

Use of Library Space for Art Exhibits Policy

Date:	May 14, 2007
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

Toronto Public Library's current strategic plan includes enhancing opportunities for citizens to engage in the cultural life of their city and its neighbourhoods as a key priority. Providing art exhibit space for use by community groups and residents is one way the Library addresses this priority. Art exhibits also support the Library in fulfilling its mission which includes providing *access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment*.

The Use of Library Space for Art Exhibits Policy sets out the terms for exhibiting art in Toronto Public Library branches. It provides the context that library space is public and that art is selected within the context of creating a welcoming environment for everyone. This report outlines the main features of the policy, including partnering with local community arts councils or groups to review and select the exhibits. The policy harmonizes the policies of the former library systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves the Use of Library Space for Art Exhibits Policy (Attachment 1).

Implementation Points

Staff have developed an application process and procedures for implementing the policy. The procedures allow for local community and branch needs in applying the policy. The policy and information about exhibiting in branches will be made available on the TPL website.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The adoption of this policy has no immediate financial implications. The policy provides insurance which includes theft, fire, smoke and water damage for exhibit items for which the exhibitor has provided a written value and which the Library accepts. The Library reserves the right to request an appraisal for any exhibit item.

DECISION HISTORY

This policy is part of the on-going program to harmonize the policies of the former library boards.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto Public Library's current strategic plan prioritises enhancing city and neighbourhood opportunities to engage in the cultural life of the community. Providing free space for local community artists to display their work provides visitors with an opportunity to engage in the creative life of their community, and presents community artists including youth, with a valued place to exhibit their work locally.

The Library currently provides free art exhibit space according to the policies of former library boards. Branches that have exhibit space are listed in Attachment 2. The proposed policy excludes the TD Gallery at Toronto Reference Library, which is the only Library-owned space that operates to the specifications of a professionally-curated art gallery.

TPL's existing policies, procedures and practices were reviewed during the drafting process. The needs of communities and the level of support that the Library can provide to local artists were considered. Community arts councils were consulted. A list of councils consulted is included as Attachment 3. The policies of other Canadian and North American public libraries have been reviewed. The TPL policy reflects the input received from the community arts councils, and is generally consistent with the policies of other public libraries that offer free exhibit space to the local community.

COMMENTS

The policy outlines that providing access to exhibit space supports the Library's strategic priority of supporting residents in engaging in the cultural life of their City and its neighbourhoods. Providing public space for art displays is one way the Library fulfills its mission to provide *access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment*. The policy outlines that when selecting art for Library branches, providing access to a wide range of human experience will be balanced with creating a welcoming environment for people all ages and backgrounds.

The proposed Use of Library Space for Art Exhibits Policy describes the purpose and context in which the Library provides free exhibit space to the community. It also standardizes the terms and conditions for using free exhibit space. It makes clear the exhibitor's responsibilities and the Library's responsibilities, especially concerning liability and insurance.

Consultation with the arts councils confirmed that local artists value the free exhibit space available in many branches. The policy supports and encourages exhibits by local artists by giving priority consideration for space to artists who live or work in Toronto.

The policy also includes direction that:

1. access to exhibits is open except when the Library needs the space for other activities;
2. any publicity for the exhibit must be approved by the Library;
3. the Library will not apply a commission on the sale of exhibit items;
4. the Library has the right to request removal of individual exhibit items, or to cancel a scheduled exhibit;
5. if one or more items are not accepted for display, the exhibitor may appeal the decision.

The policy states the Library's preferred approach for reviewing and selecting exhibits is in partnership with local art groups or councils. At present, the Library has a successful partnership with the Scarborough Arts Council, by which the Council carries out the review and selection process on behalf of a local branch. During consultation, other arts councils expressed interest in assisting with the selection of exhibits.

The application procedures for exhibiting in libraries include a formal contract with the exhibitor. This will ensure that every exhibitor understands their responsibilities, and the terms and conditions in which the Library provides the space. The contract may be signed by the exhibitor or by the exhibitors' representative (for example, when an exhibit represents the work of a local art group). The contract will state:

1. the details and limits of the Library's insurance of exhibits;
2. that Library space is provided "as is";
3. that the Library does not supervise the exhibit; and
4. that the exhibitor is responsible for preparing, mounting and dismantling the exhibit.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Use of Library Space for Art Exhibits Policy
- Attachment 2: List of TPL Branches Providing Art Exhibit Space
- Attachment 3: Community Arts Councils Consulted