

## ***User-Initiated Exhibits, Displays, and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights***

Libraries may offer spaces for exhibits, displays, and bulletin boards in physical or digital formats as a benefit for their communities. The use of these spaces should conform to the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*, which states:

"Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." (Article I)

"Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." (Article II)

"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." (Article VI)

Libraries are not required to make space available to community groups or individuals for exhibits, public displays, notices, pamphlets, or flyers. However, if they do, they should post a permanent notice stating that these spaces are available as a service for the public and are not necessarily reflective of the library's viewpoint.

Libraries should have written policies that are content-neutral (do not pertain to the content of the display or to the identity, beliefs, or affiliations of the sponsors), clearly defined, and applied equally, and that address any time, place, and manner restrictions. Policies should be inclusive rather than exclusive. For example, a policy that the library's space is "open to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities" is an inclusive statement about the limited uses of the space.

Those who object to the content should be able to request a reconsideration, similar to challenging any library resource. Library workers should not censor or remove materials from exhibits, displays, or areas designated for the distribution of information because someone may disagree with the content or with the identity, beliefs, or affiliations of the sponsors.

Adopted July 2, 1991, by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 2004, July 1, 2014, and June 25, 2019.

***Displays and Exhibits Waiver of Liability Form***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of items to be displayed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my artwork or other property is scheduled to be on display from \_\_\_\_\_ (mm/dd/yy) to \_\_\_\_\_ (mm/dd/yy). I agree to pick up my artwork/items on or before \_\_\_\_\_ (mm/dd/yy) during normal hours of operation and understand that items not picked up by this date will become property of the Cary Area Public Library.

I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following:

I acknowledge that my property, including, without limitation, any art or other items on display, may be damaged, lost, or stolen during the exhibition or during the unpacking or packing of the items and I acknowledge and understand the risk involved by allowing such property to be displayed by the Cary Area Public Library.

I understand that the library does not insure any exhibits or displays and if I so choose I must acquire my own insurance. If I so choose such insurance, I agree to submit a copy to the library.

I agree that I will have a period of no longer than five (5) business days to remove any and all property from the Cary Area Public Library once the exhibit ends.

I hereby represent and warrant that I have read this Displays and Exhibits Release Form in its entirety and fully understand its contents. I have signed the waiver voluntarily and of my own free will. By signing this waiver, I release and hold harmless the Cary Area Public Library, its Board, employees, or representatives from and against any and all claims of injury or damages relating to the above provisions.

Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Library Employee's Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***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, 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.<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.

“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.

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.