

## **Programming Policy**

Approved: July 22, 2024

Effective: July 22, 2024

Revisions: N/A

Review: September 22, 2025

## **Philosophy and Scope of Programming**

Programs at the Amery Area Public Library support our strategic initiatives, collection of materials, services, resources, and facilities along with community goals. In addition, programs serve the popular, recreational, informational, and social needs of the general public and reflect equitable outreach and engagement to a diverse community while promoting a culture of inclusion.

Inherent in the program philosophy is an appreciation for each user of the library. The library provides programs to support each individual's journey and does not place a value on one user's needs or preferences over another's. While the library upholds the right of the individual to access information (even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox or unacceptable to others), Hateful Conduct, as defined by the American Library Association, is not permitted. The views and opinions of program presenters do not constitute endorsement by the library.

In an effort to provide equitable, inclusive, and diverse programs, library staff will:

- Create and maintain an environment of inclusion and respect in all program planning, promotion, and spaces.
- Work with diverse communities to develop inclusive consultation and engagement processes.
- Work with diverse communities to determine appropriate ways to design, deliver, and evaluate programming.
- Reduce or eliminate barriers in accessing programs.

Ultimate responsibility for programming at the library rests with the Library Director, who administers under the authority of the Board of Trustees. The Library Director, in turn, delegates the authority for program management to the Adult Services Librarian and Youth Services Librarian. The Adult and Youth Services Librarians are responsible for keeping the Director informed of all programs' status.

## **Criteria for Selection of Library-Initiated Programs**

The Amery Area Public Library initiates programs and may also co-sponsor programs with community groups. Selection of library-initiated and co-sponsored programs must be flexible and broad.

In no particular order, the following criteria are used in making decisions about library-initiated program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources:

- Library's mission, vision, and strategic plan
- Community needs and interests
- Availability elsewhere in the community
- Treatment of content for intended audience
- Presentation quality
- Budget
- Accuracy and timeliness of program content
- Impact and capacity of internal, tangential partners within the library

Library programs must have a special educational, informational or cultural 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. Examples of programs that would be considered of a commercial nature include, but are not limited to, presentations offered for free but with the intention of soliciting future business.

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 will not be offered or approved that endorse or oppose a specific religion. 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 customers.

No individual or organization shall use a program at the Library to advertise or recruit members or customers, unless affiliated with the library. Programs are not used for commercial, religious, or partisan purposes or the solicitation of business.

Religious, non-profit and partisan groups may utilize meeting rooms for programs and meetings as provided by the Meeting and Study Room Policy.

### **Procedures for Handling a Statement of Concern Regarding Library-Initiated Programs or Displays**

1. To receive consideration by the library, all concerns regarding library-initiated programs or displays (including complaints from Library Board members) must be made by fully completing the attached form.
2. The library-initiated program or display about which a concern has been made will not be canceled, nor be restricted in any way, before final action is taken by the Library Board

on the concern, unless the Library Director finds substantive justification for the program to be delayed or canceled until further investigation can be completed.

3. Within 30 days of the filing of the written complaint, the applicable staff member will confer with the Library Director, then send a written response to the complainant, explaining in detail their decision regarding the statement of concern. The response will also inform the complainant that they may appeal the decision within 30 days.
4. Within 30 days following the written response, if it is the desire of the complainant, the Library Director will review the statement and submit it along with their recommendations to the Library Board.
5. Within 90 days of the filing of the written statement of concern the Library Board will review the complaint and take final action on it. In making its decision regarding the concern the Library Board will employ all of the Criteria for Selection of Library-Initiated Programs listed above, along with the American Library Association's statements entitled "Library Bill of Rights" and "Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource"
6. The complainant will be notified in writing of the Library Board's decision in the matter.
7. Requests for reconsideration about a particular program or display will not be considered by the Library more than once within a 12-month period.

### **Programs at the Library Not Initiated or Sponsored by the Library**

The library's "Policy on Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms" and the "Library Bill of Rights" govern programs at the library that are not initiated or sponsored by the library.

The Library Board of Trustees subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, adopted January 23, 1980. Article VI states:

*Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.*

See policy on Meeting Rooms and Study Rooms.

### **Library Bill of Rights**

The Board of Trustees of the Amery Area Public Library adopts and incorporates the following two statements, approved by the Council of the American Library Association, as part of the policy on Library Programs.

