

Collection Development and Maintenance Policy

Purpose

In keeping with its mission to improve the quality of life and meet the informational, educational, and cultural interests of the entire Hamden community, the Library recognizes that the development of its collection is paramount to its success. This policy applies to both the digital and print materials in the Library's collection. The Library strives to select, acquire, curate and provide free and easy access to materials, in all formats, that meet the varied needs and interests of the community. This policy provides guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials that anticipate and meet the needs of the community. It also addresses collection maintenance, and replacement and weeding of materials. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in [section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes](#), including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

The Hamden Public Library Board of Trustees shall review and update as necessary this policy every five years.

In following this policy, neither the Library nor its Hamden Public Library Board of Trustees endorses every thought, expression, or belief represented in the many collections of the library system. The Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression as well as free access to ideas by residents.

Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular, or controversial in nature. Library materials should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole. The Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements.

The Library strives to support the many and distinct types of literacy necessary for navigating life in the 21st Century. To achieve this goal, the Library actively participates in resource sharing opportunities, such as the Libraries Online Consortia, Connecticut State Library's BorrowIT, and other interlibrary loan initiatives. The Library commits to staying abreast of new and emerging resources, then incorporating them into the collections as appropriate. Library collections anticipate, support, and reflect the diverse informational, cultural, and leisure needs of all community members.

Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to materials, whether physical, digital, virtual, or hybrid, which are acquired and maintained for the use and lending to patrons by professionally trained library staff.

A library collection is an ever-evolving assemblage of materials [physical, digital, virtual, or hybrid] separated into groupings that meet general [i.e., Adult Fiction], subject specific [i.e., Animal Husbandry], or specialized [i.e., Early Readers] criteria. Materials come in a variety of formats

which may be either owned, shared within collaborative agreements, leased, or licensed by the Library for free usage by the public.

Collection development refers to the activities professional staff engage in to create a responsive, varied collection for the public and to meet the mission of the library as a center for voluntary lifelong learning, an information resource hub, and a portal of recreational and cultural exploration. It is a dynamic process that involves community analysis, evaluative selection, and ongoing curation by professional library staff.

Collection maintenance is the ongoing care of the collection, including the deaccession of materials based on a variety of criteria, which includes condition, usage, timeliness, accuracy, and community relevance. Professional library staff are responsible for this ongoing and systematic process, aka weeding.

Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials

The Hamden Public Library Board of Trustees delegates the oversight and management of the collection, within the guidelines of this policy, to the Library Director and staff. Responsibility for the selection, maintenance, replacement, and weeding of materials rests with librarians who are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides patrons with access to the widest array of library and other educational materials. An additional set of collection criteria may govern the Library's Consortium-level collections.

Selection Criteria

Community analysis: To provide for a robust, responsive, and varied collection, professional library staff engage in analysis of community needs, interests, trends, and requests. This analysis may include:

- Reviewing usage patterns of materials both owned and not owned by the library;
- Voluntary inquiries by patrons on a subject matter, author, specialty, or resource;
- Literacy needs of the community as determined by educational test scores from the school district, the U.S. Census, employers, financial sector, etc.;
- Audit of materials as comparative to the demographic trends and issues of the town;
- Community findings from the Library's strategic focus planning and community needs assessment.

Selection process using professional criteria: Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides patrons with access to the widest array of library and other educational materials. Professional library staff with expertise are responsible for selecting materials for the Library's collection. In general, Children's and Teen materials are selected by our Children and Teen librarians. Selection of adult materials is divided among the Library's professional staff. Branch managers select items for their geographical service area. All selectors apply their knowledge and judgement in selecting materials along with the following standard criteria. An item need not meet all criteria to be selected. Additionally, selectors use reviews, bibliographies, and other evaluative sources in determining an item's suitability for the collection.

In order to build and maintain its high quality collection, professional library staff review library and educational material within the library using professionally accepted standards: of material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age appropriate or grade-

level material, continued demand of material. The Library applies the following general criteria in this review process:

- Public demand, interest or need;
- Accuracy and effectiveness of material;
- Anticipated potential for long-term public interest;
- Favorable assessments by reputable critics, reviewers, or organizations in professionally recognized publications;
- Prominence and credibility of author and publisher;
- Relation to existing collection and other material on the subject;
- Timeliness and importance of material as a document of the times; current or historical significance of the author or subject;
- Availability and affordability;
- Compatibility of format for Library use;
- Value as resource material;
- Suitability of subject or style for intended audience;
- Local origination or particular relevance to Hamden and the region;
- Public's ability to procure item from alternative sources;
- Availability of electronic bibliographic records.

Specific Selection Criteria for Digital Collection/Databases: Wherever possible, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The Library will make every effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public learns how to use its electronic databases.

