LIBRARY PROGRAMMING MADE EASY

A Practical Guide for Librarians

Library Programming Made Easy

PRACTICAL GUIDES FOR LIBRARIANS

⊚ About the Series

This innovative series written and edited for librarians by librarians provides authoritative, practical information and guidance on a wide spectrum of library processes and operations.

Books in the series are focused, describing practical and innovative solutions to a problem facing today's librarian and delivering step-by-step guidance for planning, creating, implementing, managing, and evaluating a wide range of services and programs.

The books are aimed at beginning and intermediate librarians needing basic instruction/guidance in a specific subject and at experienced librarians who need to gain knowledge in a new area or guidance in implementing a new program/service.

⊚ About the Series Editors

The **Practical Guides for Librarians** series was conceived and edited by M. Sandra Wood, MLS, MBA, AHIP, FMLA, Librarian Emerita, Penn State University Libraries from 2014-2017.

M. Sandra Wood was a librarian at the George T. Harrell Library, the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, College of Medicine, Pennsylvania State University, Hershey, PA, for over thirty-five years, specializing in reference, educational, and database services. Ms. Wood received an MLS from Indiana University and an MBA from the University of Maryland. She is a fellow of the Medical Library Association and served as a member of MLA's Board of Directors from 1991 to 1995.

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Library Programming Made Easy

A Practical Guide for Librarians

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Contents

Figures and Tables

Figures

◎ Table

Preface

People of all ages love visiting the library, and they love it even more when there is something fun to do while there. Who doesn't remember attending storytimes, making cool arts and crafts, or attending a fair at their local library when growing up? Maybe now you go to use the library's makerspace, attend a comic con, or just hang out and do some stress-relieving activities in between classes. As programming and outreach librarians, we have the fun (and enviable) job of finding new and exciting ways to attract new users while making sure our regulars keep coming back happy and satisfied with their library experience.

We can remember the first events and programs we put together and how nervous we were as new outreach and programming librarians. Neither of us had a helpful manual; there were few documents left behind to help with planning, and in many cases we just had to make things up as we went along. We know how difficult it can be to plan, budget, advertise, staff, execute, and assess successful library programming, so we are here to help you! Writing this book was an excellent opportunity to showcase all of the amazing programs we have both accomplished over the course of a decade of librarianship. Our readers now get to benefit from our experiences—both positive and negative!

Library Programming Made Easy: A Practical Guide for Librarians is your resource for navigating the ins and outs of library programming, regardless of whether you are a public or academic librarian. In fact, with a little extra imagination and creativity, many of the programs discussed throughout this book are applicable to almost any type of audience. The truth is that everyone, whether they're a child, a teen, a college undergraduate, or an adult, loves a fun and engaging event. Adults of all ages have shown an increased interest in recapturing the carefree feelings they experienced as youths, making retro programs like paper-mache volcano contests cool again as well as enjoying a cultural renaissance of science fiction and superhero themed events like comic cons.

Library Programming Made Easy: A Practical Guide for Librarians features ten chapters chock-full of advice and inspiration for developing and implementing high-quality and engaging library events. In this book, you will find the basics of what programming is and why libraries do it, along with detailed information on how to conduct a program, create a budget, and get partners involved. The book starts from the beginning of the process and gives step-by-step guidelines for achieving programming success. Ready-to-use documents are included, such as survey templates, contract examples, budgets, and more.

If you are brand new to library programming, start at the beginning of the book and work your way through the chapters sequentially. Otherwise, feel free to skip around based on what you're looking for to enhance your programs. Our goal is to help you take your programming game to the next level with tips and resources as you develop and execute innovative programs for your library users.

We have written *Library Programming Made Easy: A Practical Guide for Librarians* with library students, library staff, and librarians new to outreach and programming in mind. Here you will find ideas for tried-and-true programs, ways to forge strong community and campus partnerships, and support for managing your programs from start to finish. We hope you will find the information here informative and inspirational as you plan your own amazing library programs that are sure to wow any audience.

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the support of many people. We would both like to thank our editor Ellyssa Kroski for her constant support and advice throughout the entire writing process, and especially during our scramble at the end to get everything done on time.

I would like to thank all my family and friends for listening to my ideas and my griping about deadlines and editing. The ten years of curated experiences highlighted in this book would not have been possible without the amazing academic outreach librarians, supervisors, and staff I am proud to call my friends and colleagues. Special thanks go to Rachel Besara, Bridgett Birmingham, Gloria Colvin, Abby Scheel, Leah Sherman, Holly Kouns, Elia Trucks, Cat Silvers, Meghan Johnson, Nikki Morse, Ginny Fouts, Jessica Evans Brady, Christie Koontz, Jacque Druash, Suz Byke, and Becca Bichel.

—Michelle Demeter

Thank you to all of the people who have supported my crazy programming ideas, from supervisors to colleagues to employees. None of those ideas would have come to fruition without a team of support. I really had no idea how much I had learned through my experiences over the last fourteen years working in the public library until starting to write this book. Thank you especially to Rhonda Woolhouse, Kate Gray, Marcie Hernandez, and Ana Farr. And, of course, thank you to Cheryl Sheehan, my number one supporter and librarian.

—Haley K. Holmes

Introduction to Programming and Outreach

IN THIS CHAPTER

▷ Public Libraries and Programming

▷ Academic Libraries and Programming

P ROGRAMMING ENCOMPASSES A WIDE RANGE of activities and can include presentations, classes, hands-on projects, exhibits, technology, and multimedia events. Libraries are centers of civic and cultural life, and programming provides individuals and communities with a venue to come together to learn and to share knowledge. Learning takes place through experience, as well as through written forms of communication. At the library people have the chance to be exposed to ideas they may not encounter otherwise. By providing such experiences, the library plays an important role in bringing people of differing backgrounds together to participate in building community. Programming can highlight the experiences, beliefs, and values that connect us as humans while also helping people recognize their bonds to their ancestors, to other cultures, to their community, and to one another.[1] Alongside reference, technology support, instruction, workshops, and community outreach, library programming and outreach are core library services. Well-planned programming successfully engages its constituents whether they be young or elderly, an undergraduate or graduate, unemployed or a faculty member. Whether examples from public or academic libraries, the information in this book can be used to enhance programming at any type of library and will apply to many audiences.

Public Libraries and Programming

Programming has many benefits for the public, but what programming does for the library goes well beyond just bringing people into the building. Events and programs can raise the profile of a library and create media buzz around what libraries do besides house books and computers. Everybody knows that libraries have books for check out,

▲ 1

but many do not know that they can use a 3D printer at the library, learn how to brew beer, play laser tag, or hear a forensic scientist talk about crime scene investigation. The hype around an upcoming program lets people know that libraries have a lot more to offer than warehousing documents and information and that they are current in their offerings of experiences relevant to what is popular and/or needed by today's library users.

Programming is considered an essential service in public libraries today, from story times, Lego time, book clubs, and educational and cultural presentations to computer classes and film screenings. Everyone is given the opportunity to participate in activities geared toward specific groups of people on a daily basis. Programming for adults can take many forms and provides a place for library patrons to meet one another, which fosters a greater sense of community. There are few places where people can go for free and experience the breadth of experiences and engagement found in public library programming.

Events also provide opportunities for community engagement through partnerships. Local colleges and universities, nonprofits, and other organizations bring their services, expertise, and information to the public by coordinating with libraries, which have built-in audiences thanks to their many daily visitors. Library programs are unique in each community because they are open to the public and most often free, which gives individuals the ability to participate in events regardless of their income or ability to pay. Public library programming adds a contextual layer to the traditional ways in which information is housed and disseminated, putting that information into practice. Through hands-on sessions, patrons have the opportunity to experience new ideas and to expand their abilities. Adult programming has evolved along with the methods by which information can be accessed and broken down into five major categories: reading, learning, meeting, making, and geeking, which are explored below.

Reading

Book clubs are probably the most traditional form of programming found in the public library. The act of gathering together to discuss a book that everyone in the group has read has existed for hundreds of years. They became more popular, especially for women, following the Civil War.[2] Libraries are natural places to hold book discussions because librarians can facilitate the formation of groups by obtaining numerous copies of the same title. The popularity of book clubs was given a boost by Oprah's Book Club in the mid-1990s. Oprah's selections over the years have ended up on the *New York Times* Bestseller List, including Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, first published in 1877.[3] Book clubs can address any genre and range from general fiction or nonfiction groups to very specific groups that read only cozy mysteries or contemporary science fiction. Traditional face-to-face book clubs are still very popular in public libraries, but many have now branched out to host virtual book clubs through social media platforms. A book club is the perfect place to start if you are new to programming. The resources are already at your disposal and book clubs are a natural fit for libraries. Ready to start a book club? See chapter 8 for instructions.

Author talks are another natural fit for libraries. Many local authors wish to make presentations at their public libraries and for their titles to be held by those libraries. Generally, for a fee, more well-known authors will speak at a library or do a virtual presentation and Q&A session for library users. To get an author for a reduced price, follow their tours and contact the literary agent when the author is already making a stop in your

town or state. Lesser-known and local authors are often willing to join a book club (in person or virtually) to answer questions when their book is selected for a discussion. Engaging an author with the audience is always exciting for book club members. Members have the opportunity to ask the author what his/her process was in writing the book and to clarify questions they may have about events or characters.

Learning

Educational programs are a natural fit within an institution known for providing access to information. Adults are encouraged to continue to learn although no longer part of a formalized school environment. Subjects extend far beyond the scope of direct library services, such as technology, including downloading electronic content and digital inclusion efforts like computer basics. Library staff teach the basics through upper-level technology languages like coding and app creation. Lectures on history, art, and culture are common, as are series on current social issues, such as racial literacy, women's rights, and immigration. A popular term—"adulting"—has recently made its way into library programming. Classes meant to help new adults traverse the ins and outs of being a grown-up include home buying, healthy eating on a budget, and staying out of debt. While marketed to the millennial crowd, these types of programs attract adults of all ages. Learning practical skills for life appeals to patrons of every age, and public libraries offer an array of learning opportunities.

Figure 1.1. Lemonade Day presentation linking Beyonce's album *Lemonade* and women's empowerment. *Haley K. Holmes.*

Meeting

Libraries fall into what is called the "third place," a space people spend time when not at their home (first place) or workplace (second place). As a community gathering place, neighborhood libraries are popular and centralized meeting spaces. Patrons participate in group activities, coming together with others who may not be members of their usual circles. By providing meeting spaces for established groups like knitters or a book club, a library can increase its public profile by adding these groups to regular library programming schedules. The groups also benefit through the addition of members. Natural partnerships like these are a great way to bring experts into the library to lead programming.

This gathering of diverse individuals creates an environment where ideas are shared and similarities discovered. Programs can expose participants to new ideas and cultures, while at the same time creating connections that highlight the shared beliefs and values of communities. Public libraries are also hubs of civic engagement where constituents can meet their local political leaders and other government representatives, as well as take part in voting. Not all patron interactions at the library are through planned programming facilitated by staff. People go to the library for a variety of reasons and may establish relationships with strangers just through using library spaces and resources. Childcare givers may discuss common interests with each other while searching for books as their children play together. Regular newspaper readers will get to know one another and possibly strike up conversations about current events. Programming brings people together to learn about a specific topic or to engage in a common activity, but connections are often created within the library without staff intervention.

Making

The maker movement is often thought of as technology based, but maker can refer to any hands-on activity where something is produced. Making encompasses projects considered do-it-yourself, or DIY. Many public libraries have created makerspaces with 3D printers, laser cutters, soldering tools, bicycle repair stations, and more, but maker programming can be as simple as scrapbooking or sewing. Libraries do not necessarily have to provide the equipment for people to come together to create and to share ideas about how to create. Many people buy materials and equipment for hobbies, and use them rarely. Encouraging them to come together in a shared space with their own equipment and materials and providing some instruction gives them the motivation to complete projects in a group setting. Participants can share tips and tricks and even materials. This is another great opportunity to bring community members in to lead programs. Library staff do not have to be the experts to bring a new program to the library. Making connections with organizations who already have experts in areas such as coding and photography can yield excellent and varied programming. The maker movement has become an initiative for all ages and lends itself to multigenerational programming.

A DIY program is another easy way to get programming started if you are a newbie. Making programs can be discovered through books already available at the library, as well as Pinterest and YouTube; are done with inexpensive supplies; and are popular among adults. Ready to plan a maker program? Look to chapter 8 for instructions.

Figure 1.2. Patrons participating in a DIY basket-making class. *Haley K. Holmes*.

Geeking

The rise in demand for programming based on popular culture, especially movies, books, and TV, can be seen in many libraries. Some of the most highly attended events are based on common fandoms such as *Star Wars*, Harry Potter, *Game of Thrones*, anime, and comic book characters. These tend to draw a multigenerational crowd, which brings individuals and families together thanks to their love of a particular pop culture phenomenon. Ongoing clubs to discuss film and TV show genres have also become trendy in public libraries. Video, tabletop, and role-playing gaming are popular programs aimed at adults with specific interests and have become another means of finding community among young adults. Adults enjoy these meet-ups as much as teens who are the usual

Figure 1.3. Green screen photo from a *Downton Abbey* tea. *Haley K. Holmes*.

audience for these types of programs. Public library staff have a tendency to have more leeway when it comes to indulging in creative programming for children and teens. Making a case for this type of programming for adults is important in recognizing that play stimulates the brain and provides a source of relaxation while providing a space for patrons to connect with each other. Libraries have gone well beyond the traditional book club by bringing people together who enjoy similar interests based on other types of materials and activities. Many public libraries host their own convention-type events similar to Comic-Con, as well as cosplay groups (people who like to dress up as characters from movies, books, or video games) and sessions on making costumes. There is a direct relationship between the characters celebrated at these conventions and the materials available for check-out at the public library.

Academic Libraries and Programming

Academic library programming shares many similarities with public library programming, but it has numerous differences in its approach, audiences, and emphasis on user experience. Academic libraries rely heavily on programming, outreach, and/or engagement to ensure students and faculty know about and use their resources and services. Academic library programming often falls under the umbrella of outreach, marketing, and/or engagement. Although each term has specific meanings that will be defined within this section, it is not uncommon to see outreach and engagement used interchangeably within academic libraries. Much like marketing, these terms have been given rather broad definitions and may mean something different to individual library staff, resulting in misunderstandings of the outreach or engagement librarian's duties and goals. However, for clarification, this section offers definitions and resources regarding outreach, engagement, and programming.

Outreach

Outreach is a wide-ranging term that may include presentations, consultations, instruction, tours, and/or liaison interactions between the library and faculty, students, or specific campus and academic departments. Outreach is literally reaching out to the campus community and educating them about library resources, services, updates, and changes. Outreach is expected of all library personnel as it simply refers to talking and networking with others across campus or the community in an effort to inform them about library resources and services.

Programming

Programming can perhaps be best considered a subset of outreach that involves event planning and execution. Library events include such activities as fairs, tabling (setting up a table and giving information and/or swag away), and finals activities both within and outside of the physical library. This is typically seen as the "fun" part of library outreach because it allows more flexibility in implementation than more "traditional" outreach efforts like instruction or subject liaison programs. Programming may also involve campus partners and have nothing to do with promoting library resources or services; rather, it may be meant to entertain and/or educate in a way that uses the library's location, spaces, and resources to contribute to the overall well-being of individual students and campus life.

Engagement

Engagement may include the same activities as outreach or programming, but in the end it emphasizes the quality of an interaction. Put another way, engagement is not necessarily about attracting the most people to the library. Rather, it focuses on creating meaningful interactions with patrons to establish the library as a place where students and faculty can connect with others on projects, find and learn how to incorporate technology into projects, and establish a research relationship with a subject specialist librarian. Instead of seeking pure numbers of attendees, engagement can be thought of as a way to provide meaningful interactions with patrons and finding new ways to tell the library's story among stakeholders.

Marketing

Marketing is often conflated with advertising or programming efforts. It is important to note that marketing is the systematic investigation of a segment of users or potential users in an effort to provide directed advertising or programmatic efforts to those identified library users. It typically involves a great deal of assessment and information gathering to determine how to best reach out to specific groups of people. Marketing also includes evaluation of those efforts and is constantly seeking new ways to reach out and keep the library on the cutting edge of what its patrons need and expect in terms of services and resources.

Partnerships

Partnerships are the bread and butter of any good library programming effort. Most libraries find it advantageous to invite other groups to participate in their events in order to boost funding, staffing, and visibility for all participants. Thus, it is not unusual for campus groups to approach the library in planning their own events. Because they are so varied, different types of partnerships for all libraries will be explored throughout this book, along with tips on how to establish and maintain good partnerships. Examples of potential partners include:

- Academic departments
- Academic groups (e.g., honors, undergraduate, or graduate research offices)
- Campus religious groups
- Campus union
- Community groups
- Greek life
- Health and wellness centers
- Poetry and literary groups
- Student government associations
- Student groups
- Student unions
- Student veterans
- Tutoring groups

Figure 1.4. Student group TEDxFSU talks to fellow students about upcoming events. *Ginny Fouts.*

In order to understand the importance of developing partnerships or to help you convince others of why they should partner with the library, here is an initial list of benefits:

- Prominent location and visibility (whether at the library or the partner's location)
- Combining resources to make a larger or more involved event
- Sharing staffing to allow for longer hours
- Often a built-in audience already exists at the library
- Flexibility in types of spaces available
- Mutual advertisement of library's and partner's services and resources
- Meaningful interactions with patrons
- Establishing the library as a "destination"
- Potential to combine, and therefore increase, event budgets
- Opportunity to engage with the campus/community on a broader scale
- Publicity (campus, community, state, national)

Engaging Students

Engaging students can be tricky as most campuses have robust activity planning committees, student organizations, clubs, and sports, and most students have jobs on top of potentially heavy class schedules and homework demands. While it may seem like the library is an obvious place to do homework and find assistance with assignments, library anxiety often precludes many students from actively using their library, especially during their first year on campus.[4] A great deal of research has shown that incoming freshmen may be intimidated by the sheer size of their school's library, unwelcoming and outdated layouts of the space, standoffish staff or librarians who seem disinterested or out of touch, the Library of Congress system, or the overwhelming number of options and new types of technology that teenagers are expected to automatically understand but may have never previously encountered in their high school careers.[5]

Targeted programming provided during campus preview visits, orientations, introductory courses, and other locations around campus can help break down barriers and help freshmen feel more comfortable about visiting their libraries on campus. This often

means using student workers to welcome new students to the campus and tell the new-comers about how the library works and what it offers. Using a peer-based model has proven successful in significantly reducing library anxiety and provides opportunities for students to connect on deeper levels, perhaps even establishing friendships that are valu-able to university and college retention efforts.[6] In chapter 9, there will be more specific suggestions for developing focused programming for various student groups as the needs of incoming freshmen differ from those of transfer students, upperclassmen, graduate students, and other groups.

Engaging Faculty

Faculty have much different needs than students as they are engaged in higher levels of research and seek support for developing and refining assignments. Because much of what faculty need may be accessed through electronic collections or print materials are possibly delivered to their offices, it can be difficult to attract faculty to the physical library. Programming focused on faculty, however, can engage them and they may even establish deep connections with their librarians. Chapter 9 will provide ways to engage faculty through specialized programming aimed to assist with their research while con-necting them with their peers and supporting their classroom projects.

Telling Your Library's Story

Programming is often used in conjunction with library marketing and assessment, and it can provide excellent opportunities for libraries to "tell their stories." Because funding for libraries is always competitive, it is important that libraries use programming to not only showcase their materials, technology, and other resources, but also to highlight the posi-tive impact libraries have on students, faculty, the campus at large, and their surrounding community. Telling your story can help build a donor base in a campus institution that does not have an alumni base from which to draw as academic departments do. While libraries may lack the spectacle and appeal of athletics, smart programming can foster a strong following and inspire future donors by reinforcing the library's significance within students' academic lives and faculty's professional output. Chapter 10 offers methods to assess programming and how to maximize the library's impact.

Key Points

Whether you are in a public or academic library, programming is an important compo-nent to consider when serving your patrons. Good programming can elevate the status of the library, introduce patrons to new services and resources, and provide a safe space for all users.

- Programming keeps the image of the library fresh through innovative and enter-taining activities.
- The goals of programming for the public and for students share commonalities but may look very different in their execution.
- No matter the type of library, the demographics of your users should drive the types of programming offered.

Now that programming has been defined for both types of library, the next chapter will detail how to make a strong case for providing library programming by highlighting the benefits for various user groups.

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Making a Case for Programming

IN THIS CHAPTER

▷ How Programming Relates to the Mission of Libraries

▷ Different Types of Programming

S OMETIMES IT IS NECESSARY to make a case for doing different types of programs to your supervisor. Programming for adults is complex, including literacy and socialization, as well as lifelong learning, workforce development, digital inclusion, community connections, and more. Programs can range in size from large to small, and they can be recurring events or one-time spectaculars. Regardless of these factors, it is important to show how library programming links to the library's mission and vision and how it enriches the community, both public and on campus. This chapter suggests ways to effectively align your programming ideas with the goals of your library and help ensure your events receive the management support they need and deserve.

How Programming Relates to the Mission of Libraries

Programming provides numerous benefits to the library and its partners. Traditional library resources like books, journals, media, and technology can be linked to programming, leading to their increased use in the physical building and online. Programming supports library missions that include learning, promoting critical thinking, and developing life skills. Patrons are thus exposed to new ideas, have the opportunity to interact with other attendees, and relate the library to more than just written information. Both public and academic libraries have increasingly become community spaces, encouraging interaction within the library while continuing to provide spaces for those who want or need to focus on studying, reading, job applications, or similar activities that demand quiet zones. Thus, programming supports the building of community, bringing people together who have common interests while respecting, as well as enhancing, the traditional functions of the library.

▲ 13

Link to Library Resources

Library materials can be used both to advertise an upcoming program and to complement a program or event. Book displays are a great way to draw attention to new and ongoing programs or to highlight a partnership or special event. It is often fun to host book displays sponsored by community or campus clubs or groups to highlight an event or issue, such as Earth Day or a month-long celebration like Women's History Month. The book display could include a poster detailing affiliated events both inside and outside the library. Book displays often generate excitement about upcoming events, such as Banned Books Week. Wrapping books up and identifying them solely by enticing sentences or reasons why they were banned can generate interest as patrons pick up their mystery books and read them in anticipation of the end-of-September activities that accompany Banned Books Week. A fun alternative is "Blind Date with a Book," which occurs in February with books wrapped up and decorated for Valentine's Day, giving patrons a chance to read a book they might not usually choose for themselves.

A dedicated book club display allows patrons to see the various types of clubs at a location and gives them the opportunity to easily pick up a copy of the next book for discussion. A display with items about jewelry making along with a flier for a beginning beading class can draw the attention of someone who has always wanted to make jewelry but was too intimidated to try with only a book as an instructor. Conversely, having the book display at the program location allows patrons to take home some materials to continue improving on the skills they learned in the beading program. Programs like this one give people the opportunity to try a new hobby or skill without having to purchase all of the materials up front. Once they have a basic understanding of the hobby and have tried out the tools and supplies at the library, people are more likely to invest their own time and money in the future. In these ways, programming has the potential of increasing circulation when tied directly to resources the library already owns.

Civic Engagement

Libraries have increasingly become hubs of the community and of civic engagement. Many libraries serve as voter registration sites and have elections in their meeting rooms multiple times a year. Programming can serve as a way to bring a community closer by highlighting similarities and educating the public regarding the differences between candidates. On college and university campuses, libraries have hosted debates between student political organizations moderated by qualified faculty members. Libraries often host election night viewing parties, providing light snacks and a safe space for patrons to watch the elections unfold live.

Other ways to engage the public include inviting city council members to have their constituent meetings at the library or the League of Women Voters to hold voter registration drives in the lobby. Allow community groups such as homeowner associations and parent teacher organizations to use meeting rooms for free, encouraging more users to step foot into the library. Ask to give a presentation about library services at each of these meetings and put up advertising in the room for upcoming programs and events.

Community Building

As mentioned in chapter 1, libraries are often seen as a third place, where someone may choose to spend their time within a community after home (first place) or work (second place). When designing library spaces, it should be taken into account how people use the spaces beyond traditional services. The library experience involves more than checking out materials; patrons often spend chunks of time browsing items, meeting with others, or using their own devices with the Wi-Fi provided by the library. The types of seating and variety of spaces should match the community needs. Performance spaces, areas to make and create, and living-room-type atmospheres are increasingly included in public libraries, indicating the importance of community spaces. Programming does not always take place away from the public spaces, so this should be taken into account when thinking about how you might incorporate programs and events into spaces where people are already gathered.

Thanks to the different types of spaces available for group or individual study, many college students find that the library is where homework and studying actually get done. For students on campus the library provides a quieter space, away from friends and distractions, where serious research can be conducted, assistance with creative projects can be found, and writing can be more focused. For students living off campus, the library may be their retreat from work and home life, a way to separate school and the rest of their lives. For any student spending a large chunk of time on campus, the library's often central location makes it the ideal location to take a nap between classes, do quick research searches, hold study sessions, or hunker down for a few hours until the next class.

Figure 2.1.   Patrons participating in a passive craft program in a public space. *Haley K. Holmes*.

In between these activities, students may find themselves needing a break from studying or a way to kill an hour before heading to class. In these instances, quick-stop programming like tabling is particularly effective. Tabling allows students to drop by and leave quickly, learn about library resources, connect with campus groups like health and wellness or honors programs, or grab a snack along with a flier for upcoming events.

Engaging Students Beyond Academics and the Public Beyond Books

Programming may be academic in nature, and much falls into this category, such as workshops, book discussions, and symposia. However, numerous studies have shown the importance of providing library users, especially students, with the opportunity to take breaks from studying.[1] It is for this reason finals programming is so popular. These pro-

Figure 2.2. Students enjoy a finals week pet therapy session outside of their campus library. *Nikki Morse.*

grams are not meant to distract from studying but rather offer students a brief moment to step away from their work and recharge their minds and bodies. Popular finals activities include coloring, making bookmarks, simple arts and crafts, mini dance breaks, coffee or snack distribution, yoga, therapy animal visits, and massages. This is also an opportune time to engage partners from across campus to come in and table or provide support services. For instance, health and wellness centers may offer self-care tips. Groups that provide pet therapy may bring along dogs or other animals. Student groups may drop by with snacks, like bananas, pancakes, or coffee. The fitness center may send yoga instructors. The counseling center may offer mini counseling sessions, messages of encouragement, or information on calming techniques to reduce stress and anxiety.

In addition, offering students time to interact with one another and make friends contributes to academic retention efforts.[2] Many students see their new friends and peers as significant, almost functioning as a surrogate family, and programming can support students in developing these meaningful relationships. While some administrators and faculty may not see the immediate value to hosting speed dating, container gardening, or finals activities, the library should conduct assessments that highlight their intrinsic value. Even something as simple as a questionnaire asking students if they have made friends at the library can provide a wealth of information about the library's contributions toward campus retention efforts and student success. Students may not have explicit learning goals when they visit the library to get a massage or free snacks, but there are many gains for both student and library. Not only does programming break down barriers and reduce library anxiety, it fosters trust that the library staff actively address their users' needs and well-being while generating a sense of comfort that transforms the library into that coveted third place, where students feel welcome and productive.

Traditional programming in public libraries for adults focuses on connecting to the library collection through presentations, lectures, and book clubs discussing titles held in the collection. Public libraries have become so much more than repositories of information, and programming has evolved in accordance with that shift. While some programming directly relates to the collection, the topics now skew toward what is popular or trending in society. Crafting, cooking, health and wellness, technology, and home improvement are more likely subjects for programs than the Great Books series or history lectures. Interactive programs, where attendees are active participants rather than passive listeners, are also more prevalent. Patrons meet others who have similar interests and eventually become part of a community of users.

⊚ Different Types of Programming

Programming is not created equal, and it is critical to determine the type of event that is best for individual audiences, ideally using marketing techniques and inquiries. Incorporating a variety of programs allows patrons the opportunity to take advantage of the level of participation that makes sense for themselves.

Ongoing

Many library programs become ongoing, regularly scheduled activities, such as book clubs, tabling, book displays, knitting groups, and conversation groups where people practice newly acquired languages. Library orientation sessions, tours, or classes on how

to use library resources such as downloadables are also important to offer on an ongoing basis so staff can effectively market the library and its resources to new users. Workshops, tutoring, and finals activities may be considered types of ongoing programming as well.

One-Time Programs

One-time programs may be repeated annually or done just one time and never again. Most presentations, symposia, lectures, and film screenings tend to be offered one time. Each monthly celebration, such as Black History Month, with an annual theme means that month's programs will be dependent on that topic, but the events may differ from year to year. For instance, one year may include a book display or book discussion, and another year may feature a lecture series.

If your library system has multiple locations or is on a campus, programs may be repeated or marketed as a series. An example might be classes on money management at multiple locations that are advertised as a financial wellness series. Another series could include a variety of do-it-yourself classes, such as cooking, sewing, or wood burning, marketed as "DIY U." Other events might include a special workshop led by a guest faculty member or student group. They may involve a theme or be part of a community or university-led initiative. All of these series are excellent opportunities for public libraries and college students who especially need to build life skills they may not have learned at home. Libraries can help students learn how to live on their own and/or function as respectful roommates. Because college students have set class and work schedules, a series can be repeated on different days, at different times, or in different campus libraries to attract more attendees.

Large-Scale Events

Large-scale events are programs that take more time and budget than a stand-alone program, typically attract more than fifty participants, may occur over multiple days, and/or require more in-depth planning and organization than smaller or ongoing events. For instance, an academic symposium, hackathon, Wikipedia edit-a-thon, comic con, faculty social gathering, full-day conference for people wanting to start a small business, or a mini Maker Faire may end up garnering larger crowds than the usual library event. A large-scale or special event is an opportunity to pull in more staff members and volunteers

Figure 2.3. Pop Con, a Comic-Con inspired event, brought over 2,000 people to the library. *Ana Farr.*

to take on aspects of the project. These programs require more advanced planning than one-time or regular programming since they tend to have multiple elements or special considerations. Some big events may also become repeated events, although they are generally held on an annual basis when replicated, such as a banned books read-out. A detailed budget will likely be necessary and additional funding may need to be solicited from stakeholder groups, grants, or donors.

⊚ Interview with a Librarian Experienced in Planning Large Events

Rhonda Woolhouse is the Assistant Branch Manager at the Tobin at Oakwell branch of the San Antonio Public Library. Rhonda's favorite programs to plan are those based on pop culture. Her biggest fandom is *Supernatural*.

Q: What are some of the large programs you have planned?

A: We held our first Pop Con celebrating all things pop culture this year and had more than 2,000 attendees. I've also planned events around Harry Potter, *Doctor Who*, *Game of Thrones*, *Downton Abbey*, and *The Princess Bride*.

Q: How do you define a big event?

A: A big event takes time, money, space, and people. It's possible to have a "small" big event which involves numerous elements like crafts, food, activities, and partner organizations, but the expected turnout is less than a large event. If you have more time to plan, a larger budget, more staff to help, and a large venue, you can plan a big event.

Q: How do you decide what pop culture phenomenon to plan an event around?

A: I follow a lot of pop culture Twitter sites so I know when a new season of a show is coming out, or a new *Star Wars* film is about to open. You don't have to be a fan of something to plan an event around it, just find a fan of that thing. There are fan groups for everything and most of them can be found online. Look for local groups, too. Anyone who considers themselves a fan will be happy to share knowledge and to be a part of the event if possible.

Q: How do you know how to plan for how many people will attend an event?

A: Basically, you never know. This is always the hardest part about planning any library event. Plan for the crowd you would like to have. For my first *Doctor Who* event, I was told by coworkers that no one would come for that type of event. I knew there were *Doctor Who* fans out there. Almost 100 people showed up. I considered that a success because it hadn't been done at my library before. Over 160 showed up for *Downton Abbey*. Like I said, you never really know, but the more you put into advertising the event in the right places, the better the chances of a good crowd showing up.

Q: **What is something that you realized you hadn't prepared for?**

A: The first time you do an event, you're likely to overlook something. For Pop Con, I had not planned for enough help for setting up and taking down. But next time, I'll make sure to have plenty of help.

Q: **How do you deal with a failed event?**

A: You have to be willing to take the chance to find out if people will be interested in your event. I was hoping for 200 people for my *Game of Thrones* event and only 50 showed up. Even though it wasn't what I hoped for, I learned a lot from the experience. I made connections with partners that I was able to use for future events. If you have support from your supervisor, it won't feel like a failure as much as a learning experience for the next event.

Q: **What are some tips for staff planning their first big event?**

A: Always buy extra food. People will eat everything you buy. Decide early on if the event will be limited to adults or will be a family event. If it's for adults, make the marketing clear. Some events like *Game of Thrones* are not likely to draw kids, but a Harry Potter event will. People raise their kids on their own fandoms, so a lot of events will bring in families. If the event is for all ages, plan activities for children and activities more appropriate for adults. Signs can be used to indicate those activities that are for adults only.

Q: **What has been your favorite large event?**

A: The next one I'm planning. Planning is definitely the best part. The day of is really full of terror, not knowing if anyone will attend. Pop Con and Harry Potter are my favorites, though.

Q: **What advice would you give to someone who has never done a large event or a program based on pop culture?**

A: Present your idea as though it is a winner from the beginning. Find a supporter in your library leadership team. Start planning early, and don't take no for an answer.

Key Points

Programming is considered an essential service in both public and academic libraries, enhancing traditional library offerings while also highlighting how libraries remain relevant and impactful.

- Library collections can be directly connected to programming in order to increase circulation.

