

Adult Programming Policy

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Policy Title: Adult Programming	Policy Approval Date: February 2026
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Introduction:

Programming supports the library’s mission as a welcoming, inclusive community place that inspires meaningful connections. Programming provides information, invites public discussion, encourages curiosity and creativity, and promotes literacy and reading. Programming promotes the library’s services and resources and is an integral part of Norfolk County Public Library’s service to the public. Programming is delivered in a manner that supports equitable access, reflects diverse lived experiences, and contributes to inclusive, respectful community engagement.

Purpose:

The Library’s adult programs are planned to meet the informal educational, health, cultural, and lifelong-learning interest and needs of adult patrons and community members. The Library is committed to providing inclusive and accessible programming that responds to community diversity and addresses barriers experienced by equity seeking groups adult programming supports cultural awareness, Indigenous inclusion, and anti-racism by fostering learning, dialogue, and understanding in alignment with the library’s public service role.

Definition

Programs are defined as any group activity offered to the public that staff coordinate, plan and/or present and that provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment.

Section 1: Criteria for Programming

Programming is evaluated based on how it supports the library’s mission, values, and goals, the interest and benefit to Library patrons and the community, the expertise and presentation skills of presenters and facilitators, budgetary considerations, and how the program aligns with ongoing and short-term goals and initiatives.

Programming decisions consider equity, representation, accessibility, and cultural relevance, including a wide variety of perspectives and address systemic barriers to participation.

Section 2: Scope of Programming

Adult programming includes, but is not limited to:

- Lifelong learning programs supporting personal, cultural, recreational, and educational development

- Digital literacy and technology learning, including foundational, practical, and advanced skills
- Makerspace learning, including hands-on creation, experimentation, and skill development using library equipment and tools
- Digital creativity programs, including media creation, film and audio production, design, and creative technologies
- General computer instruction and technology assistance
- Language learning and conversation groups, including English conversation programs
- Book discussion groups and reading-based programs
- Author talks and literary events
- Film series and facilitated screenings
- Exhibits and displays
- Health, well-being, and social awareness programming
- Cultural heritage and local history programming
- Workshops related to employment, business, financial literacy, food literacy, arts, crafts, and practical life skills

Section 3: Program Outcomes

Events and programs offered by NCPL will:

- Be responsive to current interests and needs of the community, recognizing that needs may differ across populations and locations
- Support equitable access to learning, information, and participation for adults from diverse backgrounds
- Promote cultural awareness, including Indigenous perspectives and lived experiences
- Encourage respectful dialogue on contemporary social issues, including those related to equity and racism
- Attract new audiences, particularly those historically underrepresented in library programming

Section 4: Program Delivery

Content may be developed and presented by staff or by experts outside the Library. The Library may participate in collaborative programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals. Scheduling programs depends on the availability and expertise of staff and the availability of space. Every attempt will be made to offer a wide selection of programs at all branches. The Library may offer programming delivered by:

- Performers, by whom sales of recordings is permitted
- Agencies, professionals, and community members with expertise relating to the programming topic
- Authors and illustrators, by whom book sales are permitted

Participation is based on a first come, first served basis. Library staff may use tools to limit and track attendance, including online sign up, tickets, and a sign-in process.

The Library reserves the right to cancel programs as deemed necessary and will make every effort to notify the public.

Section 5: Program Evaluation

Adult literacy programming supports reading, writing, digital, information, and cultural literacies and is delivered in formats appropriate to adult learners.

All adult programs are designed with defined outcomes and are evaluated using consistent data collection practices. Evaluation supports service improvement, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.

Evaluation indicators include, at minimum:

- Attendance and participation levels
- Program capacity and registration fill rates, where applicable
- Audience reach, including new or returning participants
- Alignment with stated program objectives

The library uses standardized tools to support evaluation, including:

- Attendance tracking through sign up systems, sign-in sheets, or digital tools
- A post-program evaluation made available to attendees to gather feedback on program relevance, quality, accessibility, and overall experience
- The library will initiate a process for community submissions.

Evaluation data is reviewed by staff to inform future program planning, identify trends, and adjust delivery methods, topics, and formats.

To support transparency and accountability, the library prepares a bi-annual summary report of adult programming activity. The report includes program counts, attendance data, high-level evaluation findings, and notable outcomes. The report is used for internal review and may be shared with the Library Board as part of regular operational reporting.

Section 6: Intellectual Freedom

The Norfolk County Public Library upholds the principles of Intellectual Freedom and Freedom to Read as articulated by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations and the Ontario Library Association. The library affirms the right of individuals to access a broad range of ideas, information, and creative expression through library collections, programs, and services.

Library programming supports informed choice and public dialogue. Programs may present diverse, controversial, or opposing viewpoints. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute endorsement of the content, opinions, or views expressed by presenters or participants.

Intellectual freedom is exercised within an environment that supports inclusion, dignity,

and safety. The library does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or conduct that infringes on the rights of others. All participants are expected to engage respectfully.

Section 7: Risk Management

Adult programming is governed by risk management and procedural standards to protect library users, staff, volunteers, presenters, and the Corporation of Norfolk County.

All programs are planned and delivered with consideration for health, safety, reputational, and operational risk. Staff assess program risks in advance and apply appropriate mitigation measures, including space suitability, equipment use, supervision levels, and accessibility considerations. Programs must comply with applicable legislation, municipal policies, and Library procedures.

Presenter Vetting

External presenters, facilitators, and partners are subject to vetting appropriate to the nature of the program. Vetting may include reference checks, verification of credentials, and, where required, confirmation of a criminal record or vulnerable sector check. The level of screening is determined by program content, audience, and risk profile and is aligned with Norfolk County and Library requirements.

Insurance and Liability

All programming must adhere to Norfolk County insurance and liability requirements. External presenters and partners may be required to provide proof of insurance naming the Corporation of Norfolk County and the Norfolk County Public Library as an additional insured, where applicable. Programs that do not meet insurance or liability requirements will not proceed.

Cancellation and Program Changes

The Library reserves the right to cancel or modify programs as required due to safety concerns, staffing availability, low registration, facility issues, or unforeseen circumstances. When a program is cancelled, the Library will provide public notice as soon as reasonably possible using appropriate communication channels. For programs requiring registration or payment, the Library will clearly communicate refund or credit expectations in advance. Refunds, where applicable, will be issued in accordance with Library and municipal financial procedures.

Accountability

These governance and procedural requirements support consistent decision-making, reduce risk, and ensure public trust. Staff are responsible for following established procedures, and managers are responsible for oversight and compliance.

Review of Concerns and Complaints

Concerns or complaints related to adult programming, including those involving intellectual freedom or freedom to read, must be submitted in writing. Complaints are reviewed using established Library procedures to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency.

All written complaints are escalated to the Chief Executive Officer for review. The CEO

assesses the concern in relation to Library policy, intellectual freedom principles, and applicable legislation.

The Library provides a written response to the complainant within a reasonable and defined timeframe. Unless circumstances require additional review, a response will be issued within fifteen business days of receipt of the complaint.

Programs are not cancelled, modified, or restricted solely in response to objections to content or viewpoints. Decisions are based on policy, risk considerations, and the Library's public service standards.

Related Documents:

- Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Intellectual Freedom Policy (FN-04)**
- Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Code of Conduct (Public) (OP-04)**
- Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Young Adults' Services (OP-11)**
- Norfolk County Public Library Policy **Children's Services (OP-10)**

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