

Fall Executive Committee Meeting
October 25-26, 2014, Chicago

Topic: Draft Programming Guidelines

Background: At their 2013 Midwinter Board meeting, the Board voted to establish a taskforce to great teen programming guidelines. An updated draft is provided below by the chair, Hayden Bass. The taskforce will further refine the document based on Executive Committee feedback, then open a call for public comments all Dec. In January the taskforce will finalize the document taking into consideration public comments and submit a final document to the Board for approval via virtual discussion in Feb.

Action Required: Discussion

Teen Programming Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended to guide library staff who design, host, and evaluate library programs with and for teens. While not every program will meet every guideline, library staff should strive to address most of these guidelines to be better positioned to support teens in their interests, education, skills, and relationship to their community.

Traditionally, many teens have accessed the library primarily for academic support. While these connections are important, it is crucial that youth also experience informal learning in their libraries. ~~Today's teens are proficient multi-taskers;~~ technology and social media are deeply embedded in their lives of today's teens. To meet their needs, libraries must provide connected learning opportunities that are driven by teen interests and incorporate thoughtful, forward-thinking use of technology while building personal, academic, or workplace skills. Programs should promote print, digital, and media literacies, as well as ~~skill sets~~ soft skills related to such as collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking.

Libraries are in a unique position to serve as hubs, connecting residents with resources that inform and expand their interests, both inside library buildings and in the community beyond. As teens undergo physical, social, and emotional developmental changes and build their identities, they require experiences that bridge different spheres of learning. Effective teen programs foster peer-based learning and positive developmental relationships, leverage unique library resources, and enable the acquisition of twenty-first century workforce skills.

The mission of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is to expand and strengthen library services for teens. Through its member-driven advocacy, research, and professional development initiatives, YALSA builds the capacity of libraries and librarians to engage, serve, and empower teens and young adults. YALSA is a subspecialty of the American Library Association, the world's largest and oldest library organization, and a financially stable 501(c)3 not-for-profit.

To learn more about YALSA or to access other national guidelines relating to library services to teens, go to www.ala.org/yalsa.

Guidelines for Teen Programming

1.0 Facilitate teen-led programs.

When teens take the lead on all aspects of library programming, they grow as leaders and decision-makers, becoming more proactive, confident, and independent. This in turn adds value to the overall library program, because the library can demonstrate a role in helping teens develop key soft skills needed to be successful in school and the workplace.

- 1.1 Engage teens via outreach to schools, community organizations, etc.
- 1.2 Strive for diverse program attendance by targeting underserved teens ~~who may be~~ including but not limited to low income, immigrant, LGBTQ, or of varied abilities and inviting them to be active collaborators and participants.
- 1.3 Involve teens in every step of the program planning process, including design, marketing, hosting, and evaluation.
- 1.4 Use a flexible design and action research model to allow teens to modify and adapt programs to better meet their needs.
- 1.5 Facilitate programs, rather than ~~acting~~ as leader and expert.
- 1.6 Enable teens to engage in peer-supported learning activities.
- 1.7 Create an environment in which teens can collaborate and network with peers outside their own cultural group.
- 1.8 Balance the needs and skills of all youth program participants.

2.0 Develop interest-based, developmentally appropriate programs.

Comment [BY1]: The only time that the library or staff other than teen services staff are mentioned is in the spaces and staffing section. These guidelines would be stronger if they did a better job of acknowledging that teen programming takes place within the larger context of the overall library program. For example, teen services staff should strive to align programming with their library's mission, goals and priorities. Do you feel that this can be addressed by revisiting the existing guidelines, or would an 11th one be warranted?

Each teen in the community should be able to find something in the library's menu of programs that strongly connects to their identity and interests. Programs should be driven by teens' passions and designed to help them explore and shape their identity and skill sets, both personal and professional.