- Libraries are community hubs where people can spend time doing a variety of tasks including engaging in civic duties, meeting others, and connecting through activities.
- Programs come in many different forms, and can be one-time sessions, ongoing regular events, or large-scale, requiring a great deal of planning.

Having made the case for why programming is important, the next step is to determine who makes up your audience in order to decide which programs to conduct. Chapter 3 also gives insight into how to gather programming interest from users and staff.

Notes

1. Gary Felsten, "Where to Take a Study Break on the College Campus: An Attention Restoration Theory Perspective," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 29, no. 1 (March 2009): 160.

2. James E. Eckles and Eric G. Stradley, "A Social Network Analysis of Student Retention Using Archival Data," *Social Psychology of Education* 15, no. 2 (June 2012): 177–78.

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Discovering the Best Programs for Your Library

IN THIS CHAPTER

▷ Defining Your Audience

▷ Generating Ideas

PLANNING A LIBRARY PROGRAM can be as simple as booking a free speaker, reserving a room, and posting a flier on the reference desk or as complex as researching demographics, fundraising, and creating a promotional video for social media. The more you delve into the what and why of programming, the more in sync you will be with your users and their needs and interests. After becoming more comfortable with the details necessary to plan a successful program, you will be free to incorporate more experimentation into the types of programs you choose to offer.

Defining Your Audience

Figuring out what type of programming is right for your community can be an exciting challenge. Most likely there is already some programming in place at your location, but using demographics and survey methods to find user interests can result in programming that fulfills a need rather than relying on traditional programs, such as book clubs and author talks. Try not to fall into the trap of setting up a crochet class because your favorite hobby is making amigurumi animals or starting a science fiction book club because you are a Trekkie. If, after you have done some research, you find that there is a need for crochet classes in your community, go ahead with planning those types of programs. Making sure there is an audience before putting energy into planning a great program helps maintain your confidence also. On the other hand, sometimes a community does not know what they need or want. Resources such as the Business Decision database (a subscription web-based software service accessed through local libraries) and the United States Census (https://www.census.gov/) can help identify those unknowns. Assessment

▲ **23**

surveys and feedback can also guide idea generation. This chapter will give more information concerning generating ideas and finding your audience while chapter 10 offers more detailed information on building more formal assessments.

Looking Beyond the Built-In Audience

Public library users generally fall into two categories. The first category includes the loyal users who come every three weeks (or however long the circulation period is), every week for a specific program such as storytime, or once a month for a book club. The second category is made up of people who have a one-time immediate need, such as a tax form, a specific book for their child's research project (due tomorrow, of course), or to renew their library card so they do not lose access to electronic materials. Loyal library users continue to be so even if they move from one state to another. Bringing in people who fall into the second category more than once in a great while is a challenge all libraries face. Appealing to that group beyond the periphery takes thought, creativity, and persistence.

Take a look at circulation statistics in detail to find some of the audiences that are not so obvious. If cookbooks or craft books are circulating heavily in regard to the nonfiction collection, bring in a local chef for a cooking demonstration or offer a series of DIY classes. In the months leading up to summer, there may be a rush on travel guides. Have a travel agent or a national park ranger give a presentation on potential destinations and money-saving travel tips. True crime novels are often popular selections. Contact your local college to find a criminology professor to give a presentation on forensic science. Home improvement is another popular area that lends itself to numerous programming ideas from having a local hardware store give a demonstration on tools to a hands-on project allowing adults to use power tools.

Attracting Students and Faculty

Many universities and colleges have students living on campus, making these groups an excellent built-in audience. However, many campuses have strong commuter populations who often stay on campus all day due to the difficulty of finding parking or the distance driven. Regardless of the student, most will spend a great deal of time on campus, even if only for a day or two each week, and the library may be the place where they spend their down time between classes. Faculty can be a challenge to get into the library, but the fact many are already on campus means they are an audience just waiting to be tapped. Because of the different demographics on campus, it is important to offer a wide variety of programming of both an academic and a fun nature. Lectures, symposia, tours, tabling, and resource fairs are all excellent ways to attract users to the library. Thanks to its often-central location on campus, the library functions as both the literal and metaphorical heart of campus, and a good programming library can tap into that potential with creative and targeted events.

While the library is not the only group on campus vying for students' attention, there are many ways to attract students. Recruiting a student advisory board can be one way to start. Contact student government to invite a few students to attend a feedback meeting. Use liaison librarians to reach out to their representative departments and ask for undergraduate and graduate students to volunteer or be nominated by their department head for the student council. In addition, an online form on the library's website can invite students to self-nominate themselves. Using a Google form or other online form can help keep track of applicants. Be sure to invite a variety of students from different majors and

at different stages in their academic careers. Some libraries separate out their councils by designating ones for undergraduates, graduates, or even STEM majors. It is up to you to determine what the best makeup of your team will look like.

Faculty and students can also be surveyed to get a sense of what services, events, or resources they might think the library is missing or should continue offering. Keeping surveys simple is key; they should include as many multiple choice options as possible and allow for comments at the end, but they should not exceed ten questions. Surveys can be sent out to students and faculty based on the school's regulations. Surveys can also be conducted via an online or paper form at the library's entrance/exit or just outside the library to capture opinions from people not already using the library.

Attending other groups' activities and events is a good way to get a sense of what students and faculty are doing across campus. Seeing what is successful elsewhere on campus could spark an idea to host an event, like a comic con or a lecture. Attending these events can also provide an opportunity to create potential partnerships. For instance, if an event seems like it should have been widely attended but did not attract many attendees, talk to the organizers and offer the library as a venue for the next event. As a central location with a built-in daily audience, the library has much to offer partners looking to increase their visibility.

Social media is a newer but powerful way to connect with users both on and off campus, especially increasing populations of distance learners. If your library does not already have a Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, or other platform account, build one. It often helps to have one account per library to avoid confusion, even if there are multiple libraries on campus. Form a social media team with members from all interested parties and maintain a schedule for posts. Develop a social media style guide that details best practices for each platform and be sure to pay close attention to spelling. For more information on developing good social media practices and general advertising and marketing tips, see chapter 7.

Figure 3.1.   Arrange advertisements and swag items to entice visitors. *Michelle Demeter.*

And finally, old-fashioned word of mouth is always beneficial. Chatting with students at the check-out or reference desks can result in new ideas. Talking to student workers at the library is often illuminating and offers insight into what students are looking for at the library. By talking with them, you may realize students have no idea that certain items or services are available to them, and learning what the gaps are can allow the outreach team to develop programming or activities that advertise specific library services. One such example involves creating small quarter-sheet fliers with information about the service/item and tabling inside or outside of the library. In the past, handing out food, like candy, ice pops, or popcorn, or a small swag item like a temporary tattoo, bookmark, pen, chip clip, or sunglasses, can attract students' attention and give an outreach team the opportunity to spread the word about the amazing resources the library offers and get suggestions as to what else can be offered.

Using Demographics to Reach the Community

Communities change over time, so it is important to regularly look at the demographics surrounding the library to ensure you are bringing in the people closest to your location. If 50 percent of your community is made up of people over age 60 and your user base is nowhere close to that percentage, you are missing a huge portion of the community. There are many resources that can help determine the makeup of a community, including the United States census and databases designed specifically for this purpose. Some of these resources include the buying habits of residents, which can also be used to find appealing programming. If the community is into buying health magazines or spending money on gym memberships, plan programming that speaks to that interest.

Finding Hidden Populations

Discovering populations whose needs are not being met can be one of the biggest challenges in librarianship. Creating displays of library materials can be one way to engage people who do not want to be seen for whatever reason. An LGBT Pride Month display can give users the opportunity to pick up a book on a topic of interest to them unobtrusively. Keep track of how many items are checked out from the display and what topics and materials are most popular. Create displays on a variety of subjects and, through their popularity, you may discover groups you did not know existed in your community. Programs could then be planned based on these topics. Create the display again and advertise the program with the display, including a bookmark or other takeaway item that can be used to remind the interested patron of the date and time of the program. Don't be discouraged if attendance is sparse at first. Finding these populations takes time. Give them the time to feel comfortable and build a community within a community.

⑥ Generating Ideas

Coming up with ideas for programming can be difficult whether this is your first time or you have been leading programming for years. Goals should always include a program that is of interest to the community and that will bring in an audience that is worth the amount of time spent planning. A librarian's interests may align with community interests, but more often than not some research will be required. A great way to discover

new ideas for programs that may fit your community is to follow other libraries on social media.

Gathering Community Input

Sometimes library users will approach staff and ask for or suggest specific services or programs. This can be good or bad. On the one hand, the program will have at least one attendee who is interested in the topic. On the other hand, that may be the only person interested in the program. Make sure the program will appeal to more of the community before committing to suggestions from patrons.

Asking what people want is a great way to gauge interest in programming. A simple survey given to focus groups can be insightful depending on the scope of your audience. People do not always know what is possible for a library to offer, so giving them examples of possible programs can help get them started. Ask if they would attend a variety of programs and events, from lectures to interactive sessions. Use the survey to find the best days and times to offer programs for adults. Include demographic questions to see if varying age groups prefer different types of programs and are available at different times during the day. Senior citizens may prefer daytime programs to evening programs, and millennials may prefer after-hours events on weekends.

Harnessing Staff Interests

Working in a library is a team effort that extends beyond shelving, circulation, and reference. Programming does not have to be a solitary endeavor. Staff members have many talents and interests outside of the library and often find bringing those interests into their professional work to be fulfilling. This can be especially true of aides and clerks who do not intend to pursue librarianship. Match staff interests to community interests. Ask staff what topics they would be willing to teach or book genres they like to read. Include these as possible programs in a survey for users. For those who are reluctant or nervous about presenting for the first time, encourage staff to partner with each other to plan a program. They can work together to discover each other's talents. One person may prefer

Figure 3.2. Sample survey. *Haley K. Holmes.*

coming up with the idea or advertising the program while the other is more comfortable doing the presentation. Not all staff will want to be involved in programming, but there are many ways to involve them behind the scenes. Craft preparation or preparing a flier are just as important as leading the program. An employee who loves to garden could be the person who helps to plan the community garden plots but does not necessarily end up being the person who leads the gardening program.

Key Points

Discovering the groups likely to attend programming at your library will make the process of deciding which programs to present much easier.

- Define audiences through demographic research and by reaching out to current library users for their opinions.
- Consider how staff interests can be used to contribute toward planning and executing programs, especially when it comes to hosting a large event.
- Audiences are not always obvious and some experimentation may be necessary to find vital groups that are present but not always apparent.

Once you have established your audience, you will want to look for partnerships to help provide the programming identified. Chapter 4 will go into detail about how to find and establish partnerships with numerous types of groups and individuals for both public and academic audiences.

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Finding Programming Partners

P**LANNING A PROGRAM** or putting on an event does not have to be a solitary endeavor. Many organizations and individuals want to bring their knowledge and information to others and often approach libraries with the request. Partnering with a library is the perfect way to find an audience and a meeting space for individuals wanting to share their knowledge and for established groups looking to increase their attendance. Sometimes those individuals are not associated with an organization or business but just want to share a hobby they are passionate about, while others may be looking for opportunities to practice giving presentations as they prepare for a new career. Whatever the reason, look at the information that will be presented to determine if the fit is right for your library and its users. Many great programs come straight from the community. Partnering is a great way to connect with people in the community and to create a catalog of presenters who are often willing to present for free.

Public Libraries

Programming partners are easy to come by for public libraries. Many community groups, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses reach out to libraries and offer to share their information, knowing that their target demographics often visit public libraries. Many times these individuals or groups are willing to offer a program for free because they see the benefit of getting their information out to the public. On the other hand, while there can be many groups lined up to offer programs, there are also many groups the library may want to seek out to partner with on an idea that staff already has. For instance, a do-it-yourself cosplay costume program would be greatly enhanced with an

▲ **31**

introduction by a local cosplay group dressed in their own creations. People love to share their own interests and passions, so approaching an individual or group asking for them to be a part of a program or event is often met with excitement and affirmation. Local, state, and even national government offices can be additional resources for program ideas. Some examples of potential government partners include your state's parks and wildlife department or health department, both of which may already have programs prepared to offer as outreach at the library.

Community Groups

Community groups can encompass a wide range of groups, from people who just like to get together to share an interest like geocaching or bicycling to people who take their passions very seriously and invest significant amounts of time and money, such as Civil War reenactors. Meetup.com and Facebook are great places to connect with these types of groups in order to set up a potential program. This is especially helpful if you do not know where to begin with a program on a specific topic. Contacting someone interested in that topic can lead to a chain of referrals until the right person is found. Most groups are looking to add members so offering a program at the library can be just what they need to find those potential members. Partnering has benefits for both sides.

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations are typically created with the goals of supporting a cause and educating others about that cause. They are also self-sustaining and must make money through donations to support their cause. Partnering with a library can be beneficial for nonprofit organizations in numerous ways. Many libraries have community information boards or tables where groups can post their fliers and brochures. Their locations within communities make the perfect settings for groups to get the word out about their services available in that community. Libraries are seen as authorities on information so they are trusted in the community; therefore, advertising in a library gives partnering organizations an added boost of trustworthiness by association. This can apply to services as well. Depending on the community, partnering with an organization to provide free HIV testing at library locations could result in attracting individuals who are afraid to go to a doctor and them receiving a service they desperately need in a setting they find more trustworthy.

Libraries seek to be neutral spaces leaving room for both sides of controversial topics, but it is questionable whether that is truly possible. When partnering with an organization whose stance may be considered controversial by some of your users, consider whether an organization with the opposing viewpoint could also be invited to make a presentation. If the answer is no, then this may not be the program for your library.

Local Businesses

Library policies vary and may exclude businesses from providing programs, but there can be other ways to engage them for mutual benefits. A new business in the neighborhood may send an employee with advertisements or coupons hoping to solicit library users or staff. While leaving fliers or coupons may not be allowed per your community information board policy, the business could get indirect publicity by providing refreshments at a

program. Acknowledge the business with a sign indicating what they provided and their logo and address.

If library policy allows, many people in business for themselves or part of a larger organization want to bring their services to library users. Many times this type of program involves financial services or health insurance. A personal service agreement can be particularly useful in this situation, where protecting patrons from solicitation is an issue. The agreement can state exactly what is expected of the presenter and what is prohibited, such as collecting personal information from the attendees. While a little more oversight and planning may be required for this type of partnership, it can still be beneficial for the library and the presenter. Although the presenter may not be allowed to specifically talk about their company, if they give a useful, informational presentation, there may be individuals who follow up on their own and make a connection later, bringing business to the presenter. The best way to organize a program when approached by someone clearly wanting to promote their business is to be up front about the purpose of library programming and what the library's policies state with regard to solicitation. It is possible to have a program with a business that meets the policies set by the library.

Stakeholders

A library's established stakeholders may not be the first group you think of to partner with for programming, but they can often provide programming as well as connections to other individuals and groups who may also provide presentations or activities for patrons. These groups may include but are not limited to a library foundation, Friends of the Library, or even a library board. The benefits to including these groups can include

Figure 4.1. Friends of the Library supporting a family event. *Haley K. Holmes.*

a greater understanding of the library and its mission and vision, creating a connection with staff, and potentially increased financial support. Many people who join these groups have a vested interest in libraries and want to work toward their success. By engaging individuals from these groups, they gain a bigger sense of connection with the work they are doing on the outside. Find what their interests are and engage them on a personal level, inviting them to attend a program or to be involved in the planning or even as part of a presentation. A library board member who is involved in the film industry might love the chance to judge entries in a teen film festival. Someone in the Friends of the Library group who scrapbooks in her free time might be delighted to be invited to present a paper craft program and may even offer to provide the supplies. Creating a meaningful connection to the library will engage these groups, further strengthening their commitment to supporting the library and the programs being offered.

Academic Libraries

Partnerships abound on college campuses. At times, partners will seek out the library to host a program or partner to participate in something that extends across campus. At other times, library staff have an idea that would be vastly improved by adding others from around campus. In either case, it is clear that the library is often a desirable location on campus to host and promote programming and events. This section considers ways to engage various groups across campus and ways to involve them in building a partnership. Although not always necessary, some academic libraries complete a memorandum of agreement with their partners. This document clearly outlines what each partner brings to the table regarding staffing, space allocation, funding, and other resources as well as detailing the expectations of both partners so that there are no surprises and it is clear what each partner is responsible for.

Finally, be sure to come prepared to list the many benefits holding a program at the library can offer each group. Due to the centrality of most campus libraries, the location alone is often a significant attraction. For many groups, whether they are new or looking to showcase themselves, visibility is key and many libraries offer this perk for free. Every library has something unique to offer its partners, so have a list prepared when you meet with any potential partner. Prepare a couple of lists—a long one in case you have a good deal of time, and a short one, also known as an elevator speech. An elevator speech is usually less than a minute and meant to grab someone's attention quickly (see chapter 5 for more information and examples). It helps to have a few prepared speaking points regardless of when or how long you think the meetings may last so you are prepared for anything that could arise. If you are still having difficulty attracting partners, just ask why the groups were not interested. There may be nothing you can do about some feedback, such as hours or size of the space, but for other seeming concerns there may be solutions—don't be afraid to be creative and to critically evaluate the library from the perspective of your users.

Student Groups

Student groups are perhaps the easiest to make partnerships with, because so many of them have service requirements or activities they want to conduct or share with their fellow students. If, however, student groups are not lined up at your door asking to bring

Figure 4.2. Students seek out "Ask the Sexpert" for health & wellness advice. *Nikki Morse.*

their programs to the library, there are plenty of ways to find them. Often campuses host resource fairs and tabling events during orientation and throughout the year. Reach out to the overarching student affairs department to find out how to become involved. Once at those fairs, work the tables. Introduce yourself and ask about the group. As you learn more about the group, ask whether they put on any programs or events. If so, ask if they have ever considered hosting their event in the library. Perhaps as the students were talking an opportunity to combine their participation with an existing event arises. If there are no resource fairs, consider starting one sponsored by the library. Email the leaders of each group and invite them to participate. The fair could be all encompassing or have a theme. Student workers are also a great resource. Send them to the fairs to recruit their peers. Or perhaps the student employees are involved in groups that would like more exposure by setting up a program or event at the library.

Often the library's location and guaranteed foot traffic is enough to convince students to give the library a try. However, if potential partners are hesitant, woo the organizations with the numerous benefits to their organizations. Perhaps you offer free and/or attractive space they can use. If the group is new, tabling can offer excellent visibility and help them attract new members or even get a new group up and running. Will the library help the group set up or provide direction on planning a successful event? Many students have never organized a program, and the library is in a unique position to coach and mentor students who want to give back to their campus community but may need some support

and guidance. Share planning guides and ask students what they need from the library to make their program a success.

Student Government

Student Government Associations (SGA) make fantastic partners. Students in these organizations have a clear stake in their school, and as leaders they have more power than the average student to make large-scale changes for the better. The fastest way to get their attention is to attend a meeting. Again, librarians can go along or bring/send staff or students on their behalf. Regardless of who goes, have a very clear introduction ready. SGAs often possesses a substantial budget that must be spent on student activities and academic endeavors. In this case, the SGA could partner with the library in providing funds for student symposia, finals events, buying equipment to use at library events (tents, prize wheels, tables, chairs, equipment rentals, etc.). The SGA could also host its own event to engage with students, such as a student mixer or speed friending event. While the SGA likely has venues available for its events, a new venue could breathe new life into an older event or attract students who did not frequent the other locations. Using the library as a location for SGA election debates and/or as a voting station for annual electrons can boost the library's and SGA's visibility and show the library's commitment to broader student issues.

In general the SGA can be a strong partner and advocate for the library, and not just for programming. Successful partnerships have led to donations of computers and funds for substantial renovations and beginning new or innovative services. Partnerships with SGAs can be challenging, however, as the leadership changes each year and often is not in alignment with a library's fiscal calendar, making it difficult to ensure the longevity of any arrangements. Despite this potential issue, the SGA is often interested in ways to impact as many students as possible and the library can offer suggestions for achieving this goal.

Academic Departments

Academic departments make excellent partners in graduate and faculty programming. A good deal of academic programming seamlessly aligns with the mission and goals of most academic departments. Inviting faculty or students to give presentations, host lectures, or cosponsor symposia are some of the most visible types of partnerships. Liaison librarians are the best choice to approach departments. With their established contacts and relationships, liaisons are often already highly tuned in to the needs and aspirations of faculty and students. They should be empowered to offer the library as a venue for departmental programming and events. Departments can also provide funding for symposia, acting as cosponsors and helping to bring in national-level speakers or providing meals for attendees.

However, if there are no liaison librarians, try sending emails to the office managers to ask who would be the best contact regarding a potential partnership. Contacting the dean or department head could work well, but often they are very busy and may not return calls or emails in a timely manner. Attending department events and researching the faculty members through the department's website and publications can also help identify potential partners. Do not be afraid to pop up at lectures, symposia, or the office if in the area. Know that these opportunities will provide a brief window for conversation, so

come prepared with your pitch about the library, what it can do for them, and how you'd like to better partner with the department on future planned or hypothetical programs.

Administrative Partners

Administrative partnerships may be the most difficult to establish due to the nature of administrative departments work and their staffing. Administrative departments might include institutional research or assessment, student affairs, the graduate college, undergraduate studies, counseling, health and wellness, or honors. Even in this brief list, the partnerships that could unfold are limitless, but with heavy workloads and events to host in their own buildings, it can be challenging to coax these groups to the library. The designated outreach librarian is probably the best person to forge relationships with these groups if partnerships have not already been established. Emails are a good way to reach out and schedule introductory meetings. However, attending other partners' events and noting things that go well or could be improved may open the door to a conversation about moving an event, duplicating it, or offering a variation at the library. In this instance, emphasizing the opportunity to reach students who do not already frequent the buildings where these partners are located and the foot traffic in and around the library may be great selling points. Providing a rotating tabling calendar, inviting them to a resource fair, or building a themed program with an administrative partner could go a long way in helping them realize the benefits to partnering with the library.

◉ Key Points

Establishing partnerships is crucial to offering diverse perspectives in library programming. Many groups and individuals will be eager to partner with you, but you will have to approach others.

- Attend events where you can find potential partners.
- Send emails to potential partners and find opportunities to connect.
- Use your connections with library staff, volunteers, student workers, and librarians to connect with new partners.
- Prepare a brief list of benefits to partnering with the library or a list of upcoming programs your partner could join.

Partners enhance programming for everyone involved. Once you have partners identified, you can begin to develop your budget and determine how much funding you'll need to make your dream programs come to fruition.

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Funding and Budgeting

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— IN THIS CHAPTER —

▷ Identifying Funding Options

▷ Developing Effective Budgets

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Identifying Funding Options

SECURING FUNDING FOR PROGRAMMING can vary greatly depending on the type of library, the proposed program and audience, and how a library is funded, for instance whether through student fees or tax dollars. For some libraries, programming funds are considered part of their general fund, meaning the money is guaranteed annually as part of the regular budget, while others rely solely on donations, grants, or support groups for a programming budget. Providing quality programming does not require a huge budget, but ambitious projects involving equipment, such as makerspaces, do need a substantial sum to build and to maintain. Funding can come from a variety of sources, and knowing your options will help you find the financial support you need. Every event and interaction by librarians and library staff at any service point in the library could result in a potential donation, so it is important for all library staff to be prepared to talk about the library's mission, goals, and opportunities for support and how the library's programs contribute to the benefit of its communities.

Making the Most of Library Support Groups

Groups such as Friends of the Library and library foundations often raise money for the resources a library needs outside of its regular budgets, which may include funds for programming and associated costs like supplies and equipment. Donors are also an effective group to reach out to. Some libraries have development offices or individuals dedicated to fundraising. Libraries often attract community and corporate sponsors or donors who

are interested in funding specific areas or programs, such as makerspaces, entrepreneurial programming, reading or storytime sessions. If your library is hosting a large community event like a comic con or resource fair, donors may want to sponsor a booth or table for the library or to sell or promote their own company.

When a group is connected to the outcomes of their fundraising efforts, members may become more engaged in what library staff hope to offer with regards to programming. Presenting the group with wish lists of items or programs you want to offer in the future is another way to give substance to the work the group is doing. If the library has a goal in mind (for example, to purchase a 3D printer along with the cost for that item and supplies), it can let its members know what they are working toward or approach potential funders with the goal and purpose for the money it is raising. Of course, any successful donor campaign needs a robust social media and website presence. Regardless of the source of your funding, be sure to thank your financial supporters with thank-you notes, special library swag, and/or acknowledgments on advertising and program materials.

Securing Grants, Donors, and Development Opportunities

Library staff may be eligible for grants to help pay for big name presenters, such as famous national or local authors, or for specific projects like an adult education class series. Larger systems may have a staff member who is tasked with writing grants or assisting staff with their applications. If staff are prohibited from applying for grants, support groups may be able to apply on behalf of the library. There are many sources to find grant opportunities for both public and academic libraries including grants.gov, the American Library Association, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Not having an alumni network to pull from like academic departments, academic libraries need to be more creative than their peers. Some academic libraries may have a designated grant writer or a development office that seeks grants and donations. In this case, the development officer and their team will solicit donations and work with the university to participate in and/or develop campuswide fundraisers. These fundraisers might include a sponsoring partnership with athletics to promote the library or offering a percentage of ticket sales to the library. It could mean adding the library to an existing fundraising campaign on campus. Identifying a specific cause, such as buying textbooks, renovating a library space, or purchasing an item for special collections, will help generate excitement for the cause. Another great way to raise funds is by throwing an event attached to the acquisition or promotion of a special collection or the opening of a new library space. Throwing a themed party connected to a collection unique to the library, such as civil rights papers, medieval manuscripts, local history, or artists' books, can offer a fun and educational event that raises the bar for attracting wealthier or connected potential donors or supporters, or even campus or community administrators who control funding.

Many grants exist for all types of libraries, and each has its own deadlines, guidelines, and requirements for applications. Doing a Google search for your state may reveal additional grant opportunities. When searching, be as specific as possible once you have exhausted all general searches. Look for library technology, research, construction, literacy, etc. Below is a select list of national-level grants available to different types of libraries.

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—https://www.gatesfoundation.org/
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services—https://www.imls.gov/grants
- National Endowment of the Humanities—https://www.neh.gov/grants
- Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) Research Grants—https://www.oclc.org/research/opportunities.html
- Librarian and Researcher Knowledge Space Grants—http://www.ala.org/tools/research/larks/grants
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Academic Library Impact Research Grant—http://www.ala.org/acrl/awards/researchawards/impactgrants
- The Journal Weekly Updated List of Grant Opportunities—https://thejournal.com/grants
- Scholastic's List of Updated Grants—http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/programs/grants.htm

Making Your Case for Funding

Creating a solid plan of action for programming funds is imperative to ensure they are spent fully within the time frame given by the fiscal department. The best case for funding is a proven track record of successful programming. Make sure to keep a record of program outcomes including statistics, survey responses, and photographs. When it comes time to ask for more funding, this portfolio will show how the money was spent and the success generated through those funds. Create a list of potential programs and associated costs so you are always prepared to make an ask if funding becomes available or a grant opportunity arises. Having a wish list ready will make the process much easier than coming up with a plan with a short deadline. Tying programming goals to library, community, and campus strategic plans shows the necessity of funding quality programming efforts.

Crafting a Compelling Elevator Speech

One way to always be ready to talk to potential donors is to have an elevator speech ready. An elevator speech is a short, compelling, and concise pitch that gained its name because it should last long enough to be given during an elevator ride. Most elevator speeches last thirty seconds to one minute and offer quick details or statistics about a topic, or make a strong argument or advertisement for your topic. It is important to keep in mind your audience and what is appropriate to ask for or say, so it might be a good idea to run your elevator speeches past a supervisor to ensure you are not overstepping your boundaries or perhaps making an ask at a time when library administrators are seeking funding for something larger than your program. Good outreach and programming librarians, library managers, and administrators have a number of elevator speeches at the ready, covering a wide range of scenarios. Below are a few examples of elevator speeches.

If these speeches seem too stilted or one-sided, you could just carry or memorize a brief list of talking points that you keep updated regularly. This way you can raise a topic and have a brief conversation that evolves more naturally. Regardless of what you choose, be sure you are always prepared to promote the library, your programs, and the positive impact the work you and your colleagues do has every day on the campus or local community.

Good morning, Provost Birmingham! I am not sure we have met before, but I am the outreach and engagement librarian at Allen Library. We're working on an amazing speed friending program focused on helping new students make friends and feel more comfortable visiting the library. We know that students who feel connected to campus are more likely to return the next year, and we feel this is one way the library can help. We're currently seeking sponsors and if you are interested, I would be happy to give you my information for a follow-up.

Good afternoon, Professor Besara! It's good to see you again. I wanted to make sure you were aware of our upcoming faculty events. I am sure you and your colleagues would love to join us here at the library for the faculty social we're planning, which will give you an opportunity to network with administrators and faculty from across campus while enjoying some delicious local wines and hors d'oeuvres. We're also planning a symposium of discussions revolving around the fake news phenomenon that I am sure you will find informative and engaging. I hope to see you at one of these events soon!

Good afternoon, Mrs. Agostin! I am the outreach librarian at the downtown branch of Leon County libraries, and it is a pleasure to meet you. I'm not sure if you have heard that we are organizing a comic con here at the library, and we are looking for community sponsors and business owners to provide sponsorships or sell their related products. Since you own two local comic shops, I thought you might be especially interested. Here is my business card if you'd like to discuss this opportunity in more detail.

Developing Effective Budgets

Developing a budget may seem like a daunting task if you have never created one before, but with a little practice, a budget can be easy to create and maintain. This section is not meant to make anyone a spreadsheet or budget pro, but rather to help librarians and staff consider factors for their budgets and how to use them in support of funding requests and grants. Below are some tips and budgeting basics intended to demystify the process and put a little kick in your spreadsheets.

The easiest way to compose a budget is by using a spreadsheet, which can be done through Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets. If you are not familiar with Excel or Google Sheets, watch some YouTube videos, check out Lynda.com if you or your library has a subscription, or seek out the spreadsheet gurus in your library or community. Once you have a working familiarity with a spreadsheet application, seek out some sample budgets from coworkers or online. Budgets can range from simple, one-sheet files to multi-sheets and pivot tables. Of course the most crucial component to any budget is money. There are many types of budgets that apply to programming planning, including budget proposals, operating budgets, and static budgets.

It is important to remember that outreach and programming librarians often maintain multiple budgets spanning event costs, staffing salaries, and may even separate annual

versus individual event planning. Just as there is not just one type of budget, there often is not just one budget for a single event. For instance, there may have been a budget proposal to request funding, which was awarded. Then a budget may be necessary to track the actual spending of the funds based on the amount of the award. If the program is comprised of multiple events, each event may have its own budget to keep track of individualized spending so that it is easy to evaluate whether some events cost more or less and to move money around for the remaining events as necessary. Spending less than projected on early events may mean later events can have extra funds or an additional event could be added. However, budgets can also ensure planners rein in any superfluous spending if it appears they are going over budget early on or if unforeseen factors demand funds not originally considered. Budgets are fluid documents and must be regularly maintained to be useful, so be sure to keep track of all budgets and manage the files in a way that makes them easy to find, be understood, and able to be compared.

Budgets may be required as a fulfillment of a grant application or other funding request. In order to know what type of budget to use and how to best set up your spreadsheet file, you will need to determine several factors. Before beginning, it is important to gather as much information about the budget as possible.

- Is the budget tied to grant money or other special funding with specific guidelines or restrictions?
- Are you starting from zero and requesting a specific amount of money?
- Do you have a dollar amount assigned?
- Does the budget cover an individual event?
- Does the budget cover multiple events?
- Does each event need its own file or can they be combined?
  - If the events can be combined, should they be on one sheet or multiple sheets?
- What time period does the budget cover?
  - One event? A month of events? A semester? A year?
- Is the year calculated annually? (e.g., January 2018 to December 2018) or fiscally? This varies depending on the library and what department controls its budgets; while it could be January 2018 to December 2018, it could also be July 2018 to June 2019.

Writing a Budget Proposal

A budget proposal seeks to convey the amount of funds a proposed event or program may cost. It may be a required component of a grant or other funding application. A proposal may cover one or multiple events and span any length of time. Typically no dollar amount has been assigned yet and the proposal seeks to request a specific amount of funding. Often a written explanation accompanies the budget and may detail each item's necessity, cost, and identification of where the item will be purchased. Reviewers may suggest alternate pricing or purchase options. Do not assume administrators will connect the dots or see the intrinsic value of your program. Be sure to clearly show the purpose and expected outcomes for the planned event so reviewers understand how the money will be spent and how it directly impacts the mission and goals of the library.

It may take months or even a year to receive a response to a grant funding request, so that must be included in the planning process. When written for a library supervisor,

Annual Programming Budget — 2018-2019

	Purpose	Est. Cost	Actual Cost	Reimbursement Date	Notes
Learning Commons					
Library Welcome Event - Open House		$50.00			
Book Displays		$50.00			
Fall resource fair		$150.00			
Escape Room		$50.00			
Kissing Booth (to be held at various times in Fall & Spring)		$25.00			
Finals Week Fall		$150.00			
Finals week Spring		$150.00			
Marathon Reading Fall		$50.00			
Spring resource fair		$150.00			
Banned Books Week		$50.00			
Veterans tours (fall & spring)		$30.00			
Undergrad Advisory Board		$50.00			
	Subtotal	$945.00	$0.00		
Scholars Commons					
Grad Student Orientation		$20.00			
Bootcamps (Soc sci, hum/arts, STEM, etc.)		$75.00			
Grad Social (Fall and Spring)		$1,000.00			Co-sponsored by Grad School ($1,000 for fall)
Book Discussion		$50.00			
Grad Advisory Board		$50.00			
Fall Symposium		$300.00			
Spring Symposium		$300.00			
	Subtotal	$1,795.00	$0.00		
Miscellaneous events (all locations)		$535.00			
	TOTAL REQUESTED	$3,275.00			Not counting Grad School donated funds
	Donated	$1,000.00	$1,000.00		Donated by Grad School
	Total to Spend	$4,275.00			
	Total Spent		-$1,000.00		

Figure 5.1. Annual event budget spreadsheet example. *Michelle Demeter.*

the response is likely to have a much quicker turnaround. Regardless, start the process early if the program is entirely dependent upon the proposal's approval, bearing in mind that not all proposals receive full or partial funds. If funding is denied, be sure to have a backup plan if the program is essential or important.

