



## Collection Development 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 as the community's information center. The Collection Policy serves as a guide to staff in the selection and retention of materials that address a broad spectrum of interests and ideas. It also provides the public information about the principles which support selection decisions. In following this policy, neither the Library nor its Board of Trustees endorses every thought, expression, or belief represented in the many collections of the library system.

The Library develops and provides access to a quality, comprehensive collection of print and non-print materials that are responsive to the interests and needs of the community. Through the development of its collection, the Library strives to support the many different types of literacy necessary for navigating life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These literacies are: basic, early, digital, health and science, civic, numerical, and financial. The Library serves the informational and recreational needs of the community in part by providing and encouraging life-long learning through a variety of resources, print and non-print.

To provide a well-rounded and balanced collection comprised of new and popular materials, reference tools, multi-lingual materials, 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. The Library collections anticipate, support, and reflect the diverse informational, cultural, and leisure needs of all community members.

### **Intellectual Freedom**

The Library subscribes to the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Freedom to Read Statement](#), [Freedom to View](#), and the [Free Access to Libraries for Minors Statement](#), which have been adopted by the American Library Association and are appended to this policy. These statements pertain to all materials maintained in the library collection.

### **Responsibility for Selection and Methodology**

Professional librarians and staff with particular expertise [i.e. special knowledge of a subject or language] are responsible for selecting materials for inclusion into the Library's collection. In general, children's and young adult 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. General Selection criteria includes:

- Relevance to current and anticipated community needs
- Intended audience
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Critical reviews and other evaluative sources
- Number and nature of requests from the public
- Relation to the current collection and other materials on the subject
- Reputation and qualifications of the creator of the item
- Local significance of the author, creator, or topic
- Comprehensiveness of treatment
- Representation of majority and minority points of view
- Usefulness to patrons with special needs
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Quality of illustrations and effective characterizations
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Relevance to library programming
- Support of curricular goals of the local school system
- Cost

Furthermore, needs are continually assessed by selectors through review of census data, evaluation of use of the collection, observing community interests and activities, and monitoring services and programs available in the community. Patron requests and recommendations are encouraged.

Annually, a formal plan will be developed that effectively earmarks monies tailored to the strategic development of the collections.

### **Electronic/Digital Resources**

In general, digital resources expand the Library's ability to provide access to materials even when physical locations are unavailable. These resources may include downloadable items, items available for streaming, internet sites, and databases. While the general criteria employed in selection of print or other traditional items is applied with these resources, there are additional selection criteria also used. These include:

- Quality, relevance, currency, comprehensiveness and accuracy of information
- Ease of interface/use
- 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

- Frequency of updates
- Financial concerns – purchase/lease, overall cost, per use cost

### **Gifts/Donations**

Gift and donated materials are accepted with the understanding that the same criteria of selection used for the purchased collection will be applied to all gifted/donated materials. Gifts and donations are accepted with the understanding that these items may not become part of the collection. Gifts/donations 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 are given in memoriam. If these funds are given without stipulation of use, they will be applied to the collection with the 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.

### **Local Authors**

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.

### **Access**

The Library's collection is physically 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 the Children's or Teens' collection, 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 resource providers provide a kids only portal as well.

The Connecticut State Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicap is a resource library staff can help connect users with and improve collection access to individuals needing such services.

### **Material Deselection**

Essential to effective management of a quality collection, professional library staff periodically deselected [weeds] materials from the circulating collection. This ensures that all materials available are useful, accessible, and relevant to the current needs of the Library. Some of the criteria used in determining deselection of an item are:

- Condition of materials
- Outdated materials
- Accuracy of information
- Accessibility to the collection by staff and users
- Identification of collection gaps

- Popularity/interest/demand of item
- Unused duplication

### **Request for Reconsideration of a Library Resource**

The Hamden Public Library does not promulgate particular beliefs, views, or actions, nor does the selection of a resource express or imply an endorsement of a particular, view, or action. The Library assures that the collection is open and accessible to all library visitors. It is committed to a balanced collection of resources which present various points of view on all topics. The Library seeks to meet community needs, recognizing that some materials may be controversial to some users. It is the responsibility of each library user to choose materials suited to their individual tastes and needs. A minor's use of these resources is the responsibility of the child's parents, guardians, and/or caregivers.

Comments from community members about the collection or an individual resource provide librarians 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.

A community member may request a reconsideration of a resource. This requires the person to obtain a physical copy of our Request to Reconsider form at any one of our physical locations and at any public service desk. This form needs to be completed in its entirety and then returned to the library. It will be forwarded to the Library Director for review of the resource. While this review is underway the resource will remain available to other library users. The Library Director will review the request and make a decision regarding the disposition of the material. This decision and the reasons for it will be presented in writing to both the person who made the request and the Library Board of Trustees. Such a thorough review of a resource and the decision regarding it will be in effect for three years.

If the person is not satisfied with the decision of the Library Director, an appeal for a hearing before the Board of Trustees may be made in writing to the President of the Board. The Board of Trustees will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with the stated policies and procedures of the Library. The Board reserves the right to limit the length of presentation and number of speakers at any of its meetings, and is responsible for setting the agenda of any Board of Trustees meetings.