

Bucks County Free Library

Information and Group Services

PROGRAMMING POLICY

Policy Statement

A library program is a planned event or activity that is open to the general public. A program may take place at the library, at other locations in the community, or electronically. Programs are presented to adults, teens, children, and families and may include performances, lectures, panel discussions, open houses, workshops, readings, and presentations in various media.

The Bucks County Free Library (BCFL) offers programs to:

- Promote and demonstrate the use of the library's collections, resources, and services
- Encourage sharing of expertise and knowledge
- Instill a love of reading and learning in children of all ages

Library sponsorship does not constitute an endorsement of a program's contents or the views expressed by participants. Topics and speakers are not excluded because of possible controversy. The library works to include a broad spectrum of opinion, but is not obligated and does not guarantee to represent multiple viewpoints within a specific program or series.

The library does not offer programs that support or oppose any political candidate or ballot measure. Election information may be offered in a way that includes invitations to all recognized candidates, such as candidates' forums. No solicitation of library users to sign petitions or letters is permitted at any program.

The library does not offer programs that support or oppose a specific religious conviction or that simply celebrate the holiday of any specific religion. The library may offer informational or cultural programs about religious traditions, including religious holidays.

The library complies with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and provides reasonable accommodations upon request. Attendees who require an interpreter, materials in alternative formats, or other accommodations should contact the library no later than one week prior to the program date.

BCFL does not permit illegal use of any copyrighted materials. Reproduction or public performance rights must be obtained prior to distribution or viewing.

Alcohol is not permitted at any programs.

All program attendees must follow the library's Behavior and Unattended Child policies.

Regulations

Program Selection

The library offers programs based on the following criteria:

- How closely the program matches the library's current strategic plan priorities
- Availability and suitability of facilities, including parking
- Quality of the presentation and qualifications of the presenter based on recommendations and evaluations
- Tangible evidence of wide appeal, such as attendance at past or similar events
- Relationship to other community programs and initiatives
- Contribution to the variety of viewpoints expressed in library programs

The library uses various measures to assess community needs and interests, including past attendance, surveys or questionnaires, and suggestions.

Professionals who have special expertise may be hired for library programs. Library employees who offer programs do so as part of their regular duties and are not hired as outside programming contractors.

Fees, Fundraising, and Solicitation of Business

Admission fees usually are not charged for library programs, except for fundraisers or when there is a cost for materials used by participants.

All fees or fundraising must be approved in advance by the Executive Director and must directly benefit the library. The library and its Friends group do not sponsor any fundraising events or activities for the benefit of any organization other than the library.

Library programs must be non-commercial. No solicitation of business is permitted. This includes presentations that are offered for free but with the intention of soliciting future business. Outside speakers and performers may not solicit personal information from attendees but may provide materials such as business cards or brochures if asked for contact information.

The library accepts financial support or donations of items from businesses to help defray costs. Donations are recognized by crediting the donor in publicity and at the program. The library does not distribute information about the donor or give away branded items to the public.

Registration and Attendance

Attendance at library programs may be limited because of space or safety restrictions. When limits are enforced, attendance is managed on a first-come, first-served basis, by pre-registration, by lottery, or by another non-discriminatory method.

The success of certain programs may require limited attendance based on age, such as programs intended for children or teens that are geared to their developmental needs. Programs targeted toward specific audiences will be publicized as such. Attendance will not be limited when the contents of a program may be controversial.

The library generally does not sponsor programs that limit attendance to few participants. Examples include series where the same participants attend all the sessions, “club” events limited to members only, and events that fail to draw an audience of less than half of room capacity or other attendance limit.

Organized Groups

Library programs generally are filled to capacity based on walk-in attendance by individuals and families. Unexpected attendance by a large, organized group will exceed room capacity, disrupt the program, and cause safety problems.

Organized groups that include five or fewer children, such as clubs, camps, school groups, and homeschooled groups, may attend library programs held in small or large meeting rooms on a walk-in basis. Those with up to 10 children may attend programs held in large meeting rooms on a walk-in basis. Groups with more than 10 children will not be permitted to attend any library programs on a walk-in basis.

Library services provided and other requirements for organized groups are outlined in the Group Visit Policy.

Cancellations

Programs may be cancelled because of weather, absence of the presenter, low registration, or other reasons. Cancelled programs are not automatically rescheduled. The library will not alter or cancel a program solely because an individual or group may find its contents objectionable.

Refreshments and Decorations

The library does not offer food or other refreshments at programs except for special celebrations and fundraisers. When offered, all food must be peanut-free and pre-packaged or purchased from a licensed food service vendor.

The library does not allow decorations to be attached to walls or hung from ceilings at programs except for special events.

Media and Photography

Media representatives may photograph and interview program participants as long as their activities do not interfere with the program. If photography will take place, a library staff member will announce to attendees that they can move to an “off limits” area of the room to avoid being photographed. Media representatives are responsible for obtaining appropriate releases from those photographed. For library photography, the library requires release forms from participants in close up or individual shots but does not require release forms from participants depicted in crowd shots.

Evaluation and Feedback

The library welcomes expressions of opinion from library users regarding library programs. Evaluations are provided to attendees for optional completion at every library program and made available to attendees on the library’s website.

Adopted by the Board of Directors July 18, 2000
Revised 9/17/2013