



# Collection Management Policy

## Introduction and purpose

- This policy is used for the development and management of the collections of the Fitchburg Public Library. It serves as a guide for the public about Library service as it pertains to the collections, and to inform the public about the principles upon which selection decisions are made. This policy is used by Library staff to select, maintain, and deselect materials. This policy does not replace the judgment of library professionals. The stated goals and objectives will assist them in their selection of available materials.
- Fitchburg Public Library's primary collection objectives are to acquire, organize and make available print and media materials that inform, educate, entertain and enrich people of all ages. Collections include popular and in-demand materials as well as items with enduring value. The collection is not archival, and it is maintained to meet current needs.
- The Collection Management Policy is reviewed annually by Library management and approved by the Library Board.
- The following statements and policies have been adopted by the Library and are used as guidelines for the development of Library collections. The Library endorses the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights", "Freedom to Read" and "Freedom to View" statements presented in the addenda of this document.

## Library Vision and Mission Statements

- Vision Statement
  - The Fitchburg Public Library fosters and supports a lifetime of learning, curiosity, and discovery in a diverse and vibrant community.
- Mission Statement
  - The Fitchburg Public Library inspires and connects people of all ages through a variety of enriching, innovative, and engaging experiences offered in welcoming spaces to enhance and strengthen our diverse community.

## Factors Affecting Collection Management

- The Fitchburg Public Library participates in the Dane County Library Service, the South Central Library System, and the LINKcat (Library Interchange Network) shared automated library catalog. Membership in these organizations benefits the Library in the following ways:
  - The Library's participation makes resources from throughout the state available to patrons locally. The holdings of LINK member libraries are available to Fitchburg patrons via online catalog access and an extensive delivery system.

- This shared system is accomplished by the encouragement of participating libraries to diversify their purchasing patterns. This approach to selection should result in fewer system-wide copies of marginal titles and an increase in the total number of titles available to patrons served by automated libraries.

## **Selection of Library Materials**

- Responsibility
  - Final selection responsibility lies with the Director who delegates to staff the authority to interpret and guide the application of policy in day-to-day decisions. Unusual problems are referred to the Director for resolution. The Director oversees the selection process and the overall budget. Members of the Fitchburg Public Library staff participate in the selection of library materials. The Adult and Technical Services Manager and Youth Services Manager provide appropriate selection tools and track the materials budget to ensure a flow of new resources throughout the year. Acquisition tasks are performed by the Library staff and include choosing vendors, placing orders and monitoring the status of orders.
- Criteria for evaluation
  - The selectors must consider each type of material in terms of its own merits and the audience for whom it is intended. No single standard can apply to all acquisition decisions. Some material may be selected primarily for artistic merit, scholarship or value to humanity, while others may be chosen to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of the community.
  - Some library materials are subject to widespread or local demand. These high-demand items may or may not meet the general and specific criteria contained in this policy. Selectors give serious consideration to the volume and nature of requests by members of the public. In addition, as the social and intellectual climate of the community changes, materials not originally recommended for purchase may become of interest. Such materials will be reevaluated as the need arises.
  - To build a collection of merit and significance, selectors acquire materials according to objective guidelines. They evaluate acquisitions, whether purchased or donated to the Library, primarily by examining reviews in one or more of the professional library review media and checking against the standards listed in this section.
  - General criteria for selecting library materials are listed below. An item need not meet all of the general criteria in order to be acceptable.
    - Public demand, interest or need
    - Special interest to the Fitchburg community
    - Relation to collections unique to the Fitchburg Public Library
    - Reviews
    - Physical limitations of the Library building
    - Budgetary considerations
    - Contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent value
    - Suitability of physical form for Library use
    - Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
    - Present and potential relevance to community needs
    - Relation to the existing collection and to other material on the subject
    - Prominence, authority, skill and/or competence of author, illustrator, creator or publisher
    - Timeliness of material
    - Authenticity of historical, regional or social setting
    - Attention of critics, reviewers and the public

