

7.3.15 Program Policy

Chapter:	Public Services Delivery Policy	Policy #	PS 7.3.15
Section:	Patron Services Policy	Issued	February 18, 2025
Subsection:	Program Policy	Resolution #	25-018
Paragraph:		Page	1 of 2
Issued to:	Manual Holders	Supersedes	October 21, 2003
Issued by:	Trustees	Resolution #	03-103

1 Policy

1.01 Purpose

The Fort Erie Public Library (the “Library”) offers educational, cultural, and recreational programs designed to enrich the community by providing experiences and resources that foster discovery, learning, and growth. This policy provides staff with guidelines for developing programs and informs the public about the principles and criteria used to select and deliver programs.

The Library is committed to intellectual freedom, providing access to information in various formats, and presenting diverse viewpoints, including those that may be unpopular or controversial. Offering a program does not constitute endorsement of its content by the Library.

1.02 Scope

This policy applies to all Library-organized, co-sponsored, and collaborative programs and events offered to the public. It does not apply to:

- Fundraising events;
- Programs offered by external organizations renting Library space;
- Programs whose primary purpose or effect is commercial gain for a separate interest.

2 Guiding Principles

2.01 Alignment with Library Values:

2.01.1 All programs must align with the Library’s mission, vision, strategic directions, and policies.

2.01.2 Programs must uphold the principles of intellectual freedom, as outlined in the Canadian Federation of Library Associations’ *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries* and the Ontario Library Association’s *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual*.

2.02 Compliance with Legislation:

2.02.1 Programs must comply with all applicable laws, including the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

2.03 Diversity and Inclusion:

- 2.03.1 Programs should reflect the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs and interests of the diverse communities served by the Library.
 - 2.03.2 Programs may showcase Library collections, resources, or services and may be led by Library staff or external individuals with relevant expertise.
 - 2.04 **Collaborations:**
 - 2.04.1 Programs developed in collaboration with external organizations or individuals must serve community information or public service goals compatible with the Library's mission.
 - 2.04.2 External partners must not solicit business, customers, or volunteers, or market commercial products or services during programs.
 - 2.04.3 The Library reserves the right to review an organization's terms of reference or bylaws before entering into a collaborative program.
 - 2.04.4 The Library will not pay external partners to host regular programs except in exceptional circumstances or when existing staff cannot safely conduct the program. To do so requires prior approval from the CEO or designate.
 - 2.05 **Program Fees:**
 - 2.05.1 The Library strives to offer programs free of charge to ensure equitable access. However, fees may be charged in exceptional circumstances with prior approval from the Library CEO or designate.
 - 2.06 **Participation Guidelines:**
 - 2.06.1 The Library may set age or other eligibility requirements for programs designed for specific audiences.
 - 2.07 **Program Cancellation:**
 - 2.07.1 The Library reserves the right to cancel programs as necessary.
 - 2.07.2 If possible, cancelled programs may be rescheduled.
 - 2.08 **Intellectual Freedom:**
 - 2.08.1 While individuals or groups may choose not to attend programs, they may not restrict others' freedom to participate.
 - 2.08.2 Customers who object to specific programs may submit a *Request for Reconsideration of Library Programs*.
- 3 **Photos and Recordings**
- 3.01 The Library staff may take photos or recordings during programs for use in marketing materials, social media, or other promotional purposes.
 - 3.02 Patrons who do not wish to be photographed or recorded must inform a staff member prior to or during the program.
 - 3.03 The Library will make reasonable efforts to accommodate such requests.
- 4 **Children's Programming**
- 4.01 The Library prioritizes programs that introduce children to books, reading skills, STEAM projects, and social interaction with peers. These programs foster literacy and lay the foundation for lifelong learning and Library use.
 - 4.02 Objectives of Children's Programming:
 - 4.02.1 Attract children, parents, and caregivers to the Library.

- 4.02.2 Demonstrate that reading is a pleasurable and worthwhile activity.
- 4.02.3 Establish the Library as a welcoming and valuable community space.
- 4.02.4 Empower children and caregivers to take responsibility for their own lifelong learning.

5 Community Programming

- 5.01 Programs for teens, adults, and older adults are designed to meet the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of the community. These programs reflect the unique interests of residents and are typically offered free of charge, though some may operate on a cost-recovery basis.

6 Program Evaluation

- 6.01 The Library is committed to continuous improvement of its programming. Long-range planning includes:
 - 6.01.1 Evaluating existing programs to determine their success;
 - 6.01.2 Maintaining successful programs, and;
 - 6.01.3 Setting priorities for new programs based on community needs.
- 6.02 Program planning should be informed by periodic community needs assessments to ensure alignment with evolving interests and priorities.

Reference & Related Statements of Policy

- Chapter 3 Board Policy Statements 3.1.3 Statement of Purpose
- Canadian Federation of Library Associations' *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries*
- Ontario Library Association's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual*.
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.