

3.10 COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide the public with an understanding of the purpose and nature of Richland Community Library's collection and to give guidance to library staff for collection development.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

- Mission: We serve as a community hub by connecting our patrons to all forms of literacy, lifelong learning, and growth.
- Vision: Welcoming, inspiring, and connecting our community.
- The Library and The Board fully endorse the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A), the Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix B), and the Freedom to View Statement, (Appendix C).

Support for Intellectual Freedom

Richland Community Library provides an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. The library board affirms the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View policy statements in support of acquiring and managing collections.

Selection Policy Objectives

Richland Community Library's materials collection is developed and managed to meet the majority of the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the library's service area. The collection development librarian builds and maintains a patron-oriented collection by anticipating and responding to needs and expectations.

Collection decisions are made in conjunction with the strategic initiatives, especially the following:

- Positioning the library as the preferred partner for lifelong learning by connecting community members to library collections and resources
- Committing to excellence in service to improve effectiveness and provide barrier-free access to resources for the community that are most in demand.

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- Providing an inclusive, rather than exclusive, collection that represents a diversity of viewpoints, including materials that reflect differing social, cultural, political, and religious views.

Responsibility for Selection

Staff contributes to the development of patron-oriented collections by:

- Engaging in open, continuous two-way communication with library patrons and recognizing that individuals have different ways of expressing their needs based on age, language, economic status, culture, or other characteristics
- Interacting with patrons with understanding, respect, and responsiveness
- Handling all requests equitably
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to community needs
- Understanding and responding to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Recognizing that materials of varying complexities and formats are necessary to satisfy diverse needs of library users
- Balancing individual needs and broader community needs in determining the best allocation of collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement
- Reviewing the collection on a regular basis to identify areas of community interest that may need to be strengthened

Selection Criteria

Public libraries are diverse and represent a broad demographic. With a patron base that can include infants to the elderly, selection criteria should take into account the various interests and needs of the patrons the library serves. Criteria for selection of materials should also depend on the goals and mission of that particular library. In general, public libraries provide collections containing a wide variety of material formats, including print, audio-visual, and electronic. In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, library staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. Library collections will provide a broad range of opinion on current issues.

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Collections contain popular works, classic works that have withstood the test of time, and other materials of general interest. Works are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on subject matter or on political, religious, or ideological grounds. In building collections, library staff is guided by the principle of selection, rather than censorship. Furthermore, the selection of a given item for a library's collections should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a particular viewpoint. To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable.

General Criteria

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Cost
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Attention by critics and reviewers
- Potential user appeal
- Requests by library patrons

Content Criteria

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
- Reputation and significance of the author
- Objectivity
- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Clarity
- Currency
- Technical quality
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Relevance and use of the information

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- Effective characterization
- Authenticity of history or social setting
- Cultural significance and critical acclaim

Recommended Public Library Reviewing Sources

- Booklist
- NewYork Times Book Review
- Publishers Weekly
- Library Journal
- School Library Journal
- Kirkus Review
- Goodreads

Acquisitions Procedures

The Richland Community Library Board of Trustees has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of collection materials to the Library Director and their decision to assign library staff the responsibility of acquiring material.

- The collection development librarian of the Richland Community Library has the system-wide responsibility for the overall selection and maintenance of all materials and formats within the collection of the library. This responsibility is monitored by the library director, and is delegated to this individual as a result of their education, training, experience, and job classification.
- Approved materials can be selected for the various collections within Richland Community Library by the collection development librarian, library director, assistant director, and library staff who are qualified to do so by reason of education, training, experience, or job classification.

Selection of Materials on Controversial Topics

A balanced collection attempts to represent all sides of controversial issues as far as availability of materials, space, and budget allow. Selection is based upon criteria stated in this policy. The race, religion, nationality, or political views of an author or creator; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item automatically to be included or excluded from the library's collection.

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All public libraries contain materials that some patrons may find objectionable. Libraries may omit from the collection materials that some patrons feel are important. In either case, the library has procedures that patrons may use in requesting the reconsideration of materials.

Gifts and Donations

Accepting gifts and donations is an important way for the public library to benefit from the generosity of the community it serves. Gifts and donations of materials are reviewed using the same criteria as purchases. The library reserves the right to dispose of any gifts that are given to the library. The library will determine how to best incorporate such materials into the existing collections.

Materials not added to library collections may be used for programs or given to other local organizations such as schools, senior centers, or Friends of the Library group. Gifts received by the library that are not added to the library's collection shall be forwarded to the appropriate Friends of the Library group for their disposition at a future sale. The proceeds from this sale shall accrue directly to the benefit of the library, in a fashion consistent with accepted library policies and services as determined by the Board of Trustees. Any items unsold by the Friends of the Library may then be donated to another organization or discarded.

Funds may be given for the purpose of acquiring materials recommended by library staff as prescribed in this policy, or for purchase of specific items suggested by the donor. When the library receives a cash gift for the purchase of materials, the library staff must make the selection with the general selection principles set forth in this policy.

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

The library keeps its collections vital and useful by retaining and replacing essential materials, and by removing on a systematic and intentional basis, basing its decisions on a number of factors, including:

- Publication date
- Circulation statistics
- Community interest
- Outdated or obsolete information and sources that have been superseded by new titles or editions
- Availability of items through Interlibrary Loan or digital sources
- Fiction that was once popular but no longer in demand

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- Physical condition of material

Items dealing with local history are an exception, as are certain classics and award-winning books.

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