Revision Date:	August 2022	Policy Type:	Public Service
Approval Level:	CEO	Distribution:	All Employees
Review Schedule:	5 Years (or as required)		

1.   PURPOSE

This Policy addresses the development and delivery of high quality, inclusive, community-based programming at Markham Public Library (the "Library", or "MPL"), supporting the Library's commitment to providing universal access to lifelong learning opportunities and enriching the community.

The Policy provides an overview of programming at MPL and what the public can expect when participating in Library programs. It also ensures that partnering organizations and external facilitators understand the Library's objectives and abide by its expectations. Further, this Policy provides a framework to guide Library staff in the development and delivery of programs.

2.   SCOPE

This Policy applies to all programs, including partnerships, virtual, internal and external programs. (Partnerships are governed by the *Partnerships and Sponsorships Policy*.) It does not apply to Library events developed for special purposes like promotional events, fundraising, and/or events offered by other organizations or individuals on Library premises where space is rented under the terms and conditions of the *Room Rental Policy*.

3.   DEFINITIONS

Programs – Coordinated activities that are facilitated by a Library staff member and/or external subject matter expert that have been developed according to clearly defined learning objectives and outcomes.

Partnership – A mutually beneficial agreement between the Library and an external company, organization, enterprise or individual, where the parties work in close cooperation to achieve MPL goals. The collaboration can include shared space arrangements, shared resources, and service delivery partnerships.

4.   POLICY STATEMENT

The Library is committed to providing inclusive and accessible programming that meets the needs of our community and is aligned with MPL's mission, vision and values. The aim of Library programming is to create an environment where all community members feel that they belong and

can participate freely with respect, dignity and freedom from any and all expressions of discrimination.

MPL develops and delivers programs that:

- Encourage reading, literacy, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and an appreciation of the diverse cultures reflected in broader community.

- Attract new Library users and provide an introduction to the wealth of library services available to community members.

- Are inclusive and accessible, addressing the needs of all community members.

- Utilize a community-based approach to program development by recognizing the diversity of our citizens and communities, and collaborating with local stakeholders.

- Building an awareness of existing community assets and opportunities for improvement.

- Meet clearly-defined learning objectives and outcomes based on community interests, needs and trends.

- Foster social inclusion and connection.

- Are consistent in content, scope, evaluation and delivery on a system-wide basis.

- Uphold the principle of intellectual freedom and support the rights of individuals to read, speak, view and exchange differing viewpoints on any subject provided that they do not contravene the **Criminal Code of Canada** and the **Ontario Human Rights Code**.

- Enable and encourage participation in Canadian society and contribute to a Canadian creative culture.

- Provide experiential, collaborative and self-directed learning opportunities.

The Library may partner with not-for-profit or for-profit organizations in providing programming content. Generally, such external presenters delivering programs will not solicit business, customers or volunteers, or market their commercial products or services. Exceptions to this must be approved by the CEO or designate. Programs will be developed and delivered in compliance with all applicable MPL policies.

Programs delivered by partners will be open to and accessible by all community members and should be provided free of charge. Generally, partners are not compensated by the Library beyond the reimbursement of expenses for program-related supplies.

MPL provides a mix of both free and paid programs to the public. In general, there is no charge for literacy-based programming, such as preschool story-times. Fees charged for participation in other programs are designed to recoup costs related to various expenses incurred by the Library, including those involved in presenting a program.

Statements made or positions taken by presenters during programs, events and meetings do not necessarily reflect the views or values of the Library.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

Programs and events offered by MPL will be consistent with its strategic directions and service priorities. They will also be responsive to the community's current interests and needs. Programs may be tailored to meet the specific needs of the communities being served by individual MPL branches.

Individual programs must also meet some of the following additional criteria. They must:

- Promote cultural awareness that enriches the community and encourages social cohesion.
- Create and promote community partnerships.
- Encourage literacy, including the enjoyment of reading and lifelong learning.
- Highlight materials and services available at the Library, and assist customers in the effective use of those resources.
- Offer training and assistance with new technologies used to offer Library services.
- Promote an awareness of contemporary issues and information required to engage in society.
- Celebrate local history.
- Attract new audience members to the Library.

6. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Programs developed and delivered by MPL will meet its strategic priorities and service delivery standards, and will have clearly defined goals, target audiences, descriptions, outcomes and objectives. Data collected for all programs will be reviewed regularly. Evaluation will include feedback from staff, participants, and partners.

Programs will be delivered by qualified staff or subject matter experts, as appropriate. Programs will contribute to MPL's safe, supportive and welcoming environment.

Programs will embrace the principles of diversity, accessibility, equity and inclusiveness so that all members of the community are welcomed and able to participate regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental capacity or economic status. These include, but are not limited to, access for persons with disabilities, and delivery at times and locations and through channels that maximize convenience and encourage attendance by the target audience.

MPL programs may cover a range of topics and ideas of current interest and possible future significance, including topics and ideas which reflect current conditions, trends and controversies. As with other MPL services, children's access to and participation in programming is the responsibility of parents and guardians.

MPL accepts proposals for programs from external organizations and individuals, and evaluates them according to the criteria in this Policy. MPL may not respond to all proposals. Approval of a

previous program proposal does not guarantee that an organization or individual will be asked to offer the program or have future proposals approved.

7. DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Content may be developed and presented by MPL staff or by experts outside the organization including:

- Authors and illustrator (by whom book sales are permitted).

- Performers (by whom sales of recordings are permitted).

- Agencies, professionals and community members with expertise relating to the programming topic. These presenters may share their business/professional affiliation, but may not sell or promote their products or paid services.

In order to ensure a quality program experience for participants, the Library reserves the right to:

- Limit program attendance based on considerations such as space, customer experience and customer compliance with MPL policies, including the *Unacceptable Conduct Policy*.

- Set age guidelines or limit program attendance to ensure the safe use of space, suitability of content and optimal group size for instruction.

- Determine whether or not a program is viable or fiscally feasible, based on community input, prospective community interest and other factors.

- Cancel or terminate programs that, in the opinion of the Library, are misrepresented by the program provider, do not ensure the dignity and safety of the public or Library staff, are incompliant with any provision of this or other MPL policies, or which place at risk any Library equipment, materials, property and/or space.

- Review its program offerings regularly and make changes, based on the Library's values, vision and mission, as well as community demand and interest.

Should programs be cancelled, the Library will make every effort to notify the public of this decision in a timely fashion.

8. PROGRAM EVALUATION

All programs are designed with measurable outcomes and are evaluated for effectiveness by staff.

To determine community needs and interests, the Library reviews suggestions for programs and events, and uses various mechanisms to gather community input to assist in establishing programming priorities and plans. Evaluation will include feedback from staff, participants, and partners. The Library welcomes and encourages customer feedback and comments regarding the effectiveness of program offerings.

9.   RESPONSIBILITIES

CEO / Directors shall:

- Ensure that they and their employees are acquainted with, enforce and comply with this Policy and related policies.

Managers / Supervisors shall:

- Enforce this Policy.

Employees shall:

- Comply with and enforce this Policy.

Library Administration shall:

- Develop and distribute this Policy;

- Update this Policy per the Review Schedule.

10.   RELATED POLICIES

- *Partnerships and Sponsorships Policy* (POL-Admin)

- *Privacy Policy* (POL-Admin)

- *Room Rental Policy* (POL-Pub Serv)

- *Unacceptable Conduct Policy* (POL-Pub Serv)