

# Bethlehem Public Library

## Display Policy

### Purpose

The Bethlehem Public Library's Display Policy provides a basis for the display of library materials by library staff, informs the public about the principles and criteria upon which these decisions are made, and promotes the purposes of the library's mission, which is: "To provide free and open access to materials and resources that educate, inspire, inform, and entertain"

### Policy

The Bethlehem Public Library recognizes the importance of displays as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents. With a strong focus on encouraging the love of reading, lifelong learning and creativity, we establish responsive connections between the diverse needs of our community, our collections, our digital services and an array of engaging programming. A key aspect of our approach is the creation of thoughtfully curated displays, which play an essential role in informing and inspiring individuals of all ages and of diverse backgrounds. These displays serve as a tangible expression of our dedication to the community and exemplify our belief that a vibrant library contributes to a strong community. Displays are provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, and provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and educational needs of residents.

### Principles and Criteria

The final responsibility for the display of library materials is held by the Library Director but day-to-day responsibility is shared by librarians who are professionally trained to curate and develop displays. Librarians use the following criteria in making decisions about display topics, materials, and accompanying resources:

- Community needs and interests
- Availability of display space
- Historical, cultural or educational significance
- Connection to other community or national programs, exhibitions or events
- Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits and programs

The Library may partner with other community agencies, organizations, educational institutions or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored displays and exhibits.

The Library will strive to include a wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints in library-initiated displays and exhibits, as well as offer displays and exhibits that appeal to a range of ages, interests and information needs. Library-initiated displays and exhibits should not exclude topics, books, media and other resources solely because they may be considered controversial.

The Library provides displays created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public library as well as allowing displays created by members of the public or community groups to be exhibited in the public library. Acceptance of a display or exhibit topic by the Library does not constitute an endorsement by the Bethlehem Public Library of the content of the display or exhibit, or of the views expressed in the materials on display.

Selection of materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of or be seen by minors. No one can exercise censorship to restrict access to library materials by others. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to determine which library materials are appropriate for their children.

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

## Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The Library recognizes that not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Therefore, some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial and even distasteful to some Library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any Library user or users to deny access to Library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged. When evaluating library materials the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements from the American Library Association are used as guiding documents.

## Library Display Review and Reconsideration

The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or programs to individual residents of Bethlehem. Please see our Material Review and Reconsideration Policy and Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form for further information on this process.