Elgin County Library Policy Manual
Subject: Programming and Partnership Policy
Date Approved: October 10, 2023
Date of Last Revision: n/a

1. Purpose

Elgin County Library offers a wide variety of programs as part of our key pillars of library service to provide inclusive spaces, promote lifelong learning and support creative and cultural vitality. Library programs encourage and support information sharing, curiosity, creativity, cultural awareness, diversity, equity, inclusion, literacy and reading. Programs and events expand the library's visibility in the community and offer staff opportunities to engage with community members and to respond to community need. Programming is an essential component of the library's core mission and, as a result, must be appropriately planned and resourced. This policy outlines the principles and criteria that governs the types of programs and events hosted or facilitated by Elgin County Library and provides guidelines for their development, delivery and hosting.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all branches of the Elgin County Library system and all staff working for the library system; and, all individuals, community partners and agencies that participate in library programs and events.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:
- "*Programs*" are defined as any group activity offered to the public that staff coordinate, facilitate and/or present. These programs may be offered within library facilities, elsewhere in the community, in partnership with another library, virtually, or as a hybrid.
- "*Partnership*" is defined as a mutually beneficial collaboration between the library and an external organization.
- "*Sponsors*" are defined as businesses, service clubs, community organizations or individuals that provide the library with monetary donations, products and/or services to support library program(s).

4. Guidelines

Library programs and events should be responsive to community interest and meet the needs of the community, both at the system-wide level and for the communities being served by each branch. The types of programs being offered at each branch may differ but each will take into consideration certain guidelines when developing programming opportunities. Elgin County Library staff will develop programs that, in whole or in part:

- Create and promote community partnerships;
- Encourage literacy, the enjoyment of reading, and lifelong learning;
- Highlight materials and services available at the library, and assist patrons in their effective use;
- Offer training and assistance with new technologies used to offer library services;
- Promote an awareness of contemporary issues and provide information for the purposes of community engagement;
- Interpret local history and heritage;
- Promote cultural awareness;
- Attract a new / unique audience to the library;
- Provide informational, educational and recreational opportunities;
- Provide instruction on a particular topic, craft or activity;
- Act as a gathering place for socialization;
- Support diversity, equity and inclusion in the community.

Library staff will develop and deliver programs throughout the year based on demand and the availability of space, technical supports, and staffing resources. Program development will be linked to the library's strategic directions, service priorities and community needs and interests.

The library will market and promote events and programs within available resources and based on criteria such as the scope and target area of the program. Promotions may include reference to sponsors. Such reference does not reflect an endorsement of any views or opinions shared or services provided by the sponsor.

The library will also attend local community events to offer library activities, services and resources as a means of increasing awareness about the library. Attendance at local community events is based on demand and staffing resources.

5. Intellectual Freedom

As a member of the Ontario Library Association (OLA), the Elgin County Library has a responsibility to uphold the OLA's _Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual._ Elgin County Library has an important responsibility to facilitate expressions of knowledge, creativity, ideas, and opinion, even when viewed as unconventional or unpopular.

It is the responsibility of Elgin County Library to maintain the right of intellectual freedom and expression by implementing it consistently when hosting programs and events, either within the public space of the library, in a community space, in partnership with another library, virtually, or as a hybrid. Elgin County Library creates welcoming community spaces where community members must feel free from discrimination and may engage in peaceful assembly.

The decision by Elgin County Library to host, facilitate and/or present programs does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by presenters and/or participants.

Elgin County Library prohibits programs and events which contravene any legislation or government regulation, or which might result in civil liability to the library or to any person. The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits certain forms of discrimination and harassment of other individuals or groups, and the Criminal Code of Canada includes prohibitions against child pornography, obscenity, hate literature, sedition and literature for illicit drug use. Civil liability encompasses laws pertaining to libel and slander. Participation in library programs and events is conditional upon observance of these laws and regulations.

Library staff may prohibit or cancel programs and events that in any way promote discrimination or unlawful activities. Such decisions may be appealed to Elgin County Council through submission to the County's Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk at 519-631-1460 ext. 105 or cao@elgin.ca.

6. Audience and Attendance

The library may set age limits or other guidelines for participation in a program when the program is best suited for a particular audience. When safety or the nature of the program or available space requires that attendance be managed or limited, such management may proceed on the basis of factors such as "first come, first served" or advanced registration. Elgin County residents may be given preference in registering for programs where attendance is limited. Proof of residency may be required. The library reserves the right to determine the best way to manage attendance while always striving to be as inclusive and accessible as possible.

