

Programs and Program Kits

Programs and events are core features of effective, community-focused library services. From children's story times to adult book clubs and teen after-school clubs, strong programming is an important part of making the library an integral and relevant part of your community.

Effective Library Programming

Chances are your library already runs some fantastic programs and events! Great, effective library programming takes into consideration the needs and desires of its community members. If your patrons come to you with suggestions or ideas for programs -- listen to them!

Not sure where to start? Talk to your fellow library managers to find out what has been successful in their communities! Websites like Pinterest and YouTube, conference sessions, and webinars are also great resources for finding out about new programming ideas and trends. Your Client Services Librarian at Shortgrass is also excited to help you at all stages of the planning and execution process.

Shortgrass Programming Kits

In order to help you run strong, engaging and cost-effective programs at your library, Shortgrass is continually developing programming kits that are available for borrowing by all member libraries. As with many of our Shortgrass services, our programming kits are intended to provide access to a greater variety of programming tools, materials, and devices than any one library might be able to justify on its own. Our kits are updated regularly, and depend on your feedback and suggestions to continually improve.

A sampling of current Shortgrass programming kit offerings:

- Button maker
- MaKey MaKey
- Osmo Lab
- Escape room (yes, in a box!)
- Candy sushi
- Keva Planks

A complete, updated listing of available kits is always available at:

<https://shortgrass.ca/services-for-libraries/consultation-and-support/programming-kits>.

Please refer to this list when you wish to book a programming kit.

To book a programming kit:

1. Decide the date of your event, when you will need the kit. The more notice you are able to give for your booking, the better, especially at busier times of year (e.g. summer vacation or spring break). Kits are generally booked for 1-2 weeks at a time, depending on your program date, the delivery schedule, and the time of year.
2. Email programmingkits@shortgrass.ca to request your booking, indicating when you need it for, for how long, and (in the case of kits with consumable items, like the button maker or candy sushi) how many people you expect to attend. This will help us ensure your kit is prepared for your specific event.
3. The kit will be sent to with your regular delivery, as close to your program date as possible. If you would like it to be delivered earlier (so you can familiarize yourself with its use), please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your request.
4. Run your program! Depending on the program, it may be helpful to enlist another person to help out. Please fill out the included evaluation form -- this helps us to identify issues that need to be addressed or alterations that need to be made, so that the next program runs smoothly.
5. Repack the kit contents and send it back to Shortgrass in the next delivery run. Hope you had fun!

Program Promotion

Successful programs are dependent on people actually showing up to your event. Make sure your community is aware of it by spreading the word.

Steps you can take to advertise your program:

- Make a poster for your library, community, church, and school bulletin boards.
- Promote it on your library's social media accounts: if your library has Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, post about your event there.
- Promote it on your library's website: Shortgrass can help you make a banner for your website that advertises your event.
- Promote it elsewhere in your community: if your community has a newspaper or a digital advertising board, for example, you may be able to place an ad for your event in it.

New Programming Kits

We do our best to ensure that our program kit offerings are regularly updated with fresh options for you to use, and we love hearing ideas from you! If you have a suggestion for a new kit, let the Client Services Librarian know, and we will evaluate the possibility of adding it to our collection.