

Leominster PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMMING POLICY

Rationale

This policy guides the planning, management, and implementation of the Leominster Public Library's events and programs.

Policy Statement

This policy is established by the Board of Trustees of the Leominster Public Library and is guided the Library's Mission and Vision Statements, the Library's Strategic Plan, the American Library Association [Library Bill of Rights](#), and the American Library Association's [Freedom to View](#) and [Freedom to Read](#) statements. The Library Director administers this policy on behalf of the Board of Trustees, allocating funding for and delegating management of subsets of programs or individual programs to specific staff members. Library provision of a program does not constitute or imply any endorsement by library staff or the library of the viewpoints presented in that program.

Program Selection Criteria

All events and programs, whether initiated by the library, requested by a patron, proposed by a performer, or in partnership with other organizations, are considered in terms of the criteria listed below, though a program need not meet all these standards in order to be selected.

Criteria include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Relation to library mission and services goals
2. Community needs and interests
3. Presentation quality and treatment of content for intended audience
4. Presenter background/qualifications/reputation
5. Availability and capacity of appropriate program space
6. Budget and staffing considerations
7. Connection to other community programs, exhibits, or events, and to other community organizations
8. Safety and security of patrons and library staff

Attendance Limitations

Attendance to individual programs may be limited due space limitations, program costs, and event format. The Leominster Public Library recognizes the importance of providing different age groups with safe and comfortable environments and programming offerings that prioritize their interests and needs. As such, while some programs may be intended for all audiences, many programs may be limited to specific age groups.

Commercial Limitations

The Leominster Public Library does not offer programs of a commercial nature, including free programs with the intention of soliciting future business. Solicitation at the library is broadly prohibited, and branded or business-related literature may not be provided at programming.

However, recognizing that program attendees may wish to purchase items like books written by speakers or recordings made by performers, the library may permit the sale of such items in conjunction with a library-sponsored program.

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All plans to sell such items must be arranged in writing in advance and approved by the Library Director or their designee.

Food and Drink

Food and/or drink at any library programs must be approved in writing in advance by the Library Director or their designee. Any food or drink that is approved for providing at Leominster Public Library programs must adhere to all applicable Board of Health regulations.

Outside Programs

The Leominster Public Library does not provide space for individuals or outside organizations to offer programs independent of the library, even if those programs are free and open to all. The Leominster Public Library does occasionally offer programming in partnership with outside organizations when appropriate. If you represent an organization that would like to partner with the Leominster Public Library in providing a program, please contact the library.

Performer Documentation Requirements and Payment Information

Library performers are required to pass a criminal background check (CORI) and must provide a W9 and an invoice in order to receive payment. If all documentation is provided, performers will receive payment by mail within thirty (30) days after the performance of their program.

Insurance may be required for some programs.

Program Objections

Guiding Principles

The purpose of the Program Objection Procedure is to consider the opinions of members of the community who are not directly involved in the Leominster Public Library's program selection process. Every resident of Massachusetts has the right to question programs offered by the Leominster Public Library.

If the program has already taken place, the library expects that the objecting patron will have attended the program. If the program has not yet taken place, the program will not be canceled or attendance to it restricted while the library reviews the objection. A decision to sustain a challenge to a program shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the library staff involved in the selection of the material.

Residents may offer an objection to a program verbally or in writing. The Leominster Public Library will review the selection decision for the program in question following the receipt of the objection and will respond to the resident's concern in a timely manner. Multiple objections received for the same program may be considered together, and objections received for a program that has already received objections and had those objections dismissed may not be considered again.

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Program Objection Procedure

Informal Program Objection

A patron may make an informal statement of concern about a library program by presenting an oral or written statement. The library shall attempt to resolve the issue informally.

The Library Director or another appropriate staff member shall discuss the matter with the patron and explain the library's programming philosophy and selection criteria.

If this explanation does not satisfy the patron, the patron may submit a formal objection by submitting the Statement of Concern About Library Programming form, attached.

Formal Program Objection

The patron must meet the following conditions to file a formal Program Objection:

1. The patron must be a resident of Massachusetts.
2. If the program has already taken place, the patron must have attended the entire program, or must sufficiently understand the nature of the program if the program has not yet taken place.
3. The patron must receive and read the Programming Policy and Program Objection Procedure.
4. The patron must complete and return the Statement of Concern about Library Programming Form to the Library Director.

The Library Director may communicate with the patron to discuss and attempt to address their concerns prior to submitting the Statement of Concern about Library Programming Form to the Board of Trustees. The Library Director shall notify the Chair of the Leominster Public Library Board of Trustees of the receipt of the complete Statement of Concern About Library Programming Form. The Chair shall appoint a Program Objection Committee consisting of: two (2) members of the Leominster Public Library Board of Trustees, the Library Director, the Assistant Library Director, and the Head(s) of the Department(s) responsible for the program.

Members of the Committee shall perform the following duties:

1. Examine and discuss the patron's Statement of Concern About Library Programming Form.
2. If possible, attend the program in question or watch recordings of similar programs, and review relevant documentation.
3. Determine professional acceptance of the program by communicating with other organizations who have held similar programs, and consult other library professionals and/or community members with subject expertise or related professional knowledge.
4. Weigh the values and faults of the program and analyze the program as a whole rather than on aspects taken out of context.

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5. Evaluate the program in relation to the library's array and variety of programming and review the program selection decision based on the Leominster Public Library's Programming Policy.
6. Evaluate the program in relation to the principles of intellectual freedom as presented in the American Library Association's Bill of Rights, its interpretations, and the Freedom to View Statement.
7. Prepare a written report for the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Library Director shall respond to the patron in writing and shall include a copy of the Program Objection Committee's Report.

The Library Director shall keep a copy of the Program Objection Committee's Report for the Library's files.

The Leominster Public Library shall attempt to respond to the patron within sixty (60) days of receipt of the completed Statement of Concern About Library Programming Form.

If the patron is not satisfied with the Program Objection Committee's decision, they may appeal by making a request in writing to the Chair of the Leominster Public Library Board of Trustees. Upon receipt of this request, the Chair shall schedule a public hearing at a posted open meeting with the entire Board of Trustees, the Library Director, and the patron.

The patron's initial Statement of Concern About Library Programming shall be kept confidential. If the patron appeals the Program Objection Committee's decision to the Board of Trustees, then the patron's Statement will not longer be confidential. State law requires that all meetings of the Board of Trustees must be open to the public.

STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

Please return the completed form to the Library Director. Feel free to use additional space if necessary.

Name_____ Date_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip Code_____

Telephone Number:

Email address:

If you represent an organization or group, please give its name and address:

What program are you commenting on?

Is this a program you attended?

YES NO The program has not happened yet

What brought this program to your attention?

To what do you object? Please be specific about your concerns.

What do you suggest the library do about this matter?

Do you find anything of value in this program?

In its place, what program would you recommend that would convey an equivalent perspective or provide an equivalent experience for library patrons?

Signature of Requestor

Date

STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

Staff Use Only

Date received by the Library Director: _____

Date submitted to the Chair of the Board of Trustees: _____

Date Subcommittee established: _____

Individuals assigned to Subcommittee: _____

Date Subcommittee Report submitted to the Chair of the Board of Trustees:
