

Library Display Policy

Purpose

The Bristol Public Library Display Policy governs the implementation of exhibits and displays created or curated by library staff, or in partnership or co-sponsorship, with individuals or community organizations, for the purpose of promoting the library's mission to provide "the community with a friendly and knowledgeable atmosphere where educational, informational, recreational, cultural, and professional materials and services can be found in a variety of formats. An emphasis is placed on encouraging the use of the library by persons of all ages in order to stimulate life-long learning and an appreciation for reading, and to provide a resource center for ideas and information for the entire community." This policy is meant to inform the public about the principles and criteria upon which these decisions are made.

Responsibility

Library-initiated displays rely upon the expertise of library staff who are professionally trained to curate and develop such library displays. The Library Director delegates the authority for the implementation of displays to the Assistant Director/Program Manager, who, in turn, delegates this authority to the Bristol Public Library and Manross Memorial Library department heads.

Criteria

Bristol Public Library will strive to create and curate displays provide for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents and 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.

The Bristol Public Library further recognize 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.

All library displays and exhibits will be developed, evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

With their expertise, library staff will create or curate, or partner or co-sponsor with individuals or community organizations to provide, library displays that promote the following goals:

- To consider community needs and interests
- To honor historical or cultural matters
- To bridge a connection between the public library and the community or between the community and another organization via a co-sponsored library display
- To promote literacy and life-long learning
- To promote life-long reading

Library-initiated displays will not exclude topics, books, media, or other resources solely on the basis that they may be considered controversial. The library will continuously work to curate displays representing a wide array of people, cultures, ideas, and experiences.

Creation, curation, or acceptance of a display or exhibit by the library does not constitute endorsement by the Bristol Public Library or the City of Bristol, of the content or views expressed in the display materials.

Guidelines

- The exhibitor is responsible for installing and labeling the exhibit, working in coordination with Library staff on an agreed date and time. The exhibitor shall remove the exhibit promptly on the agreed upon date.
- All materials are displayed at the exhibitor's own risk.
- The library has the right to remove exhibit materials if they aren't picked up by the agreed upon date. Exhibit materials may be disposed of if not claimed within 30 days.
- Damages to Library premises, equipment or furnishings as a result of exhibitor use will be charged to the individual or group responsible.
- Commercial displays are prohibited unless there is a clear educational or non-commercial informational purpose.
- Displays promoting any candidate for public office or advocating for a specific position on a public issue are prohibited.
- Displays intended to proselytize or promote a specific religion are prohibited. Religious topics may be included in displays for educational, cultural or informational purposes.

Request for Reconsideration

Requests for reconsideration of a library curated, partnered, or co-sponsored display or exhibit may be made using the same procedure as outlined in the policy for the reconsideration of library materials. Requests for reconsideration are limited to residents of Bristol, Connecticut.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The Bristol Public Library recognizes that some materials may be controversial or offensive to an individual but maintains that individuals can only apply their values to themselves. No one can exercise censorship to restrict access to library materials by others. The Bristol Public Library supports intellectual freedom and endorses the American Library Association (ALA) Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, the Library Bill of Rights, and all relevant interpretations.

Policy Implementation and Location

The Library Director and Library Board of Trustees Policy Committee will review the Library Display Policy as needed but no less than every five (5) years.

This policy may be found on the Bristol Public Library website:

<https://www.bristollib.com/libraries-policies/>

A copy is available in the Library Director's Office.

This policy is in accordance with Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323.

Approved: 09/08/2025