1.12 PROGRAMMING POLICY

Purpose

The North Branford Public Libraries' ("NBPL" or "the Library") philosophy of open access to information and ideas extends to Library programming. NBPL recognizes the importance of programs as a resource for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas and the promotion of free expression and access to ideas by residents. The Library develops and provides programming to further its goals of inspiring curiosity, discovery, and lifelong learning for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents of all ages and diverse backgrounds.

Programming is a fundamental and integral component of library service that:

- introduces attendees to library resources and materials;
- promotes literacy and provides learning and entertainment opportunities to help meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of our community;
- raises awareness and visibility of the Library within the community;
- represents a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, expressions, opinions, and interests;
- provides access to content relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of patrons;
- supports and responds to emerging community interests as well as established interests and demands;
- helps to foster a sense of community; and
- extends outreach for underserved populations.

The Library may partner or co-sponsor programs with other agencies, organizations, and businesses provided the programs are compatible with the Library's mission and vision. The Library will generate joint programming and invite partners to co-sponsor or collaborate. Co-sponsored programs must include involvement by Library staff in the planning of program content. Professional performers and presenters who offer specialized or unique expertise may be hired for Library programs. Programming practices adhere to the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

This policy addresses programming (1) developed and sponsored by the Library and (2) developed by members of the community and co-sponsored by the Library, not programs offered on Library premises by other organizations or community groups. Reserving or use of Library meeting room(s) by outside groups or individuals does not constitute a Library-sponsored program or imply endorsement of the users' policies, beliefs, or programs by NBPL, its staff, or the Board. Individuals or groups reserving spaces within the Library for meetings or events not co-hosted with the Library should refer to our *Meeting Room Policy*.

Definition of a Program

Library programs are a live or recorded activity or event in a group setting, developed or selected to offer opportunities for community connection, cultural enrichment, exchange of information, lifelong learning, and promotion of literacy for an intended audience in the community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Ultimate responsibility for programming, as with all Library activities, resides with the Library Director, who is responsible for the allocation of program budgets and operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board. The Library Director delegates program responsibility to other members of the staff who utilize their training, experience, and professional knowledge in the creation and/or selection of programs and program presenters, within the areas of service to children, adolescents, and adults. No employee may be disciplined or dismissed for an event when it was created or selected in good faith and in accordance with NBPL policies and procedures and any and all applicable statutory requirements.

Program Selection

Library programs are chosen by staff for their relevance to community needs or interest, popular appeal, and suitability for a general audience. Presenters are chosen for their proven or unique expertise and public performance experience.

Library staff utilize many criteria when making decisions about program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources. Library staff may use, but are not limited to, the following criteria in program planning and development:

- Availability of resources such as space, staff time, technology, and budget
- Community needs and interests
- Popular appeal
- Timeliness
- Presenter's qualifications, expertise, and public performance experience
- Program's relevance to the Library's mission and relation to Library collections, resources, services, and events
- Program's historical or educational significance
- National and local observances, commemorative months, and initiatives
- Potential to promote, supplement, and encourage use of the Library's collections and resources
- Timing/length of the program
- Presentation quality and treatment of content for intended audience
- Connection to other community programs, exhibits, or events

Unsolicited programming offers from individuals and organizations to present programs may be considered using the above criteria and evaluated in relation to this policy, as well as the mission and values of NBPL.

Program Development, Coordination and Supervision

The process of program development and presentation involves the experience and knowledge of those staff members so designated by the Library Director. Library programs are planned, curated, and developed by professionally trained Library staff. In making programming decisions, staff members utilize their training, their familiarity with the community, Library resources, other programs and events, the existing collection, and budget.

Staff consider the suitability of the program's materials, format, presenter, and relevancy when determining the intended audience. Programs with an intended audience are publicized as such. 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.

The Library draws upon community resources in developing programs and attempts to partner with other community organizations, educational and cultural institutions, or individuals to develop and present or co-sponsor programs. These programs are considered Library-sponsored programs, but this does not constitute an endorsement of the content or topic of the program or of the views expressed by speakers, presenters, participants, or audience members. Decisions to provide programs will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the program in serving the interests of Library patrons.

The Library does not offer programs of a commercial nature, including but not limited to presentations offered for free but with the intention of soliciting future business. No goods or services, including attendees' names and/or contact information, may be solicited or sold. 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. All plans to sell such 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.

Program Access

All Library programs must be open to the public and offered free of charge. Library programs may occur on- or off-site or be offered virtually. Every attempt will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a program. However, when safety or the success of a program requires it, attendance may be limited to those registered and/or by room capacity.

