

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Library Mission Statement

The Reading Public Library is a center and resource for learning and civic engagement. We provide a place and platform of, by, and for the people who can benefit as individuals as well as contribute to the well-being of the community.

Core Values

- Education
- Equity
- Accountability
- Access

Collection Statement

An important role of the Reading Public Library is to provide library materials selected in response to the diverse educational, informational, and recreational needs of all community members of every age and literacy level.

Professional staff select and provide materials in a variety of formats; including but not limited to, print, media, and digital formats; and in a variety of community languages.

Selection Criteria

This policy is intended to provide direction and guidance to staff members in their roles as materials selectors. Staff select print and non-print library materials in accordance with one or more of these criteria.

- Relevance to the library's mission and core values
- Current usefulness, interest, and/or permanent value
- Popular demand
- Relevance to the existing collection
- Standards of quality in content and format
- Price

The selection process includes the use of authoritative professional reviews, popular reviews, publishers' catalogs, standard lists of basic works, firsthand examination, and patron requests.

The Library Gift Policy addresses donations of materials for the collection. The following collections are selected with additional criteria:

Children's Collection

This collection serves children from birth through sixth grade. Children's librarians also select materials and give special attention to books of value to parents, teachers, and other adults working with children.

Local History and Genealogy Collection

This collection includes material that relates to or advances our knowledge about the town of Reading, Massachusetts and its history, people, and institutions. The collection also provides genealogists with methodological aids with which to begin research and learn genealogical techniques.

Periodicals

Professional staff consider both content and accessibility of all periodicals. Magazine subscriptions are reviewed yearly prior to renewal.

Reference

The Reference collection is intended to serve adults and students in middle school and up. Materials selected for the Reference collection supply ready information on a certain subject, in an easy-to-use form, or are tools for bibliographic access.

Teen Collection

Professional staff select materials for teens to meet the needs, interests, and reading levels of young people in grades six through twelve.

Intellectual Freedom and Controversial Materials

The Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights ([see Appendix I](#)). The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues.

The Library does not advocate particular beliefs or views. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. Access to library materials shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect them from danger or theft.

Parents are responsible for determining what their children may read, watch, or listen to. Selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain material their parents consider inappropriate.

Reading residents with serious objections to specific items in the Library should direct their complaints to a librarian. If the complaint is not resolved, the resident may file a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" (Appendix II) form to the Director's attention. The item and the form will be reviewed by the Board of Library Trustees. If materials meet the criteria of selection, they will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group. After issuing a decision on the Reconsideration, the Board of Library Trustees will not review additional Requests for Reconsideration of the title in question for three years.

Scope and Limits of the Collection

The Library does not attempt to serve as a depository of record nor to purchase materials of a highly specialized or technical nature. It does not undertake to support individual research in any subject field except local history. When requests are received for material outside the scope of this collection, every effort will be made to borrow the material from another library or to direct the patron to an agency where the material may be found.

The Reading Public Library is cognizant of the resources of other public, academic, and special libraries and will not needlessly duplicate materials. Through cooperative agreements with other libraries, particularly the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE), the resources of those libraries are readily available to Reading Public Library patrons.

This policy recognizes the differing functions of school and public libraries and establishes the responsibility of the school to supply materials needed in quantity to support the school curriculum. The Library undertakes to provide a general, comprehensive collection that will enrich the resources available to students and teachers.

Deaccessioning Practice

To ensure that the collection remains useful and reliable, it is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with decisions made whether to dispose of, repair, or retain items. Material is evaluated based on use, physical condition, currency of information, number of copies, inclusion in standard bibliographies, and availability in nearby libraries.

Materials that are withdrawn from the collection are disposed of at the discretion of the librarians responsible for the designated areas.

The library is not able to save materials for patrons or notify patrons when materials are withdrawn.

Budget

The acquisitions budget for each department or category is established by the Director at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Legal Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to approve policies for the selection of Library material, formulated by the Director. These policies are administered by the Director with the assistance of the staff. Responsibility for selection of specific materials rests with the Director, but the Director's interpretation of policy is subject to review by the Board.

Adopted: April 2021
Amended: May 2022,
August 2023

Appendix I

American Library Association Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).