

Policy III: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MATERIAL SELECTION
P3000

The purpose of this statement on material selection is to establish policies to guide staff and to inform the public about the principles upon which elections are made to develop the collection of the library.

A policy cannot replace the judgment of librarians, but stating goals and indicating boundaries will assist them in choosing from a vast array of materials available.

The library sets as its major goal in collection development and materials selection: to secure for all residents of the library's service area the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational materials in all media, both published and unpublished, that fit their needs.

A. DEFINITIONS:

P3100

1. The word "materials" used for the specific forms of media, has the widest possible meaning; it may include books (hardbound and paperbound), government documents, pamphlets, maps, magazines and journals, comic books, newspapers, broadsides, manuscripts, films, sound discs, sound tapes, slides, posters, videotapes, games, art reproductions or original art work, and software.
2. "Selection" refers to the decision that must be made either to add a given item to the collection or to retain one already in the collection. It does not refer to guidance in assisting a library user.
3. Final responsibility for selection and development of the collection lies with the Board of Library Trustees. However, the Board delegates to the Director authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections. The Director may authorize other staff to apply this policy in building the collection. In exceptional cases the Director will present comprehensive information to the Board.
4. The primary objective of selection shall be to collect materials of contemporary significance and of permanent value. The library will always be guided by a sense of responsibility to both present and future in adding materials, which will enrich the collections and maintain an overall balance. The library also recognizes an immediate duty to make available materials for enlightenment and recreation, even though such materials may not have enduring interest or value.

5. All staff members selecting library materials will be expected to keep the objectives in mind and apply their knowledge and experience in making decisions.

B. CRITERIA OF SELECTIONS:

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No item in a library collection can be indisputably accepted or rejected by any established given guide or standard. However, certain basic principles can be applied as guidelines. Every item must meet such of the following criteria as are applicable to its inclusion in the collection.

1. The degree and accomplishment of purpose.
2. Authority and competency of the author, composer, filmmaker, etc.
3. Comprehensiveness in breadth and scope.
4. Sincerity and fundamental objectivity.
5. Clarity and accuracy of presentation.
6. Appropriateness to the interests and skills of the intended users.
7. Relation to existing collections.
8. Relative importance in comparison with other materials on the subject.
9. Importance as a record of the times for present and future use.

C. USE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS:

P3300

1. The library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some library user. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of residents of the library's service area.
2. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no item will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.
3. The use of rare and scarce items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.

4. Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

D. GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTION AND SELECTION DEVELOPMENT: P3400

1. The library takes cognizance of the purposes and resources of other libraries in the region and shall not needlessly duplicate functions and materials. Through membership in the Southern Adirondack Library System and its cooperation with the Capital District Library Council, the resources of other libraries in the region will be made available through inter-library loan and other means to the Library's patrons to the extent possible.
2. The library acknowledges the purposes of educational programs for students of all ages provided by the educational institutions in the area. Test books and curriculum related materials for these programs are provided where the materials also serve the general public or where they provide information not otherwise available.
3. Legal and medical works will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the layman.
4. The library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history; therefore, it will seek to acquire appropriate state, county and local public documents, and it will take a broad view of works by and about New York authors as well as general works relating to the State of New York. However, the library is not under any obligation to add to its collections everything about New York, or produced by authors, printers or publishers with New York connections. The library will attempt to collect comprehensively works about the local community, and to the extent possible, about surrounding communities.
5. Because the library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds and reading abilities, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.
6. In selecting materials for the collection the library will pay due regard to the special, commercial, industrial, cultural and civic enterprises of the community.

E. GIFTS:

P3500

1. The library accepts gifts of materials and is grateful for such gifts, but it reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials. Gifts, which do not accord with the library's objectives and policies, will be refused, sold at the library's book sales, or otherwise disposed of according to law. No conditions may be imposed relating to any gift either before or after its acceptance by the library. The library cannot appraise gifts for their value for tax purposes or other purposes.
2. Librarians are expected to use good judgment to remove from the collections whatever no longer serves a need, and to refurbish, by rebinding or other means, materials that might suffer deterioration if not so cared for.

F. INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP POLICY:

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The library rejects any censorship of materials in the collection, which meet the criteria of this statement. The library will abide by the policies contained in the following Censorship Statements.

1. Any individual may reject materials for him or herself but may not restrict the freedom of others to read.
2. Whenever library material is challenged, it will be re-examined by the Library Director and, when necessary, referred by the Director to the Board of Trustees; if the material meets the criteria of the materials selection and collection development policy, it shall not be removed from the collection except by court order.
3. Complaints and/or objections to library materials will be considered in terms of the library's materials selection policy, the principles of the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights, and the opinions of the reviewing source(s) used in selection.
4. When materials are challenged library staff will:
 - a) Treat complaints with dignity and courtesy.
 - b) Provide a form "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" to obtain a formal complaint.
 - c) The full facts shall be presented to the Library Board of Trustees.

- d) Defend the principles of freedom to read and the professional responsibility of the Library rather than the book.
 - e) If necessary seek the support of local press and the New York Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee.
5. The complaints, and/or objections, and response will be forwarded to the Library Director for review and relevant comments if received by a substitute in the Director's absence.
 6. In the event that the person or group registering the objection is not satisfied, a direct meeting with the Library Director will be arranged.
 7. If the complainant still feels that the problem has been dealt with inadequately, a final appeal to the Board of Trustees will be made. The Library Director will notify and inform the Board of the details of the case before a full hearing is scheduled.