

Collection Development Policy

(Adopted October 2010; revised August 2014; revised June 2017)

Purpose of the Collection Development Policy

The Collection Development Policy, approved by the Library Board of Trustees, is one of the Library's most fundamental policy documents. It outlines the philosophies that create and shape the Stickney-Forest View Public Library District's unique collection, the practices that maintain it over time, and the guidelines that help the collection respond to community needs while protecting the collection from societal and political pressures. The Collection Development Policy ensure that over time, the Library's collection will remain on course, reflecting the specific needs of the community, while creating opportunities for unique experiences of meaning, enrichment, and education for the individual patron.

Philosophy

The Stickney-Forest View Public Library District collects materials in a variety of popular formats which support its function as a major information source for the varied needs of a diverse urban/suburban population. The collection also serves the popular and recreational needs of the community and reflects its racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Patron use and demand is the most important influence on the Library's collection. Circulation, customer requests, and hold levels are closely monitored, triggering the purchase of new items as well as additional copies of high demand items.

In addition to use and demand, selections are made, in accord with the Library's strategic plan, to provide depth and diversity of viewpoints within the existing collection and to provide for the needs of less vocal, often overlooked segments of the community including its least affluent, least educated, and least professionally skilled members.

Inherent in this Policy is an attempt to appreciate the individuality of each person who might use the Library's collection. Preference is not given to any one person's needs over another's. The Library attempts to serve each individual constituent as fully and fairly as possible. The Library upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others.

Scope of the Collection

The collection includes fiction and non-fiction works in a variety of formats in order to achieve the Library's mission by reaching the broadest possible audience. It includes many works that are well-established and have enduring interest as well as recent items that have or are believed to have the potential to have a meaningful impact on the Library's patrons. The collection represents the numerous interests, backgrounds, and viewpoints represented by all members of the community. The collection is regularly evaluated to ensure its continuing relevance.

Access to digital and online materials continues to expand at a rapid pace. These materials will not be considered to be a replacement of analogous physical materials, but it will be recognized as a significant expansion of the collection. When appropriate, physical materials that might otherwise have been purchased will be excluded from the physical collection in favor of their digital or online counterparts.

Additionally, the Library's participation in the SWAN consortium bears on the scope of its local collection. Membership in this consortium enables the Library to have quick and easy access to the collections of over 70 libraries in the suburban-Chicago area. In almost all cases, items available at these libraries can be requested and received within two business days. This greatly expands the breadth of materials that can be easily circulated locally to the Library's patrons. Consortium membership is not a substitute for adding highly relevant or sought after materials to the collection. However, it will be taken into consideration as a viable alternative for the occasional circulation of works of enduring popularity.

With respect to the use of Library materials by children and teens under the age of 18, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to monitor and supervise their children's use of Library materials. Decisions about what materials are suitable for particular children should be made by the people who know them best - their parents or guardians. Selection of materials for adults is not constrained by possible exposure to children or teenagers.

Selection Criteria

Responsibility for the initial selection of library resources rests with the Library's professional staff, based on the criteria listed below. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection, under the overall direction of the Library Director. The responsibility for selection ultimately rests with the Library Director operating within the framework of policies determined by the Library's Board of Trustees.

Collection development staff use their training, knowledge, and expertise along with the following general criteria to select materials for the collection:

- Relevance to specific needs and interests of the community
- Extent of publicity, critical review, and current or anticipated demand for an item
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject to the community
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Availability of an item in alternative formats
- Suitability of format to Library circulation and use
- Availability at other SWAN consortium libraries in comparison to the level of local demand for an item
- Date of publication
- Price, availability, and Library materials budget

In the case of very high demand items, such as new releases by the most popular authors, additional copies of a single item may be temporarily added to the collection by leasing them from a vendor.

Suggestions for Additions to the Collection

Patrons may request items the Library does not own. Each request is reviewed for inclusion in the collection or for loan through Interlibrary Loan. Staff determine the best method of circulation for recommended materials.

Collection Management

The Library's collection is a living, changing entity. As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes withdrawn from the collection. Generally, a similar number of items are weeded from the collection as are added to it in a given year. Great care is taken to retain or replace items that have enduring value to the community. Decisions are influenced by patterns of use, storage capacity, and availability at other libraries within the consortium relative to local demand. Staff review the collection regularly to maintain its vitality and usefulness to the community.

The final authority for the Library collection rests with the Library Director and the Board of Trustees. Implementation of the collection development policy and management of the collection is assigned by the Library Director to the appropriate Library staff. The Library disposes of materials that have been withdrawn according to the criteria for weeding and withdrawals outlined below. The Friends of the Library resells and redistributes weeded and withdrawn materials as well as donated items as designated by the Library.

The following criteria are used in selecting materials for withdrawal from the collection:

- Damage or poor condition
- Obsolescence
- Number of copies in the collection
- Continued relevance to the needs and interests of the community
- Current demand and frequency of use
- Accuracy and timeliness of the work
- Relevance to any special or research collections maintained by the Library
- Availability elsewhere, including other consortium member libraries and online

Gifts

The Library accepts donations of new or gently-used books, magazines, DVDs, Blu-Rays, and music or books on CD. The Library retains the authority to accept or reject gifts. Library staff make all decisions as to the use, housing, and final disposition of all donations. Decisions on whether and how donated items will be added to the Library's collections are based on the same evaluative criteria that are applied to purchased materials. The Library does not evaluate or appraise gift materials for tax purposes. When a statement of a donor's preference accompanies a donated item, any departure from this preference is carefully considered and negotiated with the donor.

Intellectual Freedom

The Library is committed to the principle that the constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and press should be enjoyed by all. To this end, the Library strives to offer a collection that represents the needs of its

diverse community. Inclusion of an item in the collection does not mean that the Library endorses any theory or statement contained in those materials and resources.

While every customer may not agree with the viewpoints offered in some Library material, the Library has a responsibility to provide a balanced collection with access to material reflecting diverse ideas through which any side of a question, cause, or movement may be explored, provided that the material meets the outlined selection criteria. The balanced nature of the collection is reflected in the diversity of materials, not in an equality of numbers. Customers are free to choose what they like from the collection, to reject what they don't like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to choose.

Materials are not excluded because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation or because they represent a particular aspect of life, frankness of expression or controversial subject matter.

The Library is committed to free and open access to its collections and to connecting people with the world of ideas, information and materials they wish to explore in a friendly, nonjudgmental manner.

Requests for Reconsideration

The Stickney-Forest View Public Library District welcomes patrons' expressions of opinion concerning materials purchased. Requests to remove materials will be considered within the context of the policies set forth in this document. Anyone who wishes to request that a specific item be reconsidered for inclusion in the collection of materials is asked to complete and sign the Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form, available on the Library's website or at any service desk. The form will be forwarded to the appropriate staff who will consider the request in a timely fashion, in consultation with the Director.

The questioned material will be reviewed in its entirety, and once a decision has been made regarding the retention or removal of the material, a letter will be sent to the requestor explaining the decision. If the person indicates dissatisfaction with the resolution, he/she may appeal to the Library Board. The Board will reconsider the decision based on whether or not the particular title conforms to the Board-approved Collection Development Policy, as outlined in the "Criteria for Selection," above.

The item in question will not be removed from circulation during the reconsideration process.

Related

ALA Bill of Rights

ALA Freedom to Read

ALA Freedom to View

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