

Library Programming Policy

Purpose

The Washington Township Public Library sponsors a wide variety of public programs to accordance with its mission to meet the cultural, educational, recreational and informational needs, of the residents of Washington Township. The library's investment in public programs recognizes that people learn in many different ways and that diverse programming enables the library to reach new audiences.

Program Planning

Library-initiated public programs are planned in accordance with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (see Appendix) and, as such, topics, speakers and resource materials are not excluded from library programs because of potential controversy. The library strives to present programs that represent a variety of opinions and viewpoints. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by the participants, any more than the purchase of material for the library collection constitutes an endorsement of the contents of the material or the views of its creator.

The library staff uses the following criteria when planning programs:

- Relevance to community needs and interests
- Presentation quality
- Presenter background, reputation and qualifications in the content area
- Budget
- Availability of program space
- Connection to other community programs, exhibitions or events
- Relation to library collections, resources, other library-sponsored programs, and exhibits

Library programs must be non-commercial, but speakers are allowed to hand out business cards after the program is over. Sale of products at library programs is not allowed except for the following:

- Writers, performers and artists may sell their own work at library programs.
- The Friends of the Library may sell items at library programs they sponsor.

Community Participation

The Library welcomes opinions and suggestions from the community concerning programming. Anyone with a question about a library program should first address their concerns with a library staff member. Anyone who wishes to continue their request for reconsideration for a library program should submit a formal, written request to the Director. The concerns will be reviewed and a reply will be issued to the patron. At that time, the patron may choose to bring his/her concerns to the attention of the Library Board. These concerns should be submitted in writing no less than one week prior to a scheduled Library Board meeting. The Library Board will review the written communication and the decisions of the staff, and will discuss the concerns, and will respond to the patron after the review process is complete.

Program Availability

Generally, library programs are offered free of charge and are open to all, unless a specific age group is indicated by the nature of the program. For a limited number of series (such as Lifetime Learning, Yoga, and Tai Chi) the library may charge a registration fee to offset costs. When space, seating, or materials are limited, preference will be given to Washington Township residents. 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 fire and building code safety standards.

Policy Applicability

This programming policy applies to all Library-organized and co-sponsored events that are offered to the public by the Washington Township Public Library. This policy does not apply to meetings or programs offered by other organizations on library premises.

Acknowledgements

Portions of this policy are adapted from the Princeton Public Library's "Policy and Procedures Manual" and the American Library Association's "An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights."

Appendix:

The Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.