

# **LIBRARY CULTURAL PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS**

## **Events, Programs, Art Exhibits, and other Projects Under the Purview of the Library Cultural Programming Committee**

### **Mission, History and Structure**

The City of West Hollywood is committed to providing accessible arts and cultural events programming for its residents and visitors. After building the West Hollywood Library building in 2011, the City and Library formed the Library Cultural Programming Committee (also referred to herein as the “Committee” or “LCPC”) as it was realized there was a need for greater cross-communication and collaboration between the agencies involved, and as a way to receive and approve requests from the public to present events, programs, art exhibits and other projects at the West Hollywood Library complex.

The LCPC is managed by the City’s Arts Division and is comprised of representatives from the City’s Arts Division, the West Hollywood Library (LA County Library), the City’s Recreation Services Division, the City’s Social Services Division, Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission, and the Friends of the West Hollywood Library.

### **Overarching Principles & Considerations in Review and Approval Processes**

West Hollywood includes and serves many diverse communities and cultural traditions. Its audiences include immigrants from repressive political environments, a Russian-speaking/Eastern European population, older adults, children, families, single adults, a large LGBTQ population, and people of all gender expressions. Consequently, the LCPC seeks to provide broad access to a variety of artistic disciplines and practices that can appeal to this diverse constituency.

West Hollywood has a progressive government and a sophisticated and well-educated population. As a result, the Library Cultural Programming Committee, the City’s Arts Division, and the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission encourage experimentation, edginess, and boundary pushing in providing art, in addition to the more traditional art that might be found in other government-funded arts programs.

One way in which the City’s Arts Division experiments is by utilizing the interior walls of the West Hollywood Library for art and educational exhibits. This location was not originally designed or intended for art. By placing art in this public space, art becomes more accessible to the community.

In addition, when the City Council Chambers was built and while its primary function is to hold the City Council and Commission meetings, it was also recognized that it could have an important secondary function as a venue for arts and culture programs including music, film screenings, staged readings, author talks, panel discussions and other performing or presenting opportunities. Because it was not designed as a theatre or film screening venue there are some challenges faced for those types of programs which would not be encountered in a space specifically designed for theatre and film. These limitations should be taken into account for any proposed programs. Additionally, the LCPC does not have full purview over this space; any programs which are proposed and sponsored for this space must also be approved through a staff item to the City Council.

One of the LCPC's tasks is to determine, among the numerous requests it receives for exhibiting and presenting in these spaces, which are most in keeping with the City's values and the mission and purpose of the Library and its auxiliary spaces. An established set of criteria is needed to best serve the needs of the community and to ensure the appropriateness of works exhibited or presented. While the City takes a firm stance on the First Amendment Right on freedom of speech and has a cultural value of encouraging diversity and provocative art, when works are located in the shared public spaces of the Library, the public encounters them randomly and individuals do not have a choice of seeing or not seeing artwork. For instance, when the public spaces in the Library are used for exhibitions, the LCPC is mindful that the Library is shared by people walking through the building to access the collections and other Library services such as the public computers, the WorkSource Center, the study rooms and desks, the Children's Theatre, and any of the other services found in the Library.

However, the Community Meeting Room or Public Meeting Room/Council Chambers do provide controlled access so more provocative or adult-oriented presentations, conversations, screenings or other performances can take place in these spaces, as long as they meet the other criteria set forth.

As it pertains to Library exhibits, the LCPC shall take into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the public when reviewing exhibit proposals. For instance, artwork featuring nudity and explicit language may not be suitable for a general audience who would encounter the works in the shared public areas in the Library. [The City currently has another gallery space in Plummer Park where the public must actively choose to enter the space, and where edgier, more explicit and controversial works may be displayed.]

This policy acknowledges that artists enjoy constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech and expression and that the artists' works are protected by additional state and federal laws. However, the City is not creating a public forum in providing accessible arts and cultural programming for its residents and visitors;

rather, the City is merely permitting certain artists—after a viewpoint neutral review process—to display or present various projects in furtherance of the City's goals. The City must balance the artists' protection with other applicable legal parameters such as sexual harassment and non-discrimination laws. The Committee must weigh and balance sometimes conflicting rights when approving projects and deciding where these projects or programs should be sited. In approving and siting these projects, the Committee and the City are not endorsing or approving any opinion, position or viewpoint expressed by the selected artist or the selected project. The viewpoints, positions and opinions expressed in the art are solely those of the artists and should not be attributed to the City.

In order to ensure compliance with the City's principles and applicable legal considerations, all applications and requests for temporary art installations and exhibitions in public spaces shall be submitted to the Arts Division. Approval or installation of any art project in the public space in violation of this process shall be considered a violation of the City's policy.

