What is a Program?

According to the Indiana State Library Standards (590 IAC 6-1-2), a program is defined as:

> *...A workshop, program, seminar, or outreach program sponsored by the library, in which the library's staff plays a significant role, including, but not limited to, technology, informational literacy, early literacy, children's, cultural programming, and other programming offered for the community.*

The standards require that public libraries offer a minimum number of programs throughout the year. With reduced budgets and staffing, many libraries may have trouble meeting this requirement. This document is intended to clarify what can, and cannot, be counted as a program.

The following activities are generally classified as programs:

- Storytimes
- Computer classes (does not include walk-in, one-on-one help)
- Recreational programs, including game or movie nights
- Book discussions
- Author visits
- Demonstrations
- Tours

A few notes:

- For series, each individual event counts as a program (e.g. a 6-week series equals 6 programs)
- You may count programs toward your total even if nobody attends

Some examples of programs:

- The library invites a local chef to do a cooking demonstration.
- The children's librarian visits a local school to read a story.
- The children's librarian organizes and hosts a monthly meeting for homeschooling families.
- Library staff host workshops on Microsoft Office.
- The library plans and promotes a health fair where patrons may receive health screenings and health information.
- The library plans and promotes a game night, but no families attend.
- The library plans and promotes a musical performance, but the performer cancels. (You may still count attendees even if program is cancelled)

The following activities do NOT qualify as programs:

- Library board meetings (even if public attends)
- Library staff members marching in a parade.
- The library's booth at a local festival. (This *could* count if planned events were scheduled at the booth, e.g. story times or author talks)
- The library holds an open house to kick off their summer reading program. Families are invited to drop in, but the event is not staffed and there are no planned activities scheduled.
- A librarian assists a library user one-on-one with computers or their resume. (Count as reference transaction)
- A librarian delivers books to residents at a nursing home. (Count the circulation)
- Volunteers from a local nonprofit use the library's children's area to conduct tutoring sessions. (Count students as attendees for non-library sponsored programs)
- A local business holds a meeting in the library's meeting room. (Count attendees for non-library sponsored programs)
- The library hosts an art exhibit which draws in several members of the community throughout the month.

What is a Program? Continued…

What about online or streaming programs?
Online or streaming events count as programs provided they meet the program definition. Only live events/ attendance counts. People who view the program live would count towards program attendance; people who watch an archived version of the program would not.

A note about non-library sponsored programs:
Although programs hosted by outside groups will not count toward your library's programs or attendance, you should still track the number of events and attendees for the Annual Report. This, when added to your program attendance, can present a more accurate picture of the use of the library.

The following is a checklist to help you determine if an activity counts as a program:

- Did I plan and advertise the program in advance?
- Did my patrons learn anything new about the library and/or its resources or services?
- Was a library staff member or volunteer present to facilitate the program?
- Was the program open to more than one person?

If you have any questions about whether an activity qualifies as a library program, please contact the Library Development Office at (800) 451-6028 or ldo@library.in.gov