
Purpose and Objectives

1. The purpose of this Materials Selection Policy is to guide the librarian and to inform the public about the principles upon which the library collection is developed.
2. The purpose of the Library is to select materials, which communicate the heritage of experience, past, present, and future; to make these materials readily accessible to all people within the service area; and to assist people in meeting their educational, recreational, inspirational, informative, and cultural needs.
3. Basic to this policy are the principles outlined in the following statement endorsed by the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council:
 - A. Freedom to Read
 - i. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
 - ii. Publishers and librarians do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.
 - iii. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis of personal history or political affiliations of the author.
 - iv. The present laws dealing with obscenity should be vigorously enforced. Beyond that, there is no place in our society for extra-legal efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
 - v. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.
 - vi. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.
 - vii. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality of thought and expression. By exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one; the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

Collection Development Policy

4. The Library recognizes its responsibility to provide a positive contribution toward the removal of ignorance, intolerance, and indifference.
5. The Library accepts as its primary objective the responsibility to provide and maintain an adequate collection, which is thoughtfully chosen with consideration to its timeliness and its potential usefulness to the community.
6. The Library strives to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, inspiration, and information, and in the creative use of leisure time.
7. The Library gives due regard to the differences of individuals in the service area and their variations in educational and interest levels and abilities and in their abilities to use and comprehend.
8. The Library's obligation to the development of appreciation of music and the arts extends to making audiovisual materials a part of the total collection.

Responsibility

9. Responsibility for selection of materials rests with the Director who operates within the framework of policy as determined by the Van Buren District Library Board.
10. The Director submits to the Board annually a materials budget for the Van Buren District Library system.
11. The Director may delegate responsibility to staff members for advisory assistance in the selection of materials.
12. Legal responsibility for material selection, as well as all other library activities, rests with the Van Buren District Library Board.
13. Uses that violate confidentiality of information, including but not limited to the Michigan Library Privacy Act as amended, and downloading or transmitting trade secret information or copyrighted materials.

Guidelines For Selection

14. The Library holds that all persons have the right to information in all fields of knowledge. This knowledge, however, should come from authoritative sources.
15. At the root of democracy is that people have freedom of choice. The Library attempts to make accessible various points of view in order that people may exercise this freedom of choice. In selection of materials, there is an obligation to recognize the minority point of view and to represent more than one side of a controversial subject.
16. The Library has an obligation to provide materials of current and contemporary interest consistent with the needs of the public even though such materials may not have enduring interest or value.
17. In selection of materials, the Library depends upon critical reviews and/or examination of the materials rather than upon advertising.
18. It is not the purpose of a public library collection to serve as an elementary or high school or college library, although many of the materials may be so used.

Collection Development Policy

19. Parents and legal guardians will be responsible for their child's use of library materials. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children. Van Buren District Library is not responsible for Internet content.
20. The juvenile collection is separate from the adult collection and is so designated. The juvenile collection, which is marked by a "J" or and "E" on the book plus the other numbers and/or letters, includes materials suitable for children of pre-school age through junior high school. Obviously, not all materials will be suitable for all children, nor will all materials be suited for all children of the same age. Ultimately, the responsibility for materials suitable for a given child rests with the parent or legal guardian. The Library does not act "en locus parentis." However, the Library does make every attempt to sincerely and earnestly provide professional reading guidance to children as well as to adults.
21. Selection guidelines are applicable to all print and non-print materials in the Library's collection.

Criteria Used in Selection

22. The Library recognizes the need to keep its collection rich, varied, and up-to-date by acquiring materials of both current and lasting value. Because no library can afford all available materials, it is necessary to develop criteria upon which selection is based.
23. In evaluation for inclusion in the collection, consideration is given to the following (not necessarily in the order of importance):
 - A. Author's qualifications.
 - B. Sincerity of purpose.
 - C. Literary worth.
 - D. Contribution to the history and culture of our civilization.
 - E. Content:
 - i. Breadth of coverage.
 - ii. Accuracy.
 - iii. Lack of bias.
 - iv. Authoritativeness.
 - v. Quality of illustrations, drawings, or photographs.
 - F. Physical quality.
 - G. Readability.
 - H. Degree of specialization and technicality.
 - I. Cost.
 - J. Current holdings.
 - K. Availability elsewhere.

- L. Housing.
- M. Demand.

Aids Used in Selection of Material

24. Because it is physically impossible as well as impractical, a librarian cannot possibly read all of the books that are published, nor can a librarian preview all of the non-print materials. Therefore, the Director of the Van Buren District Library, as other librarians do elsewhere, selects materials for purchase on the basis of reviewing done by other professional librarians and critics. These reviews are published in reviewing services, professional journals, and magazines.
25. The following lists selection aids that are used by the Van Buren County Library:
- A. Booklist.
 - B. Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books.
 - C. Chicago Tribune Book World.
 - D. Kirkus Reviews.
 - E. Library Journal.
 - F. Listening Post.
 - G. Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications.
 - H. New York Times Book Review.
 - I. Publishers' Weekly.
 - J. Saturday Review.
 - K. School Library Journal.
 - L. Wilson Library Bulletin.
26. In addition, there are catalogs published periodically which list the best or most popular works of previous years. Among those used by the Van Buren County Library are the following:
- A. The H.W. Wilson Company Standard Catalog series.
 - B. Fiction Catalog.
 - C. Book Review Digest.
 - D. A Basic Book Collection for Elementary Grades.
 - E. A Basic Book Collection for High Schools.
 - F. F. Winchell. Guide to Reference Books.
 - G. Historical Fiction.
 - H. Historical Non-Fiction.

