

Formulation of a Collection Development Policy for Public Libraries (draft)

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Rationale

Scientific and modern Collection Development Policy is the cornerstone of a successful Library and Information Services. Though preparing a high quality collection development policy has always been a challenge in any LIS sector, this is especially difficult in the Public Library sector where different types of clients are served. Building the library collection considering the needs of these multitude groups, different types of library materials including print, audio-visual and digital publications and the ever present budgetary constraints is a herculean task. Through the project Public Library Group of the SLLA hopes to fulfil this long felt need which will help the development and modernization of the Public Library service in the country.

2. Introduction

Library Collection Development Policy should provide a framework for the growth and development of collections in support of the public Library's mission to "provide free and equitable access to cultural and educational experiences and celebrate ideas, promote creativity, connect people, and enrich lives." Public Library's goal to provide a diverse community with library materials that reflect a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests.

Because of the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of budget and space, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs.

The materials selection/collection development policy is used by the library staff in the selection of materials and also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.

3. Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the library staff and the collection development personnel who operates within the framework of the policies which will in turn provides a wide range of literary, cultural, educational, informational and recreational materials for people of all ages. Collections should include popular and in-demand materials as well as special formats, such as large print books, government documents, foreign language materials, test and study guides, financial, tax and business information, company and telephone directories, school and career information, consumer, health and medical information. In addition, the Local Materials Collection preserves and documents the history of and provides a broad scope of information about local news, events and businesses.

Responsibility for the initial selection of library resources rests with the Library's professional staff, based on the criteria cited above. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection, under the overall direction of the Chief Librarian. The responsibility for selection ultimately rests with the authoritative officer of the local body.

The variety of formats collected include:

- Print: books, documents, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and maps.
- Audiovisual Media: videos on DVD and Blu-ray, books on CD and digital audio player, music on compact disc.
- Electronic Media: databases, software, electronic books, downloadable audio books, videos and music. The library also provides access to the Internet. Selected Internet sites are cataloged and linked to the Library's website.
- Other: multimedia kits, microforms, educational toys, devices for the visually impaired, and selected audiovisual equipment.

4. Criteria for Selection

General criteria for selecting library materials are listed below. An item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be acceptable.

- public demand, interest or need,
- contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent value
- attention of critics and reviewers
- prominence, authority and/or competence of author, creator or publisher

- timeliness of material
- relation to existing collections
- statement of challenging, original, or alternative point of view
- authenticity of historical, regional or social setting
- accessibility for multiple users of electronic formats
- Suggestions for Additions to the Collection

To assure the acquisition of resources desired by Library users, customer suggestions are always considered for the addition to the collection.

It should have facility to Customers to request specific items to be purchased by filling out a Recommendation form.

4.1 Criteria for Selection of Non fictions

The library acquires materials of both permanent and current interest in all subjects, based upon the merits of a work in relation to the needs, interests, and demands of the community.

The following general criteria are to be considered when selecting materials for purchase:

- Authoritativeness of the writer and reputation of the publisher
- Accuracy of information
- Impartiality of opinion, or clearly stated bias
- Timeliness of data
- Adequate breadth and depth of coverage
- Appropriateness and relevancy of subject to the library's users
- Popular demand
- Historical value
- Availability of similar material within the community and other area libraries
- Organization and style appropriate to the material and to the library's users
- Good quality illustrations
- Special features, such as bibliography and index
- Durable binding and paper; and cost

4.2 Criteria for Selection of fictions

Works of contemporary fiction, graphic novels, and classic works of enduring value are included in the collection.

Fiction is selected according to the following criteria:

- Popular demand;
- Reputation of the author and publisher;
- Appropriateness to the library's users;
- Importance as a document of the times;

- Relationship to the existing collection and to other titles and authors dealing with the same subject;
- Interest and originality of the plot;
- Interest and development of the characters;
- Style of writing;
- Literary merit;
- Inclusion in standard library bibliographies;
- Availability of similar material within the community and other area libraries;
- Physical qualities of the book
- Cost
- whether a title is part of an existing series

4.3 Criteria for selection of Periodicals

Periodicals are publications issued and received on a regular basis in print, microfilm, or electronic format. They form an important part of the Library's research collection and the periodicals collection is intended to complement the book collection.

Periodicals are selected according to the following criteria:

- whether the periodical is indexed in one of the Library's indexing services
- inclusion in or exclusion by standard indexing resources
- cost
- requests by library users,
- whether the periodical has local or regional interest
- whether a subject area needs to be expanded to help balance the collection.

4.4 Criteria for selection of Computer-Based Resources:

This category includes computer-based information resources available via the Internet or on a locally installed CD-ROM. This collection includes, but is not limited to, citation or full-text databases and instructional multimedia programs.

The following criteria should be considered when considering computer-based resources for the collection:

- Compatibility with available equipment and/or existing operating systems
- Ease of use by library users, including enhanced searching capabilities
- Price of print format versus electronic
- Authority
- Accuracy
- Frequency of updating
- Anticipated demand by library users
- Impact upon staff for ongoing maintenance and updating of database
- Training requirements for staff and the public
- Remote access capability
- Licensing fees and usage restrictions.

5. Collection Maintenance, Replacement and Weeding

Professional library staff regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet customers' needs.

Materials that are worn, obsolete, unused, old editions or unnecessarily duplicated are removed. It is the responsibility of professional staff to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed or lost. An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the librarian and is authorized by the Council.

Items are not automatically replaced. Decisions are based on need, demand and budget.

6. Gifts

Public Library accepts gifts of new or gently-used books, magazines, DVDs, and music or books on compact disc.

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.

7. Interlibrary Loan:

Because of limited budget and space, the library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this library's collection. In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of patrons, Public Library can agree to lend its materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan network, and to make an effort to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries.