Keeping Track of Your Spending

A budget typically has a set funding limit and is useful in keeping track of event expenditures over the course of a year. It may also be used for individual events or multiple events that are part of a unified program, such as a workshop series or summer reading program.

			Estimate	Actual	% of budget
2		**Budget estimator**			
3		Total budget:	$250		
4		Estimated 90 participants			
5		Incl breakfast and snack foods	Estimate	Actual	% of budget
6		*Totals*	222.00	216.87	89%
7	Sam's	Chips - pack of 30 Flavor x 2	$25	25.44	10%
8	Sam's	Chips - pack of 30 Variety x 2	$25	23.32	10%
9	Sam's	Chocolate Candy Mix -1	$13	12.84	5%
10	Sam's	Bananas - 12 bunches (3lbs each)	$10	16.68	4%
11	Sam's	Dr. Pepper cans (one case)	$15	10.69	6%
12	Sam's	Sprite cans (one case)	$15	10.98	6%
13	Sam's	Coke Zero cans (one case)	$15	10.69	6%
14	Sam's	Coke cans (3 cases)	$33	32.07	13%
15	Sam's	8.5 plates (one pack)	$16	16.72	6%
16	Sam's	Dinner Napkins (one pack)	$10	8.58	4%
17	Sam's	Mints (one pack)	$10	7.98	4%
18	Sam's	Gala Apples 4 bags (6lbs each)	$25	31.92	10%
19	Sam's	Tax	$10	8.96	4%
20	Notes	Only about 50 participants			0%
21		Only used one package of Coke			0%
22		Only used 2 bags of apples			0%
23		Used 7 bunches of bananas			0%
24		Chips are good but lots of cheetos and random chips left			0%

Figure 5.2. Individual event budget spreadsheet example. *Michelle Demeter.*

Operating budgets detail all costs inherent in the operation of an event. These list out supplies, staff costs, the projected budget, and funds actually spent. This type of budget can be overarching for the year or semester, or calculated per individual event.

Often for individual events, a list of all items needed for purchase is helpful not only for approval but also for planning. Keeping track of potential costs can allow you to better search for sale items or discounts that can help your budget go further. If the event occurs each year, saving these budgets and referencing them in the future can save planning time. Make notes on the budget to specify how many items were purchased, what was used versus left over, how many people attended, and whether some items were more popular than others. Doing this strengthens the event and provides an internal assessment of what worked and what didn't. Having documentation like this can also help with succession planning if you lose a librarian or staff member whose job was to organize and execute these events.

General Budgeting Tips

- Submit budget proposals as early as possible to make it easier to plan the event. It is heartbreaking to plan a fantastic event only to miss a deadline or have the funding denied.
- Be prepared to alter your plans in case the budget receives partial funds or no funds at all.
- Try templates provided in Excel and Google Sheets, or look for some online.
- Check to see if there are existing budgets you can use to create your own.
- Add in a "buffer" or miscellaneous line item to address unexpected programs or costs.
- Double-check all cell equations before inputting information and check periodically as data is entered or moved.
- Highlight cells in different colors to note when under or over budget, or when programs were canceled, to differentiate important information.
- Provide a key that explains any highlighted cells, abbreviations, or other codes you might use to save space within the spreadsheets.
- Leave room for comments or feedback on each budget line.
- Have separate columns for projected cost and actual cost.
- Enter data into budgets as it is spent and consider adding separate columns to record the dates receipts were submitted and reimbursed.

Key Points

Identifying funding sources can be easy with a little help from your Friends of the Library group, grants, and donations. Make the best of the funds you receive and be sure to explain how your funded programming activities benefit the library and its users. Budgets are a necessary part of programming and can range from simple to complex. Advance planning and meticulous record-keeping ensure fiscal responsibility and success.

- Funding can be acquired through grants, donations, or other avenues. Make the most of your contacts and resources and be sure to adhere to any guidelines or restrictions attached to the funds.
- Create several budgets to cover the year, semester, or quarter, or individual programs.

- Helpful templates are available in Excel, Google Sheets, and online. Use these or other sample budgets to build your ideal budget tools.

Once your funding is in place, you're ready to think about other aspects of your programming, such as how to identify all of the details needed to organize and execute programs and events effectively.

Resources

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Getting Organized and Executing Programs

BEING ORGANIZED IS CRUCIAL to successful program planning, especially given all of the other tasks your position may require such as public service, outreach, and research. Good organizational skills include creating a timeline to keep you ahead of the game from the initial contact with a speaker to distributing fliers and giving participants enough time to get the event on their calendars. The more you plan programs, the more confident you will become in determining how much time each task will require. Even so, unexpected deadlines and/or problems seem to crop up regularly, so be prepared for those as much as possible by determining how much time you want to devote to the program and setting aside that planning time plus a little wiggle room. Having a strong but flexible plan helps maintain calm during the event. Know that even the best-laid plans sometimes go astray, but if you have detailed plans, knowledgeable staff, and creative problem solvers at hand, your event will run smoothly.

⑥ Planning Documents

Successful programming requires advanced planning, and continued programming efforts benefit from building on documentation from previous successes and identified areas of improvement. Whether working alone or as a programming group or committee, having those references for the future can make planning easier over time and can become a guide for future staff. Keeping planning documents organized and accessible to all organizers is key to executing successful programs.

Simple to-do lists are effective, but if the program is complex or requires a team effort, you may need to consider more robust methods of project management. Planning documents may be made using Word, Excel, paper organizers, online project management tools, or Google Sheets. Some popular online organizational tools include Trello and Asana, both of which allow teams to be built and events to be listed in various formats. These tools are especially effective for teams because they allow users to leave comments, mark things as completed or in progress, and ensure that everyone working on the project sees the same information at the same time. Google Sheets has a wedding planning template that is recommended. It can be customized to your event and includes sections that identify all the people involved in the program and their roles, areas for notes, to-do lists, budget planning, and other options. Like Trello and Asana, Google Sheets allows for real-time editing and communication. Using digital project management tools facilitates the planning process by saving everyone time through improved internal communication. Maintaining these documents can minimize questions and misunderstandings by allowing comments and clarifications to be made during the entire planning and execution process.

Creating detailed planning documents also helps on the day of the event as schedules can be built into the planning documents so that even if the organizers are tied up, or even worse, unable to be on-site to facilitate the event, the program can happen and be carried out with minimal stress. There is nothing worse than planning an amazing program and getting sick, which means you might have to either call out sick and risk canceling the event or actually come into work and feel miserable while trying to wrangle a number of odds and ends. Thus, planning ahead can ensure the event's success and your personal sanity. Regardless of what methods you use to keep your program planning organized and on track, be sure that all plans, duties/assignments, and deadlines are clearly outlined at every phase of your program.

Developing Program Guidelines

Creating a programming philosophy can help in determining what programs to bring to the library, and this philosophy should align with the library's overall mission and vision. A sample programming philosophy might be "Adult Services Staff provide library programming for adults to foster community connections and understanding, advance workforce and economic development, and/or promote education and learning." Programming responds directly to the needs and stated goals of the members of the library's community and/or stakeholder groups.

Start by defining the types of programming typically planned at your library or within your library system so that terminology can then be used in proposals, making the scope of the program clear to supervisors, administration, and/or potential funders.

Examples of types of programs:

1. Branch Programming: Developed and implemented locally to respond to local needs or to ensure local participation in system-wide initiatives.
2. Workgroup Programming: Developed and implemented by a group to respond to stakeholder requests or system-wide initiatives.
3. Special Events: Anticipate high attendance; members of the audience or a presenter may include major figures or public officials and a major local partner. The event may mark the anniversary of a branch, a set of programs built around a system-wide initiative or stakeholder request, or may be precipitated by a partner's wish for exposure, like special advertising attention for some reason.
4. Off-Site Programming: Preference is given to outreach requests that provide opportunities to bring services or promote the library to targeted community users or that represent the library positively with its major local stakeholders.

Develop guidelines to help staff understand expectations and limitations such as:

1. Programs should support a service, the collection, and the philosophy of Adult Programming.
2. Programs should respond directly to user needs and stated feedback.
   a. Ex: Greenspaces Alliance does not create neighborhood gardens unless they have fifteen residents sign a commitment letter. They recognize that a community effort requires community buy-in and participation.
   b. Ex: If you have lots of folks asking about woodworking or 3D printing or alternative health, find a good way to satisfy this stated community need through collections, programs, and more.
3. Encourage your users to become active in program planning. When possible, identify built-in audiences for programming. Let them plan the programming, and you provide the resources.
4. Vet all outside organization contacts with the established "Contacts File" for your library or system if applicable.
5. Write up evaluations of programs and put them in the "Evaluations File"—good and bad. If a program was carried out with a contact, put that contact in the contact list along with a summary of the evaluations.
6. All programs should use the same "Prepare, Plan, Promote, Present/Host" checklist, though most programs won't need to use every one of the steps (those denoted with "If Applicable . . ." below).

Sample Program Planning Process

1. Prepare: You should try to start this phase at least eight weeks in advance, especially if you'll need approval or assistance.
   • Idea Generation and Communication
     ◦ Check the Contacts File for ideas.
     ◦ Look for opportunities to participate in system-wide initiatives.
     ◦ Document your program idea: Include who, what, when, where, why (include how it meets a need and adheres to your programming philosophy).

- If applicable, contact other library locations that might benefit from your idea and see if they'd like to partner.
- Get necessary approvals (from a supervisor, manager, or coordinator).
- If it's a new contact or program idea, also get library leadership approval before making contact.
- If applicable, contact an outside speaker or organization.

2. Plan: Try for at least six to eight weeks in advance. Many of these items can happen at the same time.
   - Book the space
     - If applicable, arrange any funding needs and complete necessary financial forms.
     - If a speaker or organization is not an official partner (for example, they are a volunteer, stakeholder, or another city department) discuss the "Personal Service Agreement" for both paid and nonpaid speakers.
     - Gather all details including names, title of presentation, dates and times, all locations (and library contact for each site), funding information, and full contact information for the presenter/organization.
     - Create the "Personal Service Agreement."
     - Obtain the necessary signatures.

3. Promote: Try for at least six to eight weeks in advance.
   - Post your program(s) on your library's website or calendar.
   - Create your flier or invitation.
   - Be sure to use images with permission.
   - If applicable, contact your PR department for additional advertising and publicity support.
     - Be specific about your needs, and have funding information if applicable.
     - Attach any graphics/fliers.
   - Do additional advertising on your own.
     - Send (or better yet, take and talk about) flier/invitations to local community centers, churches, neighborhood associations, businesses in the area, apartment complexes, and other places where your target audience is at.
     - If it has wide appeal, email other branches to display the flier.

4. Present/Host: Start these activities at least the week before the event.
   - Confirm the program one week in advance.
     - Contact the presenter/vendor. Ensure you have each other's contact info.
     - Arrange any technology needs.
     - Arrange room setup.
     - Order any materials to display from other libraries, and gather display items together.
     - If applicable, make sure the presenter finished the contracts or vendor process.
     - Make sure you're off-desk and the branch is staffed in your absence.
   - The time right before the program:
     - Arrange displays of materials, program publicity, and services that complement the program.
     - Have evaluations printed and ready.
   - During the program:
     - Introduce and thank the presenter, if necessary.
     - Thank funders and partners, if applicable.

- Take photographs!!
- Take attendance.
- Closing the program:
  - Thank attendees and ask them to fill out evaluations.
  - Promote displays/resources/other library programming.
- Closing: Do within a week after the program:
  - Process evaluations, and write up a summary of the program.
  - Send the summary to the manager and appropriate administration member.
  - Enter attendee count.
  - Save the best photos and share on social media.
  - Add speaker information to Contacts File if you would recommend partnering with these contacts again.
  - If applicable, close out any funding requirements.
  - Ensure invoices, with appropriate vendor numbers, are forwarded to the fiscal office—all must be signed and dated to show that services were rendered.
  - If applicable, send the presenter a thank-you note.

Maintaining a Contact List

A contact list should include all individuals and groups who have partnered with the library or have offered to partner in the future. In addition, maintaining a list of those contacts you have chosen not to work with can be helpful in providing information about interactions and why the decision was made. For those who have already partnered, include not only contact information (e.g., name, organization, phone, email) but also any associated costs (e.g., honoraria, supplies) and feedback. Would this partner be recommended to other libraries or organizations? If you were unable to work with a partner but would like to in the future, indicate the reason for the delay, whether it is costs or a specific schedule that cannot be accommodated at the time of the interest. Excel files or Google Sheets work very well for any type of contact list, as you can update them quickly and easily and add or remove categories as needed over the years.

Contact lists can also focus on potential partners. Cold calls are not unusual and since new businesses and organizations constantly form, it can be helpful to keep track of them in some way. Most partners dislike being contacted by several people from the same organization because it gets confusing as to what they may have agreed to do or it may confirm that they were right not to work with such a seemingly chaotic library. Over-contacting someone can negatively affect the partnership, so be sure to create an internal policy for communicating with existing and potential partners to avoid making the library seem disorganized.

Consider adding the library representative to the library's contact list if outreach and programming is done by a team. This can ensure that staff with established relationships are the first contact while reinforcing the organization of contacts. This does not mean that only the contact may use the partnership, but rather that they should be notified first and asked what the best way to proceed might be. The initial staff contact will know what works and what does not, and may have tips for talking with the potential partner. In addition, the library staff is already recognized by that partner, so any communication with someone other than that person may be ignored simply due to unfamiliarity. Ask your library staff to email their contact as an introduction so that you receive a formal and familiar connection that will likely have a much more positive outcome than a cold

call. Doing this affirms the significance of the original connection, shows professionalism and respect for your colleagues, and avoids potentially damaging an existing partnership.

Contracts and Agreements

Some libraries have strict guidelines regarding presenters, requiring a contract, while other libraries do no paperwork with presenters. It is always a good idea to have some sort of contract or memorandum of agreement (MoA) with a presenter outlining the expectations of both the presenter and the library in addition to a statement regarding liability. A contract should outline the program including topic, day, time, length, and library location. Include the presenter's contact information (name, organization, address, and phone number). If the presenter will be paid or given an honorarium, this should be spelled out along with the terms of payment. The library's responsibilities might include amenities, such as providing a space for the presentation and equipment like a laptop and projector.

Sample Contract

PERSONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN
_____ **LIBRARY**
AND
PRESENTER

This Agreement is entered into by and between the _____ Library (hereafter referred to as "**LIBRARY**") acting by and through its Library Director on <u>day, month, year</u> and <u>presenter's name</u> (hereinafter referred to as "**PERFORMER/PRESENTER**").

I. *SCOPE OF WORK*
    I.1. The **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** will provide <u>presentation/performance</u>, <u>for number of sessions</u>, at _____ library location during <u>date/dates</u>.
    I.2. The Library has allocated an amount of $_____ for the **PERFORMER/ PRESENTER**.
    I.3. The **LIBRARY** will make all necessary arrangements including:
        a. providing a location for the program,
        b. other facility-related requests as required for the program(s),
        c. all necessary publicity, and
        d. assistance to help manage the audience during the program.
    I.4. This program shall not be used for the solicitation of business or for the sale of goods. The **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** offering the program may not actively hand out business cards or brochures promoting any business, product or service and may not solicit personal information (names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) from the program participants, either as part of a preregistration process or during the program itself.

II. *COMPENSATION*
    II.1. Amount and Condition of Compensation
        a. The **LIBRARY** will pay the **PRESENTER/PERFORMER** $_____.
        b. Should the **PRESENTER/PERFORMER** be unable to fulfill this contract in its entirety, the **PRESENTER/PERFORMER** will be reimbursed only for the portion of performance completed.

c. Following the program the **PRESENTER/PERFORMER** will provide a numbered/dated invoice on their letterhead.

d. Payment will be Net 30 (i.e. paid within 30 days of invoice date) and mailed to the Presenter/Performer's address.

e. The **LIBRARY** shall not be obligated or liable under this Agreement to any party, other than the **PRESENTER/PERFORMER,** for payment of any monies or provision for any goods or services.

III. *INDEMNITY*

III.1. **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** covenants and agrees to **FULLY INDEMNIFY, DEFEND and HOLD HARMLESS**, the LIBRARY and the elected officials, employees, officers, directors, volunteers and representatives of the **LIBRARY**, individually and collectively, from and against any and all costs, claims, liens, damages, losses, expenses, fees, fines, penalties, proceedings, actions, demands, causes of action, liability and suits of any kind and nature, including but not limited to, personal or bodily injury, death and property damage, made upon the LIBRARY directly or indirectly arising out of, resulting from or related to **PERFORMER/PRESENTER**'s activities under this Agreement, including any acts or omissions of **PERFORMER PRESENTER**, any agent, officer, director, representative, employee, consultant or sub-**PERFORMER/PRESENTER** of **PERFORMER/PRESENTER**, and their respective officers, agents employees, directors and representatives while in the exercise of the rights or performance of the duties under this Agreement. The indemnity provided for in this paragraph shall not apply to any liability resulting from the negligence of **LIBRARY**, its officers or employees, in instances where such negligence causes personal injury, death, or property damage. **IN THE EVENT PERFORMER/PRESENTER AND LIBRARY ARE FOUND JOINTLY LIABLE BY A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION, LIABILITY SHALL BE APPORTIONED COMPARATIVELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS FOR THE STATE OF _____, WITHOUT, HOWEVER, WAIVING ANY GOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY AVAILABLE TO THE LIBRARY UNDER _____ LAW AND WITHOUT WAIVING ANY DEFENSES OF THE PARTIES UNDER _____ LAW.**

The provisions of this **INDEMNITY** are solely for the benefit of the parties hereto and not intended to create or grant any rights, contractual or otherwise, to any other person or entity. **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** shall advise the **LIBRARY** in writing within 24 hours of any claim or demand against the **LIBRARY** or **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** known to **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** related to or arising out of **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** activities under this **AGREEMENT** and shall see to the investigation and defense of such claim or demand at **PERFORMER/PRESENTER's** cost. The **LIBRARY** shall have the right, at its option and at its own expense, to participate in such defense without relieving **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** of any of its obligations under this paragraph.

IV. *INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS*

IV.1. **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** shall be responsible for insuring its employees and sub-recipients for Worker's Compensation or Alternative Plan. If a Worker's Compensation Policy is maintained, then for the duration of this **AGREEMENT**, **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** will attach a waiver of subrogation in favor of the **LIBRARY**.

IV.2. **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** shall be responsible for insuring its own Property, Equipment, Autos and Legal Liability. In no event will the **LIBRARY** be required to maintain any insurance coverage for **PERFORMER/PRESENTER**.

V. *INDEPENDENT PERFORMER/PRESENTER*

V.1. It is expressly understood and agreed that the **PERFORMER/PRESENTER** is and shall be deemed to be an independent **PERFORMER/PRESENTER**, responsible for its respective acts or omissions and that the **LIBRARY** shall in no way be responsible therefore, and that neither party hereto has authority to bind the other nor to hold out to third parties that it has the authority to bind the other.

VI. *TERMINATION*

V.1. This Agreement may be canceled by the **LIBRARY** or the **PERFORMER/PRESENTER**, with or without cause, upon written notice to the other party, sent at least 14 days prior to the date of the performance.

EXECUTED this the _____ st/nd/rd/th day of _____ 20__.

PERFORMER/PRESENTER   **LIBRARY**

_____   _____

Performer's Name   Library Director or Representative
Address
Phone
Email

_____   _____

Date   Date

Approvals

Approvals generally start with one's immediate supervisor and can vary greatly depending on position and organizational culture. Your first programs may need more approvals until a level of trust is established with a supervisor. An idea should be fleshed out before approaching a supervisor for approval. Having as much information as possible, including a proposed budget and a solid plan of action, will likely be met with more positivity than a vague idea. Find out who in the library will have the responsibility of signing program contracts or agreements since this may be limited to a director or dean. Records retention guidelines for your organization will determine how long the contracts need to be maintained after the event.

When composing a proposal, be sure to gather as much information as possible. Some libraries have formal proposal forms that must be submitted before programs are approved. These forms may be made using Word, Qualtrics, or Google Docs. The benefits of having digital forms through Qualtrics or Google are that there is automatic storage of all proposals, completed proposals can be downloaded by the person who completes the form, and there are built-in options to trigger the distribution of proposals to all stakeholders as soon as they are completed, whereas Word documents must be individually emailed. The more detailed your proposal is, the more likely it will be approved.

Here are some suggestions for information to include in your proposal:

- Information about the program organizer
  - Name
  - Title
  - Email
  - Phone number
  - Supervisor's name
- Information about the proposed program
  - Title
  - Dates
  - Location
  - Potential/interested/confirmed partners
  - A summary of the planned program
  - Purpose of the event (outcomes)
  - Benefit to the library (e.g., tied to library's mission or goals)
  - Expected audience numbers
  - Intended audience (e.g., undergraduates, teens, young adults, the elderly, faculty)
  - Staffing needs
  - Anticipated budget and identification of funding
  - Advertising plans

Timelines

Creating a timeline from conception to the day of the program will ensure no detail is overlooked. Make sure your timeline includes preparation leading up to the event, the week or days just before the event, and the day of the event. Advanced planning will give plenty of time for advertising the program, allowing potential attendees the chance to make plans to attend. It also makes sure you and your team stay on task and makes larger events seem more manageable by breaking tasks down into smaller units.

Everyday Programs

A good rule of thumb is to begin planning a one-time program at least two months in advance. When booking an outside presenter, contacting the organization or individual with two months' notice gives them the opportunity to get the library on their calendar. If the program falls during a specific month such as Hispanic Heritage Month and the speaker is a well-known speaker on the topic, more than two months may be necessary. Within that two months, contracts will need to be approved, space reserved, internal and external advertising done, and scheduling of staff and purchasing of any materials or refreshments completed. Create a timeline including all of the necessary components to give the program the best chance of success.

Large Events

Planning a large event comes with many considerations that a one-time program does not. Starting early is always the best way to ensure every potential issue is taken care of.

Sample Timeline for a Large Event

Figure 6.1. Sample timeline for a large event. *Haley K. Holmes.*

Depending on the extent of the event, extra staff and volunteers may need to be scheduled, preparation of decorations or crafts may need to be done further in advance, parking problems may need to be addressed, and more time and energy may need to go into advertising and publicity. These are only a few of the issues that can arise when planning a large event. Events that take place annually become much easier after the first time when they can build on past feedback and notes.

Large events are generally considered large or special because they have many components, several partners, a big budget, and/or there is expected to be large attendance by

the community. Up to six months may be needed to successfully plan a large event. For something like a comic con where the intention is to draw thousands, potential guests of honor may need to be contacted up to a year in advance. Partner organizations will need a lot of lead time, especially if they rely on volunteers to run an activity or booth. Like everyday programs, take into consideration what the demands may be on potential presenters or organizations given the time period. Much of the detailed planning will happen within the three months leading up to the event, but starting early allows for additional brainstorming of areas that will need attention. If dignitaries such as government officials, directors, deans, or board members will be invited to speak, they should be given as much notice as possible.

More advertising should be done for a large event to ensure a big turnout from the community. Advertise in community newsletters, calendars, and newspapers. Deadlines for these types of publications are usually more than a month in advance of the event. If possible, add a banner to the homepage of your library's website four to six weeks before the event.

Preparation Before the Program

Preparing for programs becomes easier once you have a few under your belt. The first couple of times, the staff member in charge is likely to forget something, but each time will teach you something you will remember the next time you plan a program on your own. Making lists of tasks needed in the weeks leading up to the program can help with those details.

Scheduling Spaces and Staff

Consider the scope of your event, size of your audience, and whether you want to host indoors or outdoors when determining what spaces to reserve and how many staff members may be needed to smoothly run the program. Smaller programs, those that may need more quiet space for discussion, or programs with a sensitive nature may require more private spaces like study rooms or meeting rooms. Larger indoor events might do well in conference spaces, reading rooms, cafes, or classrooms. Consider the rooms' existing furniture and layout. Invite your partners to tour and help decide what space might work best for what you have planned. What technology is already in place? Do your program participants or partners need access to computers, projectors, microphones, or other technology?

Outdoor events pose different challenges that change with geographical location and time of year. While it is of course impossible to always accurately predict the weather, do your best to anticipate potential complications based on average local weather patterns. In Florida, for instance, excessive heat or regular storms may prevent events from occurring at certain times of the day. During a Midwest winter, it might not be very fun to table for several hours in the snow or sleet. Once you've worked out the most likely time for agreeable and pleasant weather, consider what will be needed to set up the area for your program. Will you need tents, tables, chairs, sound equipment, access to electricity, or other items? Where will these items come from? Who will set them up and take them down? Be sure to consider all of this as it will help with determining your staffing needs. You may only need to schedule some staff for certain parts of the event, which means you could seek out temporary volunteers from around the library in addition to your formally scheduled staff. Create a clear schedule and inform everyone who will be helping early in the planning process, a week before the event, and the day before the event to confirm everyone remembers and is still available to complete their assigned roles.

Some of the worst things that can happen the day of the event include realizing no one reserved a meeting room or that not enough staff were scheduled to cover all of the service desks while you oversee the program. While these are mistakes that will inevitably happen at least once, they are not likely to be repeated. They are also issues that can be resolved with creative thinking. If the meeting room is double-booked, consider which program could be held on the public floor. Holding a program on the public floor may be unusual for your library, but it can be simultaneously used as an advertising tool and may attract more people to the program. If the desks are short staffed, give a circulation attendant the opportunity to work the reference desk and get a shelver to work the circulation desk. Everything will work out.

Obtaining Supplies

Place orders or go shopping as early as possible for an upcoming program to allow time for shipping issues, mistaken orders, and last-minute supply needs. Staff will either work with a fiscal or purchasing department or support groups to place an order or obtain funds. Consider the demands of those other groups to determine how far in advance to place an order or to supply a wish list to the support group. Your deadline does not always coincide with others' workloads or time commitments.

Consider getting a personal or library membership at a warehouse club like Sam's Club, BJ's, or Costco. Although there is an up-front membership fee, this can often pay for itself over the course of the year if you make enough purchases. These clubs have affordable bulk food and drink options, as well as plates, cups, and napkins, which can get expensive if used often. They also sell equipment like tables, chairs, and carts, along with fun games that may be of interest. In addition to warehouse shopping, keep an eye on local circulars to see if any stores are offering discounts or sales on materials or supplies you need. This can take a little extra time, but if you have a shoestring budget, want to stretch your budget to attempt an extra event, or want to offer even more food or supplies at the planned event, then hunting for great bargains can pay off in a big way.

Predicting the amount of needed supplies can be tricky at first, especially when offering a new program to a community. Having more than you think you need is a better strategy than running out of supplies and having to turn away excited participants. Another option is to have preregistration for the program, which can be done in person, over the phone, or online if the library uses a calendar service that is set up for registration. If funds are especially limited, ask patrons to bring their own supplies. This works particularly well when specific tools are needed for a one-time program, such as hammers for making signs from old pallets or a sewing machine for a beginning sewing class.

Technology Needs

Most libraries will have a projector, laptop, and/or screen on hand for use by presenters or staff conducting programs. Even so, always make sure the equipment is functional and reserved for the upcoming program. Speak with external presenters to make sure their technology needs can be met. Provide a microphone and lectern if needed and available. Let presenters know what is available, and if a special cord is needed (for a Mac, for example) ask the presenter to provide the cord themselves. If technology will be used as part of the program, arrange for the presenter to be at the library early to set up the presentation to ensure everything is ready to go. If the library does not have a good set of

external speakers, put that on a wish list right away. Laptop or projector speakers are not good enough for showing video clips or playing music or a movie.

After-Hours or Late-Night Programming

Having a program when the library is closed is not new, but it is becoming increasingly more popular. It can be fun for kids or teens to be in the library when the general public is not allowed in. Having a program after hours gives adults a chance to be in the building with only other adults and to have the opportunity to attend when they may be unable to during the week or during regular library hours. In the public library, after-hours events can also mean the inclusion of alcohol, which is an especially fun way to entice a different audience. Some programs that could be fun include having events that are usually scheduled for children, like a petting zoo or storytime. Adults enjoy these activities too and appreciate being able to enjoy them without feeling like they need to let children have the most time with the animals. Crafting and gaming are also activities that may attract the attention of young adults in particular.

After all of the planning, advertising, and double checking that everything is ready, the day finally arrives for the program or event accompanied by both nervousness and excitement. If you have done your due diligence, then everything will go well and you will be able to handle any last-minute hiccups. Even if things don't go exactly according to plan, take heart knowing that the only people who will likely notice are you and your team. Attendees rarely notice minor problems because they are caught up in the fun and ultimately don't know what was supposed to happen versus what actually does. A lot of hard work goes into putting a program together, but seeing it all come together and the benefits your users get from it makes the effort worthwhile.

What to Expect the Day of the Program

After weeks or months of preparation, the day finally arrives for the program or event and last-minute details need to be ironed out. Make sure to secure off-desk time for day-of preparations, setup, and cleanup. If the program will end just prior to closing, check that the room will not be used first thing the next day to determine if cleanup will need to happen before closing or can wait. If everything has to be packed up before closing, plan to have a worker or volunteer at the program to assist if there will be a lot of supplies. It helps to have a very clear action plan that details what is needed leading up to the event for preparation as well as a detailed schedule for the day of the event.

Setup

If facilities staff are available to set up a room for events and programs, provide them with a diagram at least twenty-four hours in advance so they are able to schedule staff for setup and teardown. Include the requested number of tables and chairs and the configuration (classroom, theater, etc.). For smaller libraries, you may be the person setting up the room. Keep this in mind during the planning stages and leave enough time to set the room up the way you want it. Predicting how many chairs will be needed is another skill that will evolve over time. An outside presenter should feel that staff

have done their due diligence in promoting the program. Having too many chairs can make the room look empty if the attendance is sparse. Having too few chairs for a large audience can make the room feel too crowded. Even if a small crowd is expected, keep extra chairs handy in case you are surprised by the turnout. For hands-on programs, leave enough space for participants to work on projects, but arrange shared materials so that everyone can reach them.

Introductions

At the beginning of a program, always introduce yourself and any presenters. In advance of the program, ask the presenter to provide a short biography with credentials pertaining to the presentation. When applicable, acknowledge stakeholders during the introductions, especially if funding was provided for the program or event. For a large-scale event, have a sign posted or print a statement about the presentation acknowledging the group or groups who provided the funding along with their logos. For the most part, attendee introductions are not necessary, but if you have an intimate group that will be interacting (a book club, for example) short introductions may be appropriate to set the mood of the discussion.

Having Surveys Ready

As part of the introductions, let participants know that a survey will be available at the end to get their feedback. Either have the survey at the back of the room or pass them out at an opportune moment. Surveys not only serve to get feedback on the current program—they also engage the audience in discovering what else they would like to see at the library. Ask questions that pertain to the program they just attended such as if they liked the speaker, if the information was useful, and if they would attend more programs like this one. In addition, give room for comments. Add questions that can help determine other programs this particular audience would attend, and ask open-ended questions so that attendees can give their ideas for future programs. You are likely to get suggestions you may never have thought of. Chapter 10 goes into detail about survey methods and subsequent analysis.

Staffing

How many staff are needed for a program can be determined by the size of the audience and the potential for interactivity and need for instruction. Ideally, two staff members would be present for a program, but this is not likely given the staffing complements at many libraries. If more than one person is needed and staff are not available, plan on scheduling a volunteer to be present. Make sure to give the volunteer clear instructions as to his or her duties before the program begins.

Large-scale events require many more staff, volunteers, and security personnel to oversee activities and to be able to handle crowds and anything that may require attention. An event with one presenter who attracts a large crowd will need less staff than one that involves multiple activities. For events that have simultaneous activities, a responsible group of volunteers should be recruited. With clear instructions, volunteers can be available to run or oversee the activities while staff attend to pressing issues and make the rounds to ensure everything is running smoothly.

⊚ Connecting Programs to Collections and Resources

Programs and events provide the opportunity for increased circulation since more people will be coming into the library to attend the programs, but there is also the chance to highlight collections and resources during programs. A direct relation can be made to the program through a display of materials selected from the collection about the topic. If a genealogy program is taking place, bring books into the room that the attendees may want to take home about family history. Have bookmarks available that include all of the online resources the library has for genealogy. As part of the introduction, point out the materials and make sure to mention that they are available for checkout.

Displays placed strategically throughout the building can also catch the attention of people who have come in for a specific program. Prepare circulation staff in advance, providing them with materials they can upsell at the point of checkout that relate to the program. For example, in addition to the next book club book ready for checkout, they may also have other books by the author or read-alikes for those who enjoyed the selection.

⊚ Documenting the Program

In the thick of last-minute preparations and the start of the program, it may be difficult to remember to take notes regarding things that went well and what may need to be improved next time. Surveys can provide feedback from the attendees' perspective, but what about how staff felt about the outcome? The program can be documented through means that can provide a way to jog your memory later, including photography and video.

Photography

Having a designated staff member scheduled to take photographs and/or video throughout the program can be a good way to make sure this detail is not forgotten at the last minute. Photos should be taken for a variety of purposes including celebrating the program on social media, for future advertising, as a historical document of the event, and for presentations that may be made to potential funders or other stakeholders such as a library board. If no one on staff is a talented photographer, consider taking a class or finding some videos online about composition and photographing people. Too many times, the photographs taken by staff are taken far away from the subject and the background is not taken into consideration. A good phone such as an iPhone can take professional-grade photos rivaling those taken by a DSLR camera, but the eye of the photographer can make a huge difference. A program may be videoed as well, but setting up a camera at the back and just recording will not yield a result that can be used for much other than reliving a presentation. For a famous author, this may be enough. Otherwise, a variety of angles and close-up shots will be needed to make a compelling video for advertising.

Social Media Live

Going live on social media during a program or event can serve several purposes. Patrons who are unable to attend the program in person can join in via a live broadcast wherever they might be. For a large event that will last several hours, by going live, followers who were not aware of the event may see the post on social media and actually have the chance

Figure 6.2. Audience member during a Q&A. *Haley K. Holmes*.

to get to the library before the event ends. Furthermore, showing people enjoying a program is much more enticing to those reluctant to go to the library at a particular time than a flier would be alone. On Facebook, live video can be saved so that people who did not catch the live feed can view the video later.

Social media can also be a way to interact with users when they are not at the program. For an author event, questions could be taken from the online viewers and relayed to the MC. Twitter is another tool that can be used for a play-by-play stream of the event, also allowing for online participation and dialogue.

Key Points

Whether you are new to programming or are a seasoned programming librarian, staying organized is key to executing successful events. Each time you plan a program, you will discover more details to remember in the future. By establishing guidelines over time, each program will become easier, and having the steps defined will ensure you do not forget an important component.

- Creating a programming philosophy will help you to define the scope of your intended audience, establishing intention within your work.
- A well-thought-out proposal presented to a supervisor or management (rather than a vague idea presented without all of the facts) is likely to be met with approval.
- The amount of time needed to plan a large event should be taken into account and a timeline devised early on so all steps are accounted for.

- There are many details necessary to conduct a successful program from idea inception to post-analysis. Create lists of what needs to be done for each step of the way to stay organized.

Chapter 7 will go into more detail concerning advertising programs and events. Given all of the work you will put into presenting and hosting programs at your library, you want to see a good turnout. There are many ways to promote upcoming programs in a strategic manner, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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Advertising Your Programs for Success

IN THIS CHAPTER

▷ Creating Impactful Advertising Plans

▷ Creating Successful Advertising Campaigns

Creating Impactful Advertising Plans

I**T DOES NOT MATTER** if you create the most awesome program your library has ever witnessed if no one knows it is happening. Now that the program is ready to go, a strong advertising campaign is necessary. The type of program may affect how much and what types of advertising you plan. For instance, a program that recurs monthly, like a book club, may not require a great deal of external marketing since it is expected and often has the same meeting day and time each month for consistency. A one-time or special event, like a beer brewing program, may require additional advertising to get the word out to the targeted audience. In-house marketing typically consists of print materials, such as fliers or bookmarks, digital signs, a library's website, and social media outlets. External marketing may include city council representative e-blasts, PSAs, local newspaper ads, television or radio spots, or even billboards or bus ads. Your budget will also determine to what extent you can advertise a program. Free or cheap advertisements like fliers and social media are always in vogue, but for special or large-scale events, it may be worth spending money on paid advertisements in various locations. And don't underestimate the power of word-of-mouth—get your influencers excited and ready to spread the word about your upcoming events!

Targeted Advertising

When planning a program, the targeted audience should always be determined in advance so advertising can be fully focused. Younger adults will respond to different language and images than older adults. The choice of media can make a difference as well.

A magazine geared toward a more liberal audience would be a good choice for an ad on a safe sex program, and a local mom's meet-up blog would make sense for a program on inexpensive summer activities for families. Budget is always a factor to consider when deciding whether you will purchase media buys. Consider the time put into a program versus the money spent on advertising along with the expected outcome. A large-scale event requires a lot of resources and staff time, so in situations like these, it might make sense to pay for additional advertising to ensure a good turnout.

On college campuses, there are likely several offices that distribute advertisements around campus. Fliers are always an excellent choice as they are cheap and easy to post around the library, residence halls, and campus departments. Some campuses have offices that will distribute such materials, such as the Student Union or the administrators for the residence halls. Student workers can also be employed to hand out quarter-sheet ads, promote events while tabling, or include fliers with books at checkout. Library and campus event calendars are very visible ways to advertise to everyone on campus. Calendars often allow people to register or RSVP for events, which could be handy when planning how many supplies or how much food to purchase. Many academic libraries have digital signage located throughout the building, which allows libraries to refresh their ads often. Faculty and graduate students tend to prefer direct emails, but fliers tucked into the books delivered to their offices are also quite effective. Social media posts on Facebook and Twitter provide excellent alternative avenues for advertising, as detailed next.

Building an Engaging Social Media Presence

Social media is used by library users of all ages. While there are an incredible number of social media platforms a library could choose, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are by far the most commonly used currently. This chapter will explore these three in more detail, but readers are encouraged to consider Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat, and other social media tools while keeping an eye out for the next big invention. Creating a solid presence on social media paired with getting library users to follow the library's page is key to reaching some of those hard-to-reach audiences. Social media also provides opportunities for patrons and the libraries to have conversations versus the passivity of hanging fliers. It is this potential for lively engagement that makes social media so effective and important to get right. Thus, understanding each platform's functionality and its benefits and challenges can help you determine which will work best for your particular event.

Facebook

Despite reports of its declining use, Facebook shows no signs of really slowing and most people have an account even if they don't use it every day. Facebook allows for long text posts, embedded images, videos, and fliers, and the creation and promotion of events. Facebook events provide links to pages with extra details, as well as options to RSVP or ask questions of the organizers and build conversations leading up to the program. Free and paid ads are offered. Ideally the library's page will be followed by its partners who will like and share the event with their friends. The library should also follow community and campus pages to reinforce its community and overall reach. Users can also tag partners and their pages in photos and posts, which contributes to the community building inherent in Facebook's mission. The Facebook Live function provides a cost-effective way to stream a portion of or an entire event, increasing the reach of the event even farther than

originally anticipated. This also gives library users who were unable to be at the physical event an opportunity to participate in the fun. Facebook posts can be frequent but they are better received when posts are made no more than once or twice a day.

Take a look at these library accounts for inspiration on Facebook:

- King County Library System, https://www.facebook.com/kingcountylibrarysystem/
- Lawrence Public Library, https://www.facebook.com/lawrencepubliclibrary/
- Anythink, https://www.facebook.com/ilovemyanythink/

Twitter

Although many people have Twitter accounts, not everyone actively posts. There are many who choose to follow a number of accounts to keep up with news, videos, updates, professional contacts, or just be entertained. In many ways, Twitter is the most constrained social media platform due to its format, which only allows for posts of images or text no longer than 280 characters. Despite these limitations, Twitter is excellent for promoting live updates, easily shared material, and interaction between users. Twitter posts should be frequent and timely. It is an excellent platform to host a trivia competition using photos from the library's collection or history, promote programs in progress, and answer patrons' questions about the library. If using Twitter to answer library patrons, be sure to respond as quickly as possible with accurate answers. Hashtags are the bread and butter of Twitter as they allow users to create or participate in trending conversations by linking posts to a larger phenomenon. Hashtags are searchable, which also allows people to find your content faster in the millions of posts that go up every day.

Some people say there is no limit to how many Twitter posts should be made in a day, but your library will need to determine what is feasible based on available content and staffing. Be sure to follow your partners and encourage your partners and patrons to follow the library because Twitter's strength truly lies in numbers.

Instagram

Instagram is a photo-sharing platform and can be an excellent way to generate interest before an event as well as document the library's programming efforts. Instagram not only documents events but also can show its users all the fun that was missed through photos and sixty-second videos, possibly generating buzz that will lead to better turnouts in the future. Instagram boasts filters that can make photos look more professional or fancy depending on what is chosen. Posts allow lengthy text and the ability to tag partners. Instagram posts may be as frequent as the library's resources allow.

These libraries have engaging Instagram accounts:

- Austin Public Library, https://www.instagram.com/austinpubliclibrary/
- Nashville Public Library, https://www.instagram.com/nowatnpl/

Establishing Social Media Teams and Best Practices

A unified voice and style guide are essential to creating a successful social media brand. Thus it can be helpful to organize a small social media team whose job is to ensure the

quality and consistency in posts across all platforms. Social media teams should create a schedule for posts to avoid duplications and ensure important messages are not lost in the deluge of information libraries have to offer. Tools like Hootsuite, Bitly, Everypost, and Meet Edgar can keep the team organized and synchronized with little effort, allowing for posts to be scheduled in advance and leaving the team with more time to focus on other activities.

Depending on the size of the library, staff may have the opportunity to post on behalf of the library or all posting may be done by a social media manager in your marketing or PR department or aforementioned team. In all cases, staff input should not be disregarded. Set up a system for gathering potential posts from staff conducting programs and in the field. Create a style guide that includes best practices for posting. Be sure to be consistent in hashtags and phrases unique to your library. Pay close attention to grammar and spelling as they assure readers that your posts are worthy of attention and instill trust and confidence in your posts because even the little details matter. Give your team training on what makes a good post and how to take compelling photographs. Encourage staff to take lots of pictures during events including close-ups of speakers and participants. Have makers hold up their creations for the camera (or phone). If your library has a blog, make sure to contribute by writing posts highlighting your successful programs and include your best photos. Remember to include social media symbols on all of your marketing materials to let your audience know where to find information about upcoming events on the platform they most prefer.

The number and frequency of posts should meet social media standards. Remember that not all users will see every post. Balance the number of posts between fun and engaging and interactive based on how many programs you have lined up. Stay positive when faced with trolls or negative posts and remain professional in any responses you may offer. While unfortunate, if a poster becomes particularly abusive, consider blocking and/or reporting them so they do not overwhelm your feed or distract from your original intents.

Social media contests can engage users, whether they be giveaways or "caption this" type posts. Successful social media posts are easy to track as most platforms and social media management systems have some form of analytics available for free. The more followers, likes, comments, and reposts, the more successful the platform is. Pay attention to what your followers like most and do more of the same. Make sure you are engaging more than internal staff who tend to be the most loyal library social media followers.

Creating Successful Advertising Campaigns

Deciding how much advertising should be done for a program or event is dependent upon how many attendees you want to attract. A book club would probably be too big with more than fifteen people because this program needs a small group in order to have a good discussion within an hour where everyone has the chance to contribute. A craft program where the attendees may need a lot of one-on-one help would probably be best capped at ten to fifteen. If crafts are popular with your demographic, an in-house flier may be enough to fill the session. If crafts have not been popular but the goal is to reach new users, additional advertising will be necessary.

In-House Print and Digitals

Work with your system's in-house graphic designers to create visually appealing marketing materials with short, succinct, catchy event descriptions. If you do not have staff dedicated to marketing efforts, Canva is a great free online tool for designing fliers. Fliers and other materials such as posters, bookmarks, and newsletters are the most typical in-house print advertising avenues used in libraries. Once designed and approved, post fliers physically and digitally in all locations of your library system. Pairing a flier with a book display can bring more attention to a program. Put fliers and other print materials near the area of the collection so someone who is interested in crafting will see the advertising for the upcoming craft program. Targeted marketing can also be used in house. Run a list of mystery books currently on the hold shelf and place bookmarks advertising the upcoming mystery book club in the books waiting for pickup. Ask the children's librarian to have fliers for adult programs in the storytime room so parents can see programs that may interest them. Have quarter-sheet-sized versions of a flier ready for those who want to take the information home as a reminder.

Digital signs can help cut down on the flier overload if a lot of programs are planned for one library location. A digital sign can rotate featured upcoming events. Make sure the number of slides are limited so that an individual standing at the service desk can see them all within a minute or two while they use self-checkout or wait for assistance. All signage should be kept current, have eye-catching graphics or images, and include enough information but not an overwhelming amount of text.

Fliers and other print materials should also be posted in neighborhood coffee shops, local restaurants, bookstores, and any other places that have community bulletin boards. If there are any partners, sponsors, vendors, special groups, or specific community groups involved in the program, share the flier with them digitally so they can email their own con-

Figure 7.1. Advertisement for a graduate student social. *Meghan Johnson*.

tacts and share via social media channels. There are numerous free online community calendars that will also allow you to post events and fliers for upcoming events. For example, in San Antonio, we post our events to over thirty separate community calendars each month.

Social Media

Libraries use social media platforms to connect with users and to advertise upcoming events. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are the most popular platforms for libraries, but others are used as well such as Snapchat, Tumblr, YouTube, and Pinterest. According to *Business Insider*, a single "like" from a Facebook fan is equivalent to $22.93 in earned media value for a brand.[1] Facebook's algorithm-driven news feed means that just because someone follows your page does not mean they will see your wall posts or status updates. The default news feed is comprised of content that Facebook thinks a user will like based on their interactions with past content from that author and interactions by friends with that content. Facebook ads and boosts are reasonably priced, so take them into consideration when planning an event. Part of your budget may need to go to advertising through social media.

Ask your social media manager to share your flier on all of your social media channels and request that he or she create a Facebook event on the library's page. Make sure to share your event's post to your personal page and to invite your friends, family, coworkers, and contacts to like and share the post. If an official Facebook event is created, make sure to invite these same contacts. Create a hashtag for your event and include it on the flier and in any posts about the event. This creates buzz and excitement for the event. Anytime you post about your event, tag the pages of the event partners, sponsors, vendors, and special guests. Ask your stakeholder groups to share the posts as well. Creating a post is only the first step. Sharing is the key to making sure as many people as possible see the event.

Photos and videos of kids participating in library activities and staff behind the scenes are popular with public library followers. Engaging people by asking them to comment with their favorite book or whatever is trending that day gets them involved in an online dialogue. Contests are another way to engage users. Have them caption a photo or post a "book face Friday" picture to win movie passes or a library t-shirt. Instagram best practices include capturing a feeling through the photo, appealing to emotion by tugging at the heartstrings, and posting content that is relevant. Post about hot topics, what is trending right now, or about what is happening in the news. Keep up with viral movements and participate in them. Social media is not just about advertising programs and events. It is a tool to position your library as a trustworthy, knowledgeable, and in-the-know organization.

Content Tips and Photo Tricks

- Tell a moving story from a new perspective.
- Find something that could be a conversation starter.
- Highlight the "unexpected."
- Look for candid shots.
- Use natural light sources (avoid flash).
- Don't use zoom, get closer (for clearer pictures).
- Consider composition.
- Take your photo from above or from the side, rather than straight on.

◎ Interview with a Former Library Social Media Manager

Marcie Hernandez is currently a public relations account supervisor for local public relations firm KGBTexas Communications. Prior to that role, she served for five years as senior public information officer at the San Antonio Public Library. As PIO, she was responsible for supporting the mission of the San Antonio Public Library through marketing, public relations, communications, and social media efforts.

Q: **With so many locations, how do you manage content?**

A: I prioritize the posts that highlight programs or events that are least expected from a library. Programs like PopCon [a comic con type event] and beer brewing come to mind. Next I look for posts that include a special guest such as a published author or an expert in a field rather than programs presented by staff members. Posts related to recent news stories or trending topics also catch my attention.

Q: **What makes a good post and what types of posts are you looking for from staff?**

A: Something visual that is not a stock photo or flier. In the moment candid photos get the most likes and shares on social media. I also look for good photos. You would not believe how many blurry photos are sent to me from staff. Patrons also really like seeing staff behind the scenes preparing for programs and events.

Q: **What social media channels do you recommend for libraries?**

A: Facebook and Instagram work best for our library. I know others use Snapchat and other channels, but we have had the most success with these two.

Q: **What does social media success look like?**

A: You have to post at least once a day. The best posts engage our followers beyond likes. Social media is another way to build trust with our audience. They know they can go to the library for information and our social media pages are another avenue for that dialogue. In the end, the focus should be on the user and what appeals to them.

Q: **How do you deal with negative feedback from users?**

A: The most important thing is to let them know you are listening to their concerns. I answer them with facts or give more information to clarify if there is a misunderstanding. If the person is not satisfied with my response, I generally let it be at that point. We do not delete negative comments unless they are totally inappropriate. It is good to let others see how the library responds positively and that we do not censor opinions.

Q: **Do you recommend putting money into Facebook ads?**

A: Yes! Facebook ads and boosts are inexpensive and worth the money. You can put $100 into a very successful campaign. It can be very hard to calculate return on investment for libraries, but you can see how many people actually click on the ad, which gives some indication of how successful the campaign is. You can also do targeted advertising in Facebook, showing the post to people who live near a particular library.

Q: **What is the worst type of post you have seen?**

A: Fliers with too much text and fliers with no photos are the worst. Also, posts that include library jargon, technical terms, or formal text. To be engaging, posts need to be more conversational and relate to your followers.
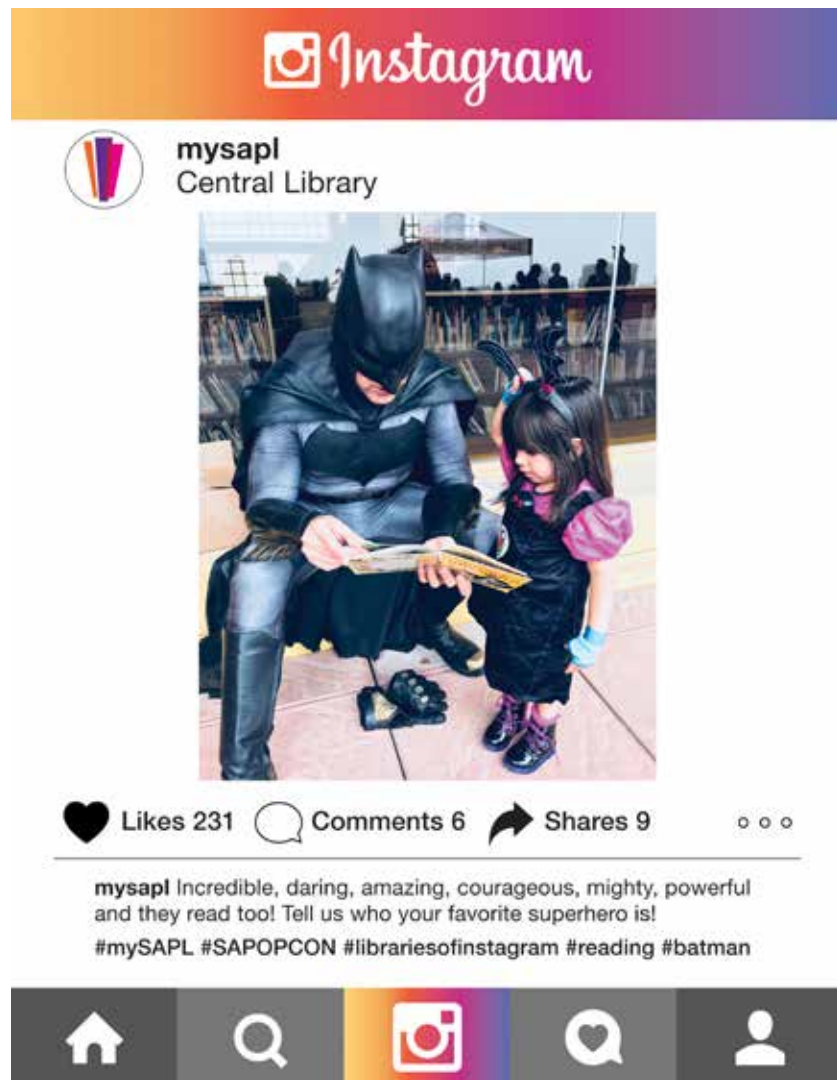
Figure 7.2. Marcie's favorite social media post. *Marcie Hernandez.*

Booking and Handling News Media

Contacting the news media is one of the best ways to get the word out about library programs and services. Having events posted to the evening news, being interviewed for upcoming programs, and having news media show up to highlight events allows a library free press in front of a wide audience.

Booking TV Interviews

If your library has a PR or marketing team, a media pitch should go directly through them since they will be familiar with all media inquiries for the system and be able to prioritize requests. Otherwise, there are a number of strategies for pitching a TV interview. Reach out to your TV station's "man on the street." This is typically a reporter who does fun/quirky stories, not a main in-studio anchor. Visit the TV station's social media channels. The "man on the street" will usually have the most videos posted here. Email addresses for television reporters are usually on the TV station's website. You can also reach out to the individual reporters via social media messages. Send them a copy of the event flier and a few reasons why their audience may be interested in the event. Make sure to reach out a minimum of two weeks before the event. Three to four weeks is ideal. Many TV stations also have free community calendars where organizations can post upcoming events. Be sure to take advantage of this if possible.

Press Releases

Press releases are usually sent to the news media on a specific schedule through your PR team, but if you are doing it on your own and want to distribute a press release to the

Figure 7.3.   Library staff promoting upcoming events during a TV interview. *Marcie Hernandez.*

media inviting them to cover your event, here are a few tips. Keep it short and simple. Include the name of the event, the date, the time, and any significant guests or partners participating. Will the mayor or another elected official be speaking? Is a published author or an actor going to attend? Is a beloved book character or other "celebrity" going to be there? Also be sure to mention anything visually appealing that may be worth catching on camera. Will the attendees be in costume or will the library be unveiling a new technology? Distribute the release two to three days before the event. Send it too early and

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release

<div align="center">

**September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month
at San Antonio Public Library**
– The best back-to-school tool that is easy to get. –

</div>

SAN ANTONIO (September 7, 2018) As the school year hits full swing and students are back in the classroom, there is still one essential school supply that doesn't cost a penny—it's a library card.

September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month and the San Antonio Public Library is joining with the American Library Association (ALA) and libraries nationwide to encourage parents, caregivers, and students to obtain a free library card that will save them money while allowing them to reap rewards in academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Whether it's providing free access to virtual tutors through our Homework Help, testing practice with Learning Express, research options through databases, or one-on-ones held with Ask a Librarian, a library card is one of the most cost-effective back-to-school supplies. Resources at the San Antonio Public Library are available to anyone with a library card.

Libraries play an important role in the education and development of children. Studies show children who are read to in the home and who use the library perform better in school and are more likely to continue to use the library as a source of lifetime learning.

This year, Disney's the Incredibles are Library Card Sign-Up Month honorary chairs, helping to promote the value of a library card and bring attention to the many ways libraries and librarians transform lives and communities through education.

The San Antonio Public Library makes it easy for the community to sign up for or renew a library card. You can get a card in person by stopping by any branch location. And, for those who want instant (but limited) library access, online pre-registration allows you to sign up and gives you thirty days to present your photo ID and proof of current address, and to pick up your library card.

> Since 1987, Library Card Sign-Up Month has been held each September to mark the beginning of the school year. During the month, the ALA and libraries unite together in a national effort to ensure every child signs up for their own library card. For more information about how to sign up for a library card, please visit your local San Antonio Public Library branch in person or online at mysapl.org, or call _____.

it gets lost in the shuffle. Send it too late, and they have already scheduled their team to cover other events. Remember that media outlets are not as likely to show up to weekend events unless they are large-scale events with a big appeal or dignitaries such as the mayor are scheduled to be present.

Take photos and video at your event and send a follow-up press release after the event. Send a release with an event recap, including how many attendees there were and highlights from the day. Include photos and video clips with the release. If a media outlet is interested in the story but was not able to attend or send someone to cover the event, they may use your photos and video! Another great opportunity after the event is to have one of the participants or partners send in an op-ed to the local newspaper with their experiences and a call to support libraries and events like this one.

Key Points

Advertising your programs is necessary for a successful turnout. The amount of time and effort put into marketing often correlates to how many people show up.

- Once the targeted audience has been determined, advertise specifically to that audience through channels they use.
- Create fun, eye-catching social media campaigns to entice followers to attend programs.
- Utilize a variety of methods to reach a broader audience and to alert nonusers of all of the unexpected events taking place at the library.

Now that you have the knowledge to define your audience and determine what type of programming to offer; ways to establish partnerships, budgeting considerations, and steps to organize and execute; and ideas for ways to advertise, you are ready to start planning. Chapters 8 and 9 provide specific examples of programs for public and academic libraries that you may choose from.

Note

1. Jim Edwards, "What Is a Facebook 'Like' Actually Worth in Dollars?" *Business Insider*, March 27, 2013, https://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-a-facebook-like-actually-worth-in-dollars-2013-3.

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Public Library Programming

DECIDING ON THE TYPE of programs to offer at your library depends greatly on your targeted audience. Since the overall purpose of public and academic libraries differs, the appeal of programming will vary in accordance with those distinctions. Public libraries attempt to cater to all patrons—from infants to the elderly—by emphasizing a wide range of activities and experiences exposing the community to a variety of perspectives. Here is some guidance for how to run exciting and engaging programming and events in public libraries.

Personal Enrichment Programming

Educational or informational programs support the library's collection by allowing displays of materials that fit the theme of the program to act as advertising before and during the event. This type of programming may be referred to as lifelong learning because it provides education to adults that does not relate to specific skills needed in

▲ **79**

the workplace or learning that fits into a school model. The most prevalent programs for adults in the public library are informational, with the most common being presentations.

Informational Presentations

Community members often approach the library seeking to share their expertise on a subject, or local organizations and universities want to partner with the library to provide informational programming. An example of a presentation program that would be informational and simple to plan and would involve a partner organization would be a presentation on personal finances. Topics within financial management may include how to get out of debt, retirement portfolios, investing, or the importance of savings. Many financial institutions require their employees to do outreach and/or community service. Contact local banks or credit unions and ask if they are able to do a presentation on personal finances at the library. Choose a topic based on your primary audience. If your potential audience may include recent college graduates, a class on savings or debt management focused on student loans may be applicable.

Once you find a presenter, make sure to explain your expectations. Bringing in a presenter from a business or for-profit organization can pose questions regarding solicitation. The intent of an informational program should be to educate the audience, not to create business for the presenter. Make sure to follow your library's policies or practices. Most presenters are happy to follow any guidelines you give, but it is always best to make those guidelines clear through a contract or personal service agreement. See chapter 6 for an example. Ask for a copy of the presentation in advance or to attend the presentation if it is being given somewhere else so that you can determine the level of professionalism and whether the topics you discussed will be covered. You can also ask for references for the presenter.

Set up a date and time with the presenter when you think your target audience would be available. An evening or weekend day may be best for twenty- to thirty-year-olds. Reserve a space and plan for the presentation to be set up in a classroom-style environment, with tables and chairs facing a screen. Check with the presenter regarding equipment needs, as a projector, laptop, and screen will probably be requested. If the library does not have the equipment, ask the presenter to bring their own. Create a flier using a description of the presentation provided by the individual who will be conducting the program. "Adulting" is a great topic that can be used for a series of programs. If the program on debt management is part of a series, make sure there is a graphic on the flier showing the series title for product recognition. Distribute the flier in local places the targeted audience frequents: coffee shops, gyms, and grocery stores, for example. Make sure the event is posted on your website and social media.

Set up the room and make sure the equipment is ready and working at least one hour before the program start time. The presenter should arrive early to get his/her presentation ready. A staff member should attend the program to make introductions, to ensure guidelines are followed, and to distribute and collect a survey regarding the success of the program. This is also a great opportunity to ask what other topics the audience would like to see in the future.

A program with a volunteer presenter should not require a budget beyond printing fliers. Most all presenters from financial institutions bring giveaway items for the par-

ticipants including pens and notebooks as well as handouts of the presentation. Again, check your library's policies to determine if the presenter can give out other items such as business cards. Many informational programs can be set up in this manner, looking for community members who want to share information for their businesses or nonprofit organizations, or based on personal interests.

Foreign Language Conversation Club

The purpose of a foreign language club is to provide a place where people can come together to practice their language skills. A conversation club can be open to all levels and all languages, although there may be room for expanding to beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels if the interest is there. Some clubs may focus on a specific language such as English. If the participants are working to improve on a specific language, then they should primarily use that language in the club, so it will not matter which language they speak at home. A staff member with knowledge of the primary language (for example, Spanish if many of the participants speak Spanish at home) could lead the club to assist with specific translations, but again, this is not necessary since English will be the language expected in the program. Conversely, another language club may be needed at your location. Maybe there is a big community of Russian speakers, and community members want to keep up the practice of speaking Russian. In this case, you may find that having a volunteer lead the group makes more sense.

Choose a day and time that will work for the targeted demographic. Senior citizens may prefer mornings to evenings and weekdays to weekends, while working individuals may like the opposite choices. Reserve a space that is similar to where book clubs take place, small and with comfortable seating. Remember that this is not a class but a conversation. Create a welcoming, intimate environment. Create a flier that makes the purpose of the group clear and outlines which language will be spoken. Consider creating a second version of the flier in another language. For instance, if you know there is a large community of Spanish speakers you want to target, create a flier in Spanish or a bilingual flier in English and Spanish. Advertise the program online and through social media channels. Find local adult language classes at community colleges or other organizations such as cultural centers and ask them to share the flier.

Before the program, choose a topic of discussion and a list of potential questions to keep the conversation going. Have the participants introduce themselves and explain what they hope to get from the club. The first sessions may revolve around the participants' experiences and interests. Ask them about their families and why they want to learn a foreign language. Encourage active participation and acceptance no matter the level of the speaker if your group is welcome to all levels. Participants will be willing to help each other increase their language skills. Bring a laptop or iPad if you do not speak any of the other languages represented in case a translation is needed. You can also use this opportunity to promote other library services the participants will benefit from such as materials or databases focusing on foreign language acquisition. Beyond fliers, no budget is required for this program unless you want to provide snacks on occasion or to celebrate holidays. Participants may want to bring food to share relating to their own cultures. Staff time required for this type of program is minimal. Start with a basic group, and break the group into more segments if it becomes necessary.

Here are some sample questions for facilitating a foreign language club:

Why do you want to learn a new language?

How long have you been studying this new language?

How many languages do you speak?

What languages do you speak?

Do you have any hobbies?

What hobby would you like to start?

What do you do or did you do for work?

Do you have any siblings?

What activities do you like to do with your family?

Do you like to travel? What are your favorite destinations?

Adulting

Adults in their twenties and thirties are often difficult to bring into the library for programs so many libraries, public and academic, have begun targeting that age group with special after-hours sessions focusing on adulting to change the traditional image of the library. Adulting refers to doing grown-up things that require responsibility such as paying bills and having a nine-to-five job. Some adulting classes may include debt management, cooking on a budget, home improvement projects, and basic car maintenance. These can be purely informational or may include hands-on projects.

Mug Meals

An adulting class that could be presented by a library staff member with a small budget would be how to cook healthy meals with fresh foods using a microwave. College students and young adults starting in the workforce would be the target audience since time and cooking equipment are generally limited amongst this group. In addition, the class could focus on the importance of saving money by cooking at home or in a dorm room.

Start by searching for the books held in your library that either include mug meals or cooking in a microwave. You will want to have these books available for checkout during the program, but you also may consider asking your collection development librarian to order more titles and copies. Choose a few recipes to test out before deciding which to include in the class. Plan to demonstrate how to make two to three courses such as a soup, entree, and dessert. Be sure to take photos of the ingredients and final products as you test the recipes so you have images to use in marketing materials. This program could be held as either a demonstration or hands-on activity, depending on the equipment available. If

the budget is limited to buying only one cutting board, knives, and utensils, conduct the program as a demonstration and allow participants to taste the food when done. With more equipment, attendees could participate in preparing the foods. Another option would be to ask staff to bring items from home and/or to ask program attendees to bring materials. Most people would at least have a couple of mugs they could bring. In addition, your library likely already has a microwave for staff use that could be commandeered for a program. Take into account the amount of time each recipe has to cook to make the final decision on how many mug meals to make during the program.

When considering the introduction of cooking classes as library programs, start by checking with the local health department to understand their guidelines and regulations for food preparation and food service. Impact to staff may range from minimal to requiring only prepackaged foods to attending food handling classes. Be sure to provide food handling gloves to participants, a place to wash hands, and safety recommendations for using sharp tools.

Once you have decided on the recipes you will introduce in the program and have decided on a day and time, prepare a flier that will show what participants will learn using the images you took while testing recipes. This may be a program that has advanced sign up and a limitation on number of attendees depending on the equipment available and how long each recipe will need to cook in the microwave. Ask your local colleges to advertise the program in their dorms or student unions, and look for young professional groups in the community that may have social media pages. A mug meals program could be presented by one staff member. This would be a good opportunity to engage a staff member who has a special interest in cooking, not necessarily a programming librarian. The budget will vary depending on the recipes selected, but generally speaking, fifteen people could participate in such a class for fifty to seventy-five dollars if most of the equipment is already available or provided by attendees.

Figure 8.1.   Seniors learning to play ping-pong. *Haley K. Holmes.*

Interactive Programming

Public libraries offer a variety of interactive programming in which participants are part of the discussion or take part in the activity. Book clubs are very popular and can be found in almost any public library. Another type of interactive programming is exercise classes where the instructor gives some background about a health topic and then the audience is led through movements, whether they be low-impact circuit training, chair exercises, or yoga. These programs are educational but they require an active audience rather than the passive audience expected for a presentation or lecture.

Yoga Class

Yoga is a very popular program when offered in the public library. Paying for yoga sessions at a private studio can be very expensive, so free classes offered at the library can fill to capacity very quickly. Many times people working on a certification to teach yoga will approach the library offering to teach classes for free in order to gain experience and to fulfill practice requirements. Unfortunately, these instructors do not tend to stay on long once they fulfill the requirements needed for certification. Partnering with a yoga school could potentially provide a steady stream of student instructors. Another option would be to partner with your city's parks and recreation department to offer their classes in library spaces. These are ways to find instructors who would offer yoga for free, but if you have a budget for paying presenters, yoga is definitely a program worth paying for.

Another option is to use a virtual instructor through an app or by following a yoga DVD. Be sure to check the public performance rights before proceeding with an app or DVD. In addition, even if you do have a live instructor and have regular classes scheduled, have a DVD handy in case the instructor cannot show up for a session rather than cancelling an already promoted program.

The instructor you find may teach a particular type of yoga (chair yoga for seniors, yoga for runners, yoga for weight loss), and communication regarding the focus will be imperative to determining the intended audience. If the instructor is a student, consider setting a specific number of sessions so that attendees will know what to expect rather than disappointing them if the classes end suddenly. You can always extend the number of sessions or advertise them in blocks (six weeks, twelve weeks). After determining the type of yoga and audience, create a flier that provides the details, including the expected intensity, recommended clothing and equipment (ask participants to bring their own yoga mats at the very least), and class limit. Limit can be determined by measuring the meeting space available. Each participant should have about twenty-one square feet for their mat and movements. Distribute the flier at appropriate venues (for example, senior centers if the focus is chair yoga) and post on social media.

Book Clubs

As referenced in chapter 1, book clubs allow individuals to get together to discuss common or related titles that they have read and to share the love of reading. Many libraries host clubs based on genre so they may range from fiction to nonfiction or address very specific genres like romance, cozy mysteries, or a particular time period, such as World War I. Book clubs allow people from different backgrounds to share their thoughts on the same book, potentially educating one another or learning from the facilitator, often a library staff member.

The first step to creating a new book club is to decide what type of book club you will arrange. If there are no other book clubs at your library, consider focusing on general fiction. Otherwise, choose a specific genre based on how well those items circulate, such as mystery, science fiction, classic literature, romance, or biography. If you know through patron interactions that a more specific club would be of interest, go with that genre. Some examples of niche book clubs may include true crime, works by a specific author (Jane Austen is very popular), military history, prizewinners (Pulitzer or Nobel, for instance), and young adult novels that also appeal to adults.

Once you have decided on a type of book club, create a list of titles for the first few meetings. Sites like BookBrowse can help you find appropriate titles. Novelist is also a great resource if your library subscribes. Use reviews (e.g., *New York Times* Best Sellers, Goodreads) to verify that the titles will have enough interest for an hour-long discussion, and check your holdings to make sure you have enough copies to accommodate ten to twenty participants. Put the books on hold, including multiple formats (e.g., large print, audio). Depending on demand, you may have to think ahead if you want to use popular books to ensure they are available. The best practice is to wait until the initial rush has occurred before incorporating a best seller into a book club unless your system can buy copies just for the club. Make the books available at least one month in advance. Remember to let other staff know that the books are ready for checkout and whether the loan period needs to be extended. The book should be due on or after the date of the meeting.

Before creating marketing for the first meeting, you will want to determine the frequency of the club. Monthly meetings work best for most clubs because this gives participants time to read the book but not so much time that they forget the details. Choose a day and time in accordance with your targeted audience. Reserve a room for the meeting. If you have options, choose a smaller room where the setup can be in a circle, as a more intimate setting is ideal for a group discussion. Take into account the acoustics of the rooms you have available since participants will be speaking with no amplification. If you only have a large room, use chairs to create a small circle so the participants can see each other. Create a flier and add the program to your online calendar. Advertise in the library, bookstores, coffee shops, senior centers, and other local places.

In preparation for the meeting, create a list of discussion questions (many can be found online on publisher or author websites) and other relevant information about the book or author, including online interviews or historical information relating to the book. Sometimes, discussion questions are not needed if the group has a lot to say, but it is good to have them in case there is a lull in conversation. For future meetings, you may want to hand out the discussion questions with the book for the next month. Some attendees like to consider the questions as they read or immediately after finishing the book to prepare for the book group meeting. As the facilitator, you should also read the book. Having read the book makes the experience much more enjoyable for both you and the other attendees. Reading summaries of the book can be helpful, too. If you cannot get through the book or do not like it, be honest with the group. They will relate to your own experience.

At the meeting, have the members introduce themselves and ask an ice-breaker question like what is their all-time favorite book. Start with a simple question such as, "Did you like the book?" That usually gets the conversation started. Always make sure to ask the opinions of people who are not as quick to talk. Some people prefer to listen, but others have a hard time breaking into a conversation. Bring copies of the next book (in multiple formats) on the list so they are available for checkout after the meeting. Some supplementary resources you should consider bringing are video clips of reviews or interviews with

the author, the author's biography, and information about something that may have been confusing in the book or something you looked up for your own interest. There may be times when bringing food and/or decorations or dressing up based on the period featured in the book would enhance the experience.

Always stress to the group that it is not crucial to have finished the book in order to come to the discussion. The session can be enjoyable even if the book was not read and oftentimes, people have something to contribute based on their own experience or on other books they have read that are similar. Once the group is meeting regularly, you can ask for input on future titles and a name for the club to distinguish it from other book clubs at your library. A good practice is to create a reading list at the beginning of each year so that it is easier for participants to prepare and have something to look forward to as the year unfolds. Ask the participants for suggestions, add your own, and have them vote on the list.

Some books or topics can raise sensitive issues and a discussion can turn argumentative. Be ready to deal with a variety of personalities and to redirect the conversation if needed. Over time you will learn the personalities of the individuals and figure out ways to address people in the best way to ensure everyone has a good time and returns. Allow people to express opinions, but do not allow someone to dominate a conversation. Others will be turned off and may not return next time. An important role of the facilitator is to balance the conversation and to introduce different perspectives when needed to engage everyone while keeping the discussion focused, on track, and moving forward positively. If the group tends to go off on tangents or strays from the book, guide them back and leave room at the end of the session for those off-topic matters.

A book club can be one of the best low-cost programs for libraries if the books are already in the collection. For a smaller library, buying additional copies may be necessary. Otherwise, printing fliers or other marketing materials comprises the only other necessary cost. Some book clubs have refreshments that come from the library's budget or from asking members to take turns bringing snacks. Staffing for book clubs is also minimal, as only a facilitator or leader of the group is needed. A backup staff member should be assigned in case the leader is unavailable for a meeting, but the backup person should be determined well in advance if possible so he or she has time to read the book.

TED Talks Discussion Group

TED Talks are free online videos highlighting inspirational speakers on almost any topic you can think of. The videos are usually no longer than fifteen minutes. See the list of topics at https://www.ted.com/topics. A TED Talks discussion group is another low-cost program that can start fairly quickly with minimal planning. The videos are readily available, and most libraries already have the equipment needed to screen the talks (either a TV with an internet connection or projector, laptop, and screen).

Familiarize yourself with TED Talks and watch a few if they are new to you. Choose a couple of videos on topics that you think will interest your community. Always make sure to watch the videos before the program to make sure they will hold the attention of your audience. If you stop watching after a few minutes, the talk is probably not going to go over well. Reserve a meeting space along with the necessary equipment.

Create a flier and post the program to your online calendar. Advertise the topics you plan to discuss in order to draw in people who may have a special interest. Make sure to briefly explain what a TED Talk is on the flier. Research the speakers you have chosen and the topics. Create discussion questions to get the conversation started, and bring

supplemental materials that can get people talking if they are reluctant. At the program, introduce a video and allow for discussion between videos if you are using different topics. Another approach would be to show two to three videos on the same topic and to discuss them all after the videos play. Ask the participants what topics they want to discuss in the future with a short survey. As you plan future topics, you may want to look for outside experts who could lead the discussion and/or add additional information in support of or in opposition to the video presentation. If the program goes well and grows, consider hosting a TEDx event (TEDx events are independently organized under a free license granted by TED) at your library where patrons present their own ideas!

A TED Talks discussion group would require no budget beyond the equipment, which your library likely already has. One staff member could plan and lead the series of programs. If more staff members are interested, this could be a group effort where staff members take turns leading the discussions based on the topics chosen and their particular interest in the topics.

Maker Activities

Maker or hands-on activities are not presented for adults as often as they are for children and teens, but they can be some of the most engaging. Maker activities such as do-it-yourself projects are very popular and tend to bring in a different audience than lecture-based programming. Staff can plan and present programs on crafts or look to local shops for instructors. STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programming is on the rise for adults as well. The word "maker" does not have to be associated with a maker lab featuring expensive, technologically advanced equipment like 3D printers or laser cutters. Making can involve any hands-on project and often employs traditional tools. Crafting or making programs are fairly easy for staff to lead, but partnering with local businesses and organizations can be beneficial when introducing this type of programming, especially when materials are required. Some partners will offer to provide materials and tools. Home Depot offers basic do-it-yourself classes, such as how to make a birdhouse, and will often donate all of the supplies for participants.

Hands-on programming can also be done with little to no budget. Ask participants to bring their own tools from home. Most people have a basic tool set and others are willing to bring tools to share. Reclaimed wood is easy to find in old pallets that stores are willing to part with for free. Websites like Freecycle and Craigslist can provide a wealth of free material. If you know you are going to need certain materials, post a flier at the circulation desk with a wish list, and other patrons may be willing to donate. Most public libraries do not charge for programs, but this does not mean that they have to provide all of the materials. Post a supply list along with the program advertising and ask participants to bring their own supplies and tools, or do a combination where the library provides some of the materials.

One example is a tie-dying program. The library may be able to buy the dye and other necessities such as rubber bands and buckets, but ask the attendees to bring their own t-shirts. This way they have a shirt in the size they like and the library has spent very little on the supplies. Just make sure to indicate that the shirt should be 100 percent cotton on the flier. For maker programs, you will want to determine a class size and consider having preregistration to ensure enough supplies. When deciding on what project to start with, you can look at circulation statistics to determine what areas are popular with your community. For instance, craft or cooking books may circulate well and give you an idea of what types of programs your patrons would attend.

Figure 8.2. Learning how to quilt using her own machine. *Haley K. Holmes*.

Quilling

Quilling or the art of paper rolling involves using paper strips that are rolled, shaped, and glued together to create intricate designs. This is a very low-cost project that is easy to learn and results in a complex, beautiful product.

Supplies needed:

- Paper strips in various colors, typically ⅛" wide
- Wooden skewers
- Cardstock
- Scissors
- Glue
- Example images printed from the internet

Buy or collect supplies and make samples. If you have never done quilling before, watch a YouTube video to learn the skill. Be careful to choose a project that can be completed in the time frame allotted. Some participants will take twice as long as others, so take this into account. While there are tools created specifically for quilling, a wooden skewer will work if you need a low-cost option. Precut paper strips are also available for purchase, but for a beginning class, printer paper in a variety of colors can be cut into the strips needed.

Choose a date and time that makes sense for your audience. If older adults are your audience, a morning or afternoon session will work. If the audience is people who work during the day, choose an evening (account for traffic) or a weekend afternoon. Reserve a room and determine the setup. Participants will need tables and chairs in either a lecture or square configuration so that the instructor can be seen for demonstrations and move around the room to assist individuals.

Create a flier and add the program to your online calendar. Always indicate on a flier when a program is for adults only. For crafting or hands-on projects, you may have families that want to come together so it is especially important to market these types of events clearly. If you find families interested in a particular project, consider partnering with a children's librarian to offer the same program for a different audience. Post the event on social media and put the flier in local shops people who like to craft might frequent or senior centers if that is your intended audience.

Prepare for the event by cutting enough paper strips and gathering/purchasing the other supplies. Set up the room in advance of the program so that there is plenty of room to spread out. Either have the participants collect the supplies as they enter the room at a supplies station and choose a template, or put the supplies out on the tables in advance if you are planning to have everyone make the same design. Give basic instructions to the group and show them how to make the various shapes they will need to complete the project. Since each piece of the project is fairly small, you may ask the group to stand around your table to demonstrate the process. Another option would be to use a camera to project the instructor's hands onto a screen. An IPEVO document camera is a low-cost, easy-to-use camera that can be used for this purpose.

Move around the room helping people and giving them feedback. Some people will be more confident and require no further instruction, while others will need one-on-one help. Be cognizant of how many people are asking for help and make sure one person does not monopolize your attention. If a participant is unable to finish the program, this is a time when allowing them to take basic materials, such as paper strips and the wooden skewers, home makes sense. There may be other times when you would invite the individual to come to the library at another time to use tools to complete the project if possible. Distribute a survey at the end of the program asking for feedback and for future program ideas. Set up advance registration for your next DIY class because everyone will want to return and bring their friends.

The budget for many craft programs such as this one can be minimal, while others require more materials that are not already found in the library. If you have a limited budget, start with low-cost programs first. Once you have proven the need for maker programming, you can seek additional funding using the results of the initial programs in a formal proposal. A program such as this one can be led by one staff member. Volunteers can be used as assistants if you find there to be too many participants to give enough individual attention to. Limiting the program to ten to fifteen participants can help when preparing supplies and planning for some one-on-one instruction.

Reclaimed Wood Mason Jar Vase

Another project that would be considered a maker program but requires more skill, materials, and tools is a reclaimed wood vase wall hanging. This project can be accomplished by beginners but is moderately challenging. This is an opportunity to teach the use of hand and power tools and could be included as an adulting program.

Supplies needed:

- Wood pallet
- Crowbar or saw (handsaw, circular saw, or miter saw)
- Safety glasses
- Hammer

- Nails
- Mason jar
- Twine
- Acrylic paint and paint brushes
- Hose clamp
- Drill and bits
- Screws

The library is unlikely to have most of these supplies on hand, so make sure you can obtain the tools and materials before deciding to offer the program. Wooden pallets can be found for free at many stores and on websites like Craigslist and Freecycle. Mason jars are available for purchase at grocery stores and craft stores. Hose clamps are found in hardware stores. Create a sample and determine if you will have participants cut the wooden pallets into sections on their own or if you will precut the wood. Pallets can be torn apart with a crowbar or cut with a saw, so this decision may be based on factors such as safety regulations and time and noise constraints. For instance, you may not want patrons hammering in the library during storytime. Not all supplies and materials have to be provided by the library. In your advertising, you can ask attendees to bring items they may have at home. For this project, provide hose clamps, pallet wood, and paint if possible. Ask participants to bring the tools, if they have them at home, and a mason jar. Tools can also be shared since people work at different rates.

Create a flier using a stock photo (be cognizant of copyright when using photos) or a photo of your finished project and post to your library's website after reserving the needed space for the program and choosing the best time/day. You may choose to do a combination of inside and outside if space is available and the weather is tolerable. If you are concerned about the difficulty of the project, let the public know that this is a more advanced activity in the advertising. Include a supply list on the flier or let participants know to pick up a supply list at the circulation desk. If participants bring the tools, and the library provides the supplies, the cost per person will be about five dollars.

Have the spaces set up in advance. If you have to do activities like cutting the wood and drilling indoors, consider laying down plastic to protect the floor and other surfaces. The same goes for painting, depending on your tables. Acrylic paint cleans off most tables easily but not off carpet. Provide a list of instructions for those who like to work faster. Start the program by explaining the project and the steps involved. Demonstrate the use of tools and cover safety instructions. Have participants sign waivers if required by your library. If possible, arrange for a volunteer or another staff member to be present to assist individuals since they will get to different steps at different times.

Take pictures of patrons completing the steps of the project during the program and of the finished projects at the end. If possible, get a group photo with all of the projects in hand. Ask participants to fill out a survey at the end of the program providing feedback on the instructor, project, and process, as well as requesting ideas for future programs.

STEAM for Adults

STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), STEAM (adding art), or STREAM (includes reading) are popular in educating school-aged children, but there are benefits to this type of program for adults. Adults want to be stimulated intellectually and have the opportunity to interact with others who are knowledgeable in the areas of science and technology. STEAM for adults is a great way to bring a lot of resources together to create

a series of programs adults will be drawn to and appreciate. Decide how many programs you aim to present as part of the series. If you are planning for your location only, consider starting with five, one for each of the areas covered by STEAM. Brainstorm ideas for what types of programs would fit well into each category paired with contacts you already have or can make easily. You should decide what level of programs will work for your audience. Do you want to have university-level lectures on the topics, beginner-level presentations, or a mixture? For instance, if you have an active local astronomy club, invite them to host an astronomy session to fit the subject of science. Science, technology, and art are the easiest topics to find programming for since they are such broad topics and include programming that may already be happening in your library. Another way to find appropriate programming would be to look at STEAM activities for kids or teens (there are tons of books and websites available) and choose some that would also appeal to adults.

Any of these programs could be staff led, but this is a chance to make new partners and to bring in some local talent. Look for an engineering department at a local college or university. High schools often have engineering clubs, as well. If none of these options is available, develop an engineering program based on a topic such as bridges and provide background information as well as a chance to test bridge-building skills with materials like dry spaghetti or popsicle sticks. A local professor may be willing to give a presentation on an engaging topic, such as the Fibonacci sequence. In contrast, a baking demonstration or hands-on cooking event could be used to highlight the use of math or chemistry in everyday situations.

Some additional possibilities:

Science: Medical topics, such as diabetes or stem cell research, zoology, meteorology

Technology: Snap circuits, 3D printing, photography

Engineering: Catapults, aviation, civil engineering

Art: Watercolor techniques, bookbinding, collage

Math: How to read music, measuring for home improvement projects, budgeting

Once you have decided on the five programs that will fulfill the subjects covered by STEAM, create a schedule. For a series of programs at one location, choosing a regular day, such as the second Tuesday of the month, will make the series easier to advertise. Use your knowledge of previous successes and the targeted audience to make the scheduling determination. Lock in the dates with outside presenters and do any necessary paperwork. Be sure to reserve spaces at this time as well.

Create eye-catching fliers and post the event to your online calendar. Share the flier with outside presenters and any organizations involved. Each topic may draw a different audience, so advertise in the places that make sense given your expectations. Always follow up with outside presenters in the week before the presentation to verify details, including any equipment needs. Do targeted marketing to your patrons based on interests. If possible, include a quarter-sized version of the flier in the books on hold that match the topics of the programming series. Gather supplies and equipment and make samples or test equipment as needed. Prepare the room for each program based on the topic. A presentation on math may require a lecture-style setup with or without tables while an art class will have a different setup using tables and chairs with space for working. Have surveys ready and make sure to take lots of pictures. As the series progresses, post photos and teasers to social media.
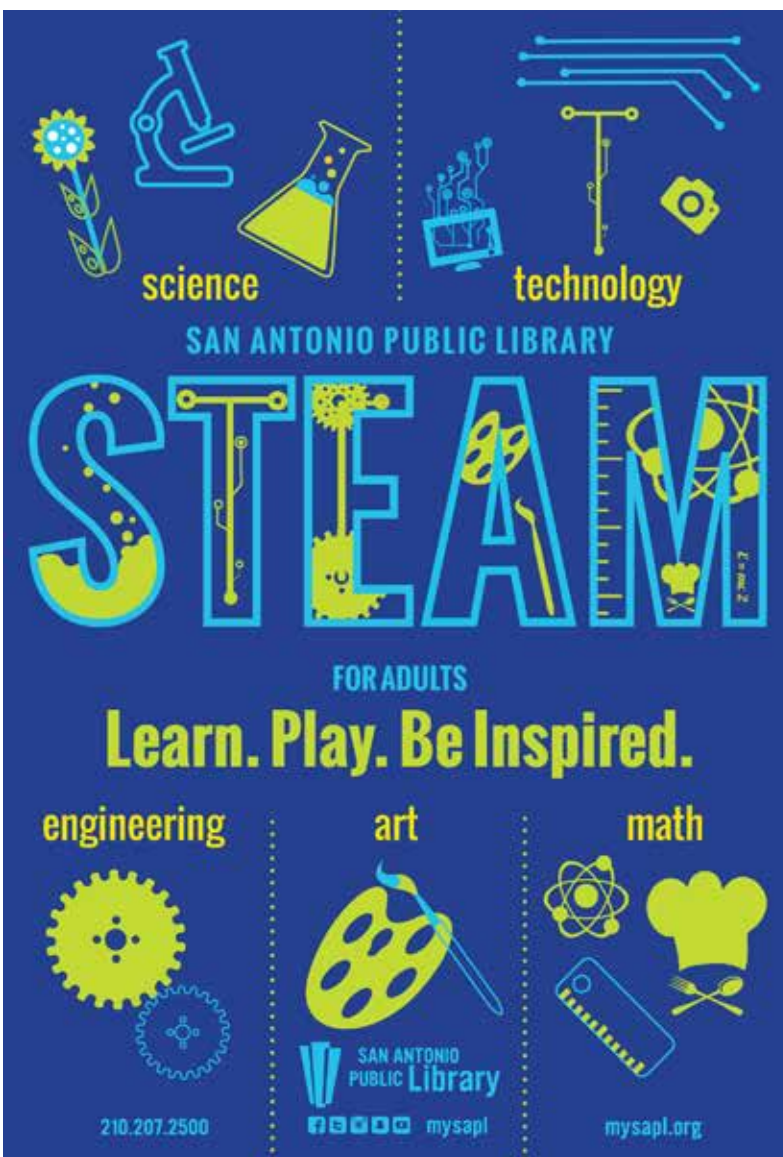
Figure 8.3. Advertising example for a series of programs. *Ana Farr.*

Enlightening Programs

This is an opportunity to educate the public about specific historical events, such as programming surrounding International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Placing people face-to-face with survivors of the Holocaust is an experience that can be life-changing by creating a human connection with someone who went through a trial most people cannot fathom. Look for a local museum or group to identify speakers. The United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, also has volunteers who are willing to do Skype presentations and interviews for the public.

Human Library

Human Library events allow patrons to "check out" people (referred to as "books") who represent a specific topic to have a conversation about what they represent. The Human

Library started in Denmark as a way to break down stereotypes and has been held at libraries throughout the United States. Find more information at www.humanlibrary .org. To hold an official event and to use the Human Library logo, apply for permission through the website. The "book" topics chosen are typically perceived as unknown or misunderstood by the general public, such as someone who is transgender or Muslim, allowing the "readers" to better understand someone's experience and to challenge stereotypes or stigmas in a safe and nonconfrontational environment.

Setting up a human library can be time consuming and complex if you are working alone. This is a great project to incorporate team members. Begin the process of planning a human library at least three months in advance of the event date. Start by brainstorming the types of "books" you want represented in the event. Coworkers may have personal contacts who may be interested in participating. Select a date for the event and contact potential participants who will serve as the "books." Aim for at least eight people for a first-time human library event. Each book will be checked out by individual "readers" or small groups for fifteen- to twenty-minute conversations. The people serving as books will need to be given breaks throughout the event. Having personal, intimate conversations with strangers can be draining. Keeping this in mind, the event should not last more than a few hours.

Once the books are secured, create an advertising campaign that explains the purpose of the program and lists the book topics for the event. Create a catalog for the day so that people walking into the program have a reference for selecting whom they want to speak to. A catalog can be simple, listing the book's topic and a short description. Develop expectations for the books and send this information in advance. You want to make sure the books are comfortable and know that they do not have to answer every question. Consider a short meeting with the books ahead of time to increase their levels of comfort and confidence.

Figure 8.4.   Human Library book and her reader. *Haley K. Holmes.*

Here are some tips for the books attending the event:

- Be yourself, be honest, open, and listen carefully.
- Treat each reader with respect.
- Remember the goal is to increase understanding, which is a two-way street.
- Don't pretend to be someone you aren't or play a role; the reader will realize, and you will lose credibility.
- Be ready to share personal experiences. If questions become too intimate, feel free to say you don't want to answer.
- Wear what you will be comfortable in, but please no shorts or "message" shirts.
- Feel free to bring small props for your subject matter if you feel it will help with conversational flow.
- Be prepared to repeat yourself again and again as different readers might have the same questions. Treat your readers as if they are the first people you are giving this information to.
- Every reader borrowing you will be different and the reasons for choosing your book will vary. A good question to start the discussion is "Why did you choose my book?"
- Readers are, in general, ready to talk, listen, and learn. Sometimes their questions aren't always clear. Get some basic information from the reader: Have they met someone like you before? Did they have a good or bad experience with a person like you? This will help you decide what information they might find useful.
- If a reader is ignorant or becomes verbally aggressive and/or attempts to blame you for a variety of social problems, remain calm and show understanding while expressing disagreement where necessary. Move the conversation to a subject in which you feel safe.
- You have the right to end the discussion if you feel insulted or accused.
- Your discussion with the reader is confidential.
- A good book is modest but shows excitement for their subject matter; please leave egos at the door.
- Enjoy yourself!

In advance of the event, make a check-out schedule so that all blocks of time are accounted for, including breaks for the books. Besides reserving the space for the event, set aside another space where the books can relax and enjoy refreshments when on break from the public. Set up the event room in such a way that people can have private conversations. Comfortable seating facing each other would be ideal. Try not to set up barriers such as tables between the books and readers. Space the chairs out so that conversations will not detract from one another.

More staffing for this event will be necessary than for most programs. Bring in volunteers to assist in leading readers to the books, keeping time, staffing the welcome/check-out area, and assisting with other directional needs. A human library can be done with a minimal budget, but with marketing, refreshments, and t-shirts (or other thank-you gifts for the books) it can add up to between $400 and $500. Be sure to provide surveys to both the readers and the books at the end of the event. Having feedback from all participants will be very valuable in planning the next human library event.

Cultural Events

Because public libraries are funded by taxpayers, they are inclusive organizations dedicated to reflecting the communities they serve. In addition to this goal, staff also work to expose people to a variety of ideas and perspectives through cultural events. Many times diversity months are celebrated through book displays, programs, and exhibits. Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Pride Month are a few of the most common months celebrated. The demographics of a community should be examined regularly to determine what less common cultural celebrations may be of interest to patrons. For example, in a community with a big Sikh population, it may be appropriate to hold a program close to Vaisakhi to give members of the Sikh community an opportunity to introduce their culture to others.

Culture can certainly extend beyond religion and ethnicity and can include realms of commonality such as music, art, theatre, and film. Patrons are encouraged to create their own information in the form of writing, film, music, and more. Platforms have been developed that allow the public to upload their original content in order to share it freely with others. Libraries also host poetry contests and slams, film festivals, and writing workshops encouraging the public in content creation rather than just using the library as a warehouse of information already created.

Film Festival

Hosting a film festival at the library can be a great way to support local talent and expose your community to the filmmakers amongst them. Even a film festival that is open to city or county residents will attract the attention of filmmakers worldwide, so creating guidelines and requirements is essential. For example, you may require that the filmmakers be residents of your service area, that they have not submitted the film to another festival, and/or that the producer be over the age of eighteen. There are three main components to a film festival: a call for entries, judging, and a screening of the winners and selections. Establish a timeline for planning each of the components. Once a call for entries has gone out, give participants at least two months to submit. Give your judges at least a month to view and to score the entries. The screening will be an event in itself so plan accordingly. Since the screening and awards presentation will be the culmination of the project, start by choosing a date and location for the event and work backward to develop a timeline. Your library may be a great venue to host the event, but you might also consider partnering with a local theater to book a screening. The theater may be willing to host the event if the library agrees to purchase a certain amount of refreshments.

Use existing film festivals to determine rules and terms and submit those to your legal counsel for review.

Sample Verbiage for Film Festival Rules

- Films shown at private screenings not open to the public (for crew, investors, etc.) are eligible.
- Films screened at other film festivals are eligible.
- The video/film shall have been produced by the entrant and/or the entrant shall have the unrestricted right to disseminate it. All persons appearing

in the video/film shall have provided written consents for their likenesses being used in the production.

Festival and Entrants' Conduct

All entrants of the Mission City Film Festival (MCFF) shall not submit any film(s) that in whole or in part violate or infringe in any way upon the rights of others; which are unlawful, threatening, abusive, defamatory, or invasive of privacy or publicity rights; which are vulgar, obscene, profane or otherwise objectionable; which encourage conduct that would constitute a criminal offense, give rise to civil liability, or otherwise violates any law, including, but not limited to, HIPAA; or which contain any advertising or any solicitation with respect to products or services. All entrants shall not modify, exploit, create derivative works, or otherwise interfere with the material submitted by other entrants. In the event of permitted copying, distribution, or publication of such material, no changes in or deletion of author attribution, trademark legend, or copyright notice shall be made.

Proprietary Rights

Submitted films must be the original work of the entrant and must not infringe upon the copyrights, trademarks, and rights of privacy, publicity, or any other proprietary rights of a person or entity, including but not limited to: location releases for footage shot at any location; name, voice, and likeness releases for any person whose name, voice, likeness, and/or feature appears in the film, other than the entrant; releases for the use of any props, set dressings, and other materials used in the film; releases from any individuals participating in the production of the film and releases for any other audio and/or audiovisual materials not wholly owned by the participant(s), which are used in the film.

Permissions

If the film contains any material or elements that are not owned by the entrant and/or are subject to proprietary rights of third parties, the entrant hereby automatically grants or warrants that any third parties owning material included in the submitted film, have expressly granted to Mission City Film Festival the royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, nonexclusive right and license to use, reproduce, edit, publish, translate and distribute such material (in whole or in part) worldwide and/or to incorporate it in other works in any form, media or technology now known or hereafter developed for the full term of any copyright that may exist in such material, with the objective to promote the goals of the Mission City Film Festival and the mission of the Mission City Film Festival.

Minors

If any person(s) appearing in any film is (are) under the age of majority in their state of residence, the original signature of a parent or legal guardian is required with each release. Entrant must obtain such releases before submitting film.

Termination, Cancellation, Suspension, Disqualification

MCFF reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to consider any film ineligible and disqualify the entrant, or to cancel, terminate, modify, or suspend the

MCFF in whole or in part and without prior notice at any time, if it suspects, or finds that:

- The film actually or potentially infringes upon any third party's intellectual property right and/or it is discovered that the necessary permissions for an entered film have not been obtained (see Section 6). MCFF reserves the right to verify that any intellectual property rights are not infringed and that all related permissions have been obtained.
- The film does not comply with the established entry requirements and/or in the sole discretion of MCFF the film contains obscene, unlawful, or other objectionable material, as defined in Section 4.
- The film is advertising or promoting products or services.
- The entrant is tampering with or otherwise commits fraud relating to the entry process or the operation of the MCFF. The entrant is acting in violation of these Rules and Guidelines.

User Rights

- Entrant grants to MCFF a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, nonexclusive right and license to use, display, reproduce, screen, edit, publish, translate, and distribute the submitted film (in whole or in part) worldwide and/or to incorporate it in other works in any form, media or technology now known or hereafter developed for the full term of any copyright and renewal that may exist in such material, with the objective to promote the goals of the MCFF and the mission of MCFF and its subsidiaries.
- Entrant grants to MCFF the right to use submitted film to create a trailer or to splice together with other submitted films for the objective to promote the goals of the MCFF and the mission of MCFF and its subsidiaries. Entrant grants MCFF the right to use the entrants' names, likenesses, photographs, voices, sounds, and/or biographical information and films in connection with the MCFF and for any and all advertising, publicity, and promotional purposes relating to the MCFF and promoting the mission of MCFF. The entrant will be clearly acknowledged for any use of his/her material and his/her name will accompany any dissemination of the material he/she owns by MCFF. Beyond permission granted herein and acknowledgment, MCFF shall not be obliged to compensate the entrant for use of the submitted material, unless prohibited by law.

Determine the categories that you want to award prizes for, such as best overall film, best feature film, best documentary, best director, best actor, best actress, and best film created in a local public library. Create a call for entries and post as a flier, to your website, and on a free website such as FilmFreeway.com. Recruit judges from local talent agencies, film schools, film commissions, or other applicable organizations. Consider the number of eligible entries you receive to decide the number of judges needed. Asking someone to watch fifty or more films can be overwhelming and difficult for someone volunteering

Figure 8.5. Film festival screening and awards ceremony. *Haley K. Holmes.*

their time. You may decide to have different judges for different categories. FilmFreeway provides a way for each judge to have an account and an easy-to-use scoring system.

Once winners have been determined and official selections made, be sure to let the filmmakers know so that they can make arrangements for their teams, friends, and families to be present at the screening event. Advertise the screening separately from the submission fliers to ensure people know that the screening is an event open to the public. Make it clear on the flier if there will be adult content in any of the films screened. The awards ceremony can be as fancy as your budget will allow. Custom trophies and t-shirts are definitely nice touches. Roll out the red carpet and offer a photo opportunity with a step and repeat background covered the library's logo. Invite dignitaries and stakeholders to the event, possibly providing a speaking opportunity as part of the ceremony preceding the screening.

Workforce Development

Learning as an adult can seem daunting when the topic is something necessary for an individual's success in life. Many public libraries are responding to community needs by offering adult education classes including support for those earning a high school equivalency or studying to learn English. The method for these subjects can range from one-on-one assistance to group classes or peer learning. By offering these services for free whenever possible, libraries are working to break down barriers for people who may not otherwise be able to access such classes due to factors like income, work schedules, childcare challenges, or transportation issues.

Many valuable programs can be offered that fall under the heading of workforce de- velopment, including sessions that help people who are looking for employment, want to

start a business, or want to improve their knowledge of specific technologies or software. Community demographics will play a large part in determining which classes to offer. In a lower income area, resume building and interviewing skills, including mock interviews, may be popular. Some libraries put together full-day job fairs for patrons. The Small Business Development Centers supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov) provide resources for partners willing to assist in setting up free workshops and potential mentor programs in your area. Computer classes on Microsoft Office products, coding, and other specific software can aid people in developing skills to either find a job or to work toward current job goals.

Job Fair

A public library is the perfect setting for a job fair since many patrons come in daily to use computers to apply for jobs, seek staff assistance on job applications, and create resumes. A job fair is a great opportunity to partner with local businesses looking for employees. There are also community organizations such as Goodwill that help people find jobs. Connect with those groups to bring in a variety of employers. Job fairs are often targeted to specific audiences, such as veterans, teens, healthcare professionals, and people looking for part-time employment.

Planning a job fair will take more time than other one-time programs since there can be many elements, including a number of employers, resume help, dress for success presentations, and mock interviews. Some of these additional presentations could be held in advance of the job fair or during the job fair. If presenters are available, having more elements available while the fair is happening can help to attract more participants, especially if their time is limited.

Determine where you will hold the job fair. You may need multiple spaces. Each employer should be given a table and space to discuss options with participants. If you have a meeting room, consider how many tables will comfortably fit into the space when deciding how many employers to invite. Make contact with potential employers or organizations that can help connect you with employers. Approach local businesses to see if they have interest in a table. Have each employer fill out an agreement giving them the details of the event including date, time, and location. A three- to four-hour block typically works well for a job fair event. Make the same agreement with any other presenters. If you place the employers in the meeting room, use smaller rooms for presentations or carve out an area in the library and create a small presentation space. Reserve desktop computers or laptops for resume help. Create another small space for mock interviews. Some employers will set up interviews on the spot, and you want participants to be as prepared as possible.

Create a flier including the names of the employers who will be present and any special presentations, along with specific times. Marketing should include a heads up to potential attendees that they should bring resumes and be prepared for on-site interviews. Post the event to your website. Send the flier to all of the presenters and employers for them to post on their sites, social media channels, and in house if appropriate. Seek additional publicity including TV and radio interviews. See chapter 7 for specific tips on advertising. A big event like a job fair takes a lot of time to plan and will attract a larger crowd. You will want to put more time and effort into marketing so that the event will be worthwhile for both the employers and the potential employees.

While the budget for a job fair can be minimal, there are some expenses that make a job fair more attractive and ultimately successful. Consider additional signage advertising

the event, such as yard signs ($50–$200; corrugated plastic to feather banners) in advance of the event and on the day. If the event will be four or more hours, consider catering for the employers since they are donating their time to the library ($200–$500; light snacks to lunch). Providing the participants with branded tools for the fair such as notebooks, pens, portfolios, bags, and USB drives can be a nice touch but is not necessary. The products will require at least an additional $500. If you do not have enough tables and chairs on hand for all of the employers and presentations, rentals may be necessary ($200–$500). The overall budget can range from $0–$2,000 depending on your resources.

If possible, set up all of the tables and chairs the day before the event to ensure everything is in place. Have a check-in table near the front door with a list of employers, presentations, and any giveaways. You can use a sign-in sheet to figure out how many people attend the fair. An exit interview or survey could be used at the same table to help judge success. You may also consider asking recruiters to provide feedback following the fair with how many people they end up employing. While a job fair can be planned by an individual staff member, the execution will require more people. Find volunteers to help with check-in, monitoring spaces, leading employers and presenters to their spaces, resume and online job applications, mock interviews, and other duties as needed. In some of these cases, volunteers will need to be prepped in advance of the event. A job fair requires a lot of planning, but the impact to the community will be worth the effort.

High School Equivalency

Many states now offer more options than the GED for those needing to complete high school. By offering programs based on these tests or specific subjects covered on these tests, the library can participate in aiding the community in having more opportunities for employment and advancement. Some libraries also use grant funds to offer GED test vouchers. The GED can be difficult to pass, but providing one-on-one tutoring may be an option for your library. Through a grant, the San Antonio Public Library currently offers a program where adults can earn a high school diploma online. Because there are only so many spots available, potential scholarship recipients are identified through an ongoing adult education program. These individuals have attempted the GED and have been unable to pass but show the potential to be successful through the high school diploma program. The program takes approximately three months and is significantly less difficult than the GED. Students are required to work on-site at the library three hours a week and are expected to work three hours from home each week in order to finish all of the classes and tests necessary to graduate. In one year, seventeen students have graduated, and many of them have enrolled in college.

Math Tutoring

The subject that poses the biggest challenge for most people pursuing high school equivalency is math. Providing additional assistance in this subject has been proven to increase success rates among adult learners.[1] While someone on staff may be great at math and willing to lead group tutoring sessions, chances are you will need to find an outside tutor. Start by looking for a volunteer (for example, a retired teacher or student teacher) by posting a flier and using a service like volunteermatch.org. Create a list of preferred qualifications for the tutor including background, experience, education, and availability.

While you may find someone through this method, the person may still expect some compensation. Budget between twenty and forty dollars a session for a tutor depending on qualifications and experience.

Determine how many sessions you will provide. The course should run no less than six weeks and attendees should be expected to attend all sessions. Advertise the series of programs in house, online, and in appropriate venues. If your local community college offers classes for high school equivalency, ask them to provide students who need extra math help with the flier. Find other local organizations offering classes, tests, and/or vouchers and ask them to display the flier as well.

Prepare the space for the instructor and provide needed equipment. Staff are not necessarily needed to be present for a program like this, although someone may want to sit in on a session or two to assess the instructor. To determine the success of the program, work with the instructor to conduct a pretest and posttest to assess student improvement. You may also follow up with the students and ask them to report high school equivalency success or failure following the classes. Finding a qualified instructor and a funding source (if required) will be the toughest parts of planning a series like this one, but the potential success of the program can be life changing for participants.

English as a Second Language

Public libraries are publically funded and open to all, so our users often come from very diverse backgrounds. Depending on your locale, you may encounter many immigrants

Figure 8.6. ESL students on a field trip to a local museum. *Haley K. Holmes*.

or people who are looking to improve their English. Some libraries provide formalized instruction and have dedicated language teachers. If this is not an option for you, a low-cost program like a foreign language conversation club, as outlined earlier in this chapter, can be very successful and help create community among your patrons.

Someone on staff with teaching experience and/or who has been hired specifically for teaching English as a second language would be the preferred person to provide this specialized service. The San Antonio Public Library provides ESL instruction through their adult education program called LEARN at SAPL. Dedicated training officers provide group and one-on-one instruction in English for beginners.

Deciding on a curriculum would be the next most important step. Intercambio, a nonprofit organization based in Boulder, Colorado, has established a program to work with immigrants on language skills through the use of volunteers. In addition, they developed a curriculum that is available for purchase by other organizations. Their model of a volunteer network could also be used by a public library to connect individuals to a community of supporters. Another option for providing ESL in the public library would be to find a volunteer teacher or student teachers, or to partner with another organization in your community to provide classes within the library.

Digital Literacy

A recent State of America's Libraries Report released by the American Library Association emphasized the importance public libraries play in bridging the digital divide for low-income families.[2] Public libraries provide access not only through public computers and free Wi-Fi but also through the training people need to use those tools. Many cities across the United States are focused on becoming "smart" cities, which means technology is used to increase operational efficiency and to communicate with citizens. The problem with this model is that lower income families may not have access to technology in the form of a computer, mobile device, or even broadband in order to connect to a network. Some libraries now offer Wi-Fi hotspots to help individuals who lack access at home, as well as helping individuals to earn devices they can keep.

Digital inclusion has become a prominent theme in library programming. Classes from basic to advanced are being offered by staff and outside organizations. Digital skills refer to the basic ability to perform functions, such as creating an email account, sending and receiving email, and using Microsoft Word to create a resume. Digital literacy skills include the ability to identify false information, such as spam, or searching the internet for verifiable information. Such programs can be more difficult to teach than basic digital skills. Programs on fake news, job searching, and coding can all fall under digital inclusion. Exposing a community to technology can aid them in many ways, such as workforce development and entrepreneurship. Close to 80 percent of middle-skill-level jobs now require use of technology and many employers only accept online applications.[3] Computer classes held in the time leading up to a job fair would allow job seekers a chance to increase their skills before meeting with potential employers.

Basic Computer Classes

Hands-on classes are really the only way to go when teaching people who have little to no computer knowledge, so a computer lab, set of laptops, or the ability to reserve public

desktop computers is a necessity. Define your audience (see chapter 3) to determine which classes to teach and the best days/times to offer them. Find a curriculum or design one. Many databases—such as LearningExpress Library, Lynda.com, and Universal Class—offer computer classes.

Some basic classes can include topics such as:

- Meet the computer: Learners will review basic information about computers, such as vocabulary about computer hardware and software and how to put information into computers and get information out of computers. File management and its importance will also be considered.
- Internet basics and safety: Learners are introduced to web browser basics, search engines, and search strategies. Ethical and safety concerns will also be considered.
- Introduction to email: Learners are introduced to email and other forms of electronic communication. They will learn how to register for an email account; navigate an email interface; compose, send, and receive messages; manage a contact list; and upload and download attachments. The course will also provide a brief overview of safety concerns and social networking.
- Online job search: Learners are provided with strategies to conduct an effective online job search. They will learn how to access job sites on the web, use job search engines, and fill out online applications. The course also includes a self-evaluation of skills and tips on online privacy during the job search.
- Microsoft Word: Learners are introduced to the terminology, screen components, and most commonly used functions offered by Microsoft Word. Emphasis will be placed on proper document formatting techniques and file naming and file management conventions.
- Social Media: Learners will become familiar with social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. They will learn how to create an account and the basics of each social media platform.

Design supporting materials such as handouts and find resources for students to gain additional practice after the class. GCFLearnFree.org is a great online resource for practice tests. Reserve the necessary space and the equipment you will need including desktops or laptops, projector, and screen. Create a flier and add the program to your online calendar. One staff member can teach a class of ten to fifteen students, but having a tech volunteer available to assist with questions would be ideal. Besides equipment and fliers, no budget is required for hosting computer classes.

Pop Culture Events

Many of the most attended programs attract participants of all ages and speak to the community in nontraditional ways. Events based on popular culture are fun for staff to plan and appeal to a wide range of patrons. These can take the form of typical-length programs, such as showing the last *Avengers* movie in anticipation of the upcoming release to a multiday comic con type event. Harry Potter–themed parties with multiple stations including potions class, herbology, quidditch exhibitions, and live owls can be held celebrating Harry's birthday or the anniversary of the books' release.

Comic Con

Comic cons have become increasingly popular and widespread. Having such an event in the public library is a chance to show the public that libraries are current and an opportunity to allow people to participate in an event that they may not otherwise attend due to cost. A comic con inspired event can be as elaborate as staffing and budget will allow. The first one is likely to start small, but these events are very popular and repeated events tend to add activities and details. The extent of the event can be planned according to the staffing, volunteers available, and the budget. You can only do so much with a small budget. Comic con events attract an audience of all ages, so you may consider partnering with age-based librarians to plan activities for children, teens, and adults. When adults are the primary audience, consider incorporating these elements: authors, artists, panel discussions, anime, board gaming, video gaming, crafts, cosplay, comic sales, food trucks, and demonstrations.

Start by determining the scope of the event. Will you have all events in one room or spread the events out over multiple areas? Create a schedule of events for the ideal day and a layout showing where each activity will occur. Plan to have staff or volunteers to work each activity in each area. In this way, you can decide if you have the capacity to host the number of activities you hope to offer. Put a committee together of staff who have interest in the different areas. Task each person with an area such as recruiting authors, the gaming area, crafts, a cosplay contest, and reaching out to community partners.

A comic con is another program where community partners can add various elements while allowing staff to concentrate on other areas. Contact local comic book stores to establish connections and to potentially allow them to sell merchandise. The nearby university may have a quidditch team available to do demonstrations of the sport. Search for other local cosplay organizations, *Star Trek* groups, gaming clubs, Harry Potter clubs (found in high schools), and anime interest groups such as a maid's cafe or dance crews.

If space allows, create a layout where groups with similar interests are put together. You can create an author area, artists alley, vendor section, video gaming corner, tabletop gaming room, craft space, and more based on the activities. For an all-day event, invite food trucks or other food vendors to park outside so participants have food options without leaving the library grounds. Allow authors and artists to sell their works or invite an outside vendor such as a local bookstore to supply materials. Attendees will like the opportunity to have a work signed by the creator if they choose to do so. However, do not make a purchase a requirement for meeting an author or artist. The opportunity to have a conversation with an author or artist for free will set your con apart from other local cons.

An event with a turnout of over 2,000 attendees and special guests of honor will take a significant budget ($5,000 to $10,000) and require a staff committee (15 members), as well as an army of volunteers (at least 50). A smaller comic con event could be done for $500 with a smaller group of staff and fewer elements. Staff capacity, available funding, and desired outcomes should be determined to decide how large of an event you want to plan the first time. Be prepared to add elements and for a bigger budget for future events.

Community Initiated

Giving already established groups a place to meet can create readymade programming and may bring new members to the group. Many public libraries allow meetup.com

groups to use their spaces and can benefit from gaining new library users in the process. Librarians do not have to be experts in everything to have a wide range of successful programs. They just need to make connections within the community and bring the experts in, providing them with space and marketing. Many groups will approach the library asking for a meeting space or to rent a space. When possible, partner to allow the use of a space for free in exchange for allowing the public to join and participate in the group. Gaming communities are good resources for connecting people with a particular interest that requires a social network and can be found through sites such as meetup.com. Other community programs (such as woodcarving, scrapbooking, or ukulele clubs) allow people with similar interests to come together to share their talents or to learn from each other.

Sample overview from the first Pop Con at the Central Library of the San Antonio Public Library (event held on three floors):

Figure 8.7. Library director as the Riddler and Pop Con attendees. *Haley K. Holmes.*

Author area in the gallery with book sales from Barnes & Noble and special guest appearances by:

C. Robert Cargill—Guest of Honor
Christopher Brown
David Bowles
David Liss
Joe McKinney
Robert Jackson Bennett
Stina Leicht
Xavier Garza

Artist area on the second floor escalator area including print sales and with special guest appearances by:

Alfredo "Freddy" Lopez, Jr.
Allison Stanley
Armand S. Baltazar—Guest of Honor
Jason Limon
John Picacio
Matt Frank

Panel discussions:

Panel Area 1
11:00 a.m. Podcasting: Who, What, How
12:15 p.m. How to Become a Youtuber—with Vince Guzman from Geek Out SA
1:30 p.m. Cosability! Cosplay for Those with Disabilities

Panel Area 2
11:00 a.m. Armand Baltazar—artist-to-artist conversation with John Picacio
12:15 p.m. C. Robert Cargill—discussion and live narration during viewing of *Doctor Strange*
3:15 p.m. Cosplay contest

Panel Area 3
11:00 a.m. *Doctor Who* Panel
12:15 p.m. Joe McKinney—author chat
1:30 p.m. Made-for-TV Movies with Amanda Reyes

Panel Area 4
11:00 a.m. Fan Fiction
12:15 p.m. Pop Nostalgia—interactive panel
1:30 p.m. Where Few Writers Have Gone Before. . . . Area writers discuss how they broke into Sci Fi, *Star Trek*, and Fantasy

Other events include:
Kickoff with Mayor and State Representative
Anime/Manga area: Live performances by Sweetness Maid Café, the Vixens, Galaxy Girl Paida, and Deacon Rap (K-pop)—first floor
Harry Potter, *Star Wars*, and superhero crafts—children's floor
UTSA Quidditch Team demonstrations—outside area
Video gaming stations with Hebi Studios
Tabletop gaming with San Antonio Nerd Night
Visits by The South Texas Droid Builders and The Batman of San Antonio—mobile
Green screen photos and Instagram stations—first floor
Food trucks—outside area
Pop Con cosplay contest—auditorium
Pop Con art contest—second floor

Role-Playing Games

There are many established role-playing game groups that may be in need of a place to meet and will contact the library looking for a meeting room. If they do not reach out to you, search meetup.com or Facebook to find a group of werewolves or people who already get together to play Dungeons and Dragons. Invite the group to meet at the library. The benefit for the group would be a free space to meet, perhaps bigger and nicer than where they currently meet. The benefit for the library will be an established group that is likely to bring new people into the library who may not already be library users. Once you find a group willing to allow others to join them in the library setting, create marketing materials to promote the group. Staffing will be minimal depending on if you are required to be at the program or can allow the group use of the room without staff presence. The budget will only include marketing materials.

Community Organizations

A program does not always have to be a formalized event. Allowing community organizations to have a table inside or outside of the library to distribute information can be a form of programming. The local water company may give away water-saver faucet aerators while talking one-on-one with patrons about how to save water and money on their bills, or another city department, such as Animal Care Services, may want to bring out some kittens available for adoption. Libraries are a convenient community hub for organizations to reach citizens. The key is to match the requests from such organizations to the needs of an individual community to create a win-win situation.

Passive Programming

Programming does not always have to be held in a meeting room or led by someone. A program can consist of putting out a project for people to do at their leisure or having a group do something out on the library floor for others to observe and enjoy. One example of a project-based passive program is a coloring station. If a lot of people are using your library for studying or work, they may appreciate an opportunity to take a break and relax by either coloring individual sheets or by contributing to a group project (a large mandala, for instance). Put the coloring station in a quiet adult-oriented section of the library to attract adults rather than children. Provide crayons or colored pencils (with a sharpener) and coloring sheets that are geared towards adults (more complex lines, subjects of interest to adults). Many royalty-free coloring sheets for adults can be found online. Keep the area tidy and well stocked.

Another passive program that would require no budget and no staffing involves inviting a small musical group to perform amongst the stacks. Contact your local high school to see if they have an ensemble that would like to perform a few pieces one afternoon. A flier could be created to advertise the music in advance, but it is not necessary. If the music may be disruptive to patrons, advertise so you have given them advance warning. Classical music is not likely to be disruptive and would work well as a pop-up program. Give the musicians chairs and a space to set up and let them perform.

Programs Outside of the Library Walls

Programming outside the walls of the library may refer to the literal taking of the program outside, or to beyond the library by programming in other locations. Doing a program for

adults outside may seem a subtle difference, but in a society where people spend less and less time outdoors, the change of scenery will be seen as innovative. Partnering with the parks and recreation department can bring exercise classes to the library, and a fun all-ages evening event would be to partner with the local astronomy society. The setting of the library will determine the ability to take programming directly outside, whether it be in an urban, suburban, or rural area, but there are possibilities in each case. If there is local art near your downtown urban area, an art walk could start from the library. A local history organization may also be willing to take patrons on a monument or cemetery tour. Suburban or rural libraries may have the space to create a community garden where patrons plant and tend to the harvest, which could also be paired with a seed library or lectures on gardening.

Programs in locations other than the library are an extension of outreach. Instead of having a table with library information, provide an example of a program the attendees may experience at the library. People know that libraries have books, but many do not know the extent of free programming available. Show off some of the items created during crafting or painting classes. Partnering with other organizations and attending their events is a way to get out of the library walls. Host a film festival at a local movie theater or support a lecturer at the museum on their free night. Public libraries are also partnering with local breweries to provide book clubs or trivia nights as a way to engage a different audience. Taking programming out into the community is a great way to advertise what the library offers beyond the traditional and to get those nonusers reacquainted with the public library of today.

Trivia Night at the Brewery

Serving alcohol in the library may not be approved by your leadership, so the next best thing is to go to the alcohol. An outreach event does not have to be limited to school nights or the YMCA campout. Seek places where you can take the library out into the community to find new users. Contact a local brewery or bar and ask if you can host a trivia night for their patrons. Many bars already have trivia on a regular basis and may be willing to let the library take over for a night each month. Choose a theme for the trivia that relates to the library in some way, whether it be about books, movies, music, or some other relevant topic. Come up with a clever name (Books & Brews is cute and frequently used).

Create marketing materials and post them in the library, at the bar, online, through social media, and anywhere trivia lovers may frequent like independent coffee shops. Develop the game, including questions and a scoring system. If you have never planned a trivia night, attend one so you can see how it is done. Procure prizes and decide how they will be distributed in relation to the game. If your budget allows, you can purchase prizes. Otherwise, dependent on policies, you may solicit local businesses for prizes or ask your stakeholder groups to obtain them. Whether they supply it or you bring it from the library, work with the bar to test equipment in advance if you plan to use technology.

On the day of the program, arrive early to get things set up. Remember that one of the purposes of having a program in another location is to promote library services to potentially new users. Bring swag and informational materials about the library and set up a table making it obvious that you are from the library (another reason to get there early). Two staff will be needed for a program such as this, one each for the outreach portion and the trivia part. The questions should be read by one person while the other keeps track of scoring or consider using an online service like Kahoot. People take their trivia very seriously, so practice in advance and be accurate!

◎ When There's Not a Precedent

Another library has probably done the program you are thinking about hosting, and you may be able to find information including materials used, outcomes, and photos online, which can make your case stronger if you are hoping to bring something out of the box to your library. Conversely, you may have a new idea that has not been tried in a library before and you are ready to be the trailblazer. Make your proposal as strong as possible before taking it to a supervisor for approval. Coming up with ideas can be easy, but implementing those ideas can be challenging! Make a list of reasons your supervisor may question and do prior research to find arguments to the contrary. The program will need to relate to your library's mission and vision in some way, so do not forget to tie back to those. Include an action plan detailing how the program will be planned, resources needed including time and budget, and what the outcomes will be. Anticipate risks and provide actions to mitigate those risks. Making your case impenetrable will make it very difficult for someone to say no. Good luck!

◎ Key Points

In considering what programming to do in your library, take a moment to determine the goals you hope to achieve and how those goals fit the overall mission of your library.

- Programming covers a wide range of activities in public libraries.
- Partners are critical in providing expertise outside of library staff. Programming ideas can be found through already established groups.
- Look to what is already happening in the community and get the library involved.

While chapter 9 focuses on programs for academic libraries, much of the information could easily be used for public library audiences as well.

◎ Notes

1. Chandra Villanueva, "The Texas GED Problem is Getting Worse," Center for Public Policy Priorities, accessed October 28, 2018, https://forabettertexas.org/images/2018_EO_GEDproblem_FullReport.pdf.
2. State of America's Library Report, "The Benefits of Public Programming for Participating Libraries and Audiences," ALA Public Programs Office, American Library Association, accessed October 25, 2018. http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/ppo/resources/benefitspublic.
3. Ben Bradley and Dan Restuccia. "The Digital Edge: Middle-Skill Workers and Careers," Burning Glass Technologies, accessed October 28, 2018, https://www.burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/Digital_Edge_report_2017_final.pdf.

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⦿ Resources

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Academic Library Programming

ACADEMIC LIBRARY PROGRAMMING can be similar to public library programming, and many of the events and activities outlined in this book can be modified for different audiences. The main difference in academic library programming is the composition of the audience: Faculty tend to remain static as they stay at the college longer than students; undergraduates frequent the library regularly but most leave in four to six years; and graduate students may spend a decade at the library, seeking strong relationships with their assigned librarians. Each group poses its own challenges and opportunities. Undergraduates tend to comprise the largest segment of most college campuses, making it important to keep abreast of new trends and ways to engage with them and bring them into the library. Faculty and graduate students often know exactly what they want so their visits and interactions with the library may be more limited in nature. Regardless of who comes to the library or how often, the campus library often functions as the literal and metaphorical heart of campus, and its unique blend of academic and social programs reinforce its significant role in retention, high-quality scholarship, student success, and campus engagement.

Academic Library Audiences

Research shows that social engagement and making friends are significant to university undergraduate retention efforts, making libraries an ideal location to host both academic

and social events and activities in an effort to contribute to this important goal. While graduate students and faculty do not share the same prerogative, many academic libraries offer a blend of academic and social opportunities to these groups as well. Because many academic libraries are located in the heart of campus, they often play host to typical academic fare such as symposia, tabling, talks, and workshops, but they also attract a wide range of social events like wine tastings, socials, and fun hands-on activities. Many times these events are done in partnership with academic departments and student organizations, which exposes students to even more groups on campus, opening academic and social networking opportunities not found elsewhere on campus. With respect to the differences in needs between freshmen, upperclassmen, honors students, graduate students, post-docs, and faculty, successful library programming is frequently tailored to a target demographic in order to maximize its efficacy. This section will detail several groups and some types of programming efforts that are used to garner attention.

Undergraduates

As universities and colleges place increasing focus on retention rates, finding ways to engage undergraduates has never been more important. Undergraduates comprise a wide-ranging group of students, especially when considering the academic expectations and needs of first-year students, students spending their first semester abroad, transfer students, honors students, and upperclassmen. Because academic libraries are often much larger and hold significantly larger holdings than their former high school media centers, new students may struggle with library anxiety.

Library anxiety is a sensation of feeling overwhelmed or intimidated by the size of the library and its space, and/or the anticipation of having to search for books or ask for technological or research assistance. While many academic libraries have worked to modify their physical spaces to appear more open and welcoming, outreach and programming are integral to establishing a meaningful relationship with students and faculty.

Undergraduate Groups on Campus

While undergraduates may be your main group, there are infinitely more subgroups on campus who may benefit from targeted programming. Establish a connection with these groups and work with them to determine how you can best support them in their research needs. These groups can include:

- First-year students
- Upperclassmen
- Students in honors or undergraduate research programs
- First-year study abroad students
- Transfer students
- Student veterans
- International students
- Nontraditional students
- Distance learners
- Students in study abroad programs
- Students with disabilities
- LGBTQ students

- Students who are first in their family to attend college
- Students in college orientation

Undergraduate Upperclassmen

Juniors and seniors typically know, or think they know, what the library has to offer. Some seniors brag about their "first visit" to the library during their final semester, only to be surprised at all the things they missed out on. While it is easy to assume that upperclassmen are aware of what the library can do for them, it's important to maintain continuous programming to entice them in and show them what's there or what's new. In order to keep them engaged, tabling and events with partners across campus are important. Perhaps the best way to inform students is through outdoor programming, which attracts passersby outside the library, and finals activities, as finals week tends to be the one time of the year students venture to the library to study or find materials left by their instructors.

Honors Students and Undergraduate Research Programs

Undergraduate research programs are making headlines at universities in recent years. While the library may not run these types of programs, they are a perfect partner for hosting various undergraduate research events and programs in and outside of the library. They can provide space for presentations and workshops, provide specialized instruction to honors classes, or offer consultations for research and poster development. Workshops and walk-up research help hours can be provided in the library or in the honors/undergraduate research spaces on campus.

Graduate Students and Faculty

Graduate students and faculty may not spend as much time in the library as their undergraduate counterparts due to their busy schedules taking classes, teaching, conducting research, writing, working toward tenure, and serving on professional development and academic committees, among other activities, but they still expect and enjoy a variety of programming. It is important to consider the different lifestyles of these two targeted audiences in order to ensure the events and programs are especially attractive and engaging. These two groups often seek out ways to make connections and build their networks, improve their teaching and assignments, or streamline their research processes. This chapter offers various programs meant for an audience that largely focus on academics but also provide opportunities for interdisciplinary networking.

Academic and Research-Focused Programming

Academic libraries often base much of their programming efforts on teaching their users something new, sparking conversations, and supporting research efforts. What these programs look like varies depending on the audience, but there are many academic events that attract students and faculty across disciplines, such as symposia, forums, and book discussions. Academic programming can be small- or large-scale depending on the topic. It is often easy to attract partners to academic events due to students' and faculty's

interest in sharing and exploring their research projects with others. These events also most closely align with the library's and university's mission and goals, which can make it easier to secure approvals, funding, and advertising. Remember that academic does not mean boring—lectures, workshops, and other educational programming can still be fun and should always be engaging.

Conducting Research Forums and/or Symposia

Many university undergraduate programs require their students to give a formal presentation as part of the requirements for participation. Graduate students and faculty are especially interested in attending or participating in symposia. The library can generate a topic for a symposium and invite speakers from across campus, the community, or even the nation. Partnering with academic departments or local/state library organizations can generate revenue to pay for speakers' travel, meals, or other amenities. Choosing a broad topic can allow interdisciplinary participation and attendance.

Libraries offer an ideal location by using their open spaces to showcase posters and by using their study rooms as presentation rooms. Start by reaching out to the directors of the honors programs, academic departments/faculty, or the student leaders of any student research groups. Tell them you'd like to discuss what their groups do and what programming they have planned, and to talk about ways the libraries can support or partner with them. If you are interested in hosting a day or two of presentations, be sure to prepare a list of all the ways the library can help: offer space for presentations or posters, advertising of the event, setup and breakdown of the area, the audience, refreshments, research support to students, practice sessions with feedback, or poster design support.

Libraries often have numerous study and presentation rooms that are controlled by the library's calendar system. These can be blocked off for a few hours, a day, or longer to host presentations. Open library space might also be used to display research posters. This may require moving furniture or clearing out spaces for a day or two, but with a built-in audience, and potentially large spaces and/or a central campus location, the library offers an opportunity for students to see the results of their peers' research efforts. This visibility may inspire other students to seek research opportunities as undergraduates. Be sure to highlight the event in library social media posts and on the library's website, and any other internal locations, such as bulletin boards, newsletters, and monitors. It will take a concerted effort from the honors programs and the library to handle the logistics for hosting such a large event, but solid planning and communication can ensure success.

If your library is smaller, or the larger events are not able to be conducted in the library, consider hosting small research events in which students give lightning round talks or ten- to fifteen-minute talks for an hour or two each month. Reaching out to the honors program directors could result in a list of students who need or want experience giving presentations of their research. Often students enrolled in undergraduate research programs need opportunities to give brief presentations or receive feedback on oral presentations for larger state or national conferences. In addition to offering research support, librarians can sit in on practice rounds and provide constructive feedback to students. Regardless of the event's scale, it is a solid win for the library as it prominently shows campus administration the library's support for research at all levels.

Poster Design Presentations and Consultations

Another program to consider involves providing support for designing research posters. Reach out to the directors of research programs and ask them to invite all of their students working on posters to a workshop and/or individual consultations. This service not only improves the quality of posters but also helps students understand the process of visually displaying their research in an engaging and personalized manner.

Since the library most likely has all the technology and expertise in using programs like PowerPoint and the Adobe Creative Suite, they are excellent partners in this endeavor. Recruit librarians, staff, or student workers with experience in poster design who are patient and willing to work with undergraduates, as well as graduate students and faculty, to help them understand design principles and best practices. Be sure to have a presenter and others on hand to help during the presentation. Be prepared to offer individual consultations, while emphasizing that library staff are happy to help students become familiar with design programs but will not, of course, do the posters for the students. Finally, discuss the possibility of displaying undergraduate research posters in the library as another way to highlight the research and creative output of undergraduates. There could be a voting process to choose which are displayed or the posters could be rotated depending on how many there are and availability of space and resources.

Planning Tabling Events for Honors Groups

Invite honors and research programs to staff a table in the library and discuss research opportunities on a regular basis or during an established honors event. Providing regular tabling can expose students to the options they have for research grants and partnerships across campus, whether they are honors students or not. Typically, the library needs to provide a table and chairs in a well-trafficked area inside or outside of the library. The entrance/exit, check-out desk area, and cafe are often excellent choices for tabling.

Many groups offer workshops and talks about the research process or the difference between research in the humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields, which would be ideally located in the library's presentation, instruction, or lecture rooms. Reaching out to the coordinator of honors programs and classes can result in the chance to teach focused one-shot instruction classes or workshops. Seek subject librarians who can scale their presentations to undergraduates and offer follow-up consultations to enhance the students' research projects. Some campuses also have student-run TEDx organizations. Many times these groups are looking for places to host viewings of TED Talks and programs that hold discussions. At times, they may hold a large-scale TEDx event, and the library could be a viable option to host this larger event. But if the library does not have the capacity, it can host teaser events leading up to the main program while providing advertisement for all of the events. Most of these events can be open to all students, allowing those new to research to ask about how they can become involved.

Holding Academic Boot Camps and Workshops

Workshops are still a fixture in most academic libraries, but boot camps are emerging as a popular addition or replacement. Boot camps are typically daylong programs that include a number of workshops that attendees can drop in and out of throughout the day. These may

target the humanities, social sciences, or STEM fields, and while they may be advertised to grad students and faculty, upperclassmen and honors students are often interested in the offerings. It may be wise to partner with the campus instructional office or individual faculty to offer incentives to students. Writing boot camps are especially popular as they provide uninterrupted time focused on writing in an environment surrounded by other writers working to meet deadlines. Try different times of the week and semester to determine your campus's best availability. Be sure to survey attendees to make sure your presentations were at the expected level and were worth their time. Consider offering snacks and coffee to keep your attendees refreshed and alert.

Hosting a Book Discussion

Book discussions are a great way to highlight new additions to the collections and engage faculty in library programs. Discussions offer an opportunity to blend an academic discussion with an informal social activity, which can be enjoyed by undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. Some discussions are hosted by academic or campus departments, or student organizations. They can also be help to celebrate a writer, genre, or overarching topic.

Books may be chosen by a committee, a group or faculty member, or based on something timely or popular. Sometimes a group may approach the library with a chosen book to read and ask the library to distribute the book and provide a room to host the discussion. Books may be purchased and distributed, bought by members of the club for their personal use, or checked out from a library. Most discussions are meant to be for small groups, composed of no more than ten people, to allow everyone an opportunity to participate. Thus, a small room is needed with chairs put in a circle for easy discussion. If a moderator for the discussion has not been chosen, reach out to a faculty member whose research background matches the genre or subject of the book. The moderator should come with prepared questions or observations meant to keep the conversation going. For more information on organizing book discussions, see chapter 8.

