

Putnam Public Library

Library Display Policy

Purpose

The Putnam Public Library strives to serve the needs of the community by providing free access to a diversity of ideas, information and experiences with the goal of promoting the love of reading, the joy of lifelong learning and engagement with the arts, sciences and humanities. This policy provides a basis for the display of library materials by library staff, informs the public about the principles and criteria upon which these decisions are made, and promotes the purposes of the library's mission.

The Putnam Public Library recognizes the importance of displays and programs as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expressions and free access to ideas by residents. With a strong focus on encouraging the love of reading, lifelong learning and creativity, we establish responsive connections between the diverse needs of our community, our collections, our digital services and an array of engaging programming. A key aspect of our approach is the creation of thoughtfully curated displays and programs, which play an essential role in informing and inspiring individuals of all ages and diverse backgrounds. These displays and programs serve as a tangible expression of our dedication to the community and exemplify our belief that a vibrant library contributes to a strong community. Displays and programs are provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints and provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and educational needs of residents.

In keeping with its mission, the Putnam Public Library showcases exhibits and displays for the artistic, cultural, and informational enrichment of the community. In addition, the exhibits are intended to make the library a pleasant and interesting place to visit.

Principles and Criteria

The final responsibility for the display of library materials is held by the Library Director, but day-to-day responsibility is shared by library employees throughout the library who are professionally trained to curate and develop displays. Library staff uses the following criteria in making decisions about display topics, materials and accompanying resources:

- Community needs and interest
- Availability of display space
- Historical, cultural or educational significance
- Connection to other community or national programs
- Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits, and programs
- The library may partner with other community agencies, organizations, educational institutions or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored displays and exhibits.

The library will strive to include a wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints in library-initiated displays and exhibits, as well as offer displays and exhibits that appeal to a range of ages, interests and information needs. Library-initiated displays and exhibits should not exclude topics, books, media and other resources solely because they may be considered to be controversial.

The library provides displays created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public library as well as allowing displays created by members of the public or community groups to be exhibited in the public library. Acceptance of a

display or exhibit topic by the library does not constitute an endorsement by the Putnam Public Library or the Town of Putnam of the content of the display or exhibit, or of the views expressed in the materials on display.

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. The library recognizes that some materials may be controversial or offensive to an individual but maintains that individuals can apply their values only to themselves. The selection of library materials is predicated on the customer's right of access to information and freedom from censorship. Selections will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but on the merits of the material itself. No library material, display or program shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program or because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program. The library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or programs to individual residents of Putnam. Please see the Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy, which is available on the library website.

Selection of materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of or be seen by minors. No one can exercise censorship to restrict access to library materials by others. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to determine which library materials are appropriate for their children. The Putnam Public Library supports intellectual freedom and endorses the American Library Association (ALA Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, the Library Bill of Rights and all relevant interpretations).

Display Space

The non-secure case in the adult section is available to be reserved on a first come, first served basis if the library is not using the case for library displays. Exhibits are subject to the approval of the Library Director or his/her designee and will be accepted or rejected based on their artistic, cultural, and/or informational merit. All exhibits must meet acceptable community standards.

The library will make every reasonable effort to protect items displayed, but exhibitors should recognize that the library is a public building used by many people. Library staff cannot be held responsible for the preservation or protection of items on display. Normally, items will be kept on display for one month. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to set up and remove his/her exhibit. The library does not participate in the sale of displayed items. The exhibitor's name and contact information may be left with the Library staff to give to any interested party.

Brochure Rack and Handouts

The Putnam Public Library maintains a brochure rack to make handouts available in order to provide the residents of Putnam and the surrounding communities with information on cultural, educational, recreational, civic or service-oriented events and issues.

Only information from non-profit organizations will be accepted. The library will **not** display or distribute personal, commercial, or profit-making handouts. In addition, the library reserves the right to reject other materials that are deemed inappropriate.

Handouts will be placed in the library at the discretion of the Library Director based on space available, date of the event, and length of time the library has displayed the material. Acceptance of handouts does not constitute or imply endorsement by the library or by the Town of Putnam. The library will accept for distribution multiple copies of free local or regional newspapers, as space allows.

Administration of Policy

The Library Board of Trustees authorizes the Library Director to act in keeping with this policy and to execute its provisions on behalf of the library and the Town of Putnam.

Exceptions and Amendments

The Library Board of Trustees reserves the right to make exceptions to the provisions of this policy. In addition, the Library Board reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time, as it deems appropriate or at least every 3 years in response to changing conditions.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on May 22, 2023

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on September 22, 2025