

UPPER SADDLE RIVER LIBRARY

COMMUNITY PARTNERING AND CO-SPONSORSHIP POLICY

Introduction

As part of the Upper Saddle River Library's mission to serve as a community gathering place, a cultural destination and a gateway to ideas for residents of all ages and interests, the Library provides programs of an educational, cultural and civic nature. The purpose of this policy is to provide structure and guidance to collaborations between the Library and other organizations and groups. Working with a community/program partner or entering into co-sponsorship is a mutually beneficial collaboration between the Library and another entity.

The Library welcomes engagement with institutions, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government departments, community and/or other groups to expand the capacity of Library programs, services, and activities provided to the community.

We do not host programs that support or oppose specific political or religious agendas, though we permit programs of an educational nature covering political or religious traditions and information.

Definitions

Community/Program Partner

A community/program partner is an institution, business, nonprofit organization, government department, community and/or other group that collaborates with the Library to provide and/or promote programs, activities, services, events and/or resources to the public in ways that are mutually beneficial to, and in support of, the missions of both the Library and the partner, without the exchange of money. Typically, community/program partners work together with the Library without the contribution of funds, products or services of a defined value to the Library. Community/program partners are provided with a level of recognition commensurate with their level of collaboration.

Co-Sponsor

A co-sponsor is an institution, business, nonprofit organization, government department, community and/or other group who contributes funds or products or services of a defined value to the Library in support of an activity, service, event or program. The Library can also act as a co-sponsor. Co-sponsors are provided with a level of recognition commensurate with their level of collaboration.

Program Collaboration

The Library will only work with community/program partners and enter into co-sponsorships that are determined to be in the best interest of the Library's mission. The purpose of community partnerships is to serve the needs of the community more effectively than either the Library or its partners could do working alone. Through community partnerships, the Library strives to support its mission by connecting the community to resources that meet its needs. In addition, community partnerships enable the Library to share its resources, educational materials, and staff skills in support of our partners' service to our community, just as they enhance the Library's service to the community by connecting our patrons to the resources, educational materials, and staff skills our partners offer.

Certain guidelines apply in deciding the specific nature and conditions of acceptable co-sponsorships and community/program partners. Co-sponsorships and community/program partner relationships:

- Must be consistent with the Library's philosophy and mission, vision, and values;

- Must be consistent with all policies of the Upper Saddle River Library, including but not limited to the Library's policy of equal access to services. Co-sponsorships and community/partnerships must not give unfair advantage to, or create discrimination against, any sectors of the community.

In addition, agreements between the Library and its co-sponsors and community/program partners must further the Library's goals. Desirable outcomes may include:

- Increased visibility of the Library in the community.
- Support of regular or special Library activities, services, events, and programs.
- Improved response to identified community needs.
- Enhanced use of community space inside or outside of the Library.

The Library will consider the following criteria in choosing community partners:

- Geographic proximity to Upper Saddle River and relevance of the partner's mission to the needs of the Upper Saddle River community.
- Partner's documented status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or governmental entity.
- Reputation of the partner, based on factors such as length of time in existence, success of past projects, makeup of the entity's board of directors, professional references from other organizations, professionalism of the partner's website and promotional materials, etc.

The Board of Library Trustees delegates development of community/program partners and co-sponsorships to the Library Director who may delegate it to designated department staff. Initial inquiries from potential partners should be referred to the Librarian for the age group the partner primarily serves or the Library Director.

While the Library and the community/program partner or co-sponsoring entity may not have identical goals, the goals should be complementary and not contradictory. Each partner should contribute to the enterprise.

Co-sponsorships and collaboration decisions are made on the basis of mutual need and equitable benefit between the Library and potential partners. All decisions about a program or event, including but not limited to advertising copy, marketing materials and any shared costs, must be mutually agreed upon by all parties before the program or event is promoted.

At the beginning of a new relationship, the Library and the potential partner will prepare a set of guidelines to outline each party's responsibilities and activities that form the partnership. Some partner programs or co-sponsorships may warrant a written agreement and/or require a supplementary performance agreement.

Every co-sponsored program will have a Library staff member designated as program supervisor. The program supervisor may collaborate or delegate some responsibilities for program coordination. Volunteers who develop or present programs will do so under the direction of a Library staff supervisor. Community/program partners will have a specific library contact.

Activities which the Library may engage with community partners include (but are not limited to):

- Hosting partners to present educational and informational programs at the Library, per the terms of the Library's Programming Policy.
- Sending library staff to present educational and informational programs or host informational tables at partners' locations and events.

- Providing Library space for partner staff to host informational tables or to meet with community members for the purpose of connecting them to social services or other resources provided by the partner.
- Dissemination of the partners' informational materials by the Library or the Library's informational materials by the partner. The Library's distribution of partners' print materials will comply with the Library's Displays, Exhibits and Sign Policy.

The Library will generate and disseminate all publicity for co-sponsored programs and community/program partners except where mutually agreed upon. Any requirements for publicity or sponsorship statements (such as crediting funding agencies or use of logos) will be mutually communicated, agreed upon between the Library and program partners or co-sponsors prior to the program, service or event being promoted, and continuously maintained by all parties.

The Library will be the point of contact for all formal press releases and public inquiries except where mutually agreed upon by program presenters/partners/co-sponsors and the Library. Only the Library will have access to Library publicity avenues such as mailing lists, web pages, or e-mail addresses.

Separate resource requests or unsolicited offers from organizations to present programs will be evaluated by the same standards used by Library staff, and the Library reserves the right to decline sponsorship or resource requests. The library reserves the right to decline to participate in any activity proposed by the partner if staff capacity is not available or if the activity does not sufficiently align with the purpose of Library.

All community/program partners and co-sponsors must abide by Library policies and any New Jersey or federal laws governing municipal libraries. Community/program partners and co-sponsors may not influence the selection of materials, programs or services, and must respect the Library's commitment to intellectual freedom. Partners may not require explicit endorsement of products and services. In addition, the Library ensures the confidentiality of Library records as required by law, and partners shall be granted no access to such records.

Expectations of Community/Program Partners and Co-sponsors

The Library expects community/program partners and co-sponsors to:

- Be committed to the success of the partnership.
- Adhere to this policy and any applicable agreement(s).
- Jointly identify clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all involved.
- Show understanding of Library policy.
- Maintain effective communication with Library staff about partnership activities and any changes that may affect the quality or scope of the partnership.
- Share updates about relevant changes to program plans, contacts, contact information, schedules, budgets, and capacity.
- Be committed to ongoing evaluation of progress and continuous improvement.
- Be committed to collaborative, long-term strategies, not just short-term solutions.
- Be committed to creating opportunities to engage the community and/or target audience.
- Provide opportunities for all partners to meet their shared social responsibilities.
- Review and affirm partnerships periodically through the use of a Community/Program Partnership Agreement, when applicable. Typically a partner or co-sponsorship that would warrant a written agreement will have an ongoing program or event series that engages large audiences, requires significant expenditures of revenue or resources, and involve collaboration by multiple people and/or organizations.
- Refrain from selling or providing explicit endorsement of commercial products and services.

Dissolving Community/Program Partner and Co-sponsorship Relationships

The Library reserves the right to terminate or withdraw from co-sponsorships or program partners at any time.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy may be subject to exception at the discretion of the director and/or board of library trustees.

Approved by The Library Board of Trustees 4/23/2025