

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Adopted by the Phillipsburg Free Public Library Board of Trustees, April 7, 2016

General Principles

The Collection Development Policy has been unanimously adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Phillipsburg Free Public Library to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

The collection supports the interests and needs of people of all ages, starting with early literacy and including children, teens and adults. Books and other library materials are selected on the basis of literary, educational, informational and recreational value. The Library Director is ultimately responsible for developing the collections of the Library. Authority may be delegated to appropriate staff members responsible for various areas of the Library.

No title is excluded on the basis of moral, racial, religious, or political prejudice. The Library makes every effort to ensure that the collection reflects all trends of contemporary ideas and views, including minority views. Recognizing that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons, selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval but solely on the basis of the principles set forth in this policy.

The existence of an item within the collection does not imply an endorsement of the author's or artist's viewpoint. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft. Audio/Visual materials will retain any markings or ratings as indicated by the original producer.

Responsibility of the reading habits of children rests with the child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Selection of materials for the collection is not to be inhibited by the possibility that items may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

The Library endorses the American Library Association's Freedom to Read statement, The Library Bill of Rights, and the statements on Labeling Library Materials, Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks, and Free Access to Libraries for Minors. (Appendices)

Selection Criteria

In general, the Phillipsburg Free Public Library will select materials that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrated or perceived interest, need, or demand by Library users or potential users
- Contemporary significance, popular interest, or permanent value
- Quality, including accuracy, clarity, and usability
- Currency of information
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Significance and/or reputation of the author and/or other contributors
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Physical durability and quality of the format
- Value of resource in relation to its cost
- Availability of space
- Local importance, and/or historical value

It is the Library's policy to acquire best-sellers in popular demand without regard to literary merit. At the other end of the spectrum, the Library's policy is to provide a representative selection of modern literary or experimental fiction, even though of limited readership.

The Library strives to maintain a basic collection in attractive editions of standard novels and the classics of world literature.

Criteria for the selection of children's materials are the same as for adult materials, with the addition of vocabulary suitable to the age of the intended audience and quality of the illustrations.

Scope of Collection

The Library collects popular materials on a reading level suitable to the general public. The Library does not collect scholarly or highly specialized materials typically found in university libraries. Providing textbooks and curriculum material is held to be the responsibility of the schools. Textbooks are considered for the collection when they supply the best or only information on a specific topic.

With the exception of local history materials, collections are not retained for archival purposes.

Materials and equipment for people with visual impairments, such as large-print books, magnifiers and audio books are acquired according to patron demand. The Library also encourages patrons with special needs to use the resources of the New Jersey State Library Talking Book & Braille Center.

Method of Selection

The primary method of selection shall be printed or online reviews in established selection media including Booklist, Library Journal, New York Times Book Review, Publisher's Weekly, School Library Journal, VOYA, The Horn Book, and The Bulletin for Children's Books. Reviews may also be used from other general interest media outlets such as radio or Internet-based publications. Publisher's catalogs are also considered.

Except in unusual circumstances, walk-in jobbers and salesmen should not be used as a vehicle for material selection. Selections should be based upon critical review as indicated above.

The Library may use a book rental plan to meet demand for popular material. The selection criteria for leased books are the same as that for purchased books.

Multiple Copies

To meet high demand for popular titles, it is necessary to purchase multiple copies of a work. Typically, the number of copies purchased is based upon a ratio of copies available to the number of people waiting on reserve. Within budgetary constraints, one additional copy may be purchased for every four to five requests, at the discretion of the Director.

Requests for Purchase

All requests and suggestions for purchase are considered using the selection principles described in this policy. If the Library elects not to select a requested item, all efforts are made to obtain the item via interlibrary loan.

Audiovisual Materials

Audio books are offered in a variety of formats including compact disc and downloadable audio. Due to budgetary limitations it may not be possible to purchase the same title in multiple formats, or to offer the same scope of material in audio as in print.

