C.H. BOOTH LIBRARY

Program Policy

Purpose:

The Cyrenius H. Booth Library presents programs for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents that represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints. Library programs provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and educational needs of residents. They are an integral component of library services and support the Library's role as the center of the community. The library recognizes the importance of programs as a resource for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

All library programs are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

This policy provides guidelines for the development, management, and oversight of programs presented by the library.

Key definition:

A library program is a free event, virtual or in-person, planned by the library staff for the benefit of those members of the public who opt to attend. It may involve outside presenters, facilitators or performers and may be presented in cooperation with other entities. Note: Use of a public meeting room by an organization or individual to hold a public event is not a library program.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop programs, and are responsible for the coordination and supervision of library programs. The ultimate responsibility for selection of library programs rests with the Library Director.

Library staff and the Library Director use the following criteria when making decisions about program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources:

- Relevance to community needs and interests
- Presenter background/qualifications in content area

- Budget
- Connection to other community programs, exhibitions, partners, or agencies
- Relation to library collections and resources
- Historical, cultural, or educational significance
- Relevance to strategic plan initiatives
- Availability of appropriate library space and staff availability

Program Selection:

The library strives to present programs that are educational, informational, cultural or recreational and avoids programs that do not meet these standards. 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 upon 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 of the program. The library provides programs created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public library as well as allowing programs created by members of the public or community groups and offered in the public library.

• Library programs must have an educational, informational, cultural or recreational value to the community. Programs of a purely commercial nature or those designed for the solicitation of business will not be offered by the library.

• 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 that support or oppose a specific religion will not be approved or offered. Programs are planned to be inclusive of all cultures and of all religions and no 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.

Program Development, Coordination, and Supervision:

Library programs may originate from library staff, partnering institutions, or members of the public. In the event of a co-sponsored program, supervision of the program may be delegated to the cosponsoring organization depending upon the timing, venue and intended audience of the program. All programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the library, however, must abide by this policy regardless of where they are hosted. For library sponsored or co-sponsored programs:

• No attempt may be made by presenters to obtain the names, addresses, email addresses, or telephone numbers of attendees as a condition of attendance. Presenters may provide their contact information after a program has concluded so that attendees can voluntarily

contact them if they so choose or provide a signup sheet for attendees to voluntarily opt in to being contacted.

• In our promotion of programs, organization names or business affiliations may be used. This does not constitute endorsement, merely acknowledgment.

• Relevant library policies, such as the Appropriate Library Use Policy and Child Safety/Behavior Policy, apply to all library programs regardless of venue.

When a community group, agency, or individual approaches the library with a programming request, the library will consider 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.

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.

Applying for Library Sponsored Programs:

Library sponsored programs include the use of library space and staff involvement in the planning or logistics.

• Events must be planned within normal operating hours.

• Sponsorship may include promotion or publicity by the library and contributions toward expenses or supplies.

• Each presenter will work with coordinating library staff to plan the necessary logistics for their event.

• All publicity will either be created or approved by library staff.

• Presenters will provide the coordinating library staff with the materials and information they wish to be used in publicity.

Program Access:

All programs must be free and open to the public. Every attempt will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a program. Any individual requiring accommodation to participate in a library program should contact the library two weeks prior to the program.

• Registration may be in advance or at the door.

• Attendance may be limited if the number of participants reaches the room capacity established by the Newtown Fire Marshall.

• When safety or the nature of a program requires it, attendance will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis or by pre-registration.

• Programs designed for specific audiences may have attendance restrictions or requirements based on age. Programs designed for a general audience have no age restrictions.

• It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians, not Cyrenius H. Booth Library staff, to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services.

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 at the physical library as well as programs that are offered only virtually. While hosting the virtual program, library staff, partnering organizations, and program facilitators will follow industry standard best practices for virtual events.

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

Live virtual programs require advance registration. Registered participants will receive via email a link to log on to the program and must not share that link with others. Information collected during the registration process will be used only to communicate information about that program or to confirm eligibility to participate in that program.

Patrons attending virtual programs are expected to adhere to the library's Appropriate Library Use Policy and failure to do so may result in their immediate removal from the program. The library will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the digital security of virtual events, however attendees must understand that all online activity carries some degree of risk.

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 will be compatible with the widest 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.

Program Materials:

Products or services will not be sold during programs at the library. Excepted from this are authors who come to speak about books they have authored and performers who have recordings available for sale.

Program Evaluation:

To provide the highest quality and most useful programming, Library staff may gather information about program results to guide future programming decisions. Outputs, such as the number of attendees at a program, will be gathered for all or almost all programs. Outcomes, such as how well the content of a program helped attendees learn about the

program’s topic, will be gathered at times when such data is required for grant reporting or would be helpful in evaluating a new program topic or format.

Procedures for the Questioning of Library Programs by Patrons:

The library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays, or programs to individual residents of Newtown, CT. Please refer to our Material Review and Reconsideration Policy and form for more information on this process.

Adopted by the Cyrenius H. Booth Library Board of Trustees, October 14, 2025.