7. Program Cost

Elgin County Library is committed to limiting any barriers that may prevent residents from enjoying library programs. The majority of library programs are free to attend but occasionally the library may need to charge a nominal fee in order to recoup costs for items such as materials, food, facility rentals, performers and facilitator fees. Any such charges for children's performances will be nominal and will be assessed so that costs do not form a barrier to attendance. The library may also host special programs which are intended as fundraising events. These events will be clearly designated as fundraisers and the library will charge for tickets and/or other items and activities as part of the event.

As per the County of Elgin's *Donation Policy*, the library may seek sponsors to subsidize costs and/or increase the availability of programs.

8. Program Delivery

Library staff will coordinate, facilitate and/or present programs. Staff may also engage speakers, instructors or performers in the delivery of programs, such as authors, artists, musicians, community representatives and subject-matter experts, but only under the direction and guidance of staff. Any fees associated with the participation of non-staff in programs must be confirmed in advance and must be accompanied by an invoice. External speakers, instructors or performers may be required to provide a valid certificate of insurance and/or vulnerable sector check in advance of any program.

The library may provide any or all of the following support for community-led programs: staff assistance, library space, equipment use, virtual platforms, and/or marketing support.

9. Commercial Activities

Library programs and events are generally intended to be free from commercial activity. On occasion, the library may allow the sale of merchandise by community partners and sponsors as long as the sale of such merchandise is complementary to the program or event taking place. Some examples include book sales as part of an author event, sale of supplies as part of a crafting program and sales of finished work as part of an exhibit. Facilitation of commercial transactions is the sole responsibility of external vendors. Library staff will not be responsible for the collection or remittance of funds for items that do not belong to the library.

10. Program Recommendations

Program suggestions from community organizations or individuals are welcomed. Community members wishing to suggest a program may do so by contacting the Library Supervisor for the branch. The Library Supervisor is responsible for approving, planning and coordinating programs that take place within the branch. Individuals or organizations will only be contacted if the library chooses to move ahead with the proposal, at which time a *Program Agreement* (see Appendix A) will be issued. All suggestions will be taken into consideration based on the program criteria contained in this policy, strategic priorities and library resources.

11. Program Cancellation

The library reserves the right to cancel any program due to inclement weather, limited participant registration or other unforeseen circumstances and will make every effort to notify the public in advance. Cancelled programs may, or may not be, rescheduled.

For programs that require registration, third party facilitators must provide the library with a minimum attendance requirement prior to program confirmation. These requirements will be considered when determining when such programs are to be cancelled due to low enrollment.

12.0 Program Evaluation

All programs aim to have measurable outcomes and are evaluated regularly based on these outcomes. Evaluation techniques may include audience surveys, electronic or paper questionnaires, participant comment forms, presenter comments, and staff input.

Program Agreement

Name of Program Facilitator(s) and/or Organization:

Phone: Email:

Website and Social Media handles (if applicable):

Title of program:

Date of Program: Number of Programs:

Additional Dates:

Time of Program: Location of Program:

Type of Program: In Person   Virtual   Hybrid
If virtual, please indicate preferred
platform:

Description of Program:

Target audience:
                                                         Maximum audience size:
Minimum audience size:
Drop-in program: Yes ☐ or No ☐

Equipment needs:

Short bio of facilitator:

Fee to participants (if applicable): $ OR Free to participants ☐

Total cost to Elgin County Library: $

Elgin County Library requires an invoice for services rendered. Please attach an invoice to this completed form.

As a program facilitator or organization, I/we acknowledge that:

- **Programming Policy:** I have read and agree to Elgin County Library's Programming and Partnership Policy.

- **Pictures/video recordings:** Library staff may elect to take pictures and other recordings of the program for marketing, publicity or educational purposes. Pictures and other recordings may be used on various library social media channels, including but not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube; in press releases and on the library website. The facilitator will be informed prior to the event if pictures will be taken and/or, as agreed between ECL and facilitator, will be recorded. All pictures and recordings remain the sole property of the Elgin County Library, though links to the content can be shared.

- **AODA Compliance:** As a program facilitator/organization/vendor of the County of Elgin and/or Elgin County Library, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and am compliant with all accessibility standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as amended from time to time, and the Accessible Policy.

- **Proof of Insurance:** Third parties (i.e. vendors, caterers, performers, etc.) may be required to carry general liability Insurance, as confirmed by library staff.
    Insurance required, please attach a certificate of insurance naming the Elgin County Library and County of Elgin as additional insured.
    Insurance not required.
    Other, please specify_____

_____	_____
Program Facilitator or Organization (please print)	Elgin County Library representative (please print)
_____	_____
Signature	Signature
_____	_____
Date	Date