

CHESTER COUNTY LIBRARY PROGRAMMING POLICY

Policy Statement

The mission of the Chester County Library is to provide informational, educational and cultural services to the residents, workers, and students of Chester County and member libraries so that they may be life-long learners.

The Chester County Library provides prompt, accurate and courteous service to all patrons regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, socioeconomic status, disability, immigration status, background, and/or views. It offers this in fulfillment of its mission to develop services, resources and collections that meet the cultural, informational, recreational, and educational needs of its diverse community.

Library programs are planned public activities that are initiated or presented in partnership by the Library and take place at the Library, at locations in the community, and/or online. Library programs include, but are not limited to: lectures, community forums, performing and visual arts, participatory workshops, technology programming, creative learning, wellness, story times, book clubs, discussion groups, and presentations for social, cultural, educational, or entertainment purposes.

The purpose of Library programming is to:

- Encourage the use of the Library and its resources
- Promote early literacy, acquisition of skills, and a life-long love of reading and learning
- Present information on issues of current interest
- Foster cultural awareness, diversity, and equitability
- Foster civic engagement and discourse
- Facilitate the sharing of local talent, knowledge, and expertise

Programming

Programming is planned by library staff throughout the year and is designed to fulfill the strategic plan, mission and vision of the library. The programs are run by or organized by library staff as part of their regular job duties.

The Library welcomes program proposals from individuals and community groups. When a community group, agency, or individual approaches the Library with a programming request, the Library will consider the partnership based on the following criteria:

- The program fulfills the purpose of a Library program, as defined above
- The program supports the Library's mission and strategic priorities
- The resources needed to accomplish the program are available and appropriate
- The program meets the selection and design criteria outlined in this policy

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Programming partners are expected to actively participate in the development, promotion, presentation, and evaluation of programs. The Library's role includes, but is not limited to: facilitating and approving program design; furnishing appropriate space and equipment; coordinating promotion; and offering supplementary Library resources.

All presenters of Library sponsored programming in-person must submit to background checks as required by law. Any required clearance certificates must be submitted to the Director or Branch Manager before the date of the performance or presentation.

The Library reserves the right to decline a program for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, staffing and budgetary constraints, space issues, or conflicts with the date, time, or location. Program proposals that do not meet the Library's program criteria are welcome to reserve meeting spaces at our facilities and requires customers to comply with the Library's Meeting Room Policy.

Selection and Design

The Library's goal in programming is to connect members of our community with a wide variety of ideas and perspectives. Staff generate program ideas from a number of sources including but not limited to professional publications and conferences, popular media, other libraries, and community interest.

Criteria for program selection and design include:

- Advances the Library's mission, vision and values
- Promotes early literacy, acquisition of skills, or a life-long love of reading and learning
- Presents information on issues of current interest
- Fosters civic engagement and discourse
- Aligns with the PA Forward 21st Century Literacies initiative
- Fosters cultural awareness, diversity, and equitability
- Facilitates the sharing of local talent, knowledge, and expertise
- Considerations of cost, staffing and capacity

Library programming guidelines:

- The Library is not obligated to represent multiple and/or opposing viewpoints within any one program or series. The Library welcomes the opportunity for other viewpoints to be represented in a separate program or series.
- Presentation of a program does not constitute the Library's endorsement of the content or views expressed by participants.
- Library programs are not used for commercial, religious, or partisan purposes or the solicitation of business.
- Space and physical arrangement are safe and conducive to effective program delivery.

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- No program shall be permitted that endangers Library patrons, staff, Library facilities, or otherwise materially interferes with Library operations.
- The Library reserves the right not to schedule a program and/or cancel a scheduled program for lack of registration, inclement weather or other emergencies.

Charges, Sales, and Fundraising

All library programs are free and open to the public. A small materials fee may be charged at the discretion and approval of the Library Director. Fundraising and sales are permitted with prior approval in the following circumstances:

- For fundraising to benefit the Library, the Chester County Library Trust, the Friends of the Chester County Library or Henrietta Hankin Branch or the Library itself, and
- For sale of items created by authors and artists responsible for the content of a Library program.

Exceptions to the above may be made at the discretion of the Library Director. At no time may a presenter use a program to promote their business, solicit future business, generate a mailing list, etc.

Attendance

All programs must be open to the public. The library is committed to ensuring access to all, and reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure people with disabilities may attend or participate.

- Registration is required for most library programs and the library may limit the number of participants due to venue size or to provide an effective program.
- The Library reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone becoming disruptive to audience members or the program facilitator, and to anyone in violation of the Library's Behavior Policy.
- Programs designed for specific audiences may have attendance restrictions or requirements based on age, grade in school, gender, etc.
- Programs targeted toward specific audiences will be publicized as such. No exceptions will be made to the advertised restrictions.
- It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians, not the Library staff, to guide their own children's use of the Library and its resources and services.
- Attendance at Library programs and events constitutes consent to be photographed/video recorded for use in print and/or electronic publicity for the Library. To ensure the privacy of individuals and children, images will not be identified using names or personally identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent, or legal guardian. If anyone does not wish to be photographed/video recorded, they should let staff know prior to the start of the program.

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Evaluation

Programs will be evaluated for effectiveness on an ongoing basis. The effectiveness of a library program will be based on attendance, audience satisfaction, new patrons attracted to the library, the promotion of library goals, and the needs addressed of a specific target audience.

Statement of Concern

The Chester County Library and Henrietta Hankin Branch and the Board of Trustees welcome feedback from customers. Any customer concerns will be handled promptly and courteously, as detailed in the [Statement of Concern Policy](#).

References

This policy has been developed in concert with the following American Library Association Guidance Documents:

[Libraries: An American Value](#)

[Library Bill of Rights](#)

Interpretations of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “[Library-initiated Programs as a Resource](#),” “[Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors](#)” and “[Freedom to View Statement](#).”

Library Policies

[Library Behavior Policy](#)

[Statement of Concern](#)

[Meeting Room Use Policy](#)

[Program Proposal Form](#)

Approved by the Board of Trustees of Chester County Library on 09/19/23.

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Statement of Concern

The Chester County Library and the Henrietta Hankin Branch Library (hereinafter referred to as “the Library”) acquire and make available materials and programs that inform, educate and entertain. The Library offers materials and programs for the general public on current issues, embrace broad areas of knowledge, entertain and reflect our diverse community. The programs presented are selected to satisfy the needs and interests of the community, and to promote and extend the collections, services, goals and mission of the Library. Materials are selected to satisfy the needs and interests of the community, to support the roles of the Library, and to present balanced points of view within the collection.

Because of the Library’s commitment to selecting materials and presenting a broad range of programs on a variety of topics, there may be items which are of concern to some individuals or groups. The Library recognizes that some programs and items may be controversial and that any given event/item may offend some customers. Library sponsorship of a program or acquisition of materials does not constitute an endorsement of their content or the views expressed therein, but enables the Library to fulfill its mission in providing materials, information and programs for life, work and pleasure. The Library also has a commitment to our customers to respond to concerns expressed about programs the Library sponsors and materials in the Library’s collection.

The customer with a concern should complete this Statement of Concern form if wanting to make a formal request for reconsideration of a Library program or Library materials. The person submitting the form will be given copies of the Program Policy or Materials Selection Policy and the ALA Library Bill of Rights. This completed form will be sent to the Chester County Library Director or the Henrietta Hankin Branch Library Manager. Within a month of receipt of the Statement of Concern Form, a review of the program/item will be completed by a committee of Library Staff, who will make a recommendation to the Library Director or Branch Manager. The Library Director or Branch Manager will respond in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the recommendation to the concerned individual notifying them of the Library’s decision. If the individual is not satisfied with the decision made or the action taken, the decision or action may be appealed to the Board of Trustees of the Chester County Library.

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Statement of Concern Form

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent self? _____ Or an organization? _____

Name of Organization _____

1. Type of Library Material or Program:

_____ Book, eBook or audiobook (CD or download)

_____ Movie (DVD or streaming)

_____ Magazine (paper or digital)

_____ Newspaper (paper or digital)

_____ Music CD

_____ Digital Resource

_____ Program

_____ Other

Please provide the following information regarding the program or item:

- Title _____
- Author/Artist/Presenter _____
- Program Date(s) _____

2. What brought this program/item to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review? For programs, did you attend the program(s)? Did you attend the entire program? If not, what part did you review?

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4. Please describe your concerns regarding this resource or program:

5. Are there any specific examples within the resource/program that illustrate your concerns?

6. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

7. What action(s) are you requesting the committee consider?