2.01 Library Program Policy

North Shelby Library programs are events, displays, or exhibits that promote the use of library materials, services, and/or offers the community informational, entertaining, or cultural experiences. Programs are planned for the interest and enlightenment of the residents of our district as well as to increase and diversify the visibility of the library within the community. Programs are intended to serve groups of people, not individuals. The Library strives to offer a variety of programs that reflect the interests of our growing and diverse population and as such, programs will not be canceled because of the ideas or topics of the program or the views expressed by the participants or speakers.

Library programs shall generally be voluntary, free, and open to the public. However, nominal materials fees may be charged for certain types of Library initiated programs. The Library's philosophy of open access to information extends to programming. The Library does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or any other characteristics protected by local, state, and federal law. However, some library programs may be restricted by age to ensure the content is age-appropriate and appealing to the intended audience.

Library programs must be non-commercial in nature. Although a professional expert may present a program, the information should always be generic in nature. Library programs must have a special entertainment, informational, or cultural value to the community. Library programs may address religious themes to educate or inform, not to promote or observe a religion. No individual or organization shall use a library-initiated program at the Library to advertise or recruit members or customers. Programs are not used for commercial, religious, or partisan purposes or for the solicitation of business.

Programs initiated by the Friends of the Library groups are usually designed for library fund-raising and may include an admission fee or be for members only. Programs put on by paying renters of the library meeting rooms are not considered public or library-initiated programs and are not subject to the library programming policy.

Library programs are primarily funded through the Library's budget. Staff members in charge of programming are designated a budget by the Director of Library Services. Additional program funding may come from the Friends of the Library groups, unsolicited donations, or from sponsorships.

Sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by participants. Sponsorship is defined as the Library working with another agency, presenter, or business to provide a program as defined above for Library patrons. Priority sponsorship is given to local government agencies. Agencies, businesses, or organizations that participate in sponsoring a program receive acknowledgement on the library website, in local publications, and on social media. Staff members in charge of programming reserve the right to accept or deny potential program collaborations based on the needs of the Library.

Program presenters are chosen for their expertise and performance experience. While due diligence is practiced when booking programs, the Library and its employees will not be liable for the content of any program presented by a third party. Professional performers or presenters will be permitted to sell their creative products (CDs, books, etc.) following the completion of their program.

Timely and adequate public announcement shall be made of all programs. Organizations or individuals partnering with the Library must coordinate marketing efforts with the Library. Press releases, public notifications, and marketing publicities must be approved by the staff member in charge of the program.

Registration may be required for planning purposes and when space is limited. When registration is required it must be handled by the library unless other arrangements are made with the staff members in charge of programming. Program participants' personal information is confidential and will not be shared with program presenters who are not library staff members.

Program evaluation forms may be distributed to the participants of select programs so that staff may know what has been successful and receive ideas for new programs from patrons. Recurring programs such as storytimes, book discussions, and regularly scheduled programs with repeat attendees may receive a program evaluation annually.

The Library will endeavor to offer an equitable number of programs throughout the community. However, factors such as staffing levels, program space, budget concerns, and other demands upon the staff will influence the number and types of programs able to be offered. Library staff who present programs do so as part of their regular job and are not hired as outside contractors for programming.

Library programs may be held online and require participants to download software to their personal computer or device. The library is not responsible for loss of data or damage to the participant's personal equipment that may result from use of this software. Library staff will make every effort to prevent disruptive intrusions; however, the Library is not responsible for actions of others which are outside of its control.

Library programs are recorded only with the permission of the presenters. Participants will be notified if a program is to be recorded and given the opportunity to opt out of participation. Photos may be taken by staff during programs for promotional use. Individuals in images will not be identified by name or with identifying information without written approval from the subject or their parent or legal guardian.

Ultimate responsibility for programming at the Library rests with the Director of Library Services, who administers under the authority of the Board of Trustees. The Director, in turn, delegates the authority for program management to staff members who program for their departments and/or branches. These staff members keep the Director informed of the status of all programs.

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from any library patron concerning programming. If a patron questions a library program, they should first address the concern with a Library staff member. Patrons who wish to continue their request for review of Library programs must follow the procedure outlined below.

2.01a Program Policy Appendix A: Statement of Concern for Programs

Procedures

1. To receive consideration by the Library, all concerns regarding library-initiated programs must be made by fully completing this form. This includes concerns brought up by members of the Board or staff.
2. The library-initiated program about which a concern has been made will not be canceled, nor be restricted in any way, before final action is taken by the Board of Trustees on the complaint, unless the Director of Library Services finds substantive justification for the program to be delayed or canceled until further investigation can be completed.
3. Within two (2) business days of the filing of the written statement, the applicable staff member will confer with the Director, then send a written response to the patron, explaining in detail their decision regarding the statement of concern. The response will also inform the patron that they may appeal the decision within five (5) business days.
4. The Board of Trustees will review the appeal at their next scheduled board meeting and take final action on it. In making its decision regarding the concern, the Board of Trustees will employ all of the Criteria for Selection of Library-Initiated Programs listed above, along with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (1.04) and the ALA Statement "Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource" (2.01b)
5. The patron will be notified in writing of the Library Board's decision in the matter.