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

### **Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for accessing information, education, and recreation. Article I of the Library Bill of Rights states, "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves." Library displays increase awareness of programs, resources, and services.

Library-initiated programs include, but are not limited to, lectures, displays, exhibits, community forums, performing and visual arts,<sup>1</sup> participatory workshops, technology programming, creative learning programming, wellness programs, story times, continuing education, fairs and conventions, book clubs, discussion groups, demonstrations, and presentations for social, cultural, educational, or entertainment purposes. Library-initiated programs may take place onsite at the library, off-site at other locations, or online, and may be provided by library workers, volunteers, or partners. Libraries may also choose to promote their programs, services, and resources through displays and digital signs.

Library-initiated programs and displays utilize library worker expertise for community interests, collections, services, facilities, and providing access to information and information resources. They introduce users and potential users to library resources and the library's role as a facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.

Libraries should not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and should ensure they have equitable access to library resources. Library-initiated programs and displays should comply with all applicable laws, including the standards and requirements of The Americans with Disabilities Act and state and local disability accessibility guidelines.<sup>2</sup> If a program is held in a location not controlled by the library, the library should assure that the space is accessible to all users. If users overflow designated event areas during library events, libraries should secure accessible public spaces (e.g., ramps, pathways, and emergency exit routes) to ensure access and safety for everyone. Reasonable accommodations should also be made to have interpretation or real-time captioning for the deaf or hard of hearing at library-initiated programs when needed or requested by library users, provided that accommodations are requested with reasonable advance notice.

“Socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented people, not just the mainstream majority, should be able to see themselves reflected in the resources and programs that libraries offer.”<sup>3</sup> Libraries should actively seek to include a variety of programming options representing diversity of genres, formats, ideas, and expressions with a multitude of viewpoints and cultural perspectives that reflect the diversity in our communities. Library initiated programs that cross language and cultural barriers introduce community members to the library's resources and provide access to information. Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities should make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those who speak and read languages other than English, including advertising for such events.

Concerns, questions, or complaints about library-initiated programs and displays are handled according to the same written policy and procedures that govern reconsiderations of other library resources. These policies should apply equally to all people, including, but not limited to, library users, staff, and members of the governing body. The policies should set forth the library's commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.

Programs should not be canceled because of the ideas or topics of the program or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, nor should library workers censor or remove displays because someone may disagree with the content. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the program content or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, any more than the purchase of resources for the library collection or curation of a display constitutes an endorsement of the resources content or its creator's views. Libraries should vigorously defend the First Amendment right of speakers and participants to express themselves.

Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states, “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.” The right to use a library encompasses all the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries create programs for an intended age group or audience based on educational suitability and audience interest; however, restrictions on participation based solely on the gender, chronological age, or educational level of users violate this right and should be enforced only when not doing so would adversely impact the safety of the participants or interfere with the intended purpose of the program. Parents and guardians may restrict their own children’s access to library programs, but no person or organization can interfere in others’ access and participation. A parent or guardian may discuss their child’s access to and participation in library programs with their child, but may not impose those decisions on others, including other people’s children.

<sup>1</sup> "Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," adopted February 13, 2018, by ALA Council.

<sup>2</sup>“Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,” adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 2018.

<sup>3</sup>“Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,” adopted June 27, 2017, by the ALA Council.

Adopted January 27, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 1990; July 12, 2000; June 26, 2018 under previous name "Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource"; and June 24, 2019.

**Amery Area Public Library Statement of Concern: Programs or Displays**

1. Title of program, display, or exhibit

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2. Location

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3. Department

- Youth Services
- Adult Services
- Outreach
- General

4. Request initiated by (name)

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5. Phone

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6. Address Street/ City/ Zip

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7. Do you represent

- Yourself
- Organization \_\_\_\_\_

8. What specifically causes you to be concerned about this program? Please include sources to support your objections.

9. Did you attend this event or view this exhibit in its entirety?

- Yes
- No

10. What do you think would be the result of a patron viewing this material or attending this program? Please include sources to support your objections.

11. Is there an age for which you would recommend this program?

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12. Are there any positive aspects to this event or exhibit?

13. What would you say the theme or purpose of the event is? Did it meet that purpose in your opinion?

14. Is there a program, event or exhibit you would recommend in place of this material?

15. What specific action would you recommend to library leadership?

16. Signature

Date

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