Visual materials, such as DVDs, are also purchased to meet the recreational and informational needs of the community. A variety of popular, classic, and foreign motion pictures are collected. Within the confines of the budget, a limited number of television programs may be purchased to meet anticipated demand. Instructional videos and videos on special subjects will also be purchased.

The musical performance collection consists of a variety of categories. Emphasis is on music with lasting appeal as opposed to ephemeral popularity.

All audio/visual materials are purchased using standard review sources including but not limited to Billboard, Entertainment Weekly, Library Journal, New York Times, and Rolling Stone, and online review aggregators such as Metacritic.

Digital Materials

eBooks and eAudiobooks are selected using the same selection criteria as described above for print materials. Additionally, consideration is given to the access model available. Depending on the cost of digital works and the anticipated demand, preference is given for access models that allow for ownership of digital works rather than leasing or licensing.

Periodicals

The Library subscribes to a wide variety of popular magazines. Titles are selected to meet local demand and interest. The collection is not archival and back issues may be limited to the current year. Back issue content is widely available through electronic databases. Print magazine subscriptions are supplemented by e-magazines as the budget allows. A limited number of newspapers are purchased to cover local, regional and national news.

Local History

The Library attempts to collect materials that document the history of the Town of Phillipsburg. Materials to be collected may include: books, maps, periodicals and locally published newsletters. Local history items may be acquired through purchase or through gifts.

The Library maintains a partnership with the Phillipsburg Area Historical Society to house and provide access to its collection of local history monographs, vertical file clippings and genealogical materials. Selection criteria for these materials rest with the Historical Society and not with the Library.

Gifts

The Library accepts gifts to be added to the collection if they meet the same standards as those required of purchased materials. If gifts do not meet these criteria, they are sold or otherwise discarded. The Library does not assign a value to donated materials. The Library will, upon request of the donor, provide a receipt for gifts. The Library will not return donated material to the donor.

Weeding

Weeding is the selection of items for withdrawal from the collection. Weeding is done on a regular basis in conjunction with systematic collection evaluation.

Items are weeded according to the evaluation of the Director and staff responsible for the collection. Criteria for weeding include:

- Materials worn out through use
- Ephemeral materials which are no longer timely
- Materials no longer considered accurate or factual
- Materials which have not circulated in three years or more
- Excess copies of a title no longer in demand

Circulation of material shall by no means be the single determining factor in the weeding process, especially in the area of non-fiction. The high circulation of an outdated item does not necessarily indicate that the item should be retained, but possibly that the item should be replaced with a more current title.

Classic and popular fiction titles in disrepair are considered for replacement. Non-fiction books in poor physical condition are considered for repair or replacement if contents remain accurate and useful.

Disposal of materials weeded from the collection is accomplished according to the following priorities:

- Materials deemed to have potential resale value are kept for the Friends of the Library book sale, where they are offered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Materials unsuitable for resale are discarded.

Reconsideration of Material

The Library welcomes expressions of opinions from the public concerning materials selected or not selected for inclusion in its collections. Requests to add or remove Library materials are considered within the contexts of the principles affirmed in this document.

Persons or organizations seeking the removal of materials from the Library must submit requests in writing. A reconsideration form appended to this policy must be completed and returned to the Library Director. The Director will meet with the staff member(s) responsible for selecting the item in question and the merit of the request will be considered. The Director will make a decision regarding the disposition of the item and will provide a written response to the person initiating the request. The Director will inform the Board of Trustees of all requests for reconsideration.

Should the person initiating the request remain unsatisfied with the decision of the Director, an appeal may be made for a hearing before the Board of Trustees. A written request for appeal shall be addressed to the President of the Board. The Board reserves the right to limit the length of presentation and number of speakers at the hearing. The Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with the established policies and procedures of the Phillipsburg Free Public Library. On the basis of this determination, the Board may vote to uphold or override the decision of the Director.