



Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library

Library-Initiated Program Policy

Programs are an extension of services provided by the Library and are defined as planned activities or events that may be developed and presented by Library staff or may be cosponsored by the Library and other community organizations, either within the Library building, off-site, or virtually. Library programs are open to the public without charge unless the presenter provides supplies for participants that require a cost-recovery fee. Registration may be required for planning purposes or when space is limited.

Programs are an integral part of Library service that:

- Expand the Library's role as a community resource
- Provide opportunities for personal enrichment and lifelong learning
- Expand the visibility of the Library

Library-initiated programs include, but are not limited to, speeches, community forums, discussion groups, demonstrations, and live or media productions. Library programs must have a special entertainment, informational, or cultural value to the community.

Ultimate responsibility for programs rests with the Library Director, under the authority of the Board of Trustees. The Library Director delegates program responsibilities to designated staff who more closely manage this area of Library services. They manage their assigned budgets for program expenses and coordinate, supervise, and carry out programs.

Library staff use the following criteria in making decisions about programs:

- Support of the Library's mission, vision, and values statements
- Community needs, interests, and issues
- Availability of space
- Presentation quality
- Presenter background, qualifications, and experience in content area
- Historical, educational, or artistic significance
- Connection to other community programs, exhibits, or events
- Diversity and inclusivity in our community
- Impact on the program budget
- Staff time involved in planning, organization, and implementation
- Staff availability for overseeing and management of programs



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The Library actively partners with other community agencies, organizations, educational or cultural institutions, or individuals to develop and present public programs. Library sponsorship of programs does not constitute an endorsement of the content or the views expressed by presenters and participants. The Library reserves the right to decline a request to sponsor or cosponsor a program.

Some programs may be developed for a particular audience, i.e. attendees should be within the appropriate age group such as children or teens, or may require an accompanying adult. All program participants must comply with the Library's Code of Conduct. The Library reserves the right to set age limits or recommendations for programs. In determining appropriate age recommendations, staff will consider the suitability of the program's materials, format and program presenters, the relevancy and suitability of topic, messages and programming methods for the intended audience. Programs designed for specific audiences will be publicized as such. The responsibility for child attendance at Library programs rests with their caregivers.

Programs will not be offered or approved that endorse or oppose a specific viewpoint. Programs are planned to be inclusive of all cultures and viewpoints. Library programs may address viewpoints to educate, entertain, or inform, but not to promote, observe or proselytize a particular viewpoint. Groups may utilize meeting rooms for non-Library initiated/cosponsored programs and meetings as provided by the Library's Meeting Room Policy.

Library programs must be non-commercial in nature. Presenters may be invited to offer programs on topics of general interest or of a timely nature. Presenters may not directly solicit business before, during, or following a cosponsored program without prior approval from the Library Director.

The Library reserves the right to cancel a program for any reason at any time. Programs may be canceled for a number of reasons beyond the Library's control such as severe weather, building emergencies, absence of the presenter, or low registration. Every effort will be made to contact individuals who have pre-registered. Canceled programs are not automatically rescheduled.

External organizations or individuals partnering with the Library must coordinate marketing efforts with the Library's Community Relations Coordinator. Partnering organizations or individuals may be asked to sign an agreement on terms of engagement and associated fees.

Library programming should align with the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

The Library-Initiated Program Policy was prepared under the advice of the Attorney's Office with the City of Bismarck.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: 8/24/2022