Tool Lending Library

Millvale Community Library

Adults

Tool Lending Library

Mar 27, 2019

$251-500

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Byline

Susan McClellan, Executive Director, Millvale Community Library, Millvale, Pennsylvania

The Millvale Community Tool Lending Library provides easy access to free tools to community members in Millvale and surrounding Allegheny County. Adults can check out up to five tools at a time for a one-week period.

Advanced Planning

Our tool library began in June 2018 with an idea from an Americorps volunteer. Advance planning includes having a place to store and sort the tools. The Millvale Community Library already had a small existing space adjacent to the library building.

It is also necessary to create a starter kit of forms. These include liability and membership forms, tool use policies, a future budget and a plan for volunteers to clean and organize the tools.

Next, think about how the tools will be sorted, organized and cataloged so that a community member can sign them out.

Marketing

Marketing of the Tool Lending Library is done in newspapers, social media and through the library newsletter and website. Other marketing efforts include posting fliers in other area communities, grocery stores, hardware stores, etc.

Pittsburgh's local NPR station, 90.5 WESA, published an article about the library in January 2019.

Budgeting

The Tool Lending Library was started with tool donations from patrons and community members. Over 90 percent of the tools were donated from residents, with extra tools purchased by the library for an estimated cost of $300.

Day-of-event Activity

A tour of the Tool Lending Library was held as part of our grand opening ceremony, and we received wonderful feedback from patrons. In the first week of opening, we had many phone calls from across the region, with callers asking about the type of tools we had and how customers could check them out with their library card.

Program Execution

The library is a project of the Millvale Community Library, and patrons must become members of the tool library (membership is free). We now have a catalog of more than 400 tools and sets of tools, from measuring tapes and extension cords to power saws and wheelbarrows.

The tools can be checked out with a valid library card. Patrons 18 and over can check out as many as five tools for up to a week, with renewals possible. Some tools require a refundable deposit, and late fees are applicable.

The library is open two hours daily on Fridays and Saturdays, and two hours on Tuesday evenings. The catalog is searchable, just as with books and movies, and we have a list of tools available on our website.

Some of the tools in the library include jumper cables, carpet/floor shampooer, chisels, voltage tester, dolly, hammers, pliers, saws, tile saw, pressure washer, ladders, garden clippers, lawnmowers, rakes, weeders, sanders and a variety of safety equipment (goggles, gloves and knee pads).

The library saw a 16 percent increase in patron circulation in 2018, and Tool Lending Library membership has been increasing rapidly since June. The Tool Lending Library now has over 50 members, and we intend to keep growing (space permitting) until it is full.

We now have patrons from across the state asking about our tool collection and how to start their own.

Advice

Our advice is to start small and advertise for free tool donations on social media and in your library newsletter and website.

Conduct outreach — for example, you can staff a table at farmers' markets and other places where community members may use tools. It is also important to ask community members for input on which tools they want to see in a lending library.

Considering all the benefits a tool lending library has to offer, it would be great to see more of them across the country!

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

More Programs

Dec 12, 2018
Children (9 and under)+ | □□
Image



Don’t Throw It Out! Fix It at a Repair Café

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Apr 12, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $$
Image



Telescope Lending Program

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)

Oct 27, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | $$$
Image



Toy Lending Library

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)