

## **Working with Performers**

This guide is for library staff new to the process of hiring a contracted presenter.

### **Before You Hire**

- Is this performance in alignment with your library's mission, goals, and/or objectives?
- Does it help with your community's needs? Are patrons requesting this type of event?
- Does the program support an equitable, diverse, and inclusive library?
- How accessible is the event? Can you make it even more accessible at the planning stages?
- Are there potential controversial issues? Are there intellectual freedom considerations to plan for? Or any stakeholders to talk to about plans?
- Do you have the funding? It's okay to ask if there are special prices for libraries/non-profits, etc.
- Can you partner with an organization to lower costs? Such as to offer a joint program with another organization?
- Are there other expenses to consider besides the performance fee? Supplies? Food? Other professional services? Interpreter? Special marketing? Rental equipment?
- Will you need extra staff and/or volunteer help?
- Do you have your supervisor's approval for the event?
- Do you have the space for the capacity for the event?
- What technology can you provide? (projector, screen, microphone, sound system, etc.)
- Do you need to reserve a room/space/etc.?
- For virtual events, do you have the hardware, software, and ability to use the privacy and security settings to host?
- How/where will you promote your event? (local newspaper, social media, calendar of events channels)
- Will you need a waiver for attendees? (Common for any event where the risk of injury is higher, or you otherwise need parental consent.) Does it need to be reviewed by an attorney?
- Is this event part of a grant? Be sure to check against the grant requirements, acceptance letter, and application for any additional considerations.

### **Finding a Presenter**

- Use the Oregon Library Presenters Directory.
- Ask coworkers and colleagues for suggestions.
- Consider following/subscribing to other libraries' social media and newsletters to get ideas.
- Reach out to local organizations that might be interested in bringing their program to you.
- If you're booking for summer events, book early! Start your search in October-December.

### **Questions to Ask the Presenter Before Hiring**

- What are your rates?
- Will you offer a discount for multiple performances/locations?
- How far out are you booking right now?
- Where have you presented in the last 2 years?

- What forms of payment do you accept? For checks--Do you have an SSN (Social Security Number) or Tax ID? A W-9 is commonly required to pay by check. Will you be able to supply an invoice and receipt?
- Do you have liability insurance? It is becoming common practice for libraries to require \$1M-\$2M in liability coverage for accidents, etc.
- What is the target age-range for your audience?
- What is the maximum capacity for your event?
- Is the program suited for outdoors or indoors?
- How long is the performance/program?
- What is the name of the performance/program?
- How much time will they need to set up?
- Do they need a loading zone?
- Do you need an electrical outlet?
- Are there any accessibility modifications / accommodations we should be aware of?
- Describe the space your presenter will be in (outdoors, no shade. Indoors, small space, etc.). Give them as many details as you can so they know what to expect. Consider sending the presenter a picture of the space.
- If there is a cancellation due to an emergency closure or other mitigating circumstances, will we be able to reschedule? Or be refunded? Or could it change from in-person to virtual?

### **After You've Selected the Presenter**

- Use a Letter of Agreement or contract with the presenter to confirm event and terms of agreement. (A letter of agreement is invaluable. If your library does not have one, talk to your supervisor about creating one.)
- Ask the presenter for an invoice. It needs to have the date, time, title, and description of the event, as well as their business name, contact information, and an invoice number. It's okay to use a basic template if they don't usually create invoices.
- Confirm payment method and document agreement in the Letter of Agreement / contract. Tell the presenter how they will be paid or ask them how they want to be paid (some libraries use a credit card and some libraries only issue checks)
- Be sure to document plans for reschedule, reimbursement, or changing plans due to emergencies or mitigating circumstances.
- Ask the presenter for room needs (table(s), microphone, sound system, etc.)
- If the event is outdoors, do you need tents, signage, extra seating, or supplies?
- Remind presenters that the material they present shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religion, medical condition, disability, marital status, sex, age, or sexual orientation.
- Ask your supervisor if the presenter is allowed to sell their merchandise, collect emails for newsletters and other promotional materials, hand out business cards, etc. during the event. Every library is different. Some allow the presenter to sell their merchandise, and some don't. Collecting emails is usually discouraged, but some libraries might allow it if the presenter has

consent of the audience member. You will need to let your presenter know what your library's limitations are.

### **After the Presenter is Hired**

- You will need the following from your presenter:
  - SSN or Tax ID number.
  - Email.
  - Physical address (if issuing a check --- even if it will not be mailed to the presenter).
  - Exchange phone numbers in case of emergencies.
- Find out how long in advance you need to request a check from the finance department of your organization. It is generally recommended you issue payment on the day of the event, or after, in case there are cancellations or rescheduling issues.
- Let the presenter know who their library point person is and where the performance/workshop/etc. will be. Give them a back-up point person, too.
- Ask if there is a key contact person if the presenter is part of a group.
- Set clear expectations of when forms need to be received (letter of agreement, invoice, other paperwork if needed).
- Do you need to arrange for help to set up outdoor equipment such as tents and seating? Or to set up tables and chairs for indoor events?
- Have a plan for how you will collect attendance statistics. Do you need clickers? Can you count on your own? Do you need greeters to help count?
- If your library uses PLA's Project Outcome, or otherwise collects qualitative information, have a plan for how you will distribute surveys or collect that information, as needed. Check with your supervisor about whether and how your library collects program outcomes.
- Do you need anything translated to market the event to the intended audience?
- Add the event to all your regular event calendars, internal calendars, social media, newsletters, and website.
- Consider printing fliers and distributing around your community.
- Display posters in the library.
- Make sure all staff know about the event so they can help promote during customer service interactions and answer questions.
- Communicate any updates to your supervisor / team-mates. Be sure to ask for help early if you encounter obstacles.
- Set reminders for yourself for various checkpoints and deadlines so nothing falls through the cracks.

### **During the Event**

- Introduce your performer and welcome guests to your library.
- Thank donors/sponsors if any (Friends of the Library, community member(s), etc.).
- It is becoming common to offer a land acknowledgement to honor indigenous peoples. Ask your supervisor for guidance on whether your organization does this or wants to start.

- Consider promoting 1-2 related events in the future that guests may be interested in. Consider promoting future volunteer opportunities, donations, or other library services.
- Provide library information nearby such as newsletters, program fliers, board member recruitment, business cards, or printed materials about other library services.
- Count the number of attendees for your library's statistics.
- Distribute surveys or otherwise announce how to provide feedback, if needed. (e.g., Project Outcome.)
- Be present for questions from attendees or presenter. You are representing the library as a positive part of the community. Networking may help connect with future performers and partnerships!
- Thank the audience for attending.

### **Immediately After the Event**

- Thank the performer.
- Hand the check to the performer or pay by card (if your organization allows this).
- Clean up the room/space.
- Make sure nothing is left behind (from audience or presenter)
- Recommended: Send a Thank You note to funding supporters, hosts, partners. Include number of attendees and a highlight from the event.
- Recommended: Send a Thank You note or email to the performer and include any final details or follow-up about payment being sent.