### **Library Cultural Programming Committee Review Schedule**

The Library Cultural Programming Committee has an open application process for art exhibits and programs proposed for spaces in the West Hollywood Library. These locations include but are not limited to:

- Library Exhibition Spaces (the walls and open spaces of the Library)
- Library Community Meeting Room (seat up to 78 people)
- City Council Chambers/West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room (seats 139+)
- West Hollywood Room (seats up to 10 people)
- Children's Theatre

The Committee's review schedule for proposals is as follows:

- Quarterly – The LCPC meets once every 3 months

In making its recommendations, the LCPC reviews all of the submitted proposals and supporting documents and enters into a discussion using the review and evaluation criteria as qualifiers to evaluate the proposal. Approved proposals are assigned for project management to one of the three organizations comprising the Committee (the City of West Hollywood, the LA County Library, and the Friends of the West Hollywood Library) where they may undergo an additional review/approval process within each organization.

### **Projects under the Authority of the LCPC Review and Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals presented to the LCPC are reviewed based on the following criteria. **[Please note each criterion may not be applicable to all projects and that some criteria may be weighed more heavily than others depending on the circumstances of the proposals.]**

- **Artist/Presenter Qualifications and Experience**
  - The artist/presenter's qualifications, including – the education, training, experience, body of work, and recognition of the artist/presenter, and the consistency of the artist/presenter's qualifications with the stated goals of the project
  - To the extent applicable, the artist/presenter's record of previous collaboration with other libraries, agencies, organizations, and artists to achieve a successful result in implementing the proposed project
  - The artist/presenter's experience presenting events, programs, art exhibits, and other programs to the general public.
  - To the extent applicable, the artist/presenter's previous proven successful experience in creating, producing or otherwise implementing projects similar to the one proposed.
  - Although a presenter may have extensive qualifications or training in medicine or health, any proposals offering medical or health advice may not be sponsored due to liability reasons.
  
- **Aesthetics** – Projects will be evaluated on the quality, potential enjoyment, concept and technical approach, and prospective social interaction.
  - The nature of the proposed concept.
  - To the extent applicable, the artist's past work and if it demonstrates the high level of artistry of past exhibitions.
  - The work's contribution to the goals of the City of West Hollywood.
  - The work's enhancement, advancement, and/or diversification of the library programming program.
  - The inherent artistic quality and aesthetic merit of the work.
  
- **Site-specificity/Relationship to the Location** – Exhibitions intended for the West Hollywood Library should take into consideration the location and community served by the Library and have some direct relevancy to the City of West Hollywood. As such, the Library Cultural Programming Committee includes the following criteria in considering potential exhibits.
  - Highlight and/or relate to aspects of West Hollywood's history and neighborhoods such as the Sunset Strip, the West Hollywood Design District, Historic Route 66, among others.
  - Highlight and/or relate to West Hollywood's major demographic groups (including the LGBTQ, Russian speaking/Eastern European and older adult communities) and major industries (including film, music, entertainment, home furnishings, and design).

- Align with the City’s longstanding support for Human Rights issues and its Core Value of “Respect and Support for People.”
  - Have a literary connection or component that aligns with the exhibit’s location in the Library.
- **Diversity** – The Committee is committed to providing opportunities to a diverse portfolio of artists and subject matter. All ranges of artistic styles, materials, types of artworks and programs, and diversity of artists (gender, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and culture) are encouraged to assure a balanced and interesting program.
- **Proposed Budget** – Proven successful experience working within a given budget.
    - The budget of the project given the scope of the proposed project.
    - The cost of production, fabrication, framing, installation, and other related costs.
    - If the artist or proposing entity is requesting funding from the City.
    - The sources of funding for the project.
    - The ability of the Committee to support this project, if needed.
- **Public Safety and Materials** – Each proposal shall be evaluated to ensure that it does not present a hazard to public safety. Physical artworks shall be of a size, shape, design and material composition in which they will not impact the public’s ability to safely enjoy a project or otherwise pose a threat to public safety. Performances and presentations shall be reviewed to ensure they are designed in a way that will not pose a risk to the public or participating artists.
- **Timing** – Review of proposals will include consideration of the current exhibition and programming schedule for the Library. The LCPC receives far more proposals than can be sponsored and due to timing constraints some proposals may not be able to be accommodated or sponsored. A proposal should be submitted a minimum of six months before the anticipated exhibit or program.
- **Exhibition Location** – The Library is not a museum space. There are no dedicated guards for the artwork nor does the space have museum quality climate control. All artists/presenters shall be informed of these facts and shall choose whether they wish to display their artwork at the Library. All artists presenting exhibitions for display in the West Hollywood Library shall either obtain insurance or waive the City’s liability for the artworks. In some cases with highly valuable, one-of-a-kind artworks, it may be recommended that reproductions be used for exhibitions.

- **General Standards of Decency and Respect** – Each proposal shall be evaluated with the general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the public in mind.
  - The intended audience for the proposal.
  - Whether the public will be a captive audience or will the proposal require affirmative steps to view it.
  - The location of the proposal and if it will be in an area typically accessed by minors or members of the public-at-large.

In accordance with the general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the public, the LCPC may choose to recommend a different location of an art project/exhibition/program based on these criteria.

### **Appeal Process**

There is no appeal process, but an artist/presenter may submit another application for a new review cycle.