

Programming

Mission

Mahopac Public Library provides programming to create opportunities for socialization, education, personal development, creative expression, and to promote all forms of literacy. The Library seeks to share ideas through community engagement for the benefit of all.

Purpose

This policy provides Library staff and other groups and agencies working with the Library with the necessary guidelines to assist them in the development of Library programs. It is also intended to inform the public about the principles and criteria by which programs are selected.

This policy addresses programming (1) developed and sponsored by the Library and (2) developed in cooperation with community organizations or individuals and co-sponsored by the Library. This policy does not apply to programs offered by other organizations on library premises where space is reserved and/or rented under the terms and conditions of the Meeting Room policy.

Programming Policy

Mahopac Public Library sponsors a wide variety of public programs and partners with non-profit organizations, local businesses, and individuals to develop co-sponsored public programs to fulfill its mission and promote the enjoyment of reading, greater cultural understanding, lifelong learning and civic engagement. The Library's investment in public programs recognizes that people learn in many different ways and that diverse programming enables the Library to reach a wide range of participants.

Programming is an integral part of library service that:

- Expands the Library's role as a community resource;
- Introduces patrons and non-users to Library resources;
- Provides entertainment;
- Provides opportunities for lifelong learning; and
- Expands the visibility of the Library.

All members of the public are welcome to attend the Library's public programs, subject to any occupancy limits and registration requirements. A person's right to attend a program will not be denied because of nationality, race, age, gender, religion, background, views, sexual orientation or disability.

In order to maintain an environment conducive to the purpose of the program, all attendees must comply with the following regulations:

- All Library users and attendees must comply with the Library's Code of Conduct;
- Persons shall not be allowed to enter meeting rooms once the legal occupancy limit has been reached; and
- The Library does not permit:
 - carrying or displaying signs, posters, or placards within the Library premises;
 - actions that will block access or egress to Library premises or create safety hazards;

- actions that would disrupt a program or obscure a presenter from the audience’s view or prevent the audience from hearing the presenter; and
- any use of force or violence damaging to property or threatening or intimidating to any person or group.

Failure to comply with these regulations may result in expulsion from a Library program or facility and/or suspension of Library privileges.

The Library reserves the right to use video or photographs taken of program participants for internal use, publication, use in promotional outlets, and for evaluation purposes.

Program Planning

Ultimate responsibility for programming at the Library rests with the Library Director who administers under the authority of the Board of Trustees. The Director, in turn, delegates the authority for program management to designated Library staff.

The Library staff uses the following criteria in making decisions about program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources:

- Relevance to community needs, interests, and issues;
- Availability of program space;
- Treatment of content for the intended audience;
- Presentation quality;
- Presenter background, reputation and qualifications in the content area;
- Budget;
- Historical or educational significance;
- Connection to other community programs, exhibitions or events; and
- Relation to Library collections, resources, and exhibits.

Unsolicited offers and/or requests from individuals or organizations to present programs will be evaluated using the above criteria.

Professional performers and presenters who 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, views, or because of possible controversy. Library staff members who present programs do so as part of their employment and are not hired as outside contractors for programming.

Programs will be developed with consideration for the principles of accessibility and equity. These include, but are not limited to, access for people with disabilities, and times and locations that maximize convenience and encourage attendance by the target audience. Programs represent the wide range of ideas and views contained in the library’s collection, respond to a topical issue or popular trends and are planned to meet the expressed and anticipated needs of the community.

Community Participation

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

staff to plan and develop program content, provide logistical support, advertise, or include information about Library resources relevant to the program content.

Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute or imply an endorsement of its policies, beliefs, opinions, or program content by any Library personnel, Trustee, or by the Mahopac Public Library.

The sale of products at Library programs is not allowed except in the following situations:

- Writers, performers and artists may sell their own work at Library programs;
- Third-party vendors may be invited by the Library to sell the work of the writer, performer, or artist that is the subject of the particular program;
- The Friends of the Library may sell items at Library programs they sponsor.

Any sales of products at Library programs must be approved by the Library Director.

Programs are not to be used for commercial, religious, or partisan purposes or for the solicitation of business. The presenter may leave business cards for participants to pick up after the program should anyone be interested in purchasing items or services at a later date.

The Library welcomes expressions of opinions from patrons concerning programming. Patrons who question a Library program should first address the concern with the program coordinator or appropriate Department Head. Patrons who wish to request a review of a Library program may submit a Request for Reconsideration form. Requests for review of programs will be considered in the same manner as requests for reconsideration of library materials as outlined in the Library's Collection Development Policy.

The Library recognizes and supports the rights of attendees and other members of the public to exercise their rights of freedom of speech and peaceable assembly. Accordingly, picketing and distribution of literature in a traditional public forum (generally the sidewalk) outside Library premises may be conducted so long as it does not interfere with access or egress, is not disruptive to the activities within the Library, and is otherwise undertaken in accordance with any applicable local permitting and public assembly laws and regulations. Organizers of demonstrations adjacent to Library facilities are requested to inform the Library Director forty-eight (48) hours in advance so the Library may put in place any necessary arrangements, including safety and security measures.

Program Participation

A fee may be charged in one or more of the following instances:

- To cover the cost of materials used in a program;
- For participation in a series of workshops or classes (ie, yoga, meditation, stress management);
or
- For programming that results in certification or similar credit (i.e. CPR, Defensive Driving).

Registration is required for most Library programs for planning purposes or when space is limited. For Early Literacy programs requiring registration, preference is given to Mahopac Central School District (MCSD) residents. Patrons who are not MCSD residents are placed on a waiting list on a first come, first served basis and notified prior to or on the day of the program.

In some cases, the nature and success of a program may require that attendance is limited based on age, especially programs intended for children and teens that are geared to their interests and developmental needs. In no case will attendance at a program be limited because the content of a program may be controversial.

In the event that a program attracts more audience members than the Library can safely accommodate, the Library will limit admission to a number that meets the fire and building code safety standards.

Program Cancellation

The Library reserves the right to cancel a program and to reschedule (or not) at its discretion.

Parking

Parking in the Library lot is limited. Program attendees must park in valid parking spaces. Attendees must not park in fire lanes, next to the islands, or in the exit driveway. If a car is parked illegally, staff will attempt to locate the owner of the vehicle so that it can be moved. If the owner cannot be located, the police will be contacted.

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