The Library does take into consideration the following when adding a database or electronic service to our offerings:

- Availability to multiple users, usually simultaneously;
- Hardware and software requirements;
- Technical support;
- Remote access availability;
- Enhancements of print equivalents in terms of speed, flexibility, and full text availability;
- Cost;
- Ease of accessibility;
- Availability of new format/technology.

Gifts and donations

Gift and donated materials are accepted with the understanding that the same criteria of selection used for the purchased collection apply to all gifted/donated materials. Gifts and donations are accepted with the understanding that these items may not become part of the collection. Gifts/donated materials not added to the collection will be given to the Friends of the Hamden Library. The Friends may choose to sell the gift or donation.

Often gift materials and funds to acquire materials are given in a memorial. If these funds are given without stipulation of use, they will be applied to the collection with greatest need. However, if

prospective donors wish to place stipulation of use on the memoriam, they should contact the Library Director to discuss the various aspects of the gift.

Materials created by a local author, whether published privately or by a recognized publication press, will be purchased or accepted as a gift by the library if the item is consistent with the criteria and selection principles outlined in this policy. Purchase of such items may be constrained by budgetary concerns.

Textbooks will not be considered for the collection unless they are the best or only available source of information in their subject area and serve the public and adult learning community. The Library does not purchase multiple copies of textbooks for use by students.

Born digital items are those materials created in a digital format. They are distinct from analog items that are subsequently digitized, such as paper manuscripts or photographs. To accept born digital items, the Library addresses:

- Copyright and licensing
- Redaction of personally identifiable information
- Any restrictions on use or circulation
- Maintenance and evolution of accepted formats

The Library's physical collection is available on open shelves during regular hours of library operation. The electronic/digital collection is available via the Library website at all hours of the day, every day. Within the physical library, minors are not limited to Children's or Teens' collections, although materials are kept in separate areas for ease of use. Responsibility of a minor's use of the collection, including borrowing of items, belongs to the parent, guardian, and/or caregiver. Many of our electronic/digital resources provide settings for caregivers to use to create parameters of usage for children in their care.

The Connecticut State Library for Accessible Books is a resource library staff can help connect users with and improve collection access to individuals needing such services.

Any professional library staff who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

Collection Maintenance

Essential to effective management of a quality collection, professional library staff periodically deselects [weeds] materials from the circulating collection. This ensures that all materials available are useful, accessible, and relevant to the current needs of the Library. Weeding is performed as a regular, ongoing process by qualified staff and the Library Director in the interest of keeping all collections current and useful. Weeded materials in good condition may be sold, donated, or disposed of as determined by the Library. Standard titles of permanent value and materials of local significance are generally spared weeding. Some of the criteria used in determining the deselection of an item are:

- Condition of materials;

- Out-dated materials;
- Accuracy of information;
- Duplication of titles;
- Accessibility to the collection by staff and users;
- Identification of collection gaps;
- Popularity/interest/demand.

Additionally for electronic/digital collections:

- Cost effectiveness;
- Required updates or acquisition of new equipment;
- Ease of accessibility;
- Availability of new format/technology.

Trained library staff will repair materials when possible. Sometimes it is less costly to purchase a replacement item for a damaged item. Patrons may be charged for items that were lost or damaged while under their care.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The Library recognizes not everyone will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Therefore, some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial and even distasteful to some Library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view, engage with, or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any Library user to deny access to Library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged.

When evaluating library materials the [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Freedom to Read](#), and [Freedom to View](#) statements from the American Library Association are used as guiding documents.

Controversial Materials

The Library recognizes that some materials may not be considered appropriate by all patrons. Selections will not be made based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the overall library patron community.

Responsibility for the reading, listening and viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. The Library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Materials may be reassigned among these sub-collections based on the age appropriateness of the content. Selection of adult material will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. The removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive is prohibited.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not be considered sufficient reason alone for the

Library to withdraw it from the collection.

Comments from community members about the collection or an individual resource provide library staff with useful information about interests and needs that may not be adequately met by the collection. The Library welcomes expression of such opinions, but materials selection will be governed by the previously stated criteria of selection and the Library's endorsement of Intellectual Freedom.

Hamden residents may seek to have a library item reviewed and reconsidered for inclusion in a collection. Such requests require that the Hamden resident complete the Request for Reconsideration form. Please be advised that completion of the form does not guarantee either accession to the collection or removal from the collection. It *does* ensure the attention of the Library to the resident's opinion, interests, and concerns. The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, displays or programs to residents of Hamden. For more information on the policy and process for reconsideration of a library item, program, or display, please read our Material Review and Reconsideration policy and form.

Approved by the Hamden Public Library Board of Trustees: Nov. 5, 2025