

# **Bridgman Public Library Programming Policy**

Bridgman Public Library Joint Board of Directors

## **Purpose:**

Bridgman Public Library recognizes that programming is a key resource for our community and demonstrates the Library's vision to engage and inspire a community of life-long learners. This programming policy guides Library staff responsible for program development and provides guidelines for the development and selection of programs, including budgetary needs.

This Library upholds principles of intellectual freedom and supports the rights of individuals to read, speak, view and exchange points of view. In order to provide access to diverse perspectives, the Library presents a variety of programs, topics and speakers. A program is not excluded because of possible controversy. The availability of a program by the Library does not constitute endorsement of program content or group.

## **Objectives:**

Programs offer opportunities to highlight collections, promote other services and share information and expertise. They allow the Library to develop partnerships with groups to enhance the Library's presence in the community. Programs support the Library's role as a community destination and attract regular and new users of all ages and backgrounds. Programs are intended to support and promote the mission of the Library and are consistent with the Library's core values.

Programs must meet one or more of the following objectives:

- a. To nurture a lifelong love of reading
- b. To promote literacy and lifelong learning
- c. To educate, inform or inspire
- d. To provide a platform for exchanging ideas
- e. To respond to current events or topics facing the community, state, nation or internationally
- f. To foster a sense of community

## **Scope of Programs:**

Programs are presented for various age groups, cultures, backgrounds and interest groups. Programs may target a specific age group or for general audience.

Types of library programs include, but are not limited to:

- a. Book discussions
- b. Story-time and story-telling
- c. Author visits and readings
- d. Artistic performances
- e. Film showings
- f. Demonstrations and workshops
- g. Instructional classes and training sessions

- h. Lectures and presentations
- i. Exhibits and associated programs
- j. Community forums
- k. Library tours and orientations
- l. Seasonal programs, i.e. Summer Reading program, Halloween Party

Program presenters include library staff with relevant skills or expertise, volunteers or staff from co-sponsoring organizations, local or visiting authors and performing artists, local or visiting speakers with recognized credentials or relevant experience and qualified instructors and trainers. The library regards programming as an essential aspect of service to youth. Programs convey excitement about books, reading and research. They aid in social development and help build critical thinking and problem solving skills. Programs for children and teens foster a life-long love of reading and use of the library.

### **Programming Guidelines:**

Program selection and development are subject to the following guidelines:

- a. Program content is appropriate for group presentation.
- b. Space and physical arrangements are safe and conducive to effective program delivery.
- c. Programs are open to all, including county non-residents and non-cardholders; pre-registration may be required; some programs are limited to age-specific audiences.
- d. Admission to library programs is free; a fee for materials may be charged.
- e. Programs are non-commercial; presenters may have a business affiliation but no solicitation or promotion for business purposes will be permitted.
- f. Sale of books/CDs/art work by authors/performers/artists is permitted as part of a library program when arranged for in advance.
- g. The library may co-sponsor programs with entities whose mission and goals are compatible. Co-sponsorship decisions are made on the basis of shared interest, responsibility and benefits.
- h. Program suggestions from the community and/or unsolicited offers from individuals or organizations to present programs will be evaluated by the same standards used to select library-initiated programs.
- i. Programs are held in the library when possible and appropriate; meeting room capacities will be observed. Other locations will be considered when the library is not equipped to handle an event or an alternate venue will encourage access or attendance.
- j. Individuals with disabilities will be accommodated to the best of the library's ability.
- k. Cost to bring in a program fits within the budget guidelines.
- l. Program priority is based on its potential to reach the goals and objectives of the Library's Strategic Plan.

### **This programming policy supports the Library Bill of Rights:**

- a. Article 1 – "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves."
- b. Article 2 – "Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues."
- c. Article 3 – "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."
- d. Article 4 – "Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas."

- e. Article 5 – “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.”
- f. Article 6 – “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.”

**See Appendix A for the full interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and how it applies to library programming.**

## **Appendix A:**



### Library Initiated Programs as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for information, education, and recreation. Article I of the Library Bill of Rights states: "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves."

Library-initiated programs take advantage of library staff expertise, collections, services and facilities to increase access to information and information resources. Library-initiated programs introduce users and potential users to the resources of the library and to the library's primary function as a facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals as part of its own effort to address information needs and to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.

Library-initiated programs on site and in other locations include, but are not limited to, speeches, community forums, discussion groups, demonstrations, displays, and live or media presentations.

Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities should make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those for whom English is a second language. Library-initiated programs that cross language and cultural barriers introduce otherwise unserved populations to the resources of the library and provide access to information.

Library-initiated programs "should not be proscribed or removed (or canceled) because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval" of the contents of the program or the views expressed by the participants, as stated in Article II of the Library Bill of Rights. 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.

Library-initiated programs are a library resource, and, as such, are developed in accordance with written guidelines, as approved and adopted by the library's policy-making body. These guidelines should include an endorsement of the Library Bill of Rights and set forth the library's commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.

Library staff select topics, speakers and resource materials for library-initiated programs based on the interests and information needs of the community. Topics, speakers and resource materials are not excluded from library-initiated programs because of possible controversy. Concerns, questions or complaints about library-initiated programs are handled according to the same written policy and procedures which govern reconsiderations of other library resources.

Library-initiated programs are offered free of charge and are open to all. Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

The "right to use a library" encompasses all of the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries do not deny or abridge access to library resources, including library initiated-programs, based on an individual's economic background and ability to pay.

***Adopted January 27, 1982; amended June 26, 1990; July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council.***