



Program Policy

Approved by the Joint Board of Library Trustees 3/13/2025

Purpose:

This Program Policy upholds the mission and goals of the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library by setting guidelines for the planning and operation of library programs and events. It is also used to inform the public about standards and principles that are applied to the program selection and management process.

Responsibility for Program Development:

Responsibility for program development rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Joint Board of Library Trustees. Program planning and facilitating are done by the Library Director and other staff members based on their job responsibilities and areas of expertise. The Library Director and staff members are guided by this policy and utilize professional skills, collections, equipment, facilities, and feedback from the community in planning and delivering library programs.

Program Types:

The Hamilton-Wenham Public Library defines a program as an activity or event in a group setting, developed to meet the educational, social, recreational, cultural, or informational needs of community members. Programs can be a single event, a short series, or continuously recurring.

Programs may include, but are not limited to: lectures, forums, visual and performing arts, interactive classes or workshops, continuing education, fairs, discussion groups, technology programs, story times, class visits, library tours, community outreach, exhibits, and presentations for social, cultural, educational, or recreational purposes.

Programs may take place at the Library, offsite locations, and online. They may be delivered by library staff, library partners, or other third party providers.

Criteria for Program Development and Selection:

When making decisions regarding program selection, content, presenters, and related resources, the Library Director and library staff will consider the following:

- Relevance to the Library's mission, strategic plan, and service goals
- Community needs and interests, including feedback and suggestions from Hamilton and Wenham residents

- Potential to promote, supplement, and encourage the use of library collections and resources
- Presentation quality as evidenced by the presenter's background, record of presentation, and qualifications in content area
- Historical, cultural, or educational significance
- Space required, and the availability of that space
- Available budget
- Available staffing
- Balance in light of other programs currently being offered at the Library
- Connection to other community programs, exhibitions, or events outside of the Library
- Safety of patrons and staff
- National and local observances, commemorative months, and initiatives

The Library reserves the right to decline a program for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, staffing, budgetary constraints, space, scheduling, or lack of compliance with this or other library policies.

Program Funding and Financial Considerations:

The Library receives funding for library programs primarily through the Friends of the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library. In addition, some funding is received through grants or support from charitable organizations that support the Library. The Library may also partner with other institutions, organizations, or individuals to offer library programs. Library programs are open to the public and offered free of charge. At the discretion of the Library Director, a fee may be instituted to programs and goods that benefit the Library including book sales, raffles, and other types of fundraising.

Library programs are non-commercial in nature. Programs may not be used for the direct solicitation of business. Presenters and performers, whether individual or organizational, shall not use a library program to petition, advertise, or recruit members or customers. While the Library welcomes professional experts to present at its events, library programs cannot be used to directly further commercial, religious, political, or partisan financial purposes, except as specified below.

- Presenters may receive permission from the Library Director to sell creative works as part of a library program (ie. books, music CD's, etc.) Sale of these works is not permitted unless specifically authorized beforehand by the Library Director or their designee.
- Presenters are permitted to have business related brochures, fliers, or other information available for attendees to pick up if interested. However, presenters cannot distribute such materials as part of the event nor are presenters allowed to collect personal information from attendees (names, phone number, email addresses, etc.)

- Presenters may donate their creative work (books, CD's, etc.) to the Library for possible inclusion in the collection subject to the Library's Collection Development Policy.
- Programs sponsored by the Friends of the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library may include the sale of merchandise as a means to fundraise for the sole benefit of the Library.

Program Presenters and Co-Hosts:

Anyone interested in presenting a program may submit a written proposal that will be reviewed by the Library Director and staff using this policy as a guideline. The Library welcomes formal cooperation with individuals or organizations that promote civic engagement and support the Library's mission and strategic goals and may choose to co-host programs with these individuals or organizations. Co-hosts must comply with all library policies (including the Meeting Room Policy) and can receive acknowledgement in Library-generated publicity materials.

Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by presenters or participants. The Library respects the freedom of information of its users and adheres to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements. All presenters must adhere to these principles and the libraries policies. The Library Director has the authority to terminate a program at any point should presenters or co-hosts fail to adhere to these policies.

Open Access to Programs:

All library-initiated programs are open to the public, but some meetings and programs may be designed with specific audiences in mind, such as programs intended for children and teens that are geared to their interests and developmental needs. Adults who wish to attend a program specifically designed for children must be accompanied by a child. Teen programs are limited to teens only unless otherwise designated in the program description. Parents and guardians are responsible for overseeing their minor children's program attendance. The Hamilton-Wenham Public Library does not stand in place of a parent and is not charged with a parent's rights, duties, and responsibilities.

Every attempt will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a program. However, when safety, cost, or the success of a program requires it, attendance may be limited. In these situations, admittance will be determined on a first come, first served basis, either through advanced registration or at the door. The Library reserves the right to deny attendance to anyone becoming disruptive or disrespectful to audience members or the program facilitator and to anyone in violation of other library policies.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Library will make sure seating is available for anyone that needs accommodation. The Library requests a minimum of two weeks' notice for any other accommodation; the Library does provide twelve assisted-listening devices for programs in the Large Meeting Room. Please make any requests via email (info@hwlibrary.org) or calling the Library.

Program and Registration Cancellations:

Programs may be cancelled for any reason, including severe weather, absence of the presenter, or low registration. Cancelled programs are not automatically rescheduled. When possible, advanced notification of program cancellations will be made on the Library's online calendar of events and by other appropriate communication channels.

Some library programs require registration. The Library requests that patrons notify the Library as early as possible if they are unable to attend an event. This allows other patrons to attend popular programs and events. Repeated disregard of this protocol may result in a temporary hold from program registration based on review by the Library Director.

Reconsideration of Program Scheduling:

Concerns about programs scheduled at the Library may be expressed by filling out and submitting a Request for Reconsideration of Library Program Form at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled program date. Forms must be submitted in writing and can be mailed, emailed, or dropped off at the Library. Anonymous requests for reconsideration will not be considered, nor will submissions from individuals or organizations not residing in Hamilton or Wenham or owning property in Hamilton or Wenham, Massachusetts. During the reconsideration process the program will remain as scheduled.

A request for reconsideration will be reviewed by the Library Director or their designee, who will respond in writing to the patron initiating the request. The patron may choose to appeal the decision to the Joint Board of Library Trustees. The decision of the Board of Trustees will be final.



Program Proposal Form

Name (First, Last): _____

Organization: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Description (Include the length of the program and maximum number of attendees):

Who is your intended audience? You may select more than one:

- Children (ages 0-6)
- Children (ages 7-12)
- Teens (ages 13-18)
- Adults

Suggested dates and times of program: _____

Performer/Presenter fee (all Library programs are free and open to the public):

References, Experiences, Qualifications (please include other libraries if applicable):

Please agree to the following:

- I understand that this an application and does not guarantee that I will present or perform at the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library
- I agree that decisions regarding the acceptance of my program is at the discretion of the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library
- I have read and agree to the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library's Program Policy

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Request for Reconsideration of Library Program Form

The Joint Board of Trustees for the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library has established a Program Policy. This policy includes a procedure for Hamilton and Wenham residents or property owners to request reconsideration of a Library program. Completion of this form is the first step in this procedure. Please complete this form and return it to the Library.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Do you represent an organization? Yes No Name of Organization: _____

1. Program on which you are commenting: _____

2. Date this program is scheduled to be held: _____

3. Name of the presenter/performer: _____

4. What brought this program to your attention?

5. Why do you believe this program should be reconsidered? Please be as specific as possible.

6. Have you attended a program by this presenter in the past? Yes No

7. Do you have a suggestion for an alternative event/presenter that could provide similar information on this topic to support the community?

8. What action are you requesting Library Administration and the Trustees consider?

Signature: _____