Running a Marathon Reading

The popularity of audiobooks and podcasts affirms the keen interest of people in hearing books and stories told aloud while also instilling a love for creativity and the spoken word. A marathon reading, which consists of reading a book or several works of literature out loud until the entire work is complete, can thus capture the fun of a read aloud infused with adult themes. Marathon readings fluctuate in popularity but are a fun way to get students engaged in literature they would otherwise not read. This is an excellent program for which to partner with a faculty member. The faculty member may choose a book that they want their students to get excited about, to celebrate the anniversary of an author's birth or death or the publication of a book, or a couple of books or a series of literary works, like poetry or myths, legends, and folktales, to engage in dialogue. Secure numerous copies of the book, and make sure they are all the same to ensure seamless transitions between readers during the event. If you have remote readers Skyping in, be sure to share the information with them so they can try to get the same book edition. Consider engaging specific groups across campus, Skyping in readers, and streaming the reading online to attract more viewers.

Once a book or series of works are chosen, determine how long the reading will take. There are websites that can help calculate page length and time, such as https://www.readinglength.com. Simply search for a book to read and change the words per minute (wpm) to 115–125 to get a sense of how long it might take to read the book out loud without interruptions. Using these calculations, *Moby Dick* takes 24 hours if read at 125 wpm. Knowing the length of the book helps determine how many reading slots to create.

Signing up readers is easier if you use an online organizational tool like SignUp Genius.com. Using this free site, you can create slots for ten-, fifteen-, or twenty-minute blocks. Readers simply choose the block they want, and it is all set. This makes it easy for the organizer to see where there might be gaps and to print out the schedule for the day of the event to keep track of readers who show up. Organizers should be prepared to read for several hours in case people don't show up for their assigned time, are running late, or there is no one assigned to read. If the event spans overnight, the organizer may carry forward and keep reading or pause the reading and begin again in the morning when there are more participants and audience members. When staffing the reading, build in shifts so organizers do not have to be in attendance throughout the entire event. For twelve- to twenty-four-hour events, staying for the entire event may not be too bad, but once it extends beyond that, it becomes difficult to stay awake and focused.

On the day the event begins, set up your lectern, sound equipment, and chairs for guests. If you have the funding and resources, you might consider providing a snack table for readers (reserving it for readers might entice passersby to join in). If you are Skyping or streaming the reading, be sure to have that technology set up, along with a TV to display distance readers. To kick off the event, you could invite a speaker to give historical background on the text chosen or a thespian to do a dramatic reading. There could be breaks built into the reading that allow for discussion. This is especially helpful when reading shorter works like fairy tales or poems. Invite local poets and writers to speak or moderate discussions between readers.

Wikipedia Edit-a-thon

Libraries have a love-hate relationship with Wikipedia, and that has increased as more faculty incorporate the online tool into assignments. Many faculty build their classes around a final project that involves either significantly contributing to an existing entry or creating and submitting an entirely new entry. One way the library can support these projects is to become trained in Wikipedia editing and best practices or enlist campus partners who are experts to lead Wikipedia edit-a-thons. An edit-a-thon is an event dedicated to teaching the public how to edit and contribute to Wikipedia, or allowing a class-focused and in-depth training to learn more skills in how to edit Wikipedia pages. Wikipedia has information on hosting and organizing these events and often promotes national or international events, such as the annual Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon (http://www.artandfeminism.org). Check out Wikipedia or look for subject-specific events if you plan to organize a larger program that invites anyone from around campus or the community. During the event, provide snacks and handouts, such as style guides, best practices, and editing tips or shortcuts. Enlist Wikipedia-savvy staff or partners to assist participants who need additional assistance as the edit-a-thon progresses.

Banned Books Week Events

Banned Books Week is a staple celebration among libraries. Held in late September, this week of events draws attention to books that have been or are currently banned by schools, libraries, governments, or other groups across the nation. As protectors of knowledge and institutions that value the free exchange of ideas, libraries are the ideal location to host and lead Banned Books Week programming. Regardless of the activities you choose to do during Banned Books Week, the goal is for students and faculty to walk away with a stronger sense of the importance of freedom of speech and why banned books are so important.

Banned Books Read Aloud

Banned Books Week lends itself to all sorts of creative events and activities. The most popular event is a read out. A read out features students and faculty reading aloud select passages from banned books. This can be done inside or outside and can last anywhere from one hour to two or three hours, as a sort of marathon reading. To plan this, decide the length of the event, as well as the time and day it will be held, and then invite readers from across campus or the community by phone or email. If they agree, ask if they have a book in mind. It is best if each person reads from a different book to provide variety and ensure there is no duplication of the readings—no one wants to hear the same passage from just one book! Ask speakers if they plan to bring their own copy of the book or if you'll need to reserve copies for the reading.

After speakers have been secured, advertising materials can announce the speakers and the books they plan to read. Promote the reading in English and humanities departments, as well as the library school if there is one, and of course on social media platforms. Be sure to secure a microphone and speakers so that people reading can be heard easily.

Figure 9.1. Banned Books Week reading. *Michelle Demeter.*

Make sure there is also a podium so readers do not have to hold the books as they read. Reserve chairs with your campus facilities team or pull chairs from the library so the audience has somewhere to sit.

If the reading will be outside, check the weather and be ready to move it inside if it looks like it could rain. Regardless of the weather, tents or other coverings are helpful in keeping readers and guests more comfortable. If the event is held inside, make sure it is in a highly visible part of the library. Light snacks and water or lemonade can be an excellent addition to the event.

Have a list of readers in order and try to seat them by order of speaking. It is always nice to have the speaker or an emcee talk a little bit about the book before reading. Introduce the speaker and their major or department, and then announce the title and author of the book. You may need to research a bit about why the book has been banned, and spend no more than two minutes per book explaining why it was banned so there is more time to hear the passages. If the event is only an hour, consider only one-minute introductions. It is up to the organizer to determine how many readers and how long the passages can be. It helps to create a schedule in blocks with time built in between each speaker as they switch places. Be sure each speaker understands how much time they have before they begin. You may want to make signs that warn when they have only one minute remaining, thirty seconds remaining, and when their time is ended. Be ready to help speakers transition and get started. Take a headcount of attendees, even people who stop by briefly to listen.

Banned Books Engagement Boards

A Banned Books Week engagement board could have small paper cutouts that look like book covers and are folded so that each cover has a banned book cover pasted/taped on it. The back of the book could be taped/pasted to the board and information about why the books were banned could be found inside. This way participants can look the board over and see the book titles and talk with each other about why they think a book may have been banned.

Another banned book engagement board uses the board as a criminal lineup and has a book truck with banned books beside it. Participants are encouraged to choose a banned book and take a selfie (or "shelfie") in front of the board. The images are then shared on the library's social media pages to generate interest in the collection or to promote additional Banned Books Week events. Participants could add quotes as to why they like banned books in general or a specific book. Engagement boards are covered in more detail later in this chapter and in chapter 10.

Other Banned Books Week Activities

Some libraries host trivia events based on banned books knowledge. Others post quotes from banned books on their social media and offer prizes to the students who can identify the book from which the quote originated. Some ask for people to post "shelfies," which are photos of books from anywhere in the library. Another popular activity is hosting a welcome table and asking students to answer questions about banned books—identifying quotes or guessing why a certain book was banned—in order to win a prize.

Case Study: Planning a Library Escape Room

Contributed by Nikki Morse and Liz Dunne, Florida State University

Summary of Events

In February 2018, the outreach department at Florida State University's Strozier Library held a *Stranger Things* themed escape room event. The event was the second escape room experience offered at Strozier in an effort to engage and instruct library patrons in new and immersive ways. Targeted at undergraduate students, the event was meant to deliver a fun, hands-on library experience that encouraged participants to collaborate with their peers to solve clues while familiarizing them with library resources and enhancing their information literacy skills. The escape room was set up in a large group study room and was continuously run throughout the evenings of February 20 and 21.

Preparation/Planning

The planning team decided to use *Stranger Things* as our theme because the second season had recently been released on Netflix, and we felt the show's title would make a good pun on the name of FSU's main library, Strozier. Once settled on the theme, the narrative arc of the game was developed. The basic premise was that participants had thirty minutes to solve a series of clues using library resources to help their team escape from the show's ominous parallel world, the Upside Down.

Learning objectives for the game focused on the information literacy skills taught in library instruction sessions offered to undergraduate students. The clues developed, eight in total, corresponded to these learning objectives and involved finding and utilizing a series of library resources, all of which were related to the 1980s in one way or another, in keeping with the theme of the show. The team double-checked all of the searches to make sure the answer to each clue led into the next, ultimately leading to the final clue in which participants uncovered a code that unlocked a box containing a walkie-talkie, the final tool needed to help teams escape and win the game. After finalizing the script for the game, it was tested with student workers and, based on their feedback and our observations, the team made adjustments to make the game more fluid and ensure the length and difficulty level were appropriate.

Then dates and times for running the game were set, and the study room was reserved as early as possible. The team opened the game to all students instead of targeting a specific section of the undergraduate community. Because of this, students signed up as they pleased, either in-person at a station run by a student worker the night of the event or beforehand using a free sign-up tool, SignUpGenius. This tool allowed students to sign up for an available forty-minute time slot, and they were asked to arrive ten minutes early, during which time a game would be in progress while the next group waited their turn. Students needed to provide their name and email address in order to confirm their appointments and were sent follow-up reminders as the night of their designated game time approached.

The planning team collaborated with the graphic designer from the library's marketing department to create *Stranger Things* themed promotional materials in anticipation of the event. Fliers hung throughout the library and displayed on the library website, and social media advertised the event to generate additional interest. The event's webpage explained the basic premise for the game, rules for registration and participation, and a link to the sign-up tool. Finally, to get people really excited about the game, a library-created video was modeled after the *Stranger Things* title sequence to explain the game's premise. This video was used for online social media promotion and to generate excitement at the start of the game.

The night before our event, we decorated our reserved game space with props we had used in previous outreach events, created from scratch, or brought from home. We turned the group study room into a young teenager's room from the 1980s, utilizing settings and sequences from the TV show as our inspiration. The study room's glass wall was covered with black paper, which doubled as a way to further advertise the event when we used white chalk to sketch an eye-catching ad, and the lights in the room were turned off and replaced with hanging string lights and lamps to create the illusion of a space not within the library. We also brought in props that students would need to interact with inside of the room as part of the escape experience. Participants needed to crawl into Eleven's fort to retrieve a map, locate a specific book from a book cart in the room, and use an "alphabet wall" created from a floral bed sheet, colored string lights, and black paint to decode the final clue and unlock the box.

Execution

The night of the event, we set up a sign-up station near the front entrance of Strozier Library staffed by a student worker from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Students who had signed up prior to the night of the event were sent email reminders to meet at the sign-up station ten minutes before their designated time. Throughout the evening, patrons who entered the library were encouraged to participate and sign up for an open slot. When participants arrived at the sign-up station to check in, we brought them back to our staged study room. Once inside, they were shown the aforementioned introduction video modeled after the *Stranger Things* title sequence. This sequence explained the goal for all trapped in the escape room: Use library resources to solve clues to reveal the lock combination that will allow you to access the only walkie-talkie that can communicate with our beloved *Stranger Things* characters trapped in the Upside Down.

After the short video they were asked by the Game Master—the staff member who stayed in the room throughout the game and assisted as necessary—if they had any questions regarding their mission. Once participants were ready, the Game Master started the thirty-minute timer and music to set the atmosphere. During the game, participants had the option to ask for three clues from the Game Master as they felt necessary. This feature helped us reach our ultimate goal of every student successfully completing the game. If students felt stuck or overwhelmed, they were allowed to ask for assistance, which further enforced the library's goal of increasing student retention and alleviating anxiety around academic institutions.

Once students completed the game—and all successfully did—they were invited to take a picture in front of the signature "alphabet wall" with fun '80s props and a sign stating they had escaped the Upside Down. In between game sessions, the Game Master would reset the room by returning props and clues to their appropriate locations and securing the experience for the next team to enter.

Lessons Learned

The only issue that we faced with this event was an underwhelming attendance rate. Although we did have a number of students spontaneously sign up in person the night of the event, some students who had previously signed up for the event via SignUpGenius failed to show. We believe the poor attendance was in large part due to the event being held during midterms week, a time when students are extremely busy and more likely to cancel plans if they view them as inconvenient or too much of a time commitment. And although we were excited to offer participants the opportunity to coordinate their own teams and come at their convenience, it also seems probable that if one person in a group cancelled, the rest of the team might have cancelled as well. One way we worked to solve this problem in the future has been to work with campus groups and departments to coordinate attendance.

Aside from the abovementioned attendance setback, we considered the escape room experience itself an overall success. Our goal with this game was to foster a confidence-boosting, collaborative educational experience, and each group that ran through the room was able to work together to successfully complete the game. Based on both anecdotal feedback and the results of a brief postgame survey, students definitely enjoyed both the premise/script and the decor, felt they successfully reinforced already established research skills while also learning new ones, and felt more comfortable coming back to the library.

Although not as well attended as our first escape room experience, our Strozier Things game was better designed, more detailed and immersive, and more rewarding for participants. We have since incorporated design elements from this escape room into subsequent game iterations targeted at more specific student groups with great success.

Orientation Events and Outreach

Orientations are normal for anyone entering the university for the first time, whether they be undergraduates, transfer students, graduate students, or faculty. While this section focuses largely on undergraduate orientation, its suggested activities can be modified and applied to any orientation session. First-year undergraduates are unique in their university or college experience because they are dealing with many unique transitional factors. For many, it is their first time living on their own, being away from their family, and learning how to juggle classes, work, and extracurriculars. Because of this adjustment, first-year students need a great deal of extra support and attention. It is important to note the

use of "first-year" versus "freshmen," as many students enter university and college with enough credits to be classified as sophomores and, at times, juniors. Regardless of what classification these students enter as, they all have similar issues adjusting to college life.

Most universities and colleges hold a mandatory orientation session for all incoming students a few months before their first term begins. If possible, work with the orientation organizers to have a library presence during orientation. Included below are several options for participating in an orientation, which could be done individually or combined for a larger impact and first impression. For samples and examples of images try a Google image search by combining the following search terms as desired: academic, college, university, library, welcome, advertisement, brochure, orientation.

Giving a Library Presentation at Orientation

An orientation main session or break-out session can be a great opportunity to give students their first glimpse of the library. The presentation could be anywhere from five minutes to an hour, and could include a question session. Even five minutes to introduce yourself and the library can emphasize the importance of the library in campus culture. You won't have much time to discuss what is offered, but use the time to promote one or two main points and invite everyone to join you for a tour at a later time that day or when they return to begin classes. Keep the presentation upbeat, fun, and focused. Do not try to tell them everything about the library, but rather target information that would be most helpful to someone new on campus. Ask your student employees what they would have wanted to know when they entered their first term and be sure to include those tips in the presentation. Invite your student employees to give the presentation and have a brief question and answer session at the end to allow parents and students to ask questions. Like tabling, this is a great chance to hand out swag, brochures, and information about employment.

To begin, email the coordinator of the orientation to determine what opportunities there are for the library to be involved. Remind them that the library provides many resources helpful to incoming students, such as research help, laptop lending, and assistance with digital projects. Depending on the amount of time, prepare a talk and PowerPoint slides if permitted. Choose the most important things an incoming student would need to know. Start by making a list and script so that you can time how long it takes to give all of the information. Trim your list to match the time while keeping in mind your most important points. You may want to highlight reference services, book collections, study spaces and rooms, computers and laptops, project and research assistance, any fun events or tours, technology items like cameras and calculators, and even the availability of jobs.

Making an Orientation Slideshow

If you have the opportunity to make an accompanying PowerPoint, be sure to keep the presentation slides simple. Choose a background that is not distracting and perhaps features the school's colors. Keep the background the same and do not incorporate, dissolve, or use other fancy features, as they eat up time and may cause complications. Be sure to use accurate, fun, and diverse images that showcase the library's services, spaces, and resources. Keeping the presentation simple is key so that students can read the text from a distance, as many orientation sessions are held in large ballrooms. Keep text in black, and use bold or underlining when needed but avoid using italics. Be sure the font is clear and

easy to read, like Times, Arial, or Calibri, and keep the size of the font large enough for people to read at a distance. Use bullet points and avoid paragraphs or sentences of text. PowerPoint presentations should highlight the main points of the spoken presentation and not distract from the talk itself. Include contact information at the end, as well as the library's website link. Ask if the organizers plan to share slides with the students, and if so, be sure to delete any notes you may have in the slides before sharing them.

Setting Up and Staffing a Welcome Table

Orientation welcome tables offer a quick way to meet many students and parents and answer specific questions in person, giving a preview of the meaningful attention students can expect at the library once on campus. Contact the orientation coordinator and find out how long the table will be if it is provided, as well as how many chairs there might be, or if you'll need to provide your own. Typically, the tables are six-foot-long rectangles, as they take up the least amount of space and are easiest to talk to multiple people. However, they could be round or another size, so clarify as the size and shape of the table will determine how much you can put on the table and how you arrange your items for display.

Tabling is a great opportunity to hand out library swag and brochures, discuss workshops, and even recruit potential student employees. Try to purchase a cart or something that can carry lots of materials so you don't have to carry it all. Items you could bring include a tablecloth or table runner, a TV monitor and laptop to run slides of the library space and services, photo boards, brochures, handouts, swag items, candy and a basket to keep it in to attract people to your table, pens and paper to write down questions, a sign-up sheet to keep track of attendees and/or add them to library mailing lists, business cards, a clicker to record attendance, pop-up banners, or any other item you think would be helpful in attracting people to visit the library's table.

Figure 9.2. Tabling at a graduate student orientation event.
Michelle Demeter.

Staff the table with personable people who can best connect with the audience. Undergraduates may respond better to student workers who can tell them about the campus, activities in town, classes, and other information in addition to the library. It may seem odd to talk about nonlibrary subjects, but building a rapport and helping students feel welcome and comfortable goes a long way to helping them adjust to campus life. The library is of course part of the overarching goals of university retention efforts, and those staffing the desk can be taught how to work the library into the conversation by inviting people to come take a tour or drop by the library and see all the great things there to help them be successful in their classes. If it is a graduate student or faculty orientation, librarians may be the best choice as this gives visitors an opportunity to meet their subject liaisons and get tours. Plus they may also develop a different rapport, talking about housing or places that provide childcare.

Organizing Library Tours

Invite parents and students to take a tour of the library or libraries on campus. You'll need to build in time to walk to the library if you take them from the orientation event. Alternately, you could schedule tours at specific times and/or offer walk-in tours during days of orientations. Have student employees conduct the tours so students and parents can ask questions about the library but also the student experience in general. Student employees can offer tips for settling in, recommend good restaurants and housing options, and help point the families in the right direction so they can continue their campus tour.

When organizing a tour, keep in mind that groups should be small so that everyone can hear and see what the tour guide points out. Start at the entrance and move organically through the library. Stop at the most important points in the library, which may include the circulation and reference desks, technology center, tutoring area, special collections, study rooms, and cafe. Regardless of how much time is allotted for the tour, some things should always be mentioned even if the tour can't reach the actual locations. The tour should point out anywhere items can be checked out and what sort of items are available for checkout. The library website and hours should also be noted. Tours can be as brief as five minutes or as long as the group allows.

Typically, tours are fifteen minutes and hit the highlights of the main floor or areas where undergraduates congregate. Stairs should be used minimally, and if an elevator is used, try to ensure everyone gets onto the same one so that no one gets lost. If the stairs are used, offer an option for individuals to meet on a floor and try to only go downstairs so as not to exhaust or lose guests. Consider handing out some swag items at the end and inviting your guests to visit again.

Publishing in a Campus Orientation Guide

Consider publishing an advertisement in the orientation guide and/or handing out brochures. If there is an orientation guide, whether it is printed or online, a library ad can be a great choice. Often publishing an ad is cheaper than buying individual brochures, depending on the size of the incoming class. To begin, determine if there is a cost to be included in the guide or to provide brochures to be distributed. If there is a cost, discuss with your supervisor to identify how much can be spent. With a budget in mind, you may choose to publish a full, half, or quarter-sheet advertisement in color or black and white. Ideally, there will be a graphic designer available by the university or the library to

develop the ad. Try to limit the number of fonts and colors used to maintain a clean and professional look. There are many ways to address the ad: It could feature photographs of library spaces; provide a bulleted list of featured resources; have an artistic look; or combine several elements.

Designing Library Brochures

If there is not a university orientation guide, or your library already has a significant investment in brochures, be sure to provide enough handouts or brochures for each new student. Again, it is ideal to enlist a graphic designer so the brochures look as professional as possible. The first thing to determine is how many brochures will be made. Will there be one overarching brochure to introduce visitors, undergrads, grad students, and faculty? Do certain services need to be highlighted and have their own brochure, like data services or special collections? Once it's decided how many brochures will be made, it needs to be decided what the brochure will look like.

Brochure design has gotten increasingly creative over the past few years with some that look like giant unfolded maps, comic books, are in folders, or unfold like accordions. Brochures can be any size, bifold, trifold, in folders, or one page front and back. They can be glossy or matte finish, and should be printed by a professional printing company versus on regular colored paper stock. If focused only on undergraduates, the brochure text is introductory in nature and perhaps a little more informal than the typical brochures given to new faculty or graduate students. These brochures can also be given to campus recruiters to showcase the library, which may entice honors students while assuring parents their choice of school is serious about supporting students' assignments.

Social Engagement and General Programming

Most library programming targets all students, regardless of their classification. Whether they are freshmen or seniors, students look for ways to engage in academic and social activities on campus. The library can offer all sorts of activities that not only inform and educate but provide time to relax and allow students to engage with their peers. Finding partners can help diversify the activities offered and allow for larger offerings. Clarify what the partners' roles might be in any finals programming and make sure it is clear what the library's responsibilities are in planning, execution, and promoting the finals activities. The next section details a variety of programming and events targeted to all academic library users.

Planning Interactive Tabling Events

Regular tabling and passing out small quarter-sheet handouts can be a great way to focus on a new service or resource, emphasize timely services or workshops, or promote Open Access Week and other unique events. Be as creative as you want to with your themes and find ways to connect with your students. Nostalgia or puns work especially well, such as a kissing booth where Hershey's Kisses are handed out along with a handout. Staff the table with student employees so their peers will be more likely to approach them and get the information. Better yet, invite partners to set up shop once in a while. For instance, your campus health and wellness center may be interested in tabling to discuss ways to

manage stress, how to eat well as a student, or offer advice on sexual health. Environmental groups, campus transportation, or campus police might want to table and hand out water bottles to use around campus, information on public or campus transportation options, or bicycle lights/reflectors to help students stay more visible on the roads.

Tabling can take place inside or outside of the library. If inside, all that is needed is a table and a couple of chairs. Outside of the library, make sure to get any permissions required before setting up shop. Print out any permissions in case you are asked to prove you are allowed to table. Be sure to confirm whether a table and chairs will be provided or be prepared to bring your own. As permitted, tabling can be done alongside busy sidewalks or in dining halls, residence halls, the campus union, various greens or parks throughout campus, or academic departments. Choose days, times, and locations that have many pedestrians. It may be necessary to test out various combinations before finding the optimum location.

Be prepared to stand perhaps more than you sit, as you'll want to engage with people quickly or give them a handout with a piece of candy or swag item. Have candy and swag available on the table to attract people if you have to sit. Bring a pop-up sign or other signage to help people understand who you are quickly so they don't ignore you or think you're there to sell something. Keep the pitch quick, no more than a few seconds. Often saying, "Hi, I'm with the (campus name) library, would you like info on our services?" will get things started. If promoting a specific service or resource, mention that instead of being general. If the student stops or lingers, be prepared to elaborate and offer more information or answer any questions they may have. If you are new to tabling, it may help to have scripts or cheat sheets to reference. Practicing before tabling can be helpful also. Find a role-playing partner and try different scenarios: a student in a rush; a faculty member; a student who wants to know about research help or available technology; a

Figure 9.3. Resource fair held on a campus library's lawn.
Nikki Morse.

student who has time to chat for a minute or two. Keep track of how many people stop by and the types of questions they ask. Doing this can help determine what to promote next time and whether the location was ideal.

Resource Fairs

Resource fairs are essentially large-scale tabling events that can be held inside or outside of the library. A resource fair can showcase anywhere from five to twenty-five or more partners. You can invite departments from around the library to show off their resources or you can include partners from around campus. If planning this type of event, it is best to do it closer to the beginning of the semester so new students have a chance to connect with the library and campus groups early. If you hold this event outside, be sure to provide enough tables and chairs for all participants. Make it even more fun by giving out free popcorn, cotton candy, or popsicles. You can even encourage attendance by offering door prizes or having students get a specific number of stamps from different tables to register for a larger prize. Hand out library swag and brochures, and make sure to have decorations and candy for staff who need it.

Running an Adulting 101 Workshop

Recently "adulting" has become a popular workshop series topic at academic libraries. The term "adulting" refers to the unexpected responsibilities young adults find themselves unprepared to face once they leave home. Such responsibilities include budgeting, buying groceries, cooking meals, cleaning an entire home, doing laundry, and learning general financial literacy like paying bills, getting and managing credit cards, taking out and paying back school loans, and managing a bank account.

Consider holding some of the workshops at locations around campus by establishing partners. Campus housing could host cooking, cleaning, and laundry demonstrations, using their kitchens and laundry rooms. Cooking demonstrations could also be held at one of the campus dining halls. Invite the campus banking or finance department or financial aid to host financial planning workshops. The library would ideally provide funding to cover any expenses for cooking or laundry demonstrations, but it is a good idea to ask partners to chip in as well. If it is not possible to do a hands-on workshop, book a library instruction room and ask partners to bring lively PowerPoint presentations and perhaps props for demonstrations in front of the audience.

Creating Fun Engagement Boards

Not all programming has to be active. Engagement boards allow for a more passive, yet still fun, engagement with library patrons. The board can raise questions, provide moments for students/faculty to chat with one another, or serve as an informal assessment (see chapter 10 for more ideas). To create an engagement board, locate a bulletin board or wall space in a high-traffic area of the library, often near the check-out desk, the cafe, or the entrance/exit of the building. Purchase bulletin board decorations, like colored butcher paper for the background, construction paper, markers, push pins, and other items. A Cricut cutting machine can help make the boards look more professional or make it easier to cut out fancy or difficult designs, like hearts or clouds. Be sure to include a banner with a witty title and instructions if the board is not self-explanatory. Brainstorm

questions, themes, or information you'd like to share with students and faculty. You can also invite a partner to create their own board. A couple ideas are listed below:

- Study and Rest Habits—Ask the campus health & wellness center and/or academic center to create a board providing tips for good study habits and personal care during finals or midterms.
- Environmental Tips—Invite campus sustainability or an ecological student group to create a board for April celebrating Earth Day or providing tips on recycling, ways to save gas by using public transportation or bicycles, or other topics.

Hosting a Social

Graduate students and faculty often find themselves chatting with people in their own departments but lacking opportunities to meet peers from across campus. The library can thus offer a broader event, such as a social, that allows for cross-disciplinary networking and idea exchanges. A social could be a weekly coffee klatch, brown bag lunch article or research discussion, or a large-scale event with hors d'oeuvres and alcohol. A larger social that includes alcohol may require permits with the university and a large budget, but it provides a great opportunity to partner with the graduate school or other graduate programs.

Once you determine the type of social to host, consider finding partners that may want to cohost with the library. The partner may contribute funds, staffing, or even an alternate location. During the socials, make sure there is a welcome table where attendees can sign up for listservs, get information on the library and any participating partners, and get a name tag that has their name and academic department written clearly. Encourage participants to mingle and introduce them to new people as you move around the room. Schedule enough staffing to make sure the social runs smoothly without your help if you want or need to participate. Creating a clear and detailed hourly schedule for larger events can guide staff in making sure food trays are constantly filled, keeping an eye on beverages, and making sure the welcome desk is always staffed. Socials can be fun and educational, and they may result in unexpected academic partnerships, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

Planning Fun and Stress-Relieving Finals Programming

One of the most popular types of programming other than orientation involves finals. Finals are often stressful times for students, which has prompted a recent movement of programming that works to combat their anxiety and offer brief breaks from studying. Finals activities include stressbusters like free massages, therapy animals, coloring stations, movies, and free coffee or snacks. Brief activities like yoga, dance breaks, a Lego station, and other hands-on distractions that students can participate in and leave at any time help give much-needed breaks from studying. As noted in chapter 2, these brief refresh moments can help students stay on track and make studying more focused. Thus, the main objective of finals activities is not to distract from studying or writing final papers but to provide an opportunity to refresh and recharge.

With this in mind, keep finals activities isolated to talk-friendly zones of the library or be sure signage is posted clearly so students seeking quiet spaces are not disturbed. If distributing snacks or coffee, try to be discreet and not interrupt anyone who appears to

be in deep concentration. The last thing anyone wants is a library where academic work is negatively impacted, but do not be discouraged if there are some complaints. Instead, apologize for the disturbance immediately and make notes on how to do better next time. Finals activities can often require a bit more trial and error than other activities due to the fact it is a high-stress time during the semester. Despite the potential for a slight misstep, the majority of students appreciate the programming and benefit from taking a brief break.

Choosing a Theme for Finals

The first thing to do when planning finals activities is to determine how many days and what times of day activities will be offered. Finals activities could span a few hours, a day, or several days. Once you determine how many days of activities you will have and when they will take place, you can think about the types of activities and whether there will be a theme. A theme is highly recommended as it can help tie together seemingly different events and offer a more unified presentation of the library's finals offerings while making marketing easier. Themes should be fun and offer a wide range of possibilities. Pop culture is often a great inspiration and often blockbuster movies or television shows are released near the end-of-year finals and just before summer starts. Themes could include:

- Decades (1960s, '70s, '80s, '90s)
- Science Fiction (general or specific, e.g., *Star Wars*, *Ender's Game*, *Star Trek*)
- Fantasy (general or specific, e.g., *Harry Potter*, *Game of Thrones*)
- Television (*Stranger Things*, *Sherlock*, *Doctor Who*)
- Films (*Indiana Jones*, *Fast and Furious*, *Back to the Future*, *Mission Impossible*)
- Comic Books/Graphic Novels (e.g., Avengers, Justice League, Wonder Woman, *Sandman*, *The Walking Dead*)

Figure 9.4.   Finals week Lego activity. *Ginny Fouts*.

If using a theme, name the events using references to the chosen topic. For instance, if you have a *Harry Potter* theme, and you plan to hand out snacks using a book truck, call the event the Late-Night Hogwarts Snack Trolley. Substitute names for the library's or campus's name or landmarks to have fun and connect it to campus. Also try to plan activities that match the theme, like making wands or taking a Sorting Hat quiz to determine your house and then making a bookmark that corresponds to the Hogwarts house. Using the theme in advertising materials will help make the events more memorable and fun for all. Try to avoid using movie stills and instead be creative and incorporate images that allude to or hint at the theme and rely on the creativity of the event titles and descriptions to get people excited.

Choosing Your Finals Programs

Start planning at the beginning of the semester by reaching out to various campus and community partners to participate. These potential partners include: health and wellness; counseling; therapy animal services; therapeutic massage companies; and local restaurants. Invite partners to provide their services or goods for free or to provide discounts to students during or after finals. Create a schedule to keep track of which events and partners will happen each day to make sure things are spread out as desired. Be sure to identify who is responsible for event execution and the location, and determine the library's role for each event.

Some finals activities the library might host include:

- Therapy animals—Therapy animals are extremely popular on campuses. Many students leave their pets with their families back home and especially enjoy petting a dog or cat. Even if they are not pet owners, many people find comfort in petting an animal. It is crucial to contact a licensed or certified therapy animals organization and not just gather random animals. Therapy animals undergo training to withstand the stress of large groups of people. There are also rules about how to handle the animals, and the animals' guardians will work toward ensuring the safety of both the participants and the animals. Finally, select the location to host therapy animals carefully, as many people are afraid of or allergic to many animals. It can be best to put up signage letting people know there are animals in the library, and make sure there is a path that takes people away from the animals if they want to avoid them while also keeping the animals in one specific location, either inside or outside of the library.
- Silent disco—Participants are given a music list and headphones to have a brief dance break in silence so as to minimize distracting others' studying (see http://www.library.ucla.edu/events/silent-disco).
- Five-minute dance break—Schedule five-minute breaks, and bring a portable music player and speakers to play the music in a designated area. If this happens in a location that is typically a quiet zone, be sure to put up signage notifying students of the event so they can choose a different study area if desired.
- Snack/coffee breaks at midnight or another time when many students are in the library—Purchase food and drinks from Costco or Sam's Club to serve at midnight or another designated time. Portable and individual snacks, like apples, bananas, juice boxes, grapes, boxes of raisins, small bags of chips or cookies, or granola bars are best. Consider partnering with a group to share costs. Set up in a high-traffic

area, such as the library entrance/exit, circulation desk, or cafe, or use a book truck or other cart to deliver food directly to students around the library.