Collection Development Policy

27. These lists are not all-inclusive and may vary slightly from year to year. However, this is an indication of the variety and breadth of professional sources consulted to aid in the selection process.

Special Materials Selection

28. Subject Areas

The Library attempts to provide a large general collection of reliable materials covering the broader fields of knowledge. Materials of a highly technical or specialized nature are purchased only if real or potential demand exists. The Library does not function as a research library in any specialized field.

29. Legal and Medical Materials

Such materials will be purchased given the consideration that they are useful to the layman.

30. Religion

The Library will attempt to include factual, unbiased material and to give representation to all major religions.

31. Ideologies

The Library will attempt to make available factual information on any ideology or philosophy which exerts a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education, or any other phase of life.

32. Sex and Profanity

Material is not automatically disqualified from inclusion in the Library's collection because of incidents of sex and/or profanity. The decision is based on whether the material presents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are dealt with realistically, as well as the other selection criteria. Factual matter of an educational nature is also included in the Library's collection.

33. Local History, Michigan History, and Genealogy

The Library will attempt to procure materials pertaining to the local history of Van Buren County and southwestern Michigan whenever possible. Michigan materials and genealogical materials will be added in accordance with public interest and budgetary means. Because many of these materials may be old, they may not measure up to the standards of quality demanded of the general collection, but their value is found in the information within. It must be remembered that the Library cannot possibly add to its collection all materials that are available.

34. Fiction

The Library tries to maintain a representative collection of novels of the past and present. Because fiction must satisfy a wide range of taste and background and because ideas of literary merit vary greatly with the individual, the Library purchases competently written novels in all categories.

35. Textbooks

No attempt is made to include textbooks in use currently in the schools. Books used as textbooks are included in the collection if they are of high quality and represent the best information available in a given subject area.

Collection Development Policy

36. Self-published Works

The Library does not purchase works by self-published authors, nor does it add self-published works to its collections upon request.

Discarding of Materials

37. The Library strives to maintain a vital, interesting, and usable collection. Thus, the Library must continually discard, or weed, those items, which through usage or passage of time are no longer suitable or necessary.

38. Following is a list of some of the criteria upon which material may be withdrawn:

A. Material of obsolete content, such as: outdated information (particularly in the fields of science, technology, geography, and travel), trivial subject matter, mediocrity of writing, false information, superseded editions.

B. Volumes of no use in the Library, such as: materials which have not circulated in three to five years, materials of no reference value for in-library use, unneeded duplicate titles of fiction and non-fiction.

C. Books of poor appearance, such as: worn out books (those with yellowed paper, dirty, frayed bindings, broken spines, etc.), poorly bound books, books with contents not appealing to people (small print, cramped margins, poor illustrations, etc.).

39. The Library bases its decision to replace lost, damaged, or worn materials on the basic selection considerations.

Reconsideration of Material

40. The Library shall strive to protect the right of the public to freedom of access to information and ideas. Freedom of choice is one of the bases upon which our democracy was built.

41. A standardized procedure for handling complaints will avoid misunderstanding and rumors, and it will assure a courteous and efficient approach to the situation. Freedom of inquiry is essential, and a person should feel that his/her opinion will be considered, and that his/her interest is welcomed.

42. Procedure for Reconsideration

A. When criticism cannot be resolved after an explanation of the selection policy, the person should be asked to fill out the form *Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Material*. The person will also be informed as to the procedures to be taken so as to assure him/her of a courteous and fair hearing.

B. The completed form should be forwarded to the Library Director immediately. When the Library Director has received the form, a committee to review the complaint will be appointed by the chairperson of the Van Buren District Library Board. The committee shall be composed of the following:

C. Two (2) trustees of the Van Buren District Library Board (the legal representatives of the public).

Collection Development Policy

- D. The Library Director.
- E. One (1) staff member.
- F. Complainant (if so desired).
- G. One lay person as appointed by the Board.

Gifts and Memorials

43. Public-spirited citizens have long favored the Library as a beneficiary of gifts of money and/or materials.

44. Gift Books and Other Materials

- A. Gift materials must meet the same standards of quality that all other Library materials are subject to. Therefore, the Library accepts gift materials with the understanding that they will not necessarily be added to the Library's collection, nor that those accepted will be added immediately. Space limitations and processing costs are always kept in mind in the evaluation of gifts.
- B. Gift materials that are processed are shelved with the regular collection. There is no special gift collection or memorial collection.
- C. On request of the donor, special bookplates can be inserted in books to identify such gifts.
- D. By accepting and using such gifts, the Library assumes no special obligation to the donors. Gifts, which do not meet the Library's selection criteria are disposed of in any way the Library deems fit.

45. Memorial and Monetary Gifts

- A. Frequently money for the purchase of materials is given to the Library, and often this money is designated as a memorial.
- B. Materials purchased from gift funds are often more expensive or more specialized than the Library can afford within its regular budget. These add enrichment to the Library's collection.
- C. Memorial books are distinguished with a special bookplate inside the front cover, taking precedence in the book over anything else.
- D. The Library maintains a record of all memorial books according to the person in whose name the memorial is made.
- E. Gifts of money are tax-deductible.

46. Special forms are available for memorial gifts and gift materials

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Van Buren District Library Board of Trustees