



DENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

PROGRAM OPERATING POLICY

Library Board approved revision, Oct. 14, 2024

Library programs, classes, and events (collectively referred to as “programs”) are an extension of library services, designed to promote and complement the library’s other collections. Denton Public Library is guided by the principles outlined in this document, aiming to provide clear guidance to library staff and inform the public about the principles that underpin library programming.

Mission Statement:

Denton Public Library transforms lives, strengthens community, and inspires imagination.

Vision Statement:

Denton Public Library empowers the community by providing inclusive services and resources which inspire innovation, imagination, and lifelong learning.

Statement of Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The Library refrains from taking sides on public issues or promoting particular beliefs or viewpoints through its programs. It does not endorse opinions expressed by outside presenters or groups, ensuring programming represents various sides of contentious topics.

Adults are the best and final arbiters of what is appropriate for themselves. It is the parent and/or legal guardian, and only the parent and/or legal guardian, who may determine the appropriateness of their child, and only their child, attending any programming. Parents and/or legal guardians have sole responsibility for what their children read, view, or hear. Library staff and associated authorities do not serve in loco parentis (in place of parents.)

The Denton Public Library supports intellectual freedom and subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretative statements, including “Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights” (2019).

Library Programming Priorities

Denton Public Library is committed to offering comprehensive programming that:

- Provides quality experiences for all ages that encourage discovery, learning, and enrichment
- Champions literacy and knowledge for library users and the Denton community
- Strengthens community and provides inclusive access for all
- Inspires imagination through innovative experiences to expand horizons
- Upholds intellectual freedom by presenting a variety of perspectives and content

- Utilizes data and analysis to inform program selection, development, and evaluation

Programs are designed to serve people of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs, without making value judgments about what individuals find relevant, helpful, or enjoyable.

Programming Responsibility

Professional library staff are responsible for programming development, selection, and execution.

The Director of Libraries holds final responsibility for all library programming.

Partner Programs and External Presenters

The library may partner with other agencies, organizations, and educational institutions for cooperative programming when it aligns with the library's mission. Presenters affiliated with commercial enterprises may provide general knowledge without directly promoting their businesses. Purely commercial programs are not permitted.

Criteria for Programming

Library staff consider a number of criteria when planning programs:

- Alignment with the library's mission, vision, and strategic goals
- Relevance for the intended audience
- Representation of underrepresented segments of the Denton community
- Relevance to popular trends and current events
- Scarcity of programming in high-interest subjects
- Justification of programming expenses, staff time, and space based on anticipated attendance and outcomes
- Opportunities for collaboration with external partners and volunteers
- Duplication of or competition with existing outside community events

The capacity for programming is finite, and popular programs may be discontinued or placed on hiatus to allow for redevelopment or the introduction of new programming. The library is not obligated to provide a specific format or style of programming at any given calendar season.

No fees will be charged for attendance at library programs.

Use of the library's public meeting rooms by an organization or individual to hold a public event is not a library program and must follow the guidelines set out in the **Denton Public Library Meeting Room Policy**.

Organization of Programming

Programming is primarily organized by target audience age range. For ages 5-17, target audiences are identified by their corresponding grade level in the public school system.

Age groups are:

- Birth-18 months
- 18 months-3 years
- 3 years-5 years
- Kindergarten-5th Grade
- 6th Grade-12th Grade
- Adults (18+)
- Seniors (65+)
- All Ages

The library acknowledges that not all programs within a target audience will be universally deemed relevant or appropriate by all users. Determining the appropriateness of any program for minors is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

The library plans programs for three seasons: Spring, Summer, and Fall. Programs are ideally planned at least six months in advance.

Audience Participation

The library reserves the right to cancel programs as deemed necessary and will make every effort to notify the public in advance. Programs scheduled on a day when the Library is closed due to inclement weather are automatically cancelled. Rescheduling is at the discretion of the library staff.

The library reserves the right to use video or photographs taken of program participants for internal use, publication, promotional outlets, and evaluation purposes.

Attendees of all ages are expected to abide by the **Denton Public Library Rules of Conduct**. Parents are responsible for managing their children's behavior during programs and abide by the **Unattended Children Operating Policy**.

Library staff recognizes that children may sometimes display behaviors that are disruptive for a program situation. Parents will be asked to calm the child or leave the room with the child in the event of problem behavior. Once the child is no longer displaying these behaviors, they may return to the program.

Programs tailored to a specific audience as noted in the program description (e.g. English Language Classes for non-English speakers or a breastfeed support class for parents and caregivers of newborns) may restrict participation accordingly.

Some programs may require pre-registration or tickets to manage attendance and ensure a quality experience. The library reserves the right to deny participation to late arrivals, even if a ticket was reserved.

A library card is not required to attend a program, but patrons attending programs are encouraged to apply for a card to take full advantage of all the library resources.

Age Limits for programs

Programs are open to the public unless specified for a particular target audience. The library reserves the right to restrict participation to ensure a quality experience for the intended audience. Age criteria will be noted in the program description.

