# Middlebury Public Library

## Program Policy

### Purpose and Scope

The Middlebury Public Library's programs benefit the community by providing educational, informative, recreational, and/or culturally enriching experiences that reflect the community's needs and that support the library's overall mission and philosophy. The library's programs are an important resource for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas that promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents; programs provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of residents. Programs should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents and should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints. This policy provides guidelines for the development, management, and oversight of all programs presented by the library.

### Key Definitions

A library program is a free event, virtual or in-person, planned by librarians, for the benefit of those members of the community who opt to attend. It may involve outside presenters, facilitators, or performers and may be presented in cooperation with other entities. Note: Use of a public meeting room by an organization or individual to hold a public event is not a library program.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Middlebury's Library Board of Trustees delegates development, presentation, and oversight of programs to the Library Director and her or his designated librarians. Designated librarians are responsible for the development, coordination, and supervision of library programs. Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop programs, and they work closely with the Library Director who has the ultimate responsibility for library programming. Attendees are responsible for complying with the library's Code of Conduct Policy.

### Procedures

#### 1.Program Selection

The library strives to present programs that are educational, informational, cultural or recreational and avoids programs that do not meet these standards. Topics, content and timing of library programs are developed with consideration of available resources and keeping community needs and interests in mind. Program selection is based upon the suitability of topic, format and intended audience. A program will not be excluded because its topic may be regarded by some as controversial. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute or imply an endorsement of the content or of the presenter of the program.  The library provides programs created or curated by librarians or members of the public library as well as programs created by members of the public or community groups and exhibited in the library.

A. Programs of a purely commercial nature or those designed for the solicitation of business will not be offered by the library.

B. 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.

C. Programs that support or oppose a specific religion will not be approved or offered. 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 patrons.

## 2.Program Development, Coordination, and Supervision

Library programs may originate from library staff, partnering institutions or members of the public.  In the event of a co-sponsored program, supervision of the program may be delegated to the co-sponsoring organization depending upon the timing and venue of the program. All programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the library, however, must abide by this policy regardless of where they are hosted.

Program development is guided by the library's policies, the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Bill of Rights, and the ALA's Freedom to Read Statement. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

Parents/guardians are responsible for monitoring their children at library programs in accordance with the library's Unattended Child Policy. The library reserves the right to remove anyone becoming disruptive to library staff, program participants, or program facilitators, and to anyone in violation of the library's Code of Conduct Policy.

## 3. Program Access

The library's programs (whether at the library, off-site, or virtual) are free and open to the public on a first-come/first serve basis. They are non-commercial in nature and are planned based on availability of resources, such as space, staff time, and budget. Program admittance may be limited and usually requires advanced registration. Some programs may be designed with specific age groups in mind and therefore limited to that audience. Any individual requiring accommodation to participate in a library program should contact the library two weeks prior to the program. The Library Director, or his or her designee, will be responsible for press releases and public notification for library programs.

The library may cancel programs due to: low registration, presenter absence, or inclement weather, for example. Programs scheduled on a day when the library is closed due to inclement weather are automatically canceled.  Rescheduling is at the discretion of the Library Director.

**4. Virtual Programs**

Some library programs may be offered using a library-approved virtual meeting platform that registered patrons may use to access the virtual program from their own internet-enabled devices. This may include programs that are simultaneously run at the physical library as well as programs that are offered only virtually. While hosting the virtual program, library staff, partnering organizations, and program facilitators will follow industry standard best practices for virtual events.  Some virtual programs may be pre-recorded and broadcast via the internet or recorded as presented for later viewing. In the event an interactive program is being recorded, attendees will be informed of that fact at the start of the program.  Live virtual programs require advance registration. Registered participants will receive via email a link to log on to the program and must not share that link with others. Information collected during the registration process will be used only to communicate information about that program or to confirm eligibility to participate in that program.

Patrons attending virtual programs are expected to adhere to the library's Code of Conduct Policy and failure to do so may result in their immediate removal from said program. The library will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the digital security of virtual events, however attendees must understand that all online activity carries some degree of risk.  Patrons are required to provide their own equipment and internet connection to attend virtual programs. The library will make a good faith effort to utilize platforms that will be compatible with the widest array of hardware and software, but makes no guarantee that every patron will be capable of accessing every library program successfully. Nor can the library guarantee the quality of the audio, video, or internet connection of program presenters or attendees.

**5.Program Materials**

Books, CDs, DVDs or other ancillary materials related to the content of a program may be offered for sale at a library program as a convenience to attendees.

**6.Program Evaluation**

To provide the highest quality and most useful programming, library staff will gather information about program results to guide future programming decisions. Outputs, such as the number of attendees at a program, will be gathered for all or almost all programs. Outcomes, such as how well the content of a program helped attendees learn about the program's topic, will be gathered at times when such data is required for grant reporting or would be helpful in evaluating a new program topic or format.

**7.Program Review and Reconsideration Procedures**

A Town of Middlebury resident who objects to a program sponsored by the library, the resident has a right to submit a formal complaint. The library limits consideration of requests to reconsider displays or programs to individual residents of Middlebury, CT.  Please see the library's Material Review and

Reconsideration Policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form for further information on this process. A The completed Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form should be submitted to the Library Director who will follow the procedure set forth by the Library Board of Trustees: only residents of the Town of Middlebury may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form. Programs will not be cancelled due to a program's origin, background, or viewpoints or because of the program creator's origin, background, or viewpoints. Middlebury residents are also permitted to submit a written appeal of the Library Director's decision to the Library Board of Trustees. Reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under 11-25 of the general statutes.

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

Please note: this Program Policy refers to programs developed and sponsored by the Middlebury Public Library, not to programs held at the library by an outside organization.

REVIEWED AND ADOPTED:

This policy is subject to continuous review.

Reviewed by the **CT State Library** on September 8, 2025

Adopted by the **Library Board of Trustees** on October 14, 2025