

Programs Policy



Purpose

Darien Library, in keeping with our mission to provide education, entertainment, enrichment, and community building for all, develops and presents programs for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all Darien residents and other Library patrons. Programming is an integral component of library service and supports the Library's role as a community center. This policy sets forth the guidelines that govern the development, management, and oversight of programs presented by the Library.

In developing and adopting this policy, the Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of programming as a resource for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by Darien residents.

Definition of a Library Program

A *Library program* is a free event, virtual or in-person, on the Library premises or elsewhere, that is planned by librarians for the benefit of patrons who opt to attend. Library programs may involve outside presenters, facilitators, or performers and may be presented in cooperation with other entities or organizations.

For the avoidance of doubt, the use of a Library meeting room or other space by an organization or individual is not a Library program. Please refer to our **Meeting Rooms Policy** for the guidelines governing study rooms, meeting rooms, and rentals.

Scope

The Library offers a variety of programs, including but not limited to: lectures, panel discussions, film screenings, author talks and book discussions, gardening and home décor workshops, children's storytimes, arts and crafts, yoga and movement classes, and technology classes.

Through our programming, the Library aims to represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, providing access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of Darien residents and other Library patrons.

Speakers, performers, and the content shown, discussed, or made available in Library programs may represent and explore a wide variety of subjects, opinions, and perspectives, some of which can apply to important, complex, or even controversial questions and viewpoints. Language, imagery, situations, or subjects that may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify them from being included in a Library program, the value of which is determined in its entirety and at the sole discretion of the Library, measured against the mission to provide education, entertainment, enrichment, and community building.

Roles & Responsibilities

The development, presentation, and oversight of programs is the responsibility of the Library Director and staff.

Librarians are responsible for the curation and development of programs, and they are professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs, providing residents and other patrons with the widest array of informational, educational, and entertaining resources and experiences.

Ultimate responsibility for all Library programs rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of this policy.

Library program attendees are responsible for complying with the Library's Patron Behavior Policy, and failure to do so may result in their immediate removal from a program.

Procedures

1. **Program Selection:** The Library strives to present programs that are educational, informational, cultural, or recreational. Topics, content, and timing of Library programs are developed with consideration of available resources and keeping community needs and interests in mind. Program selection is based on criteria including the suitability of topic, format, and intended audience.

A program will not be excluded because its topic may be regarded by some as controversial. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute or imply an endorsement of the content or of the presenter.

The following types of programs will generally *not* be approved, co-sponsored, or offered by the Library:

- a) Programs of a purely commercial nature or those designed for soliciting business.
- b) Programs designed to solicit donations to any entity other than Darien Library.
- c) Programs that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure. (Informational programs, such as candidate forums that include invitations to all recognized candidates, may be approved, co-sponsored, or offered.)
- d) Programs that support or oppose a specific religion. (Library programs that address religious themes to educate or inform, but not to promote, observe, or proselytize any particular religious conviction or practice, may be approved, co-sponsored, or offered. Holiday programs may be offered for the entertainment of Library patrons.)

2. **Program Development, Coordination, and Supervision:** Library programs are generally created or curated by librarians or Library staff. On occasion, with the prior approval of and in the sole discretion of the Library, programs may be created or curated by members of the public or community, such as partnering institutions.

In the event of a co-sponsored program, supervision of the program may be delegated to the co-sponsoring organization, depending on the timing and venue of the program. All programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the Library must abide by this Policy, regardless of where they are hosted.

3. **Program Access:** Library programs are free and open to the public on a first-come basis. Registration may be in advance or at the door. Programs targeted to a specific audience, e.g., children or teens, and promoted as such, will be limited to those individuals as the Library deems appropriate. Any individual requiring accommodation to participate in a Library program may contact the Library two weeks prior to the program to make a request.

All Library programs are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the CT general statutes.

4. **Virtual Programs:** Some Library programs may be offered using a Library-approved virtual meeting platform that registered patrons may use to access the virtual program from their own internet-enabled devices. This may include

programs that are simultaneously run on the Library premises as well as programs that are offered only virtually.

Some virtual programs may be pre-recorded and broadcast via the internet or recorded as presented for later viewing. In the event a virtual and interactive program is being recorded, attendees will be informed of that fact at the start of the program.

Live virtual programs will generally require advance registration, with registered participants receiving an email or other electronic means to log on to the program. Information collected during the registration process will be used solely to communicate information about that program or to confirm eligibility to participate. The Library will make reasonable efforts to ensure the digital security of virtual events; however, attendees should understand that all online activity carries some degree of risk.

Patrons attending virtual programs are expected to adhere to the Library's Patron Behavior Policy and failure to do so may result in their immediate removal from said program.

Patrons are required to provide their own equipment and internet connection to attend virtual programs. The Library will make a good faith effort to utilize platforms that are compatible with a wide array of hardware and software, but makes no guarantee that every patron will be capable of accessing every Library program successfully. Nor can the Library guarantee the quality of the audio, video, or internet connection of program presenters or attendees.

5. **Program Materials:** Books, CDs, DVDs, or other ancillary materials related to the content of a program may be offered for sale at a Library program as a convenience to attendees.
6. **Program Data and Evaluation:** To provide the highest quality and most useful programming, Library staff will gather information, such as the number of attendees, at every program. From time to time, the Library may gather qualitative data in the form of patron surveys or feedback forms.
7. **Procedures for the Questioning of Library Programs:** The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays, or programs to residents of Darien. Please see our **Review and Request for Reconsideration Policy** for further information on this process.

This policy was approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 27, 2025.

The Board of Trustees shall review and update this policy, at minimum, every five years.