- **Youth programs:** Designed for children (generally birth-5th grade) and caregivers with specific age groups listed in the program's description. Adults are only permitted if accompanying children or with prior approval.
- **Teen programs:** Generally, grades 6-12. Specific age groups listed in the program description, with no adult or young child attendance unless approved for special circumstances.
- **Adult programs:** For adults ages 18+, with no children allowed without prior approval.
- **All Ages Programs:** Suitable for multiple age groups, with specific ages noted in the program description as necessary.

Attendance may be limited when safety or program success requires it, with priority given on a first-come, first-served basis, either through registration, ticketing, or at the door. The staff member in charge of the program will determine when a program has reached capacity.

Sale of Materials During Library Programs

Ancillary materials, such as CDs or books related to the program, may sold at library programs with prior approval from the library. Sales must be for items that promote literature, literacy, or culture and align with the library's mission. Presenters are encouraged to donate 10% of proceeds to the Friends of the Denton Public Libraries.

Groups Attending Programs

Childcare centers or other organized groups must make arrangements with the library at least two weeks in advance to ensure space is available. Caregivers must follow child-to-caregiver ratios set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers.

Tours

Tours must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance.

Refreshments

Refreshments may be served at programs, provided they are from a kitchen certified by the City of Denton Consumer Health Department or purchased pre-packaged from a store. At least one full-time public services staff member at each library location will maintain a valid Food Handler's Certification for events requiring food handling.

Evaluation of Programs

Library staff will conduct regular evaluations of programs and services to make sure the needs of the community are being met within staff limitations and budgetary restrictions.

Objections to library programs

The library welcomes public feedback on its programs. Sponsorship of a library program does not imply endorsement of its content or the views expressed. Programs will not be excluded or cancelled solely because they are considered controversial.

Concerns should first be addressed to the coordinating staff member. If unresolved, Denton residents may submit a **Statement of Concern** form. Programs subject to objections will remain on the calendar pending final action.

- After receipt by a librarian, the completed and signed form will be dated and submitted to the Director of Libraries.
- The Director will keep City Administration and the City Attorney's Office informed throughout the process.
- Review and response timelines may be modified in exceptional circumstances.
- The Director or assigned representative will receive a report about the program plan and observe the program if it has not yet occurred.
- Objections to library programs will be evaluated as to whether or not the programming is in line with this policy.
- The complainant will receive the Director's response within three (3) months unless exceptional circumstances arise. The Director's decision is final unless timely and properly appealed as provided in this Operating Policy.
- If unsatisfied, the complainant may appeal in writing to the Denton Public Library Reevaluation Appeal Committee, comprised of members of the Denton Library Advisory Board, within 30 days of the date of the Director's response letter.
- The Director will supply each Appeal Committee member with all documentation relevant to the evaluation process.
- The Appeal Committee will review the appeal at the next regularly scheduled meeting if the appeal is submitted at least 30 days before the next scheduled Board meeting. If the appeal is not submitted within 30 days before the scheduled Library Board meeting, the appeal will be heard at the following Board meeting. Appeals will be evaluated as to whether or not the completed evaluation was in line with this policy.
- The Appeal Committee's decision is final and will be communicated in writing to the complainant by Library Administration.

Once a decision is final, the program or program series will not be eligible for further reevaluation for five years.



DENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

**STATEMENT OF CONCERN
FOR LIBRARY PROGRAMS OR DISPLAYS**

Library Board approved revision, Oct. 14, 2024

Note: If you wish to request reconsideration of an item in the library's collection, please use the Reconsideration of Library Materials Form.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone: _____

☐ I reside or own property within the city limits of the City of Denton

☐ I have a current borrower account at the Denton Public Library

Library card # _____

Program or display on which you are commenting:

Name/Description: _____

Date: _____

Branch: ☐ Emily Fowler Central Library ☐ North Branch ☐ South Branch

Presenter/Performer (if applicable): _____

Intended Audience: ☐ All Ages ☐ Adult ☐ Teen ☐ Children

Any other descriptive information _____

Please list your reasons for filing this request. Please be as specific as possible. (You may attach pages to this form if needed.)

What brought this program or display to your attention?

Have you attended the entire program or event or viewed the entire display? Have you attended another event with this presenter?

Did you share your concerns with library staff at the program/branch? What was their response?

In what way could this program or display be of value?

Please suggest alternative events, displays, or services that could provide similar information on this topic or support in this area to the community.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return the completed form to the Director of Libraries, library@cityofdenton.com.

Library Bill of Rights

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.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.

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,¹ 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 shall 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.² 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.

“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.”³ 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.

Libraries should not deny access to library-initiated programs if patrons owe the library for overdue fines or other fees. If libraries charge program participants for supplies used, they should make every effort to reduce economic barriers to participation.

Any collection and retention of program participants' personal information should be on an opt-in basis only. While attendees may need to demonstrate their eligibility to attend the program by showing a library card or student ID, they should not be required to share their personal information in order to attend a library program.

¹ "Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries: An Interpretation of the [*Library Bill of Rights*](#)," adopted February 13, 2018, by ALA Council.

² "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.

³ "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.