United for Libraries
Association of Library Trustees,
Advocates, Friends and Foundations
A division of the American Library Association

A CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

Library programs can be an excellent way of highlighting special collections within the library, bringing in new patrons, raising awareness about the library and all it has to offer, and enriching the lives of those who attend. Here are a few tips for holding a successful library program.

1. People lead busy lives; don't hold a program just because there is space in the calendar. Have a clear idea of the program's purpose.

2. The program task force should be large enough to handle the necessary tasks so that no one person feels too overburdened. Tasks will include program development, publicity, and logistics such as refreshments, room assignment, seating, audiovisual needs, etc.

3. Set up a realistic timetable so that all concerned have a clear expectation of the time involved and know when their tasks must be completed.

4. Publicity is a key ingredient. Have experienced people be responsible for publicity including determining media contacts, handling flyer distribution, and coordinating invitations.

5. Look for other community organizations to share the responsibility of the program. Two invitation lists are better than one, and you can expose more people to the Friends.

6. Some potential pitfalls include: poor timing, inadequate notification, careless organization, unclear delegation of responsibilities, not enough volunteers involved, inadequate or poorly-timed publicity. These pitfalls will have an adverse impact on attendance.

7. Evaluate each event afterward. If your audience evaluations are good, don't be discouraged if a program doesn't draw the numbers you expect. Often, unforeseen events can change the attendance at a program.

8.   Possible sources of ideas and materials: United for Libraries' newsletter *The Voice*; *101+ Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends* (available to United for Libraries members) and *Even More Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends* (available from United for Libraries); the United for Libraries website and Friends listserv, local interest; and current trends.

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