Library Programming Policy

Purpose: The New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL) develops and presents programs that inspire learning, support exploration, and foster community connection. Programming is an integral part of NHFPL's mission to provide equitable access to knowledge, culture, and ideas and reflects the diverse needs and interests of the New Haven community. Programs provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of residents.

All NHFPL programs are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes. The Library is committed to providing programs that are inclusive and free from discrimination based on race, color, creed (religion), national origin, ancestry, age, sex, gender identity of expression, marital or family status, sexual orientation, disability, political affiliation, or any other protected status.

Definition of a Program

NHFPL defines a library program as any planned event or activity offered, sponsored, or co-sponsored by the Library that provides educational, cultural, informational, or recreational value to the New Haven community. Programs are important 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. These activities may be led by library staff or coordinated in partnership with external presenters or facilitators. Library programs may be held at any of the five branches or offered offsite in partnership with community organizations.

Programs may take many forms, including but not limited to, activities, discussions, workshops, performances, classes, and community events. They are intended to support the Library's mission, foster community engagement, and complement library resources and services. Library programs should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints. Please note that the use of a public meeting room by an organization or individual to hold a public event does not constitute a Library program.

Roles and Responsibilities

For the Library:
- The City Librarian, or their designee, holds ultimate responsibility for programming and program selection.
- Library programs shall be coordinated and supervised by designated staff who are professionally trained in program curation and development.
- The Library reserves the right to deny or terminate the use of its facilities if the facilitator or attendee's actions are disruptive to library constituents or staff, result in disorderly conduct, or constitute a violation of the NHFPL Code of Conduct.
- The Library reserves the right to cancel any program because of adverse weather conditions or for any other emergency.
- The Library assumes no responsibility for personal belongings or equipment in connection with the use of interior or exterior space.

Program Selection & Development

Library programs are developed or curated by librarians and staff members in partnership with other

organizations, or in collaboration with community members. Programs will be developed in accordance with the principles of accessibility, equity, diversity, and inclusion. They will serve as an important resource for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and supports the promotion of free expression and open access to ideas for all residents. Programs are provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. Members of the public or community organizations may also use library meeting rooms to host independent programs; however, such programs are not vetted, endorsed, or supervised by Librarians or the Library. For more information about the use of meeting spaces, please refer to the NHFPL Meeting Room Policy.

NHFPL uses the following criteria for program selection, curation, and development:

- **Community Relevance:** Responsiveness to local information needs, interests, and demographics.
- **Inclusivity:** Representation of diverse voices and viewpoints cultures, languages, and identities.
- **Research Relevance:** Addresses the research, independent interests and educational needs of all residents
- **Equity of Access:** Support for digital and physical access across formats.
- **Educational and cultural value:** Contribution to learning, civic engagement, cultural enrichment and community enlightenment for all residents.
- **Presenter qualifications:** Expertise and credibility of presenters or partners.
- **Alignment with library goals:** Support for NHFPL's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.
- **Connection to library collections:** Support for or enhancement of library resources, exhibits, or services.
- **Community Collaboration:** Opportunities to build connections with new and existing community partners.
- **Availability of Library program space**

Program Coordination and Supervision
Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop library displays in accordance with established standards of practice. All Library programs are supervised by staff to ensure they are safe, welcoming, and consistent with Library policies. In co-sponsored programs, responsibilities may be shared with partners, but the Library ensures all programs meet the same standards of quality and inclusivity.

Program Access
All NHFPL programs are free and open to the public unless designated as a library fundraising event. Advance registration may be required, and attendance may be limited by age, or grade level when appropriate. For programs designated for specific age groups, the parent, legal guardian, or caregiver are responsible for determining whether a program is appropriate for their child. We invite library visitors to take part in our programs at their own pace; participation is always optional and meant to inspire and inform.

Any individual requiring accommodation to participate in a Library program should contact the Library two weeks prior to the program using the Accessibility Accommodation Request Form.

Virtual Programs
The Library may offer programs through a Library approved virtual platform, accessible to registered patrons on their own devices. Programs may be hybrid, held both onsite and inline, or offered exclusively in a virtual format. Our virtual programming follows the same standards as in-person programs and are designed to ensure accessibility, security, and ease of use. Library staff moderate online participation to maintain a safe and respectful environment consistent with the Library's Code of Conduct.

Live virtual programs require advance registration. Registered participants will receive a login link by email and are expected not to share this link to protect the program integrity and ensure a positive experience for all registered attendees.

Some virtual programs may be recorded as presented and made available later for viewing. In the event a program is being record, attendees will be informed at the start of the program.

Program Materials
Library collections may be used to support and enhance program value and experience. Any request to sell program-related materials, such as books or DVDs, must be submitted in writing to the City Librarian at least ten days before the program.

Program Evaluation
To ensure high quality and meaningful programming, Library staff will regularly evaluate programs using attendance data, surveys, and community feedback. Evaluation results will inform future planning and continuous improvement.

Procedures for Library program inquiries or concerns
New Haven Free Public Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or program to individual residents of the City of New Haven. Please see our **Materials Review and Reconsideration Policy** for additional information on this process.

Reviewed and approved by NHFPL Board of Directors on October 28, 2025.