



Selection of Materials Policy

INTRODUCTION

The purpose in building a collection is to make available to all people who enter the library as comprehensive a collection of recorded knowledge as possible to meet the community's needs within the limits of available funds and shelf space. The library recognizes the needs of the community are of primary importance in selection and because the community is a conglomerate of individuals, each individual's needs will be considered in conjunction with the majority of the present and potential patronage. An effort is made to include information representing all sides of controversial issues as such material becomes available. The criteria for the selection of controversial materials are the same as for any other materials. Controversial materials have no distinguishing labels and are shelved in the general collection. Responsibility for the reading choices of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection for the adult collection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently fall into the hands of children. An open shelf policy will be followed at all times.

In accordance with the recommendations of the library's Board of Trustees, the Carbondale Public Library will allocate not less than 20% of its total budget on resources and materials for patrons every year. *Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries* recommends a minimum of 12% for this purpose.

I. Statement of Purpose

This selection policy defines the standards and outlines the responsibility for materials selection for the Carbondale Public Library. Within these guidelines, the librarians use their professional judgment to determine the materials which best meet the objectives of the Library and the needs of its patrons.

II. Objectives in Materials Selections

The general objectives in materials selection are to carry out the Library's goals of providing the community with a variety of significant media to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs.

III. Responsibility for Selection

Overall responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director who operates within this framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. Typically, the Library Director delegates or shares this responsibility with designated members of the staff. No employee may be disciplined or dismissed for the selection of library materials when the selection is made in good faith and in accordance with the written policy required to be established pursuant to Illinois Library Law.

Suggestions from patrons are welcome and will be considered using the same criteria as all other selections.

All requests are given serious consideration. An attempt will be made to borrow through interlibrary loan any requested item which is out of print, or that the Library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

IV. Criteria for Selection

The general criteria considered in selecting materials include: 1) significance and permanent value to the existing collection, 2) qualifications of author or producer, 3) suitability of subject and style for intended audience, 4) quality of format, 5) currency or timeliness if applicable, 6) demand by patrons, 7) price, 8) attention given to the item by reviewers and general news media, 9) availability of materials in other libraries, and 10) technical quality of non-book materials. In selection, consideration will be given to the work as a whole. No work shall be excluded solely because of specific passages or pieces taken out of context.

V. Selection Tools

Because it is impossible for librarians to examine all items being considered for purchase, they depend on reliable selection aids. The librarians regularly depend on the reviews found in standard sources. Other selection aids such as "Notable Book" lists chosen by the American Library Association, National Book Awards lists, Pulitzer Prize lists and published lists of bestsellers may also be used as required.

VI. Scope of Collection

Materials will be selected in a variety of formats including, but not limited to, print, video, sound recording, and electronic media. Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own excellence and the audience for whom it is intended. No single standard can be applied in all cases. Some materials may be judged primarily in terms of artistic merit, scholarship, or value to humanity; others are selected to satisfy the informational, recreational, or educational interests of the community.

Through careful selection, the Library strives to maintain a diverse collection of quality materials, including items of contemporary significance and permanent value, as well as a selection of materials concerning social issues and ephemeral items. Circulating materials are supplemented by a variety of reference materials for in-house use. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational and cultural back-grounds, and reading skills, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.

VII. Statement of Specific Policies in Selected Areas

A. Materials for Children and Youth

1. In general the Carbondale Public Library subscribes to a policy of free access to library materials for minors. Children and young people have access to all parts of the library and its collections; however, collections

in Children's Services serve children and young people from preschool through eighth grades as well as their parents and caregivers.

2. Materials appropriate for the interests and needs of the ages served are chosen for this collection. Collections in Children's Services include traditional picture books, beginning readers, juvenile non-fiction, juvenile fiction, middle grade fiction, periodicals, non-book materials, reference materials, and a collection on parenting. This last collection contains some duplication of materials on parenting found in the adult collection. A sampling of children's books in a variety of foreign languages is also selected for the Children's Services department. The junior high fiction collection is selected especially for the needs and interests of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. It contains some duplication of classic titles found in both the adult and juvenile fiction collections, but is also strongly stocked with those titles that deal with the contemporary scene as it concerns 12 to 14 year-olds. Young people in the 7th and 8th grades are expected to use non-fiction materials throughout the Library in preparing school assignments or for any other reason.

