Library Program Policy

Purpose

Library programming is an integral part of the services provided by the Meriden Public Library, supporting its mission to inspire lifelong learning, create possibilities, and strengthen our community through free access to resources, experiences, and opportunities for all. The Library recognizes the importance of the public Library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents. Library staff plan and implement programs that support the Library's mission using the following criteria:

- The Library's role as a community resource
- Builds and expands relationships in the community
- Celebrates different age groups, interests, and cultural backgrounds
- Provides the opportunity to make, discover, and to feel joy
- Provides learning, enrichment, and entertainment

This policy will establish the standard for which Library programs are developed, implemented, and evaluated.

Definition of a Program

A Library program is a free event, virtual or in-person, organized by Library staff for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. These programs may feature outside presenters, facilitators, or performers, and can be offered in collaboration with community partners or other organizations. Collaborations with community partners or other organizations may also be referred to as "Library-sponsored" programs.

Community partners and other organizations that reserve the Library's public meeting rooms to hold events are not Library programs unless expressly approved as Library programs by the Library Director or designee and must abide by to the Meriden Public Library Meeting Room Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop Library programs. Ultimate responsibility for programming at the Meriden Public Library rests with the Library Director, who may delegate responsibility to Library staff. Program planning and facilitating is delegated to staff members based on their job responsibilities and areas of expertise. Programming librarians are guided by this policy and utilize professional skills, collections, equipment, facilities, and feedback from the community in planning and delivering Library programs.

It is the responsibility of program attendees to adhere to relevant Library policies such as Meriden Public Library Code of Conduct and the Photography/Video and Film Recording Guidelines, which apply to all Library programs regardless of venue.

Program Selection

The Library staff use the following criteria in making decisions about program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents:
- Community needs and interests
- Availability of program space and/or suitability of program for virtual presentation
- Treatment of content for intended audience
- Presentation quality
- Presenter background/qualifications in content area
- Budget
- Historical or educational significance
- Connection to other community programs, exhibitions, or events
- Relation to Library collections, resources, exhibitions, and programs

Programs cannot be used for solicitation or for partisan purposes, whether commercial, political, religious, or otherwise. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute endorsement of the program content or of the views expressed by presenters or participants.

Program Development, Coordination, and Supervision

Library programs may originate by staff, partnering institutions, or members of the public. In the case of co-sponsored programs, responsibility for program supervision may be delegated to the co-sponsoring organization, depending on the timing and location of the event. However, all programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the Meriden Public Library must adhere to this policy, regardless of the venue.

Program Cancellations

Programs may be cancelled for a number of reasons, including severe weather, absence of the presenter, or low registration. Cancelled programs are not automatically rescheduled. When possible, advanced notification of program cancellations will be made on the Library's online calendar of events and by other appropriate communication channels.

Program Access and Attendance

All Library programs are free and open to the public. Some programs may require advance registration for planning purposes or when space is limited to Meriden residents. Attendance may also be limited by age or grade level. Due to the design of some Library programs, entry to a program may be denied if a registered attendee is 15 minutes late.

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

Virtual Programs

Virtual programs allow attendees to stay informed, engaged, and entertained from the comfort of their own space. The Library may offer virtual programs through online platforms that allow the public to register and participate using their own devices. In addition, the Library may host "hybrid" programs that offer both in-person and virtual participation. These may include in-person gatherings to view a virtual presentation together, or in-person events that are streamed live or recorded for online viewing.

The Library will make every effort to troubleshoot or enhance the viewing experience of virtual programs. However, since virtual programs rely on technology and internet connectivity, both on the Library's end and the participant's, the Library cannot guarantee the streaming quality of any virtual programs.

Virtual program attendees are expected to adhere to relevant Library policies such as Meriden Public Library Code of Conduct. Any individual that does not follow the Code of Conduct will be promptly removed from the program.

Program Materials

The sale of books or other media by authors or performers is only permitted as part of a Library-sponsored program, if approved by the director. Presenters are responsible for completing their own sales; Library staff are not to be made available to assist in this regard.

Program Evaluation

All Library programs are evaluated for quality, attendance, relevance, and alignment with strategic goals. Library staff use the outcomes of these evaluations to determine whether a program should be continued, modified, or discontinued. Evaluation data may also be used to support grant applications, fulfill reporting requirements, and inform the development of new programs.

Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, displays or programs to individuals residing in Meriden. Please see our Library Material Review and 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.

Revised and approved by the Meriden Library Board of Trustees, October 27, 2025.