To Centralize, or Not to Centralize

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Learning objectives

- Benefits of centralized programming
- How to begin implementing centralized programming at your libraries
- Best practices for centralized programming, and lessons learned in our first year
Background

- PPLD serves most of El Paso County, CO
- Recently underwent a job analysis study, resulting in a reorganization of services
- Adult, Young Adult, Children’s, and Maker programming has become more centralized
- In late 2018, we launched our first centralized menu of Adult Programs
Currently

- Quarterly menu for adult programs
- Work on a 3-6 month timeline
- Staff suggestion form
- Evaluation criteria
- Programming 101 training guide
- Staff feedback form
Benefits

- More strategic planning
- More diverse programming
- Shared resources
- Higher impact programming
- Staff not performing outside their duties
More benefits!

- Increased program attendance
- Decreased number of program offerings

March - August 2018
- 2,367 programs
- 28,576 attendees
- Average attendance 12.07

March - August 2019
- 2,088 programs
- 28,345 attendees
- Average attendance 13.57

Stats:
- 2017 - 5,600 programs
  - 11 patrons/program
- 2018 - 5,172 programs
  - 12 patrons/program
- 2019 - ~4,172 programs
  - 13.5 patrons/program
How to!

- Take inventory of what you are currently offering
- Set goals, vision, objectives for programs
- Decide on menu or other tool
- Decide what and how much will be on your menu
- Set clear expectations
How to, con’t…

● Develop a realistic timeline
● Decide how you want to handle pop-up programming
● Generate staff excitement and buy in
● Decide what you can centralize and let the rest go
● Continually evaluate and look for ways to improve
Best practices

- Open communication
- Make internal customer service a priority
- Allowing room for individual location autonomy
- It won’t be perfect the first time (or second, or third)
- Nip problems in the bud
- Teamwork makes the dream work!
Learn from our blenders blunders

- Don’t be afraid to hit the pause button
- Assess community needs before designing programs
- Bring involved parties to the table
- Clearly define which group does which type of programming
- Design programs for all staff skill levels
Group Discussion

- What’s one benefit of centralized programming you could see at your library?
- What’s one roadblock to bringing centralized programming to your library?
- What’s one program that could improve with centralized programming? (Maker Monday, for example)
- What programs could be cut and why?
Questions?

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