B. Materials for Adults and Young Adults

The materials in Adult Services are selected primarily to serve the needs of adults and high school students; consideration is also given to the nonfiction needs of the middle school/junior high students. The collection includes reference and circulating nonfiction books, fiction books, and non-book materials.

C. Fiction

The fiction collection provides books for a wide range of interests of the general reading public, including classics, titles representing periods and styles of writing, current titles of a lasting nature, and those titles meeting popular demand for recreational reading.

D. Business Section

The Library purchases standard business directories and reference materials as well as popular circulating items which are of interest to the general public.

E. Foreign Language Materials

Materials in foreign languages are considered as community needs change. Individual needs for foreign languages not purchased by the library may be served by requests through interlibrary loan.

F. Literacy

Materials in the Literacy collection are selected to serve the needs of new adult readers and persons for whom English is a second language. There is heavy emphasis on materials teaching the basics of the English language and

grammar, materials on coping with everyday life situations, and other high-interest, low reading-level fiction and nonfiction.

G. Textbooks

Although the Library tries to serve students' needs as much as possible, textbooks are not purchased unless they are the best source of information on a given subject. The library policy is to purchase materials which will also supplement and complement the curriculum offerings of the public and private schools within the city.

H. Non-Book Materials

The criteria for and the methods of selection of non-book materials are listed in Section IV. The acquisition of a variety of non-book materials is under constant evaluation and is subject to change. Cost of items, budget, use, and availability of new items are the determining factors in selection.

IX. Collection Maintenance

A. Duplicate Copies

The number of copies purchased varies with the expected use of any item. As extensive use for individual titles is demonstrated, duplication to meet the demand is implemented.

B. Weeding

In order to maintain the best possible collection of materials, a continual weeding process takes place. Items are discarded if they are outdated, if they no longer circulate, if there are more duplicate copies than needed, or if they are in poor physical condition. Items discarded are plainly marked and may be donated to the Friends of the Library for sale.

X. Anti-Censorship

The Carbondale Public Library is committed to providing free and open access to information, ideas, and expressions of all perspectives. Intellectual freedom is essential to the democratic principles of our society and we recognize the inherent authority of the library to preserve and make available all expressions of knowledge and creativity. We also understand that censorship, the suppression of ideas or information, undermines these principles and ultimately harms our community.

The library endeavors to build a collection representing varying points of view. The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. Responsibility for the reading materials of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. While a person may reject materials for himself or herself and for his or her children, he or she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others. The library supports intellectual freedom and has adopted the following

statements as policy: ALA Freedom to Read Statement, ALA Library Bill of Rights, and the “Freedom to View” statement of the American Film and Video Association.

To that end:

- The library will not remove or restrict access to any materials in our collection based on personal, political, or religious beliefs, or on the grounds that the content is controversial or offensive to some.
- The library does not endorse or promote the ideas, opinions, or viewpoints expressed in any materials in our collection. Rather, we believe that our patrons have the right to access a diversity of perspectives and to form their own opinions based on their own critical analysis.
- The library will resist any attempt to censor or restrict access to our collection, whether it comes from individuals or organizations within or outside of the library.
- We uphold the American Library Association's Bill of Rights, which states that "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."
- The library board and staff reserve the right to place materials in the age section we deem appropriate based on the content of the materials. This decision will be made based on publisher recommendations, professional judgment, and consideration of age appropriateness of the content, as well as the potential interest and needs of our patrons.
- The library board and staff reserve the right to feature, promote, and display materials as we deem appropriate.

XII. Requests for reconsideration of materials

- If patrons object to specific materials in our collection, we encourage them to express their concerns and engage in respectful dialogue with the Library Director. Formal requests for reconsideration may be made only by registered patrons, and shall be made in writing and given to the Library Director for a written response. Appeals are directed to the Board for the final decision. The library believes that intellectual freedom is a fundamental right of all individuals and that access to information is essential to the functioning of a democratic society. We affirm our commitment to upholding these values and to serving the needs of our diverse community.

XIII. Revision of Selection Policy

Because the needs of the community change, this materials selection policy may be reviewed and/or revised as needed.

Adopted 1/12/2000

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