that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure will not be sponsored by the library. However, the library may offer programs such as candidate forums that include invitations to all recognized candidates or programs in the interest of general civics education.

Programs will not be offered or approved that support or oppose a specific religion. Programs are planned to be inclusive of all cultures, religions, and philosophical beliefs. Library programs may address religious themes to educate or inform, but not to promote, observe or proselytize a particular religious conviction. Holiday programs may be offered for the entertainment of library customers.

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. The Library provides programs created or curated by librarians or library staff members of the public library as well as allowing displays and programs created by members of the public or community groups and exhibited in the public library.

**Program Development, Coordination and Supervision:**

Library programs may originate from Library Staff, partnering institutions or members of the public. In the event of a co-sponsoring 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.

**Program Access:**

Library programs are free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration may be in advance online or at the door. 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-served basis, limited to those individuals as the Library deems appropriate. Any individual requiring accommodation to participate in a Library program should contact the Library two weeks prior, using the contact information provided on the promotional material.

**Program Materials:**

Books, CDs, DVDs or other ancillary materials related to the content of a program may be offered for sale at a Library program as a convenience to attendees.

**Expressions of Concern:**

At times, patrons may have concerns about an upcoming program or event. All such concerns should be directed to the Library Director. If, after discussion with the Library Director the patron requests further action, a Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy form may be submitted to the Library Director. Procedures to address such concerns are guided by the policy set forth in Bridgeport Public Library's Policy on Library Material Review and Reconsideration. This policy and a form to request a review and reconsideration of library material may be found on the library's website. Bridgeport Public Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, displays or programs to individual residents of the City of Bridgeport.

**Sponsorship vs. Co-sponsorship:**

Co-sponsors are expected to actively participate in the development, presentation, promotion and evaluation of their programs. The library's role in such cases may include, but is not limited to: Library staff time for planning and furnishing space and equipment, and promotion and preparation of related book lists or displays. The librarian working with the cosponsor is responsible for determining if:

- The program supports the library's mission
- The resources at the library are able to accomplish the program
- The program satisfies the definition of a library program

The sponsor presenting a program to the library is responsible for its' content and execution. The library is not responsible for the content of programs it does not initiate.

**Accessibility:**

Programs will be developed with consideration for the principles of accessibility, equity and inclusiveness and will contribute to the Library's safe, supporting and welcoming environment. Reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure that programs are accessible to all who wish to attend and participate. Due to limited space, registration may be required for some programs.

**Specific Audiences:**

Some Library sponsored programs may be developed for a particular audience. The Library reserves the right to set age limits or recommendations for programs. In determining appropriate age recommendations, staff will consider the suitability of program materials, format and program presenters. Programs designed for specific audiences will be publicized as such. The responsibility for child

attendance at Library programs rests with the parents or guardians. All program participants must comply with the Bridgeport Public Library's *Rules of Conduct Policy*.

**Room Capacity:**

Capacity will not exceed the limits posted by the Fire Marshall.

**Program Selection:**

Program presenters will be selected from local, regional and national talent in order to prepare a program schedule that reflects our city's cultural diversity. Requests from individuals to present programs including author readings and signings are considered and weighed against the public's demonstrated interest in the topic, budget, and other allocated resources, as well as the presenter's demonstrated qualifications, expertise, and reputation. Performers and presenters will not be excluded from consideration because of their origin, background or views or because of possible controversy. Decisions on programs to offer are made by the Library Director and the heads of each programming unit with the library.

**Program Fees and Sales of Materials:**

All library-sponsored programs must be open to the public and offered free of charge. Patrons are under no obligation to purchase further services from a program presenter or facilitator. At the discretion of the Library Director the following will be permissible at Library-initiated programs or on property governed by Library policy:

- Fund-raising to benefit the Library or sponsored by the Friends of the Library.
- The sale of books, CDs or other items by authors or performers/presenters as part of a Library Program. Presenters are encouraged to donate a copy of their work to the Library for possible inclusion in the Library collection.
- The sale of art work by artists in a library-sponsored art show with the understanding that some of the artwork displayed may not be for sale.
- The sale of items in a strictly defined festival/event. Patrons are under no obligation to buy any items in order to be in attendance.
- Programs and classes may require a nominal materials fee. A class such as crochet is provided for free instruction but materials (i.e.: yarn, needles, etc.) should be purchased by the student.

All plans to sell items must be arranged in advance and approved by the library staff responsible for the program. Program presenters are responsible for the handling of all sales.

