

Portage Public Library PROGRAMMING POLICY

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I Purpose of Policy

The Portage Public Library offers a broad range of programs for all ages designed to meet the educational, cultural and recreational needs of the residents of the Portage community.

II Specific Guidelines

- (A) Paired with our mission statement *that serves and supports the community through open access to resources, partnerships and technology*, programs are designed to endorse and accomplish that mission. The library endorses the American Library Association's *The Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read Statement*.
- (B) The library seeks to include a variety of programming opportunities representing genres, formats, ideas and expressions throughout the entire community, reflecting the cultural perspectives that best reflect the community it serves.
- (C) The library will evaluate community response to and suggestions for its programs on an ongoing basis. It will also review community profiles and use various strategies to obtain community input to assist in developing programming priorities and plans.
- (D) This policy serves to provide library staff with guidelines to assist in the development of library programs, events and offerings. It is also intended to inform the public about the principles and criteria used to select programs.

III Planning and Implementation

- (A) The following criteria will be considered when selecting programs, although a program need not meet all criteria to be acceptable:
 - 1. Programs should encourage education and recreation, imagination, reflection and enrichment.
 - 2. Programs may relate to a library collection.
 - 3. Programs should balance special group interests with general demand.
 - 4. Programs need to observe operational and budgetary limitations.
 - 5. Programs should not promote commercial enterprise.
 - 6. Programs should promote equitable, unbiased and objective ideals without favoritism or prejudice.
 - 7. Programs will promote lifelong learning.
 - 8. Programs should create or offer a shared public space where people in a community can come together for various activities, events, or casual interactions.

- (B) Selection and planning of library programs is the responsibility of the professional staff at the Portage Public Library and the Events and Programming Coordinator. Other staff and the public may recommend programs, events, and partnerships for consideration. Professional staff and the Events and Programming Coordinator are expected to interpret the policy in day-to-day situations. The Library Director retains the authority to reject or approve any program and answers to the Library Board and the public for any controversial decisions.
- (C) The library may partner with other agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals to provide programs and exhibits compatible with the library's mission statement. Programs will be presented either by staff or by performers or experts trained in areas of interest. Outreach programming supporting a safe and welcoming environment are a focus of this library and may expand the footprint of the library program to include the library grounds, another facility or organization, or a city park. Rescheduling an outdoor event due to inclement weather is dependent on staff and the partnering organization(s).
- (D) Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or exhibit. Beliefs and opinions expressed during library programs by speakers, presenters, performers or participants do not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the Portage Public Library.
- (E) Programs may not solicit for businesses and services. While organizations, businesses and individuals may offer their expertise on topics of interest, they may not actively promote themselves during a program. Information about the organization may be made available by request or on a table for participants. Presenters may not actively solicit participants' contact information. Activities of the Library, the Friends of the Portage Library and the City are exceptions.
- (F) Presenters requesting payment must supply a contract or performance agreement. Performers or presenters that do not request payment may receive a stipend.

IV Program Requirements

- (A) Programs may be designed with certain age-limit parameters. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the presenter or organizer.
- (B) Library staff reserves the right to limit attendance to any program based on space considerations or requirements of the program presenter. In cases of limited space or resources, registration will be required on a first come, first served basis.
- (C) All programs must be free and open to the public at no charge, or through registration on a first come, first served basis, unless they serve as fundraisers for the Library or the Friends of the Portage Library. Performers, presenters and exhibitors may be allowed to sell items that are directly related to the event such as books or music with advance permission from the staff member planning the event or the Library Director.
- (D) Some programs are designed for children to attend independently, however parents or caregivers of children under the age of eight (8) must remain in the building per the *Public Behavior Policy*.

- (E) Anyone participating in Portage Public Library programs may be photographed by library staff, newspaper reporters, photographers or others involved in the program. These photographs may appear without compensation in newspapers, productions, publications, websites or social media. Participation is assumed. Anyone who wishes to opt out of photos or videos or do not wish to have their children photographed should notify library staff and fill out the required form.

V Reconsideration Requests

- (A) The Portage Public Library recognizes that some offerings may be deemed inappropriate or offensive by some patrons. Selection of programs and events are based on the principles set forth in this policy. Library programs will not be excluded simply because they are controversial. The Library Board believes that censorship is purely an individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject a program or event that they do not approve of, they cannot exercise this right of censorship to other persons wanting to attend or view.
- (B) Contact the Library Director with questions, comments or concerns about library programs. Any formal complaints should be directed to the Library Director in writing. After consideration, the Library Director will determine if the program in question should be cancelled or amended.
- (C) Patrons may appeal the decision of the Library Director to the Portage Public Library Board of Trustees. An appeal must be made in writing to the Library Director. Discussion of the appeal will be scheduled on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Library Board. Their decision will be final.

Appendix of the Programming Policy includes:

“Freedom to Read Statement”

“Library Bill of Rights”

Approved by the Portage Public Library Board of Trustees
July 8, 2025