

Durham Public Library Collection Development Policy

Mission Statement

The mission of the Durham Public Library is to enhance the quality of life in Durham by:

Encouraging free and open access to ideas and information in support of learning by people of all ages, encouraging the development of reading and learning in children through programming and services, offering materials and programs reflecting the interests of the community, providing an access point to statewide services and a technological doorway to information, and providing a center for community life.

Purpose of Policy

The Collection Development Policy serves as a guide to library staff for determining which new materials to purchase and why, and for considering whether to retain older items by setting standards for the collection and creating a framework in which to maintain them. The policy also provides the public with an understanding of the purpose and nature of the library's collection. It explains the criteria staff use for making decisions to add or withdraw items.

Collection Objectives

It is the responsibility and aim of the Durham Public Library to provide circulating materials and reference service to meet the needs of Durham residents of all ages. Materials are selected and maintained for general information, education, and occupational uses, and the enjoyment and enrichment of leisure time. As a public agency, the library attempts to meet reasonable community needs within the limitations of budget and space. The Durham Public Library does not seek to meet the specialized curriculum needs of the University of New Hampshire or the local public schools.

The library is dedicated to the free and open distribution of ideas. It is the responsibility of the library to provide a wide-range of ideas, viewpoints, opinions, and information necessary for the functioning of a democratic society

Materials are selected on the merits of a particular work in relation to the needs, interests and demands of the community. The Library strives to provide up-to-date and accurate information. Because library materials and information come in a wide variety of formats, the Library fulfills its mission by buying materials in both print and non-print form.

The Durham Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement as adopted by the American Library Association. The Statement reads in part: "There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others . . . It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. " (See Appendix B)

Responsibility

Responsibility for materials lies with the Library Director who operates within a framework of policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Library Trustees considers and adopts a Collection Development Policy, which they authorize the Library Director to administer. The Director designates staff, using developed selection and acquisition procedures, to make purchasing decisions subject to approval. The Director allocates the materials budget annually.

The Director shall also be responsible for the withdrawal and disposal of library materials. Such materials may be withdrawn and given to the Friends of the Library to be sold, recycled, or destroyed. (see *Weeding*)

Library resources will not be limited by the possibility that controversial issues may be available to children. The responsibility for children's choices in library resources rests with parents and legal guardians. Questions concerning the scope and development of the collection may be discussed with the Director. Final authority for the determinations of policy is vested in the Board of Trustees.

Materials Selection Process

Criteria for materials selection, including books, periodicals, electronic, and audiovisual materials, is based on three factors: the needs of the community, the individual merit of the material, and the existing collection and budget of the library.

Judgment in selection is based on reviews and professional library and literary evaluation as shown in journals and other review sources. Final decision is based on the value of the material to the library and the community, regardless of the personal taste of the selectors. Following are bibliographies and review media consulted in the selection of materials, including but not limited to: Fiction Catalog, Booklist, Library Journal, School Library Journal, New York Times Book Review, Publisher's Weekly.

Librarians exercise judgment, experience, and expertise in the application of the Criteria for Materials Selection, making acquisition decisions as objectively as possible. No single criterion can be applied to all materials, and various criteria carry different weights in different circumstances. Contextual considerations – budget and space availability, interlibrary loan – also shape the selection process.

Criteria for Materials Selection

- Relevance to the library's mission
- Informational and recreational needs of users
- Local demand
- Current usefulness or interest
- Community needs surveys and assessments
- Authority and accuracy

- Level of funding for materials
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Price and availability
- Format, durability, and ease of use
- Relevance to the history of Durham
- Series title

Patrons may request items for inclusion in the collection and they will be purchased if deemed appropriate. Any item requested by four or more patrons, regardless of reviews, will be purchased if the budget allows.

Formats

Following is a list of the types of material formats that the library purchases. Because the library functions in a rapidly changing society, it is flexible about changes in communicative material, both in form and style of expression. The library does not reject materials for acquisition solely on the basis of medium. Materials in alternate formats are judged in terms of the Criteria for Materials Selection.

Print

- Hardcover
- Paperbacks
- Magazines
- Newspapers

Non-print

- Audiobooks
- Videos
- DVDs
- Music CDs
- Puzzles
- Toys

Electronic resources

- Online databases
- Digital audiobooks
- Images
- Software
- Internet

Objections to materials

The Library does not mark or identify materials to show approval or disapproval of contents. The library also does not mark materials to restrict their use by ages, or sequester them except to protect valuable items from injury or theft. The library recognizes parents and legal guardians as parties responsible for the reading and viewing habits of children.

In the event that a patron questions an item in the collection, s/he will be asked to complete a "Statement of Concern about Library Resources" (available in the library and on the website and found in Appendix E) which will be reviewed by the Director who will respond in writing within thirty days. If dissatisfied with the response, the patron may request that the Library Board of Trustees review the patron's objection at their next regular meeting. The patron will receive a letter of reply from the Board within thirty days of the meeting. The Board's decision is final.

Weeding

The purpose of discarding materials from the collection is to maintain an accurate and up-to-date collection for library patrons. Materials which are inaccurate, outdated, unused, or in poor condition detract from the usefulness and aesthetic appeal of the collection. Materials that no longer meet the stated objectives of the library are identified, withdrawn, and discarded according to accepted professional practices. Those staff members who have a direct role in the selection of materials (i.e. the Director and professional librarians) conduct de-selection, also known as weeding, using CREW guidelines under the general direction of the Director.

Some criteria for weeding: damaged, worn, superseded, replaced, outdated, multiple copies, no longer useful, no longer in demand, trivial.

Gifts and Memorials

Donations are made to the Friends of the Durham Public Library. Donated materials are accepted with the understanding that the items are donated to the Friends, and may or may not be added to the collection. The Friends do not accept textbooks, magazines, encyclopedias, or materials that are worn, damaged, musty, or moldy. All materials as acquired must be designated as a gift.

Books and other library materials will be accepted for inclusion in the collection at the discretion of the Director on the condition that the library has the authority to make whatever disposition it deems advisable.

Once an item has been accepted, it is the property of the Library and is subject to the same accession, usage, and disposal criteria as all Library materials. Upon requests the library can acknowledge receipt of donated items, but does not keep records of the disposition of donated materials.

Monetary gifts are frequently made to the library in memory or in honor of an individual. While the subject matter of a memorial gift is suggested by the donor, the library staff selects and purchases the book. Upon request, a book plate will be placed in the book to honor the individual.

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