- Literary or artistic merit
  - Enduring value
  - Social significance
  - Availability of materials on the subject
  - Awards
- Specific criteria for the evaluation of works of information and opinion (non-fiction)
  - Authority
  - Comprehension and depth of treatment
  - Objectivity
  - Clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation
  - Representation of challenging ideas, although it may be an extreme or minority point of view
  - Indexing and other organization of materials
- Specific criteria for the evaluation of works of imagination (fiction)
  - Representation of important movement, genre, trend or culture
  - Vitality and originality
  - Artistic presentation and experimentation
  - Sustained interest
  - Effective characterizations
  - Authenticity of historical or social setting
- Specific criteria for the evaluation of electronic materials
  - Ease of use of the product
  - Accessibility for multiple users of electronic formats
  - Equipment needed to provide access to the information
  - Technical support and training
- Any or all of these factors are used when selecting materials to build a well-rounded collection with many viewpoints to meet community needs, but the primary consideration is public demand. By representing multiple points of view within the collection, the Library will inevitably contain materials that are offensive to some members of the community. 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.
- Selection of materials is done from many sources, including reviews in professional journals, popular magazines, newspapers, non-print media, subject bibliographies, recommended lists, publisher's catalogs, and patron requests. Standard tools may include:
  - Library Journal
  - New York Times Book Review
  - Publishers' Weekly
  - Booklist
  - VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)
  - School Library Journal
- Formats
  - The format should be appropriate for Library use. Books are generally purchased in hardcover editions because of their durability. However, paperback editions may be purchased, for multiple copies of titles expected to be in demand for a limited time, for lower cost or when that is the only format in print. Binding should be durable, the print clear and the paper of high quality. Workbooks to be filled out by the user or other "consumable"

works are not desirable but are purchased if the specific item under consideration is needed to meet demand.

- New formats shall be considered for the collection when national surveys and local requests indicate a significant portion of the Fitchburg community has the interest and the necessary technology to make use of the format. Availability of items in the format, cost per item and the Library's ability to process and house the items also will be factors in determining when a new format will be collected. Similar considerations will influence deletion of a format from the collection.
- Patron Request
  - The Library encourages and welcomes suggestions, comments and ideas about the collection and its development from patrons who are Fitchburg residents. Selectors give high priority to purchase requests from patrons. Purchase requests can be made on the Fitchburg Public Library web site: <http://fitchburgwi.gov/FormCenter/Library-3/Purchase-Request-44> and at any service desk in the Library.
- Gifted and Donated Materials
  - The Fitchburg Public Library Board of Trustees welcomes and encourages gifts in support of the Library. The goal is to accept gifts that fit the Library's mission and are consistent with the Library's service goals.
  - For more information about donating materials to the Fitchburg Public Library, please see the Gifts to the Library Policy: <http://fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1147>

## Collection Maintenance

- Weeding
  - Items are withdrawn from the collection through systematic review by Library staff. This process is done to keep the collection responsive to patron needs, to ensure its vitality and usefulness to the community, and to make room for newer materials.
  - Selection of materials for weeding is based on many criteria, including:
    - Materials with condition issues
    - Materials which are inaccurate, which have been superseded, or which are no longer considered timely
    - Materials which have had little recent use
    - Additional copies of material which are no longer in demand
    - Materials which are no longer appropriate for the collection
    - Materials in areas with limited space availability
  - Withdrawn materials in good condition may be sold to benefit the Library. No materials are held for or given to individuals.
- Maintenance of Library Materials
  - All materials returned to the Library are inspected for damage.
  - Damaged materials that are still usable are mended by Library staff when possible.
  - Patrons are charged replacement costs for materials that they check out and are irretrievably lost or damaged beyond repair. (See the Lost or Damaged Materials section of the Circulation Policy: <http://fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1141>)

## Reconsideration of Library Materials

- The Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval but solely on the basis of the principles set forth in this policy.

- Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library materials will be sequestered, except to protect it from injury or theft.
- Responsibility for reading and the use of the Library by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that they may come into the possession of children.
- Requests to remove materials will be considered within the context of the policies set forth in this document. The Library will take on the process of reconsideration one item at a time per patron. The Library will reconsider any material in its collection upon written request of a patron who is a Fitchburg resident and who fulfills the following steps:
  - The patron must have read/viewed/listened to the item in question in its entirety.
  - The patron will be given a copy of the Fitchburg Public Library Collection Management Policy and a copy of the Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form.
  - The patron may fill out the [reconsideration form](#) and may request an appointment with the Library Director to discuss the matter.
  - If the patron wants to pursue the reconsideration, the completed reconsideration form must be submitted. The appropriate Department Head will review the item with staff and will make a recommendation to the Library Director within six weeks of receiving the initial request.
  - The Library Director will make a decision within three weeks of receiving the staff recommendation.
  - The patron may appeal the Library Director's decision to the Library Board within two months after receiving the Library Director's reply. The Board will evaluate the decision based on whether or not the particular title conforms to the Board-approved Collection Management Policy, as outlined in the "Criteria for Evaluation."
- Library materials will be neither removed from circulation nor moved to a different collection during the process of reconsideration.

## **Addenda**

- Library Bill of Rights
- <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>
- ALA Freedom to Read Statement
- <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/freedomreadstatement>
- ALA Freedom to View Statement
- <http://www.ala.org/vrt/professionalresources/vrtresources/freedomtoview>

*Approved by the Fitchburg Public Library Board on June 21, 2023.*