Statement of Concern for Library-Initiated Programs

North Shelby Library programs are events, displays, or exhibits that promote the use of library materials, services, and/or offers the community informational, entertaining, or cultural experiences. This form allows community members to voice concerns they may have about a program.

1. Title of event, display, or exhibit: _____

2. Location: _____

3. Department: ☐ Children's   ☐ Teen ☐ Adult Services   ☐ General

4. Request initiated by (Name): _____

5. Phone: _____ Email: _____

6. Address (Street/ZIP): _____

7. Do you represent: ☐ Yourself
                              ☐ Organization: _____

8. What specifically causes you to be concerned about this program or display? _____

_____

9. Did you attend this event or view the exhibit in its entirety?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

10. What do you think would be the result of a patron viewing this material or attending this program?

_____

11. Is there an age for which you would recommend this program? _____

12. Are there any positive aspects to this program? _____

_____

13. What would you say the them or purpose of the program is? Did it meet that purpose in your opinion?

_____

_____

14. Is there a program you would recommend in place of this material? _____

_____

15. What specific action would you recommend to library leadership? _____

_____

16. Signature _____ Date _____

ALA Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource
An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for accessing information, education, and recreation. Article I of the Library Bill of Rights states, "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves." Library displays increase awareness of programs, resources, and services.

Library-initiated programs include, but are not limited to, lectures, displays, exhibits, community forums, performing and visual arts, participatory workshops, technology programming, creative learning programming, wellness programs, story times, continuing education, fairs and conventions, book clubs, discussion groups, demonstrations, and presentations for social, cultural, educational, or entertainment purposes. Library-initiated programs may take place onsite at the library, off-site at other locations, or online, and may be provided by library workers, volunteers, or partners. Libraries may also choose to promote their programs, services, and resources though displays and digital signs.

Library-initiated programs and displays utilize library worker expertise for community interests, collections, services, facilities, and providing access to information and information resources. They introduce users and potential users to library resources and the library's role as a facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.

Libraries should not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and shall ensure they have equitable access to library resources. Library-initiated programs and displays should comply with all applicable laws, including the standards and requirements of The Americans with Disabilities Act and state and local disability accessibility guidelines. If a program is held in a location not controlled by the library, the library should assure that the space is accessible to all users. If users overflow designated event areas during library events, libraries should secure accessible public spaces (e.g., ramps, pathways, and emergency exit routes) to ensure access and safety for everyone. Reasonable accommodations should also be made to have interpretation or real-time captioning for the deaf or hard of hearing at library-initiated programs when needed or requested by library users.

"Socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented people, not just the mainstream majority, should be able to see themselves reflected in the resources and programs that libraries offer." Libraries should actively seek to include a variety of programming options representing diversity of genres, formats, ideas, and expressions with a multitude of viewpoints and cultural perspectives that reflect the diversity in our communities. Library-initiated programs that cross language and cultural barriers introduce community members to the

library's resources and provide access to information. Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities should make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those who speak and read languages other than English, including advertising for such events.

Concerns, questions, or complaints about library-initiated programs and displays are handled according to the same written policy and procedures that govern reconsiderations of other library resources. These policies should apply equally to all people, including, but not limited to, library users, staff, and members of the governing body. The policies should set forth the library's commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.

Programs should not be canceled because of the ideas or topics of the program or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, nor should library workers censor or remove displays because someone may disagree with the content. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the program content or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, any more than the purchase of resources for the library collection or curation of a display constitutes an endorsement of the resources content or its creator's views. Libraries should vigorously defend the First Amendment right of speakers and participants to express themselves.

Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library encompasses all the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries create programs for an intended age group or audience based on educational suitability and audience interest; however, restrictions on participation based solely on the gender, chronological age, or educational level of users violate this right and should be enforced only when not doing so would adversely impact the safety of the participants or interfere with the intended purpose of the program. Parents and guardians may restrict their own children's access to library programs, but no person or organization can interfere in others' access and participation. A parent or guardian may discuss their child's access to and participation in library programs with their child, but may not impose those decisions on others, including other people's children.

Libraries should not deny access to library-initiated programs if patrons owe the library for overdue fines or other fees. If libraries charge program participants for supplies used, they should make every effort to reduce economic barriers to participation.

Any collection and retention of program participants' personal information should be on an opt-in basis only. While attendees may need to demonstrate their eligibility to attend the program by showing a library card or student ID, they should not be required to share their personal information in order to attend a library program.