

## **Materials Selection Policy**

The selection of library materials is based on the Library's goals of serving the educational, informational and recreational needs of the community. To this end, the Library acquires, makes available, and encourages the use of materials in various formats (e.g. video, audio). In keeping with these goals, the Library and its Board of Trustees support the American Library Association's (ALA) Bill of Rights and ALA's Freedom to Read Statement.

The ultimate responsibility for all materials selected rests with the Library Director. Authority for selection may be delegated to librarians, placing the initial selection at the level where contact with the public occurs and use of the collection is observed and specific expertise is held. The public is also given the opportunity to recommend the purchase of additions both in person and via an online form.

Selection is a judgmental process requiring selectors to use their general knowledge of the subject, its place in the field, familiarity with materials in the collection, and their recognition of the needs of the community. Each work is evaluated as a whole, rather than upon the merits of the individual parts. To ensure a balanced collection, the following general criteria are used by all selectors:

- Requests by the public and popular appeal
- The author's reputation as a writer/scholar
- The importance of the subject matter to the overall collection
- Attention of critics and reviewers
- Format and durability
- Price and return on investment
- The timeliness or permanence of the work
- Authoritativeness
- Relevance to the local community
- Contribution to the variety of the library's holdings
- Usage projected by data analytics software

All physical materials, and curated digital materials, whether purchased by the Library or donated to it, are evaluated in accordance with these guidelines.

The staff makes skilled use of selection aids, publisher provided information, specialized lists, online resources, online customer reviews and book reviews when selecting materials.

The Library does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given item equivalent to endorsement of the viewpoint expressed in that item. An impartial recognition of varied points of view is the selection goal. Within the framework of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement, the library provides materials representing current approaches to public issues of a controversial nature.

There are certain opinions, such as those involving religious, political or moral attitudes, that are inherently controversial. The public library does not emphasize one subject, one aspect of an issue, or one opinion at the expense of another.

The library cannot act *in loco parentis* with regard to the selection of library materials for its juvenile patrons. Since the library cannot anticipate a family's viewpoint on controversial issues, the Library encourages parents to have an active and responsible interest in their child's choice of items. Selection will not be inhibited by the fact that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

The library recognizes the need to provide reference and research material for the direct answering of specific questions if it is to fill its role of serving educational and informational needs. However, because of the availability of other public and college libraries in the area, the Library weighs carefully the purchase of very expensive or very specialized materials. To avoid costly and unnecessary duplication, special consideration will be given to materials available to the public through these area libraries or the Internet.

To provide the best variety of digital content to the community at the lowest cost, the library acquires collections of digital materials provided as a bulk collection by the vendor. The size of those bulk collections prevents individual review of the items contained in them. Digital content which is provided as part of a bulk subscription is acquired without staff curation and may contain materials not in compliance with this policy. This content is not subject to review through the library's request for reconsideration process. The library also provides access to shared consortial content purchased by other institutions in our Overdrive/Libby platform. This content has a separate review process governed by the policy of the Blue Ridge download Consortium. The digital resources provided through Libby/Overdrive, Hoopla, and Kanopy offer separate platforms for youth which remove adult content from the results.

(Adopted by Library Board of Trustees 6/1998; amended 3/2006, amended 10/2014, 8/2019; 12/2021; 4/2022, 10/2023)