



Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number: **OP - 21**

Policy Title: **Programming  
& Partnership Policy**

Policy Approval Date: **January 2021**

Policy Review Date: **May 2025**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Program and Partnership Policy is to assist staff, community members and partners with the guidelines, principles and criteria on how Milton Public Library (MPL) will engage with partners and develop programs.

Programs and Partnerships are developed for the purpose of:

1. Reflecting MPL's Purpose statement
2. Supporting local community needs
3. Providing activities that are innovative, community driven, and which seek to promote literacy and lifelong learning.
4. Creating safe, equitable and welcoming spaces

## **SCOPE**

Milton Public Library's programs and partnerships uphold MPL's Purpose to empower the community to read, learn, innovate, and connect. This policy applies to all MPL staff facilitated, co-planned, collaborative and strategic partnerships and programs offered to the public. This policy also applies to library programs offered through outreach opportunities at the location of partners, other community organizations or community events.

This policy does not apply to programs offered by external organizations as outlined in Milton Public Library's Room and Space Usage Policy (OP-23).

### Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual Freedom is a core pillar of public library service provision, whereby all community members:

“...have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly.”

Milton Public Library is committed to upholding, promoting, and advocating for Intellectual Freedom as a fundamental principle in all its programs and services. In alignment with its policy on Intellectual Freedom (FN-04), MPL ensures that all services, including programming and partnerships, adhere to the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' *Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries* and the Ontario Library Association's *Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual*.

### Criteria for Programs at MPL

MPL adheres to a community-led programming approach, in which the library collaborates directly with community members and organizations from a variety of backgrounds to inform the direction of responsive programs.

As such, MPL's criteria for programs include, but is not limited to, topics that:

- Support the freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression of all community members
- Introduce new forms of technology to promote innovation and life-long learning
- Enhance literacy, lifelong learning, cultural awareness, and community engagement
- Encourage thoughtful debate and discussion on a variety of topics in a safe public space
- Promote, support, and adhere to illuminating equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Advance the path towards Truth and Reconciliation by consulting and collaborating with Indigenous communities and leaders
- Represent viewpoints and opinions from all sides of controversial issues, including unpopular and non-mainstream beliefs
- Meet public demand as determined by timely patron and community feedback
- Provide public access to authors of significance, or individuals and organizations providing subject authority
- Relate the importance of subject matter to community needs and current events
- Celebrate trends and current events occurring locally and globally
- Encourage and provide support to vulnerable and marginalized members of the Milton community
- Foster collaborative partnerships to strengthen community ties and support shared goals
- Reflect a relationship to existing collections in the library
- Meet budgetary considerations

### Criteria for Partnerships at MPL

Partnerships play a vital role in how MPL achieves its Purpose, especially through its community-led approach to delivering services to the Milton community. MPL actively promotes partnerships and collaborative efforts to broaden and improve the services available to its customers, while also creating opportunities for community members to enhance their well-being with access to resources and services beyond what the library can provide on its own.

Guidelines for partnerships include:

- Align with MPL's Purpose and Values
- Advise on how all parties should be recognized in marketing and communication materials.
- Provide the opportunity to achieve strategic directions and objectives that cannot be accomplished independently
- Provide access to resources, information, expertise and knowledge that the Library does not have
- Increase the ability to cross-promote partners' programs and services
- Demonstrate a relationship that, as much as possible, is reciprocal in that there are mutual needs and a sharing of purposes

#### Responsibility for Programming and Partnerships at MPL

The responsibility for programming and partnerships at MPL falls under the Director, Customer Experience and is at the discretion of the CEO & Chief Librarian. All staff at MPL are provided with ongoing training to ensure they effectively support MPL's patrons with responsive programming and partnerships initiatives, by developing their understanding of the needs of the communities served.

#### Approval and Collaborative Partnerships

Partnerships are established and authorized at the leadership and management level, requiring approval from the CEO & Chief Librarian or Director, Customer Experience. Each partnership must be formalized through a signed Collaborative Agreement between the Library and the partnering organization, ensuring a clear framework for collaboration. These partnerships are intended to be of longer-term, fostering sustained mutual benefit and ongoing community impact. The agreement will outline:

- A description and objectives of the partnership;
- A shared commitment to the proposed goals and resources, including financial responsibilities;
- Insurance requirements;
- Cancellation terms; and
- A clear definition of the partnership's benefits and the extent of resource contributions from participating organization(s).

#### Co-Planned Programs

Co-Planned programs are activities that take place in MPL spaces that are offered by Library partners. They are established at the programming level and are considered a one-time program or partnership that does not indicate an ongoing relationship with MPL. Generally, MPL provides its space for free and the partner offers a learning activity for free. The partner can brand the program, but they work with MPL to co-promote the program and include relevant library resources, when appropriate. While co-planned programs are established using the same criteria for partnerships, they are informal, and may involve shorter terms and/or project based and do

not have broad system-wide implications. Co-planned programs require a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Co-planned programs require approval at the management or leadership level.

### Evaluation and Reporting

MPL actively seeks and evaluates community input, including feedback and suggestions related to its programs and partnerships. This ongoing process helps ensure that offerings remain responsive to community needs and interests. All partnerships and programs are intentionally designed with defined measurement criteria, allowing the Library to regularly assess their effectiveness. Through these evaluations, MPL works to ensure that programs and partnerships achieve their intended goals, create positive impacts, and deliver meaningful benefits to the community.

### Request for Reconsideration

Milton Public Library believes that a vital society encourages members of the community to actively participate in an open exchange of ideas and opinions in a safe public space. The content or manner of expressing these ideas through programs and events may, on occasion, be considered offensive by other library users. Milton Public Library recognizes the right of an individual or group to object to a program or event at MPL based on personal beliefs, however, such offence does not provide any individual or group with the right to restrict the freedom of others to participate in library programming and MPL will resist every effort to limit the freedom of expression guaranteed to all community members.

Library users who object to programs offered by Milton Public Library are asked to complete a written “Request for Program Reconsideration” form.

### Program Cancellation

The Milton Public Library reserves the right to discontinue a partnership or program under the following circumstances: failure to meet agreed-upon objectives, including lack of participant engagement or community value; misalignment with MPL’s purpose, vision, and values; violations of legal, ethical, or policy standards, such as MPL’s Code of Conduct, Accessibility, Intellectual Freedom, or Privacy policies; potential reputational or financial risk to MPL; or operational constraints, including staffing, funding, or resource limitations that make continuation unsustainable.

### **Related Documents:**

Milton Public Library: **Programming Request for Reconsideration form**

Milton Public Library: **OP-23 Room and Space Usage Policy**

Milton Public Library: **FN-04 Intellectual Freedom Policy**