

Model Public Library Collection Development Policy

This model policy provides guidance to library boards, governing bodies, and trustees on how to comply with New Jersey's Freedom to Read Act.

A board-approved local collection development policy may differ from these guidelines, but must, at a minimum, reflect the principles, responsibilities, procedures, and statements in the Freedom to Read Act.

LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

[provides context for library's purpose, goals and strategies]

POLICY STATEMENT

[Describes how collection development supports the library's mission, the Freedom to Read Act, the goals of the collection, and the needs of the community.]

Freedom to Read language:

New Jersey's Freedom to Read Act prohibits censorship of library materials and provides certain protections to library workers in collection development and maintenance. It supports the right of individuals to free inquiry and the right to form their own opinions. It acknowledges the training and education that librarians receive to develop and curate collections.

This policy recognizes and acknowledges that:

- Public libraries serve as centers for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of ideas;
- Library materials should be provided for the interest, information, [and] enlightenment of all people and should present diverse points of the view in the collection as a whole; and,
- Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop collections that provide residents with access to the widest array of library material available to the public.
- Library materials shall not be removed from a public library because of the origin, background, or views of the library materials or those contributing to its creation.

SELECTION CRITERIA

[Identify overarching goal of the collection within the financial resources available]

The primary goal of collection development is to provide the best possible collection with the financial resources available. Library materials are chosen based on selection criteria such as predicated demand and interest, reputation of the publisher and author, historical significance, and cost. The item's contribution to the diversity or depth of a collection, such as providing differing viewpoints is also considered.

OR

Materials are selected by trained staff and take into consideration:

- **Relevance:** How the materials align with the library's mission and the needs of its users.
- **Quality:** Consider literary merit, technical quality, and the author's and publisher's authority.
- **Audience Appropriateness:** Ensure materials are suitable for the intended age group and reading level.
- **Format:** Consider the format of materials (print, digital, etc.) and their accessibility.
- **Cost:** Balance quality and cost when making purchasing decisions.
- **Availability:** Consider whether similar materials are available elsewhere – are the materials available through interlibrary loan?
- **Community Needs:** Materials should address the current and anticipated community needs.
- **Space Constraints:** May impact the scope and depth of the collection.

Additional criteria for digital resources:

- **Ease of Use**
- **Licensing and System requirements** (hardware, software, networking, storage)
- **Assessment of content quality and cost** as compared to other available formats
- **Long term availability and accessibility.**

PATRON RECOMMENDATIONS

[Recommended language]

Patron suggestions for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as all other materials and are not automatically added to the collection.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

[Recommended language]

The library may accept gifts and donations with the explicit understanding that the library, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to display, store, sell, or otherwise dispose of all gifts and contributions of tangible property. Those materials which do not meet the library's objectives and materials selection criteria may be refused. No conditions may be imposed relating to any gift, donation, or memorial either before or after its acceptance by the library.

WHAT IS EXCLUDED FROM PURCHASE

[List here materials your library may choose not to purchase such as textbooks, material in outdated formats (eg. Cassette tapes, text books).]

DISPOSITION OF SURPLUS MATERIALS

[The Freedom to Read Act requires that the policy include information on curation, or disposition, of collection materials]

Freedom to Read language:

A librarian must review library material within a public library on an ongoing basis. Criteria for ongoing review must include, but is not limited to, the:

- library material's relevance;
- condition of the library material;
- availability of duplicates;
- availability of more recent material; and,
- continued demand for the library material.

[Additional recommended language]

Your library may have additional criteria when evaluating materials for withdrawal from the collection, including but not limited to:

- Physical condition
- Number of copies available
- Accuracy and currency of information
- Enduring value
- Local interest
- Current demand and recent use
- Availability elsewhere
- Space limitations

REASON FOR POLICY

[Include language that identifies the purpose of the policy.]

Freedom to Read language:

The purpose of the policy is to provide standards for the curation of library material; establish criteria for removal of existing library material or library material selected for inclusion in the public library; and provide protection against attempts to censor library material.

DEFINITIONS

[Include words that have a specific meaning for your library or in your policy. Those listed below are required by the Freedom to Read Act and must be reflected in the local policy]

Freedom to Read definitions:

Diverse and inclusive material. Means material that reflects any protected class as enumerated in the “Law Against Discrimination,” P.L. 1945, c 169 (c.10:5-1 et seq); material produced by an author who is a member of a protected class as enumerated in the “Law Against Discrimination,” P.L. 1945, c 169 (c.10:5-1 et seq); and material that contains the author’s points of view concerning contemporary problems and issues, whether international, national, or local.

Governing body. Means a board of trustees, director or other chief administrative officer, a county library commission, or board of county commissioners of a public library.

Individual with a vested interest. Any resident who is served by the public library or residents in a county or municipality where the library is situated.

Library material. Means any material, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books; magazines; reference books; supplementary titles; multimedia and digital material; software and instructional material, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a public library.

RESPONSIBILITIES

[Recommended language. Identify who is responsible for adhering to or upholding policy provisions; your library may not include all those listed, but the functions should be present.]

Library Board – Establishes, reviews and updates policy. May serve as governing body.

Library Director – Coordinates implementation of policy, trains staff, approves purchases, serves as first responder for patron complaints. May serve as governing body.

Request for Reconsideration Review Committee – Reviews titles asked to be reconsidered, deliberates, makes recommendation to the governing body.

Collection Development Librarian(s) – Selects titles for the library collection that help to achieve the library’s mission and follows the collection development policy. Manages the withdrawal of materials from the collection according to library’s criteria (see Procedures).

Acquisitions Librarian – Acquires titles for the library and is the primary contact with booksellers and content vendors.

Date adopted:

Date(s) revised: