

# Programming Policy

## Table of Contents

Purpose and Scope .....	1
Principles of BPL Programming.....	2
Collaborations.....	3
Accessibility and Inclusion .....	3
Cancellation .....	5

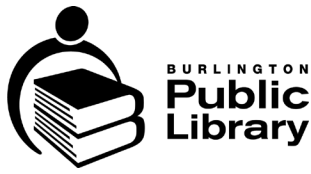
## Purpose and Scope

The Programming Policy guides how Burlington Public Library (BPL) staff develop and deliver programming both independently and in collaboration with community organizations and external presenters. It also outlines BPL’s commitment to and expectations of community members participating in BPL programming.

This policy applies to all programs and events offered by BPL (independently and in collaboration with others) to the public, in Library branches, online, and offsite at events and in community spaces.

This policy does not apply to:

- BPL events developed only for special purposes such as donor recognition, fundraising, or Library staff education
- Programs or events offered by other organizations, business or individuals on BPL premises where space is rented under the terms and conditions of the Room Rental Policy
- Outreach initiatives whose primary focus is connecting new audiences to Library services



## Principles of BPL Programming

The Library's programs are developed to support BPL's mission, vision, and strategic priorities. Programs should reinforce discovery and community well-being—inspiring curiosity and helping people feel accepted, connected, and empowered to live, work, and play to their full potential at all stages of life. Programming at BPL follows these principles:

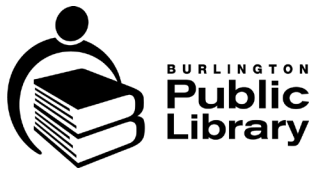
- Focus on shared experiences and connection
- Programs are simple to plan and deliver consistently across the system
- Amount and type of programming is scaled to the size and needs of each branch
- BPL works with external collaborators to expand and enhance offerings outside the expertise of Library staff
- Programming varies in theme, time/date, and format to reach and appeal to a variety of audiences
- Low barrier to participation, with emphasis on universal design
- Programs foster an ongoing connection between participants and BPL, promoting collections, resources, and other Library services

## Areas of Focus

Library programs must be geared to a wide range of age groups and audiences and cover topics that develop a variety of literacy skills, build on community interests, and foster connection and belonging among participants. Skill-based programs focus on foundational and intermediate skills, providing equitable access to learning opportunities to enable full participation in society.

Core, staff-led programs focus on traditional and digital literacy within the scope of BPL staff expertise.

Programs are evaluated to assess quality, customer satisfaction, and alignment with community needs and interests.



## Collaborations

Library staff contract third party presenters or work with external collaborators to offer programs and events that expand and enhance offerings outside the expertise of Library staff.

The Library establishes formal collaborations to plan and deliver programs with community organizations, businesses, and individuals. Collaborators are selected objectively based on defined criteria including alignment with BPL values and strategic priorities. Collaborative programs are planned jointly to meet the shared goals of both BPL and the collaborator and must be evaluated regularly. Written agreements are required for all collaborative programs.

All programs must be insured. Collaborators who are not covered under BPL's liability policy must provide proof of liability insurance.

External presenters delivering programs will not solicit business, customers, or volunteers, or market their commercial products or services to participants. Author events featuring a book sale and/or signing are permitted under the terms outlined in their collaboration agreement. Other exceptions made in service of strategic objectives must be approved by the appropriate director.

## Accessibility and Inclusion

### Universal Design

Programs offered by Burlington Public Library are developed with a universal design mindset and aim to include and accommodate people with a wide range of abilities and experiences. Library staff and collaborators will adhere to BPL's Accessibility Principles and Program Accessibility Standards when developing and delivering programs.

### Intellectual Freedom

The Library offers programs featuring a wide range of topics and viewpoints, including themes that some community members may find controversial or uncomfortable. Hosting a program does not equate to endorsement of or agreement with the contents of the program and/or its presenters. The Library offers a wide range of options and respects everyone's right to choose what they do and don't participate in, thereby

upholding the democratic principle of intellectual freedom. Library members may formally object to a program by submitting a request for reconsideration as outlined in BPL's Intellectual Freedom Policy.

Comments or behaviour from audience members or presenters that contradict BPL's policies and Customer Experience Standards, the Ontario Human Rights Code, or the Criminal Code of Canada will not be tolerated during programs. Library staff have the right and responsibility to address such behaviour including:

- Asking individuals to change their behaviour
- Asking individuals to leave a program and/or the Library
- Ending a program early or cancelling a program

## Audience

The Library may set age limits for participation or require participants to meet criteria that are necessary for participation in the program (e.g. prerequisite technology skills for an intermediate technology class). Library programs are not exclusive and must be open to all members of the community that meet the participation criteria.

Programs may serve members of vulnerable populations and BPL will take the following precautions:

- Programs are delivered in group settings where no single participant is alone in an enclosed space with a single staff member or volunteer.
- Caregivers are required to remain directly with children age five and under for the full duration of all programs.
- If they wish, caregivers are welcome to remain directly with participants of any age for the full duration of a program, regardless of a participant's age.
- Caregivers must remain in the Library facility while children age six to nine attend programs.

## Program Fees

The Library aims to reduce barriers to participation. Library programs are offered at no cost to participants. Exceptions to this will be considered on a case-by-case basis if a modest participant fee is necessary to recoup costs associated with the program. Library staff may waive fees, at their discretion, to provide equitable access for all community members.

## Cancellation

The Library strives to provide dependable programs and will avoid cancelling a program unless necessary. Reasonable efforts to deliver a program may include modifying the program, reassigning staff, or rescheduling the program. If a cancellation is necessary, staff will attempt to notify participants in advance.

- Effective Date: June 2025
- Projected Review Date: 2028
- Motion#/Date: #22-72, Nov. 24, 2022; #25-41, Jun. 26, 2025
- Amended Dates: November 2022, June 2025
- Associated Documents:
  - Burlington Public Library Strategic Plan
  - Customer Experience Standards
  - Criminal Code of Canada
  - Intellectual Freedom Policy
  - Ontario Human Rights Code
  - Room Rental Policy
  - Safety of Children in the Library Policy