

Program Policy

Purpose:

The Simsbury Public Library offers programs to further extend the Library's mission and strategic plan to help educate and enrich the community in response to the intellectual, educational, and cultural needs and input of its patrons. Programs are a resource for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents. Programs are an integral component of Library services and support the Library's role as a community center.

This policy provides guidelines for the development, creation, management, and oversight of programs presented by the Library. This policy does not address programs presented by members of the public and the community.

Roles & Responsibilities:

The ultimate responsibility for programming, as with all library activities, rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Simsbury Public Library Board of Trustees. The Library Director delegates program management responsibility to Librarians within the areas of service to children, teens, and adults who are professionally trained to develop programs.

Definition:

Library programs are a live or recorded activity or event in a group setting, developed or selected to offer opportunities for community connection, cultural enrichment, exchange of information, life-long learning and literacy support for an intended audience in the community who opt to attend. It may involve outside presenters, facilitators or performers and may be presented in collaboration with other entities.

Program Development, Coordination and Supervision:

The process of program development and presentation involves the professional training, experience and knowledge of those staff members so designated by the Library Director. In making programming decisions, staff members use their familiarity with the community, Library resources, other programs and events, the existing collection, and budget. Staff consider the suitability of the program's materials, format, presenter, and relevancy when determining the intended audience. Programs with an intended audience are publicized as such.

The Library draws upon community resources in developing programs and attempts to partner with other community organizations, educational and cultural institutions, or individuals to develop and present or co-sponsor programs.

Library selection of a program does not constitute or imply an endorsement of its content or the views expressed by the participants by the Library, Library staff, Library Board of Trustees or

the Town of Simsbury. Program topics, speakers, and resources are not excluded from programs because of possible controversy.

Programs are not primarily for commercial purposes; however, presenters may leave their business card or brochure for program participants to take if they are interested in contacting the speaker after the program. While presenters may not distribute such materials as part of the program, performers or authors may sell books, or other items as part of a Library program when approved in advance by the Library Director. Programs sponsored by the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library may include the sale of books or merchandise as a fundraiser to benefit the Library.

Library programs may take place at the Library, online, or at off-site locations.

Library programs may originate from professionally trained 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 on the timing and venue of the program. All programs sponsored or co-sponsored by the Library must abide by this policy regardless of where they are hosted.

Program Selection:

The Library Director and staff strive to present programs that for the interest, information and enlightenment of residents and should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints. Professionally trained staff use the following criteria in making decisions about program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources:

- Availability of resources such as space, staff time, and/or budget
- Topic or expertise that is outside the scope of what Library staff already offer
- Community needs and interests (perceived or requested)
- National and local observances, commemorative months, and initiatives
- Potential to promote, supplement, and encourage use of the Library's collections and resources
- Presenter qualifications/experience in content area
- Safety and security of patrons and staff
- Relevance to the Library's mission and strategic plan
- Timing/length of the program
- Budget

A program need not meet all of these criteria to be presented.

Program Access:

Library programs are open to the public on a first come, first serve basis.

Responsibility for a child's access to Library programs rests solely with their parent or guardian. As stated in [Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#),

“Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children’s—and only their children’s—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children.”

The Library will make every attempt to accommodate all patrons who wish to attend a program. However, when available resources or safety requires it, attendance may be limited. The Library will not limit attendance due to topic.

When limits are established, attendance will be determined by advance registration through the Library’s online calendar of events at simsburylibrary.info or at the door on a first come, first served basis. A wait list may be available for some programs. The staff member responsible for the program has sole discretion if the program has a wait list and how many spots are available. If a spot becomes available either before or on the day of the program, patrons on the wait list will be notified and offered the available spot based on their place on the wait list.

The Library reserves the right to deny attendance or request a patron to leave a program if they are disruptive to other patrons or the program facilitator.

Virtual Programs:

In an effort to reach the greatest volume of patrons, the Library may offer virtual programs. These programs utilize Library approved virtual meeting platforms that patrons may use to access virtual programs from their own devices and may include programs that are simultaneously run at Library facilities along with programs that are solely offered virtually. Patrons attending virtual programs are expected to adhere to the Simsbury Public Library’s Rules of Behavior while in attendance, and failure to do so may result in immediate removal from the program.

Program Materials:

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

Program Evaluation:

Program evaluation forms may be distributed to the participants of select programs in order that Library staff may know what has been successful and to gather ideas for future programs. Forms will be anonymous and kept confidential.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship:

The Board of Library Trustees, the Library Director, and Library staff recognize the responsibility of the Simsbury Public Library to provide programs and materials that support diverse points of view on different topics. The American Library Association’s [Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to](#)

[View](#), the [Freedom to Read Statement](#), the [Freedom to View Statement](#), and the [First Amendment and Censorship](#) have been endorsed by the Simsbury Public Library Board of Trustees and are an integral part of this policy.

All Library materials, displays and programs are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section [46a-64 of the general statutes](#).

Requests for Reconsideration:

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from the public about Library programs. The Library limits requests to reconsider material, displays and programs to residents of Simsbury. Please see the Library's Request for Reconsideration Policy and Statement of Concern About Library Programs Form located on the Simsbury Public Library website.

The Program Policy is subject to review and amendment by the Library Board of Trustees.

~Approved by the Library Board of Trustees October 20, 2025