- Free five-minute neck massages—Contact local businesses to schedule free massages. The library may receive these as donations or subsidize the cost so students do not have to pay for the service. Appointments may be scheduled or drop-in depending on expectations of attendees. Locate the masseurs in a semi-private room with low lighting, like a study room or instruction room, to create a more ambient and calming environment.
- Yoga or guided breathing exercises to promote calming techniques—Invite campus wellness or local yoga studios to provide guided breaks. Breaks could be done in highly trafficked areas, outside of the library, or in a secluded study room.
- Coloring books or bookmarks—Set up a table with coloring pages printed off the internet or from purchased adult coloring books. Provide markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons for use at the table.
- Legos station—Purchase or borrow Legos from a campus partner and set them up on a table. Print ideas for building small or quick builds.
- Origami—Purchase origami paper of various sizes and colors from a craft store. Print directions for making simple origami objects.
- Board/card games—Provide games that don't require more than ten to fifteen minutes to play, like Connect 4, Uno, War, Go Fish, or Operation.
- Puzzles—Spread out puzzle pieces for one large puzzle on an unstaffed table that can be crowdsourced to its completion.
- Create stress-relieving objects like stress balls or glitter jars—For directions, visit https://www.yogajournal.com/meditation/mindfulness-play-glitter-jars-imagination-anxiety for information on how to create a glitter jar and why they are beneficial.

Many of the activities listed above will require craft items to be purchased and tables and chairs for participants. A general arts and crafts table can also be a fun and quick way for students to pop by and destress while also remaining in a creative frame of mind. Purchase various small items that students can use including crayons or colored pencils, pipe cleaners, pom-poms (different sizes), coloring books or sheets, scissors, glue, glitter, plastic bottles, construction paper, toothpicks, and popsicle sticks.

Student groups often prefer to provide snacks because they can easily buy bulk foods at Sam's Club or Costco and leave them with the library for distribution. Be sure to file any paperwork the campus requires for distributing food. Individual servings are always best so that they can be left with students studying at tables or in study rooms and not just remain open all over the library. Cheez-Its, cookies, gummi fruit snacks, apples, bananas, granola bars, chips, juice boxes, and other small, portable foods are best. If the food is served outdoors or in a specific location, things like coffee, donuts, popcorn, or even premade pancakes are options. If "hot" food is served, be sure to follow campus procedures for keeping it warm and safe to eat.

Additional Programming Ideas

There are an infinite number of programming options, limited only by your creativity and energy. Due to space constraints, this book cannot contain every single library program, but here are a few additional ideas to help get the brainstorming started. Search online

and join or follow online and social media communities to find, generate, and share ideas, even branching out beyond libraries to bring in fresh, new ideas and even more fun learning to your academic library. Check out online resources like ALA's Programming Librarian website or Facebook groups like ALA Think Tank or Library Marketing and Outreach (LMaO) for fun ideas that other libraries have done.

Events based around current events, like watch parties (debates, elections, sports, historical events) or forums for controversial topics can be stressful but fun with some ground rules and a strong faculty moderator. Other events may be linked to the environment like container gardening or workshops on bicycle repair and maintenance. Social awareness projects, such as the Clothesline Project, or social justice projects are often popular installations. STEM and STEAM audiences might enjoy retro science fair activities, like a papier-mâché volcano contest or making stress-relieving slime squeeze balls. Host a STEM-themed art show or a hack-a-thon. Finally, there are the tried-and-true book talks, and events planned with the Women's Union, LGBTQ groups, the Black Student Union, and other student groups. In the end, it does not matter what programming you choose to do or host so long as it encourages students and faculty from across campus to come together, share ideas, and network with each other in meaningful experiences.

Case Study: Speed Dating

Contributed by Elia Trucks, User Experience and Student Outreach Librarian, University of Denver

Summary

In February 2013, the Florida State University Libraries hosted a speed dating event. One of the goals for outreach was to make the library more of a social space, one where students felt comfortable to come and study as well as spend time with friends, meet new people, and participate in the campus culture. The event tied in with other Valentine's Day-related programming, including a Blind Date with a Book display through the month of February. The target audience was undergraduates who lived on campus and didn't have dates for Valentine's Day. Speed dating took place on February 14 at 8 p.m. in the main library's café area, which had a large open seating area. Students often use this space for social events, meetings, and collaboration, and the library regularly plans programming there.

Preparation

The planning process included making a seating chart, a matching packet for each participant, and an Excel spreadsheet that we used to match participants after the event ended. The seating chart was simple, in theory, but ended up being a bit more complicated. We set up 120 chairs in two rows facing each other, for 60 women and 60 men. We made laminated heart-shaped badges for each

participant, numbered 1–60 for the women, and A-HHH for the men, which were laid out with single letters, then double letters, and finally triple letters for the last participants. Women stayed seated in their chairs for the whole event, while men would rotate by one chair at every interval. The layout of the café wasn't particularly conducive to having that many chairs in straight lines, so we taped arrows on the floor to indicate directions and had our student workers guide participants to the different sections of the café so that they would stay in their correct order.

We created a matching packet for each participant to declare if they wanted to be matched and to write notes about their conversations. All the women received a packet of papers that asked for their name, school email address, and the number on their badge at the top of the first page. In the left column were hearts with letters that corresponded with the badges of each date. We provided blank space for people to write notes about their partners, so that they could decide if they wanted to be matched at the end of the night.

Figure 9.5.   Sample speed dating matching packet form. *Elia Trucks*.

Men received a corresponding packet, but it asked for their letter, and included the numbers 1–60 in the left column of hearts. We asked students to write notes so they could remember who they met and if they liked them. If a student wanted to be matched with a particular person, they would circle

the heart. They turned in the packets at the end of the night so that the event coordinator could match them.

We purchased pink lemonade, seasonal cookies, and candy, like Hershey's kisses and Sweethearts conversation hearts, to serve to the dates. We also purchased seasonal decorations that included banners, tablecloths, streamers, and confetti with Valentine's Day themes to hang around the café. We set up a sound system to play pop music with a microphone for the announcer.

Our advertising included posters in each floor of the residence halls, fliers in students' mailboxes, a social media campaign, and fliers at each library desk leading up to February 14. We asked students to email the coordinator if they wanted to sign up for the event in advance. The plan was to begin the program at 8 p.m. and have the dates move every two minutes. We intended for the event to end at 10 p.m., and we would work late into that evening or early morning to make matches and send out emails that night. We encouraged students not to exchange numbers or information that evening, and to wait for their match email from the event coordinator. We wanted to make sure no one felt pressured to give out information if they weren't interested in someone.

The Night Of

The attendance exceeded our expectations. The seats completely filled up, and we had to turn people away at the door. We received only a handful of preregistrations, but the rest showed up just before the event was scheduled to begin. Because of the time it took to sign each student up for the event, including taking their name and email, giving them a heart badge, and leading them to their correct starting seat, we did not start on time, and the event ran very late.

It was LOUD. In addition to the music pumping through the speakers, the sound of 120 people, plus anyone else on the first floor of the library, talking carried through the whole building. We had a few complaints about the noise, but thankfully the other floors were undisturbed so the circulation desk sent people to other areas if they needed quiet space. The announcer had to shout over the microphone at times to get people's attention so they would switch seats.

Even though we tried to make switching seats as clear as possible with taped arrows on the floor and student worker guides, it was still messy. People sat in the wrong seats or got lost on their way across the café. It created some confusion as people moved and they lost time speaking with their partners. Some people left early, so at the end of the night there were more than a few empty seats. Others didn't turn in their matching packet, so we couldn't connect them with anyone. Regardless, the participants who stayed until the end were excited and chatty. The staff got more than one compliment from people as they left the café, and it felt like a success.

Making matches at the end of the night was much more complicated than we expected, and involved a long spreadsheet. We manually went through each matching packet and identified matches for the women participants first, marking an "X" in the column if she chose to circle the heart of a particular date. After all of the women's responses were added into the rows, we went through the men's packets and identified if they were a match or if it was one-sided.

Table 9.1. Sample Speed Dating Scoring Sheet.

		A	B	C	D
		pqr06	*stu07*	*vwx08*	*yza09*
1	abc01				
2	def02	X			X
3	ghi03			X	
4	jkl04			X	
5	mno05		X		

After finishing the matching process with the spreadsheet, the event coordinator wrote emails to each participant. If they had a match, where both participants chose each other, she wrote a congratulatory email to both sharing their first names and email addresses with each other. If participants didn't match with anyone, we sent an email saying that we were sorry they didn't make a match, but advised them to join the Facebook Group specifically for this event so that they could connect with others who didn't match.

Lessons Learned

One weakness was that the event reinforced heteronormative norms. The Pride Student Union had a similar event around the same time, so we gave that information to students if they were interested in a more queer-friendly event. We underestimated the time commitment that the matching process would take. The spreadsheet became unwieldy and overwhelming, and it took over three hours to make matches and send out emails. The next year, we held Speed Friending just after Valentine's Day in an effort to make a more inclusive and less romantic event, but it was a dud. Fewer than ten students participated, and we did not hold another Speed Friending event after that. Overall, with the high attendance and the good responses from attendees of Speed Dating, the event was a success. We helped students make connections on campus, gave them a low-stakes program to come into the library and gain familiarity with the space, and had an excellent turnout.

Key Points

In considering what programming to do in your library, take a moment to determine the goals you hope to achieve and how those goals fit the overall mission of your library and your targeted group of students, as well as what resources/services you'd like to highlight.

- Academic programming often blends academics and fun to contribute to campus retention and student success goals.

- Partners are critical in providing variety and support to library programming. Groups may come with ideas or seek opportunities to offer unique events in a centralized location.
- Academic library programming allows for a wide range of creativity and opportunities to engage with undergraduates in meaningful encounters.

Now that you are armed with a number of programming ideas and have completed several programs at your library, it is time to get some feedback for the future. The next chapter explores methods for effectively evaluating and assessing your outreach endeavors.

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Assessment and Evaluation

IN THIS CHAPTER

▷ Creating and Implementing Effective Surveys

▷ Creating and Implementing Micro Assessments

ONE OF THE MOST COMMON assessments used to evaluate library events is attendance or headcounts. While collecting general attendance statistics can be effective and should certainly be done, it only gives a sense of how many people attended an event and not whether the attendees enjoyed it or benefited from their participation. Often outreach and programming librarians are interested in how well an event went and whether it fulfilled its goals, which may include educating people about library resources, entertaining children or students, or attracting people to the library. With this in mind, programming should be regularly evaluated in depth to ensure that community needs are being met, that the programs being offered are effective, and that programming philosophies are being upheld. Assessments can be completed using a variety of tools. By documenting outcomes beyond number of attendees, the full picture can be examined to determine specific information, such as how the budget is being spent and what times and days work best for programs. Paired with attendee survey results, it may be possible to pinpoint the areas where improvements are needed. This chapter also details how assessments can be used to show the value of your programming to both internal and external library stakeholders, thus ensuring continued financial and administrative support. While the focus here is on surveys and micro assessments, be aware that programming efforts can be evaluated by a number of other methods, such as return on investment, focus groups, analyzing social media posts and shares, headcounts/attendance, interviews, or random comment sampling during an event. Because assessment and evaluation comprise such a broad and complicated arena, a list of additional resources is available at the end of this chapter.

⟲ Creating and Implementing Effective Surveys

Surveys can be used at multiple points with regard to assessing and planning. Surveys can also discover community interests or what programs to offer at a specific location based on user demographics. Surveys may be as simple or as complicated as you would like them to be, but there are some rules of thumb to follow to ensure you get honest and complete feedback. Surveys also evaluate the success of your program. The survey might be on paper or online and is administered at the end of a program to provide feedback for that particular program. Other more encompassing surveys might be developed and distributed via social media, newsletters, or email. Attaching a survey to reminder emails for checked-out materials can be an effective way to reach a large group of users. Sometimes a table can be set up at the library entrance during a program seeking feedback on programs and asking participants a variety of questions about their experiences.

Creating an effective survey is key to obtaining the most accurate and honest feedback possible. There are many factors to consider when doing a survey. Below is a list of questions to consider as you decide what type of survey to create.

- What is the goal of the survey?
- What do you hope to learn from the people taking your assessment?
- Do you hope to find out what sorts of programming your library users prefer?
- Do you want to find out if your library users are aware of the library's programs, how they learned about the programs, and what they feel might be the best way to find out about upcoming programs?
- Did the participant attend a library program recently? In the past month? Year?
- What types of programs do library users wish the library would hold?
- What did the participant think about a specific program they attended?
- Who is attending library programs?
- Is the library attracting targeted patrons to their events?
- How can we determine the success of the library event?

Once you determine the purpose of the survey, you must think about what questions might help get the answers you need to create a new program, improve an existing program, make a program successful, or help show the value of the program to stakeholders. You want your questions to be short and allow for a range of responses, both positive and negative. It is important to provide positive and negative responses, otherwise the survey is misleading, and some people may be upset if they feel they are being forced to say they liked an event that they perhaps did not. It can be tough to hear negative feedback, but it is crucial to getting as accurate a response as possible and being able to continuously improve for the future.

When formulating questions, be sure to gather any demographic information that might be useful. This could be age ranges or year in school (freshman, sophomore, graduate student, faculty, etc.), profession or major of study, city or whether participants live on or off campus, how often they visit the library, and so on. Once this is determined, develop your questions. Practice on coworkers to fine-tune the questions and make sure they interpret the questions the way you intend. Clarify the survey if there is confusion about what you're asking. The phrasing of the question can make a difference in how people respond, as can whether they read your instructions for responding correctly and whether they might skip a question. Also make sure that responses you receive will address your

main intent for making the assessment. If you want to know if people prefer popcorn, cotton candy, or snow cones as free food giveaways at events, then limit your question to asking about that. Only provide alternate options if you are willing to consider something else. Otherwise, it is best to phrase the question clearly so respondents know that those are the only options.

Finally, most people will take a survey if it is fewer than ten questions and does not require them to write much on their own. While some people love taking surveys, many find them tedious, and if there is no reward for taking the survey, many will only complete it if they can do so as quickly as possible. It is not uncommon for people to open the survey, glance at it, and close it without completing it if they think it will take too much time. Others do this and then take it later. In these cases, if the survey is blank, it can be deleted in the analysis section of the tool to ensure you do not count it when noting how many people have completed the survey.

Make sure respondents know whether the assessment is meant to be anonymous or not. If you plan to conduct follow-up interviews or focus groups, be sure to note that providing certain information is optional both at the beginning of the assessment and at the point where personal information is requested. Be sure to maintain your respondents' anonymity and do not force a response to anything that is optional, especially questions regarding personal identifiers. In most cases, a forced response is not necessary and may cause people to abandon the survey if they feel they may not remain anonymous or that the assessment seems too strict in its provided options.

Using an online survey tool like Qualtrics or a free tool like SurveyMonkey or Google Forms can make it easy to send out your survey and compile and analyze results. These tools give a variety of options for creating questions and allow a test before sending it out to participants. While you may choose to use only one type of question for your survey, you will receive more robust responses by using a variety of questions. Included here are some of the most common options, as well as their descriptions and limitations.

Multiple Choice

This is perhaps the most common type of survey question. It provides a question and a list of options to choose from. Questions may allow only one response or multiple responses. If allowing multiple responses, be sure to put a note advising participants to check all responses that apply. Some examples of this might include asking for the participants' age range or year in college, how they heard about the program, or what words they would use to describe the event. This is also a good option to ask how people heard about the program and list options like word of mouth, newspaper, library website, brochure, Facebook, Twitter, passed by, at the library, etc. It is acceptable to allow an option that provides a space to write in "other" options that your participants might want to include that you have not considered. While multiple choice is a fast option and often yields the most results because it is so quick and easy to complete, it is limited to the exact responses provided by the survey. It can be a restrictive tool and may not paint a full picture of how people experienced your event.

Matrix Tables

The matrix table is useful when you want to get multiple responses to the same question. Two common versions of the matrix table are the Likert scale and the bipolar scale, both

What year are you?

Freshman	Sophmore	Junior	Senior	Graduate	Staff/Faculty
○	○	○	○	○	○

How did you hear about the resource fair? Check all that apply.

☐ Chalking   ☐ Social Media   ☐ Toilet Times

☐ Flyer   ☐ Word of mouth   ☐ At the library

☐ Poster   ☐ Walked by   ☐ Other

Figure 10.1. Example of a multiple-choice question. *Michelle Demeter*.

of which are available in Qualtrics. Bipolar scales only allow for responses in the extreme and lack a great deal of nuance, as respondents may only choose on a scale of one to ten how they liked a program, for example. In these situations, it is easy to misinterpret what the numbers represent, as many people often do not read directions and make assumptions as to whether one or ten means best or worst. The extreme and vague nature of this type of question has its place, but it is more likely that your survey would benefit from the more specific Likert scale model.

Likert scales are far more prevalent and chances are you have already taken a survey that included a Likert scale. Likert scales are described in this section and are very useful as they offer questions that allow for a range of responses that are easy to track but are limited by their stated choices. Perhaps you hosted an event that involved multiple partners or vendors and wanted to see whether your participants visited those tables and whether they found them of interest. A matrix table allows you to ask questions about each individual partner/vendor and compare the responses. One common use of the matrix table is to allow respondents to note their level of satisfaction. The survey creator could ask questions about the quality of aspects of the event, such as location, food, vendor/partner selection, and time of day of the event. They could then ask respondents to rate these categories based on whether they were very satisfied, somewhat

We would like to get your feedback on the partners you visited during this event. Please check all that apply.

	Visited Table	Learned Something New	Already Knew Everything	Did Not Visit	Did Not Want to Visit
Library Tutoring	○	○	○	○	○
Special Collections	○	○	○	○	○
University Honors	○	○	○	○	○
Campus Police	○	○	○	○	○
Health & Wellness	○	○	○	○	○

Figure 10.2. Example of a matrix table (Likert scale). *Michelle Demeter*.

What was your favorite part of the event? The top spot should indicate your favorite part.

1 Prizes / raffle

2 Free food (cotton candy, sno cones)
3 Games

4 Vendors / Shops

5 Food trucks

6 Learning about the library

7 Having a fun event for the family to enjoy

Figure 10.3. Example of a rank-order question. *Michelle Demeter.*

satisfied, neutral, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, or any other choices the survey creator thinks will be best. Allowing for a range of comments provides a good sense of participants' reaction, but can also be limiting if the person feels somewhere in between the options provided.

Rank Order

Rank order allows users to put their preferences in order, giving the opportunity to see a relationship between multiple choices rather than allowing for only one answer to be selected. This option is perfect when you want to get a sense of what people liked or did not like quickly. Rank order lets participants click on the text and move it up or down to indicate what they liked most or least. Be sure to define what it means to move an item to the top or bottom slot with regards to whether the top rank is the top choice. This is a sort of fun, interactive option for a survey but lacks the nuance of the matrix table.

Text Entry

Sometimes it's necessary or desirable to allow for open comments. Text entry can follow a yes/no question and ask for the respondent to elaborate on their response. It is also helpful when placed at the end of a survey seeking general comments or suggestions. It can be used to ask for the respondent's information for a follow-up contact, a raffle prize, or to participate in further surveys or additional assessments like focus groups. In general, it is not advisable to use many text blocks when assessing events because most people are in a rush and do not want to spend lengthy amounts of time on surveys. They are very effective when used in conjunction with other questions or as a final question for people who like to offer their opinions. Open-ended answers can be difficult to analyze as spelling, grammar, and tone can be difficult to decipher. Text entry also takes a long time to read and may even be completely off-topic from the intent of the survey. Despite these potential challenges, text entries offer a significant advantage over other types of questions by allowing respondents the freedom to say whatever they want about your event.

🌀 Creating and Implementing Micro Assessments

Micro assessments are very short surveys or assessment tools. They are meant to give a quick snapshot of data that can be used to plan or evaluate a program, event, or activity. Typically a micro assessment is five or fewer questions, but often it consists of just one question. The idea is to get a broad view of a question that does not require a great deal of thought or input. This is especially helpful when evaluating things like furniture choices, feelings about finals, asking what free snack would best attract someone to an event, or to make a choice between two popular events. Micro assessments help library patrons feel engaged in decisions made about library events and resources, which leads to increased buy-in and happy attendees. This type of assessment provides data that is easy to gather and quick to analyze.

Micro assessments might use an online survey tool and follow similar formats to those outlined in the previous section. However, many micro assessments are done on paper, especially if they ask one to three questions. It is easy to type them onto a sheet of paper, copy and paste the text several times, then print and cut the questionnaires into strips of paper. Hosting a table where candy is given away is an excellent way to get people to complete the micro assessment. Hand out strips of paper or have a tablet or laptop available. Be sure to only use one format as paper allows for extraneous unexpected comments to be written on the form itself that the online version might not allow. Sometimes an assessment with three questions might prompt respondents to write in extra options or comments at the bottom or on the back. While this may seem like it violates the spirit of the micro assessment, it actually is helpful. Because there are so few questions, people sometimes feel they only began the conversation and their added comments or options merely extend the conversation. Answering fewer than five questions may only take a minute, and some people might feel like they can take an extra minute to add more information. Once you have the information, analysis should be quick due to the limited options of this type of assessment. Even though they are short, do not think that these assessments are not serious. Rather, micro assessments often possess a great deal of information by revealing trends in responses and may lead to the creation of more in-depth follow-up assessments in the future. They are also quick and easy ways to gauge the initial success of an event or get ideas for new programming.

Engagement Boards

One type of micro assessment that is easy, fun, and possesses a great deal of flexibility is the engagement board. An engagement board is a bulletin board decorated and prepped to ask a single question or to promote an event through connected advertising. An engagement board is usually located near the library's entrance or other highly trafficked area and kept up for two to four weeks. It is meant to gather quick data while engaging patrons in a fun manner. Using a Cricut cutting machine to decorate the board can help it look professional yet approachable and whimsical. An engagement board usually allows patrons to lift flaps and learn more information about a particular topic, write messages, or use push pins to tack up their responses. A handful of engagement board ideas and examples follows.

Pin Where You've Been

Fasten a cloth world map to a bulletin board. Print a banner that simply says "Pin Where You've Been" and attach it to the top. Provide pins in an attached cup or other holder. This

is an excellent board for the beginning of the calendar or school year that lets patrons pin where they are from, where they went on vacation, or where they spent the summer. It provides a gathering place for strangers to meet and chat about where their pin is on the map and why they pinned the specific location. It breaks down barriers and library anxiety in academic libraries, and provides an opportunity for patrons to make friends. This board is largely meant for entertainment, as it serves as a friendly public ice breaker while allowing library users to enjoy a welcoming experience upon entering the library for the first time that month, year, or possibly ever. Collect the pins and count them afterward to see how many people participated. You can also count the number of pins in popular locations and provide a summary to post at the end or on the next year's board as another fun way for patrons to interact with one another as they chat about whether they contributed to making those locations popular or how the popularity of places visited may have changed.

Finals Emoji Board

This is a good one to use in a school or college setting as it asks patrons to offer feedback on how they feel during finals season. This seemingly simple board can reveal a lot about the students in your library and how to best support them. Emotions at this time are wide ranging, as some people feel relief that the term is coming to end or they are anticipating graduation, while others may be stressed out with lots of deadlines and work to do in a short period of time. The options provided by the engagement board should cover as wide a range of positive and negative emotional experiences as possible. Ask your student workers to help choose emojis to use since they will have a better understanding of how their peers feel and which emojis might be currently trending. Popular emoji choices in the past included the smiling/grinning face, crying face, heart eyes face, wow face, x for eyes face, and of course the poop emoji.

Use a bulletin board and cover it with a solid color sheet of paper—blue is often a good choice. Print a banner asking people to tell the library how they feel while finals are underway. Place paper cups filled with different emoji cutouts at the bottom. Tape or paste a sample emoji to the outside of the cup so students can easily identify their options. Provide pins for students to pin the emoji that best represents how they feel, allowing students to choose more than one because even while stressed, people can be happy that they are close to finishing up the semester.

In fact, many students may feel a little less stressed by posting their emoji and seeing that they are not alone in how they feel. This sense of inclusion and support is important to helping students feel connected to one another and reinforces that they are at a place where others understand them and perhaps even feel the very same way. Students often chat with each other about why they posted their emojis while standing at the board, which creates an opportunity for empathetic support and the potential for creating new friendships.

Before dismantling the board, take a photo to see where faces might have clustered, and to see whether certain emojis were covered by others or possibly pinned together representing a mix of emotions. Count each emoji separately and note layout configurations made by students. While it will be impossible to interpret the board's individual pins, the board itself offers a range of emotions that are an excellent visual reminder to staff to be extra compassionate during finals and to look into adding additional wellness and relaxation events during finals if the board reveals a large number of stressed students.

Figure 10.4. Finals week emoji engagement board. *Michelle Demeter.*

Love Your Library Day/Week/Month

This engagement board can provide a quick evaluation of what your patrons like best about the library. It can be a good morale boost since it specifically asks for what people love about the library. However, be aware some people will still write negative or off-topic responses. While this may be frustrating, it is part of the engagement with the public and these comments should not be disregarded just because they don't adhere to the original theme or appear off-topic. Rather they can provide additional and un-expected insight into your patrons' needs and opinions that may help shape customer service, programs, or services.

For this engagement board, cover the board in lightly colored paper, like pink or white. A banner can be attached to the top of the board inviting patrons to share what they love about the library. Markers should be fastened to the board so participants can write what they like best about the library. Alternatively, paper hearts could be provided along with markers and pins for people to write what they love and attach the hearts to the board. This provides an excellent assessment of the library's services and might rein-force events or programs students enjoy, like finals programs.

Recording and Analyzing Data

It is important to record any collected data as soon as possible following the assessment. Doing this also ensures the ability to capture additional thoughts, observations, or notes regarding the assessment and helps retain the momentum gained by the study. Excel files are the most frequent tools used to store and analyze data from Qualtrics or SurveyMon-key. These two programs also offer data tools that may generate special reports, graphs, or charts capturing and formatting the data for easier analysis. Once the data is placed in a format that is easy to read and understand, start with some basics. Be sure to record the number of respondents for each assessment. If there are blank assessments, you may remove them from the count. Partial responses, however, are more problematic. It is up to you to determine whether you will count partial responses or if they need to be a certain

percentage completed before you will consider including or excluding them. If writing an accompanying report, be sure to note how partial responses were handled.

Reports can be long or short depending on what is needed, required, or requested. Be sure to provide the basic information about what the event was, how it benefited the library and community, when and where it was held, the budget, attendance numbers, listed partners, and any other pertinent information. This can be done as bullet points or a narrative. The report should contain charts, graphs, and other visuals that express the data in ways that make it easier to read and understand. Accompanying each visual should be a narrative that explains each as well as the analysis of what the data may mean. Be honest as you analyze the data and note both the negative and positive implications the data offers.

It is important to remember that the sheer number of assessment participants can be misleading. In the report, be sure to explain the event, the overall attendance, and why any assessments may have seemingly low numbers of participants. If an event was small, like a book discussion, there would not be a large number of people who would be available to take an assessment. Thus, percentages offer a clearer snapshot of how things went. Looking at the percentage of responses for each question can offer insight into how well a program was received. It is much better to use percentages as it makes the data analysis more accurate, especially if there are very few respondents. Look closely at comments and data and think critically about whether there were questions that seemed confusing or could have had better or clearer options. Consider the open-ended questions and try to identify general themes or ideas from which you can build categories to analyze.

Consider when the event was held; the time of year, week, or day can have a big effect on attendance. If you know there was a large town event the same day or perhaps homecoming activities the same week, note this in the report. Holding a library event during another larger local event can reduce attendance by dividing participants' attention and driving them to the more visible program. Conversely, depending how close the event is to the library, a local program could drive attendance numbers higher for tours, open houses, or other types of programming since people may feel like dropping by if they are already in the area. In addition, weather can have a major impact on programs. Rain and snow can cancel events, as can hurricanes, tornado watches, and other inclement weather systems. Be sure to note in your report whether a program had to be canceled and whether the actual date it was held was the original or a substitute, as that can affect attendance and later analysis as well.

Bear in mind that assessments are not meant to prove an existing hypothesis but to gather useful data in an effort to make an honest evaluation of what needs to be done or has been done. If it happens to support an initial hypothesis, that is ok, but data should not be analyzed in such a way that it is manipulated to provide the answers the library prefers. Assessment and evaluation are used to provide feedback regarding programs that have occurred while also gathering information on how to improve for the next one. Assessment can also be conducted to determine what sorts of programming library patrons might want and is therefore neither negative nor positive but simply informative. While assessments can be scary because it is impossible to know for sure what will be revealed until the data is collected and fully analyzed, be heartened that assessments also show the true value and worth of the library, its resources, its programming, and its amazing staff.

⊚ Key Points

Assessment and evaluation of library programming is essential to keeping events fresh and fun while also providing strong evidence of their effectiveness. The methods used to assess the quality of programs are shifting and will continue to do so as events are some of the most prominent ways people interact with the library outside of the collections. Here are some key points to consider as you plan different types of assessments:

- What do you want to find out?
- What questions will yield answers that will help create, build, or improve an event?
- Choose the type and length of the assessment carefully.
- Provide incentives for respondents to increase the chances of people completing the assessment.
- Collect and categorize data quickly to retain context and ensure its best analysis.
- Provide regular reports to administrators and stakeholders to affirm the value of the programs and the value of the library as a whole.
- Conduct and provide an honest analysis of the data.

Assessment is not a tool that stubbornly proves the library's worth without addressing areas for improvement. Rather it is a way to gauge the library's successes and opportunities for growth.

⊚ Resources

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Additional Tips and Resources

Finding Innovative Program Ideas

PLANNING AND PRESENTING PROGRAMS for adults does not require creative thinking staff. As librarians, we have the training to employ research to find ideas. Look to others who have successfully incorporated innovative ideas into their library programming and re-create those ideas. Many libraries around the world have paved the way for others. Even creative people run out of ideas. Look to those libraries that have won awards and follow their calendars online or follow them on social media to see what they are posting. Read the current library journals, join specific groups on social media, find blogs written by librarians that appeal to you, and join listservs like PubLib, ALA Connect, and PLA Digest. The benefits of joining groups extend beyond idea generation. Many others are asking the same questions or searching for ideas. Groups provide an opportunity to have a dialogue with others, giving the chance to learn from successes already achieved and mistakes made previously.

Suggested Resources

- Library Think Tank—#ALATT, Programming Librarian Interest Group, Libraries & Social Media: Each of these Facebook groups has active members who work in different types of libraries including public and academic. They are large groups with a lot of activity on a daily basis. Librarians, library staff, and library school students engage in sharing ideas, seeking advice, and highlighting new programs and services at their libraries. Facebook groups can be a good way to keep up with

▲ **151**

trends, to find inspiration, and to reach out to others in the field with specific questions.

- ◦ Library Think Tank—#ALATT: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALA-thinkTANK/
- ◦ Programming Librarian Interest Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ProgrammingLibrarianInterestGroup/
- ◦ Libraries & Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/groups/LibrarySocial/
- Library Marketing and Outreach (LMaO) Interest Group: This ALA interest group brings together outreach, marketing, and programming librarians in a forum to share best practices, excellent marketing materials, and the fruits of their labor. The fastest way to connect with them is through their Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/acrl.lmao/
- Programming Librarian: Run by ALA's Public Programs Office, Programming Librarian's website offers ideas, blogs, and webinars for public and academic librarians. Perhaps most helpful is the "Program Models" page, which provides detailed instructions from individual libraries on how to successfully identify an audience and plan, budget for, market, and execute a wide range of events. http://www.programminglibrarian.org/
- Programming & Instruction: PLA has a site dedicated to resources for adults, including high school equivalency, citizenship, digital literacy, financial literacy, job searching, and program planning. The programming section of the site includes numerous links to resources for passive, low cost, senior, and general adult programming. http://www.ala.org/pla/resources/tools/programming-instruction/programming-resources
- Library of the Future Blog: The Center for the Future of Libraries, an initiative of the American Library Association, collects resources and articles related to the emerging trends relevant to libraries and innovative techniques libraries may employ as they serve communities. You can subscribe to an e-newsletter to receive a roundup of the latest news or find the information on the blog. http://www.ala.org/tools/future/blog
- Library Marketing and Communications Conference: This annual conference brings together marketing librarians from across the United States to network and share ideas on best practices for marketing strategies. If attending the conference is not an option (http://www.librarymarketingconference.org/), anyone involved in library marketing can join their Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/LMCC.Discussion.Group/

Looking Outside the Library

People have a tendency to stick to what they know, but by looking outside the profession, ideas that are relevant to the library and your programming philosophy will become apparent and aid staff in coming up with even more innovative programs. Museums and other cultural organizations often offer lectures and presentations that would also appeal to library users. Pinterest provides tons of ideas for craft and making activities that could be used for adult programming. Do a Google search for upcoming conventions to see which fandoms are big right now. TV shows and movies, especially ones with superheroes, have large followings.

Follow these sources for pop culture news on social media to stay aware of upcoming releases and anniversaries:

- Nerdist
- *Variety*
- *Entertainment Weekly*
- Nice Girls TV
- I09
- *Wired*
- Geek & Sundry
- *HuffPost*
- IGN
- Screen Rant
- Unbound Worlds
- Gizmodo
- *The Hollywood Reporter*

Key Points

Continuously coming up with innovative programming ideas can be done by connecting with the right resources, whether those be library related or from other industries.

- ALA and PLA provide a variety of resources for programming on their websites.
- Joining social media groups with a specific interest allows you to keep up with new ideas and trends amongst colleagues.
- Look to popular news sources to know what is trending.

Find programs and events that were executed successfully by other libraries and replicate those ideas until you are inspired to implement your own ideas. Reach out to other librarians for ideas and support. We love to share knowledge.

Resources

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Index

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Haley K. Holmes, Coordinator of Services to Adults, has been with the San Antonio Public Library for fourteen years. In 2004, Haley starred in an episode of *Faking It* on TLC entitled "Super Shy to Super Fly," where she learned to be a Coyote Ugly bartender, which became the topic of her dissertation for a PhD in information science from the University of North Texas. She coordinates the forty librarians who plan programs for adults and oversees the four Learn at SAPL adult learning centers. In her first year as coordinator, adult programming attendance doubled.