- 2.1 Develop programs that address the unique emotional, intellectual, and social needs of teens.
- 2.2 Enable teens to gain workforce development skills, including creativity, innovation, communication, and collaboration.
- 2.3 Enable teens to explore career pathways.
- 2.4 Enable teens to develop learning and innovation skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, information literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, and ICT literacy.
- 2.5 Incorporate technology and social media intelligently and organically.
- 2.6 Connect youth with mentors, guides, and other adult role models and educators.
- 2.7 Connect youth with opportunities to become civically engaged.
- 2.8 Incorporate a variety of types of interaction, such as one-on-one engagement, small group discussion or activities, and large events.
- 2.9 Enable teens to demonstrate proficiency in non-traditional media and platforms.
- 2.10 Enable teens to engage in self-expression and meaningful content creation.

Comment [BY2]: Spell out all acronyms

3.0 Conduct a community analysis.

In order to ensure that library programming meets the needs of all members of the community and does not duplicate services provided elsewhere, ~~librarians~~ library staff should conduct a thorough community analysis. Library staff must know the demographics of their communities and develop relationships with the community organizations already working with youth. ~~They~~ play a crucial role in connecting teens to the community agencies and individuals that can best meet their needs.

Comment [BY3]: Is this section really about creating teen programming that meets the needs of teens in the community, and doing a community analysis is one way to achieve that?

Comment [BY4]: Is this library staff or someone else?

- 3.1 ~~Collect-Identify~~ any demographic information about the community that has already been gathered by ~~librarians, marketing, outreach, or other internal library departments~~ library staff.

- 3.2 Collect available demographic information from the census, public schools data, departments of neighborhoods, etc.
- 3.3 Identify segments of the community that are underserved by library programming.
- 3.4 Identify agencies and organizations that may already be serving ~~these~~ teens and families.
- 3.5 Determine which teen needs are being met by programming and services at other organizations.
- 3.6 Build strong relationships with community leaders at these organizations and refer teens as appropriate.
- 3.7 Direct the library's limited resources appropriately to provide needed programming not already offered elsewhere.

4.0 Develop community partnerships.

Librarians-Library staff must develop programming in partnership with other organizations in order to effectively serve all teens in the community. By working with partners, libraries reach new audiences, create robust and relevant programs that truly reflect the community, and leverage a host of resources to meet the needs of youth and families. A partnership can begin many ways -- an email, a phone call, an outreach visit, or an introduction by another community partner.

- 4.1 Assess existing library partnerships and consider how they may be maintained or expanded to develop relevant teen programming.
- 4.2 Seek out community partners (government agencies, community organizations, vocational programs, etc.) who target a teen audience the library would like to reach (e.g., homeless or low income youth) and/or have access to resources or skills that would benefit library patrons.
- 4.3 Establish a mutually beneficial relationship in which the library and the community organization participate as equals.
- 4.4 Create a written agreement that explicitly states what each partner is contributing, how each will benefit from the relationship, and how success will be measured.
- 4.5 Develop programming that best utilizes partner and library resources to meet the needs of teens and reach shared goals.

- 4.6 Establish an ongoing dialog between partners, budgeting time to debrief, celebrate success, learn from failure, and otherwise maintain the overall health of the partnership.
- 4.7 As appropriate, host programs in partner locations (e.g., youth homeless shelters, community centers, classrooms, etc.) in order to serve teens where they are.
- 4.8 Work collaboratively with community partners to develop and administer an outcomes-based evaluation.
- 4.9 Continue to refine jointly offered programs based on evaluations and feedback.

Develop appropriate and welcoming policies.

Library staff must ensure that teens of all abilities, income levels, sexual orientations, gender identities, ~~and~~ ethnic and religious groups, and so on feel safe and welcome at library programs.

- 5.1 Facilitate a conversation with teens to allow them to create behavior expectations that foster a safe environment for discussing personal or controversial topics, as appropriate.
- 5.2 Clearly state the intended audience for programs, and ensure that discussions and activities are age-appropriate.
- 5.3 Establish and adhere to general library policies that support developmentally appropriate teen behavior at programs and in the library.