When limits must be established, attendance will be determined on a first come, first served basis, either with advanced registration or at the door. If limited space is available for recurring programs, a cycle of registration may also be established so that the program is open to new participants. 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. A wait list may be available for some programs. The staff member responsible for

the program has sole discretion if the program has a wait list and how many spots are available. If a spot becomes available either before or on the day of the program, patrons on the wait list will be notified and offered the available spot based on their place on the wait list.

Registration
Registration may be required for certain programs. Every person registering for a program will be required to provide a telephone number and email address at which the Library can contact them in the event of a cancellation or schedule change.

Late Arrival
Attendees are expected to be on time for all programs. Those who arrive 10 minutes or more after the program start time will be considered no-shows. They may be denied access after that time, and their spot may be given away to people on the wait list.

Cancellation
Programs may be cancelled by the Library for a number of reasons such as severe weather, absence of the presenter, or low registration. In the event a program is cancelled, efforts will be made to let the public know and registered participants will be notified. Cancelled programs are not automatically rescheduled. Patrons who are registered for an event they cannot attend are asked to cancel their registration in a timely manner. Repeated failure to show up for programs may be grounds for being waitlisted. Continued absences will result in suspension of registered program attendance privileges for up to 90 days.

NBPL recognizes that each patron's choice of program attendance is an individual matter. Given the diverse nature of the programs provided and the varying ages, abilities, and interests of our community, not all programs will be right for all patrons. Attendance at programs by minors is at the sole discretion of their parents, caregivers, or legal guardians. Patrons may not restrict or censor another patron's ability to attend a program. In some instances, the nature of a program may require limiting attendance based on age, grade, or other relevant factors. Programs designed for a general audience have no age restrictions.

Virtual Programs

In an effort to reach the greatest volume of patrons, the Library may also offer virtual programs. These programs will utilize Library-approved virtual meeting platform(s) that patrons may use to access virtual programs from their own devices and may include programs that are simultaneously run at Library facilities along with programs that are solely offered virtually.

Some virtual programs may be pre-recorded and broadcast via the internet or recorded as presented for later viewing. In the event an interactive program is being recorded, attendees will be informed of that fact at the start of the program.

Patrons are required to use their own equipment to attend Library virtual programs. NBPL will make its best good faith effort to utilize a virtual program platform that will be compatible with

the widest array of hardware and operating systems, but the Library makes no representation that every patron will be capable of accessing Library programming virtually using their personal devices or internet connections. Nor can the Library guarantee the quality of the audio, video, or internet connection of program presenters or attendees.

All Library virtual programs will be hosted via the Library's virtual meeting account(s). A designated Library staff member will act as "host." An external presenter will be made the "co-host." Patrons attending virtual programs are expected to adhere to NBPL's Code of Conduct while in attendance, and failure to do so during a virtual program may result in immediate removal. 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.

Program Materials

A partnership is a relationship between NBPL and an institution, non-profit organization, community group, or individual. These relationships involve an effort to provide and/or promote activities and services for the public. Partnerships can range from a one-time collaboration to a long-term arrangement. External organizations or individuals partnering with the Library on programs must coordinate marketing efforts with the Library's staff and secure staff approval before distributing any promotional materials. The Library reserves the right to revise and edit any copy provided by a program presenter as appropriate for the Library's various promotional outlets.

Presenters are permitted 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.

Program Evaluation

Assessments of the effectiveness of Library programs are based on attendance and audience satisfaction. Other evaluation criteria include attraction of new patrons to the Library, the promotion of Library goals, and program evaluation forms.

Patrons who request the reconsideration of a Library program or event are encouraged to discuss their concerns with a Librarian or the Library Director. If the patron is not satisfied with the outcome of those discussions, they must complete and sign the *Request for Reconsideration* form. Requests for review of specific programs will be considered in the same manner as requests for reconsideration of materials, as outlined in the *Material Review and Reconsideration Policy*. The program under consideration will not be canceled, postponed, or rescheduled until the review is complete and a final decision is determined.

The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, programs, or displays to residents of North Branford. Please see our *Material Review and Reconsideration Policy* for further information on this process. It is understood that Library programs are of a time-

sensitive nature. If the Review Committee or the Library Board determines that the program up for reconsideration is not in line with the Library's mission and/or *Programming Policy* after the program takes place, that decision will influence future program choices.

Approved by the Library Board: September 10, 2025