

Display Policy

I. Purpose

- a. The New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL) recognizes its role as an important source for community information by providing display space to external organizations and individuals when the space is not used for Library purposes.
- b. Community information is distributed and displayed in public areas of the Library in order to support the Library's mission of fostering lifelong learning, inspiring curiosity, and building community through shared access to resources, experiences, and opportunities for all.
- c. Library displays serve 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.

II. Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

NHFPL supports intellectual freedom and endorses the American Library Association (ALA) Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, the Library Bill of Rights, and all relevant interpretations.

The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. The Library upholds every individual's right to choose their own reading materials. While particular items may be viewed as controversial or offensive by some, no one may restrict others' access to information. The selection of library materials is determined by their merit and their ability to support the free exchange of ideas and perspectives, not by anticipated approval or disapproval.

III. Principles and Criteria

The Library provides displays created or curated by librarians or staff members as well as allowing displays created by members of the public or community groups to be exhibited in the public library.

Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop library displays in accordance with established standards of practice. All library displays are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

- a. Library displays and exhibits are created with the intention of providing for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents; include a wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints; and appeal to a range of ages, interest, and information needs, representing a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints.
- b. Library displays provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of New Haven residents. These displays and exhibits serve as important resources for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and open access to ideas for all residents.
- c. Library-initiated displays and exhibits should not exclude topics, books, media, and other resources solely because they may be considered to be controversial.
- d. The Library has first priority for all exhibit and display space including, but not limited to, display cases and bulletin boards for library purposes and library affiliated organizations, city and official governmental postings, and educational and cultural information.
- e. Materials may be provided by the Library or other non-profit organizations, community groups, individuals, educational institutions, or governmental agencies.
- f. Commercial materials, religious materials, or political endorsements may not be accepted for posting or display inside the Library.

- g. The Library branch or department supervisor is responsible for oversight of planning display case exhibits and for monitoring bulletin boards to ensure that they are properly maintained.
- h. At the discretion of the appropriate manager, acceptable materials may include but are not limited to:
 - i. Printed informational items such as flyers, brochures, posters, giveaways, or newsletters promoting community meetings, upcoming events, and other community or area-wide activities.
 - ii. Legal documents, such as construction plans in a permitting process, provided by government agencies and publicly funded educational institutions that must be made available for public display.
 - iii. Free news publications such as newspapers, magazines, and booklets.
 - iv. In consultation with a community member as appropriate, works of art, collectibles, memorabilia, artifacts, or other items in order to support library and/or community programming.
- i. Items and materials for display exhibited in display cases must be presented in a manner suitable for viewing by visitors of all ages.
- j. The Library reserves the right to limit the size and number of items, the schedule of any display, and the frequency with which the group or organization may have a display.
- k. Exhibit or display materials should be picked up within two weeks after the display period ends. Items not picked up may be removed and discarded or recycled by the Library. The Library cannot guarantee the condition of materials left past the pickup deadline.
- l. Distribution or posting of materials or exhibits by the Library does not constitute the Library's endorsement of the issues, events, beliefs, viewpoints, individuals, or groups promoted by those materials.
- m. The Library assumes no liability in the event of loss, damage, destruction, or theft of materials.
- n. Materials that discriminate based on race, gender, age, national origin, and/or other classifications protected by federal, state, or local government shall not be displayed or distributed by the Library. Any materials deemed inappropriate or outdated will be removed at the Library's discretion.
- o. All materials should include the name of the individual or organization and a contact phone number and/or email. Materials posted without such attribution may be removed at the Library's discretion.
- p. Patrons should contact each NHFPL location for information about bulletin boards and display spaces.

IV. Procedure for Questioning of Library Displays by Patrons

- a. The Library limits consideration of requests to consider material, displays or programs to residents of the City of New Haven. Please see our reconsideration form for further information on this process.

Last reviewed, revised, and approved by NHFPL Board of Directors, October 28, 2025. Approved by NHFPL Board of Directors, May 24, 2019.