

Programs and Displays Policy

The Mansfield Richland County Public Library's intention is to offer quality programming and displays for all ages, in keeping with its mission, vision, and organizational priorities. Library programs and displays offer informative, entertaining, or cultural experiences; build community; or introduce the community to Library materials, resources, and services.

Through programming and displays we are able to:

- Achieve our mission of becoming a hub of information and resources as well as a place where people can connect
- Introduce our community members and our customers to library resources of which they may not have been previously aware.
- Provide entertainment and educational opportunities
- Reinforce our value of lifelong learning
- Expand the impact of the library through partnerships with community organizations

Definitions:

Display - for the purposes of this policy, a "display" consists of the contents of a bulletin board, curated materials displays, flags, or banners. They may be seasonally themed or promote a particular topic, program, initiative, or community partnership. Community bulletin boards are governed by the Public Bulletin Board policy.

Program - for the purposes of this policy, a "program" is any event, presentation, or activity coordinated by the Mansfield Richland County Public Library for public attendance, including those with paid or unpaid presenters and those that do or do not require advanced registration, as well as those events which are co-organized with a community organization.

Intellectual Freedom Statement:

The Board of Trustees recognizes that the library has a responsibility to protect and promote the customer's right to read, view, attend programs, or view displays, as protected by the First Amendment, no matter the viewpoint of the author, creator, or presenter. To provide informational, recreational, and educational support to a diverse population, the Board of Trustees directs that the library be inclusive rather than exclusive in developing its programs and displays.

Diversity Statement:

The Mansfield Richland County Public Library values and pursues diversity in programming and displays. We value a range of coverage in perspectives, presenters, audience, and subject matter. We recognize that the diverse community that the library serves needs diverse and inclusive programs, events, and displays. We commit to regularly assessing the scope of the

existing program calendar and our displays to ensure that they are reflective of the diversity of the community we serve.

General:

The library's philosophy of open access to information and ideas extends to library programming and displays. Fundamental to this philosophy are the principles expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>

Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by the participants and program topics, speakers and resources are not excluded from programs because of possible controversy.

Ultimate responsibility for programming and displays rests with the Director, who administers under the authority of the Board of Trustees. In turn, the Director delegates the authority for program and display planning and management to designated library employees. The various department supervisors responsible for programming and displays in their department utilize their employees' expertise in planning and implementing quality programs and displays at MRCPL.

Library employees use the following criteria when making decisions about program topics, speakers, accompanying resources, and library displays:

- Community needs and interests
- Relevance to current community issues, events, and trends
- Availability of space
- Presentation quality
- Presenter background/qualifications in the content area
- Budget
- Historical or educational significance
- Connection to other community programs, exhibitions, or events
- Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits, and programs

The library also draws upon other community resources in developing programs and actively partners with other community agencies, organizations, educational and cultural institutions, or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored programs or displays.

All library programs are free and open to the public. The library's philosophy of open access to information and ideas extends to library programming and the library does not knowingly discriminate through its programming.

The Library will make a reasonable effort to make all programs accessible. Requests for accommodations should be communicated to the Library at least two weeks in advance of the program.

Whether a program is delivered online or in person, participants are required to adhere to the Library's Public Behavior Policy.

Other Information:

Not all programs and events that occur in the library are covered by this policy. Library meeting and study rooms can be used by the public without being defined as library programming and are governed by the Meeting Room Use policy.

Programs of a purely commercial nature or those designed for the solicitation of businesses will not be offered by the Library. Examples of programs that would be considered of a commercial nature include, but are not limited to, presentations offered for free but with the intention of soliciting future business.

Programs that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure will not be approved or offered by the Library. However, educational programs, such as candidate forums that include invitations to all recognized candidates may be offered.

Programs will not be offered or approved that endorse or oppose a specific religion. Library programs may address religious themes to educate or inform, but not to promote, observe, or proselytize a particular religious conviction. Holiday programs may be offered for the entertainment of Library patrons.

Library programs are voluntary and generally free and open to the public. Every attempt will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a program. However, when safety, cost, or the success of a program requires it, attendance may be limited. When limits must be established, attendance will be determined on a first come, first served basis, usually with advanced registration.

The library provides programming and displays for adults and children of all ages and all levels of educational achievement. Some programs may be geared towards a specific audience or age limit and that suggested audience will be listed in the event description. In most cases the library will enforce a program's audience or age limits, but in some cases a library supervisor may choose to lift that limit.

Professional performers and presenters that reflect specialized or unique expertise may be hired for library programs and will not be excluded from consideration because of their origin, background, or views. Library-sponsored speakers are required to have some expertise, credentials, or credibility on the topic they are discussing.

Library employees occasionally present programs and do this as part of their regular job and are not hired as outside contractors for programming.

A Library staff member or parents/caregivers will be present during youth programs if the presenter is not a Library staff member.

External organizations or individuals partnering with the library on programs must coordinate marketing efforts with the library's Communications Department.

Programs sponsored by the Library within the Library or at off-site library-sponsored events may be photographed or video-recorded by library staff or its representatives for use on the library's website or social media pages.

The sale of products at Library programs must be approved by a Library Administrator before the start of the program. Generally, with prior approval by Library Administration, authors, performers, or presenters may sell and sign books, music, movies, and art following Library programs.

Professional performers and guest presenters may not:

- Promote or solicit for their business, group, or organization during their presentation. Business cards and/or brochures may be placed on a table in the room for audience pick up.
- Collect contact information, including, names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses of audience members, without audience knowledge and approval.

Request for Reconsideration Procedure:

The library welcomes expressions of opinion from customers concerning programming and displays. Requests to reconsider planned events will be considered within the context of the procedures set forth in this document.

Requests for reconsideration will only be accepted from valid library card holders who reside in the Mansfield Richland County Public Library's service area.

Anyone wishing to request a specific program or display to be reconsidered is asked to complete the Request for Reconsideration form. The program or display in question will be reviewed by the Director with input from relevant supervisors if needed. Once a decision has been made regarding the retention or cancellation of the program or display, this decision will be communicated to the interested party via email or physical mail.

If the interested party is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may appeal to the Library Board of Trustees. The Board will reconsider the decision based on whether or not the program or display conforms to the Board-approved Program and Display Policy.

Approved by the MRCPL Board of Trustees, April 16, 2024