6.0 Engage in evidence-based practice and **outcome measurement**.

Attendance must be not be the only measure of a program's success. Instead, evaluations must measure positive outcomes for participants. Programming should be fluid and flexible, undertaken with the expectation that there will be some failure, adjustments will need to be made, and evaluation will be ongoing.

- 6.1 Provide tools for teens to measure the effectiveness of the program, both in the moment and in the longer term.
- 6.2 Create evaluations that predict and measure an improvement or expansion of knowledge, skills, confidence, attitude, or behavior.
- 6.3 Create evaluations that predict and measure impact on the community.

Comment [BY5]: What about having something here about using the findings? Such as to guide future planning, budgeting, etc. Also, for advocacy

6.4 Conduct evaluations often, and recalibrate programming as needed.

7.0 Training

Library staff who plan and host programming for teens should adopt YALSA's Competencies For Librarians Serving Youth, particularly those related to Client Knowledge and Services. Areas of focus are outlined below.

Comment [BY6]: For consistency's sake, the headings should all be in the same format. The first 6 are action statements, while the last 4 are just single words

- 7.1 ~~Train~~ programmers should be trained in facilitation and power sharing, including working with teens to set and manage behavior expectations.
- 7.3 ~~Train~~ programmers should be knowledgeable about ~~in~~-cross-cultural functioning and communication to effectively serve teens of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities.
- 7.4 ~~Train~~ programmers in-should have good public speaking, collaboration, supervision, outcome measurement, advocacy, and project management skills.
- 7.5 ~~Train~~ programmers in-must be able to use effective ~~use of~~ technology effectively.
- 7.6 ~~Make sure~~ programmers are-must be familiar with the 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents, and consider which Assets each program will advance.
- 7.7 Continuously share training and professional development resources among all library staff to ensure positive and meaningful interactions with teens, both during and after programs.

8.0 Spaces

Teen programs should be held in spaces that are inviting, high interest, and meet the purpose of the program itself.

- 8.1 Programs hosted inside the library building and/or as part of the library's online presence should be developed in accordance with YALSA's Teen Space Guidelines.
- 8.2 Alert colleagues who are not directly involved with programming when programs are scheduled and what they will involve (equipment, noise levels, food/drink, etc.).

- 8.3 When programs are hosted outside the library in a community partner's space, discuss expectations in advance to create shared expectations and goals (see section 4.0 for more on partnerships).
- 8.4 For ~~these~~ programs hosted in a partner's space, take steps to highlight the collaboration and the library's role in the program. These steps might include but are not limited to:
 - 8.4 a. Having the community partner and library staff member jointly announce that the program is a collaboration, with each partner highlighting the other's contribution.
 - 8.4.b. Posting ~~library~~-branded signage.
 - 8.4.c. Checking out materials onsite.
 - 8.4.d. Creating new library accounts onsite.
 - 8.4.e. Having presenters and/or participants wear library-branded items (buttons, t-shirts, hats, etc.)
 - 8.4.f. Documenting the program via photos, audio and/or video for the online and social media presence of the library and partner.

9.0 Staffing

Programs should be adequately staffed to ensure the safety and enjoyment of participants. Consideration should be given to the size of the space, expected attendance, and the complexity of the program.

- 9.1 Ensure that staffing levels are adequate to creating a secure environment.
- 9.2 Ensure that adult/teen ratios are adequate to allow for successful programs.
- 9.3 Consider which tasks are best suited to librarians and which are more suited to paraprofessional staff, community partners and mentors, and teen volunteers and participants.
- 9.4. Consider the needs of teen participants (language, culture, ability, etc.) and staff programs accordingly.
- 9.5. When hosting programs led by outside presenters, consider ways to ensure that teens also develop positive relationships with library staff.

10.0 Resources

Comment [BY7]: This is probably better labeled an appendix and not the 10th guideline

10.1 Programming Models and Examples

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10.2 A Framework for Programming

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