**Marketing, Advertising, and Photography:**

**1) Library & Co-Sponsored Programs:**

The Library's name may be used only in reference to location, not sponsorship or affiliation, unless the Library is an official sponsor or co-sponsor of the event. Advertising and publicity must include a contact phone number for the group and/or individual responsible for the program and must not include the Library's phone number. Co-sponsors will provide a description and photograph/image for publicity purposes. Library audiences must know on whose behalf an advertising message is being presented by use of a brand name, logo, or other forms of identification. The Library does not accept advertising material promoting discrimination, stereotypes, socially unacceptable behavior, gratuitous violence, obscene or profane language or unfair representation.

**2) Non-Library Programs:**

Patrons can reserve a meeting room for the purpose of presenting their own programs. Bridgeport Public Library does not sponsor these community programs, nor does the Library provide marketing or promotional assistance for community-hosted programs. When the Library is not sponsoring the program

or event, any announcements or advertisements to publicize a meeting, program, or event must include the following disclaimer: “The Bridgeport Public Library is not sponsoring or endorsing this program or any goods or services offered.” In addition, a draft of any announcement or advertisement (including posters, flyers, newspaper, internet or other communication) must be submitted to the staff booking the program at least one month in advance of publicizing.

### **3) Photography or Filming:**

Occasionally, Bridgeport Public Library staff may elect to photograph or film Library programs and/or events. The Library may also elect to film a short clip of library sponsored /cosponsored events for promotional purposes. The Library reserves the right to include these images in brochures, flyers, web pages, news releases or other promotional materials, as well as make them available to media outlets and event participants. The Library will strive to obtain written permission from patrons (and from minor’s parents/guardians) before submitting photos of Library events to area newspapers, posting on [www.bridgeportlibrary.org](http://www.bridgeportlibrary.org) or on social media associated with the Bridgeport Public Library. The Library cannot be responsible for photos submitted by outside parties to area newspapers or other forms of social media not sponsored by the Bridgeport Public Library.

### **Programs Outside of Regular Library Hours:**

- 1) Selected Bridgeport Public Library spaces are available for use outside of Library hours with special permission. Requests for use of space before or after regular Library hours must be made to the Library Administration as far in advance as possible. Reservations are made on a first come, first served basis. The Library’s *Rules of Conduct policy* is applicable to all events taking place at the Library, regardless of timing.
- 2) The sponsor of the program must arrange with the Library for maintenance and security personnel at their event. Anyone in Library facilities outside regular Library hours may be asked to provide identification.
- 3) All meetings must be concluded and all attendees out of the building at times designated by library staff. After closing, all exits must be through specifically designated areas, unless there is an emergency that necessitates quick evacuation and other exits are impeded.

### **Statement on Liability:**

All organizations or groups shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless Bridgeport Public Library, its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, suits, actions of any kind, resulting from any negligent act, omission or error of the user which results in personal injuries, or property damage arising from the user’s use of a library meeting room. The applicant and/or organization will be jointly and separately liable for any breakage, damage, or theft of any Library property caused by members or guests of the group or organization. Liability includes all applicable court costs and attorney fees. The Library, its employees, and Library Board members do not assume responsibility for personal injury or damage or loss of personal property during the applicant’s use of meeting or study rooms.

### **Refreshments:**

The Library does not provide catering services and does not possess a license to serve alcoholic beverages. Any user desiring to serve food must make arrangements with a caterer acceptable to the Library, and comply with all health laws. The Library must be made aware of the use of kerosene, canned heat, and other flammable heat sources and will approve their use on a case-by-case basis.

Users desiring to serve alcohol must obtain the appropriate liquor license and provide the Library with a copy of the liquor license in advance of the event.

All other guidelines for meetings are applicable for after hour’s meetings and failure to comply could result in loss of meeting privileges.

**Virtual Programs:**

Some Library programs may be offered using virtual meeting platforms that patrons may use to register and gain access to from their own Internet-enabled devices. This may include programs that are simultaneously run in-person at the library as well as being offered through a virtual platform. Some virtual programs may be pre-recorded and broadcast via the Internet or recorded as presented for later viewing. In the event that 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. Registered participants will receive, via email, a link to log on to the program and must not share that link with others. 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.

Patrons attending virtual programs are expected to adhere to the library's *Rules of Conduct*. Failure to do so may result in their immediate removal from said 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 the program presenters or attendees. Virtual programs may require participants to download software to their personal devices. The library is not responsible for loss or data or damage to the participant's personal equipment that may result from use of this software. Library staff will make every effort to prevent disruptive intrusions, however, the library is not responsible for actions of others which are outside of its control.

**Program Evaluation:**

To provide the highest quality and most valuable programming, program evaluation forms may be distributed to the participants of selected programs so that staff may learn what has been successful, and receive ideas for new programs from patrons. 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.

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