

Westborough Public Library Collection Development Policy

Introduction

The purpose of the Collection Development Policy of the Westborough Public Library is to provide guidelines for acquisition and removal of library materials, allocation of resources, and short- and long-range collection development in accordance with the library's mission.

The Westborough Public Library is a member of CWMARS, an automated resource-sharing network of libraries in Central and Western Massachusetts, and of the Massachusetts Library System. These two organizations provide bibliographic access to local and regional library collections and an efficient delivery system. For patrons with needs outside the scope of Westborough's local collection or the collections of network libraries, interlibrary loan service is available through cooperative agreements with libraries statewide and beyond.

Responsibility for Collection Development

The Board of Library Trustees considers and adopts a Collection Development Policy, which they authorize the Library Director to administer. The Director designates staff to develop acquisition and removal procedures and to make purchasing decisions subject to approval by the Director. The Director allocates the materials budget annually.

Library staff exercise judgment, experience, and expertise in the application of the following Selection Criteria, making acquisition decisions as objectively as possible. Evaluation of a work includes the entire work, not just individual parts of the work. A work's overall contribution to the collection is a critical determinant for acceptance or rejection. No single criterion can be applied to all materials, and various criteria carry different weights in different circumstances. Contextual considerations including budget, space availability, and interlibrary loan availability, also shape the selection process.

Selection Criteria

All materials, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the criteria listed below. An item need not meet all of these standards in order to be added to the collection.

Public Demand and Community Interest

- Popularity
- Local emphasis, either subject matter or author
- Patron requests

Merits of Individual Titles (Media Items)

- Creative, literary, or technical quality: clarity, originality, readability, artistic excellence
- Accuracy and currency of information, depth and breadth of coverage and indexing
- Reputation, expertise, and/or significance of author, illustrator, publisher, or producer
- Quality of physical format, bindings, durability, illustrations/reproductions, the technical quality of non-print formats, ease of use
- Treatment of subject for age of intended audience
- Reviews, critical assessments in a variety of journals

Merits of Individual Items (Non-Media Items)

- Quality, function, and value
- Ease of use
- Ability to be repaired/availability of repair professionals
- Durability

The library does not mark or identify materials to show approval or disapproval of contents. The library also does not mark materials to restrict their use by ages, or sequester them except to protect valuable items from

damage or theft. The library does not rely on private advisory codes or rating services in developing collections, nor does the library remove such ratings if they are an integral part of the item or its packaging.

Collection Goals

- Contemporary significance or permanent value: source material or a record of the times; representation of an important movement, genre, trend or culture
- Relevance to the library's mission and service roles
- Relationship to the existing collection: contribution to balanced, up-to date coverage of a broad range of subject areas that is suitable for readers of different ages and reading levels, interests, and backgrounds
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Relationship to materials in other area libraries, especially availability within the CWMARS consortium
- Materials serving diverse local populations, including speakers of languages other than English
- Materials accessible to patrons with different learning abilities, educational levels, and physical needs; for example, audio and large print formats
- Currency and usability of formats

Financial Considerations

- Price and availability
- Value for cost
- Library materials budget

Selectors will consult professional library literature and publishing review media, examine other libraries' holdings in the CWMARS catalog, and review suggestions directly from the public and other staff. An item may be purchased if there is heavy demand, even though reviews may be unfavorable or other items on the same subject are in the collection.

Guidelines for Specific Subject Areas and Formats

1. Fiction

Current fiction is a mainstay of the collection and is purchased extensively. The collection includes recreational reading, classic literature, and titles representing styles of various periods and countries, all in multiple genres. The collection shall include titles intended for diverse populations (e.g. ages, cultures, languages, and interests) Controversial books of recognized literary merit may be acquired.

2. Non-Fiction

The library collects recognized, standard works as well as timely materials for current demand. Non-fiction may be excluded for inaccurate information, lack of integrity, sensationalism, intent to promote hatred or intolerance, and content that is too limited or specialized. In the case of controversial questions, variety and balance of opinion are sought whenever available.

3. Audiovisual and Non-Print Collections

1. The *music audio* collection represents significant performers, composers, and styles of popular and classical music, including a variety of cultures and traditions. Quality of content and performance, production values, and diversity are considered.
2. *Audiobooks* include both fiction and non-fiction according to the same criteria as books, with the additional consideration of quality of the performance and recorded production. Audiobooks are collected in primarily unabridged formats, though abridged will be considered when appropriate to the topic.
3. *Video recordings*, including DVD and Blu-Ray, include contemporary and classic feature films as well as TV series and foreign films. The library collects non-fiction video including, but not limited to, documentaries, health, travel, history, science, local concerns, "how-to" subjects, and self-paced instruction.
4. *Other non-print materials* include puzzles and games, technology, and other items for the Room of Things. The library also purchases some loanable equipment for which the cost per use may be unreasonably high for a single household to acquire.

5. *Digital resources* include items such as online databases; recordings, and images; digital historical archives; software programs for patron use; and internet service for the public.

4. Downloadable Content

The library provides access to a collection of downloadable/streaming content made available to our patrons by virtue of our membership in CWMARS and the statewide Commonwealth eBook Collection. Additional streaming services are purchased by the library for use by Westborough patrons based on the library's evaluation of patron needs.

5. Periodicals

The library subscribes to popular interest periodicals, news and informational publications, and a limited number of professional journals. Selection of periodicals is based on community interest, budget, and space considerations. Requests from patrons and gift subscriptions are considered using the same criteria. Magazines and newspapers are acquired for both casual reading and research purposes, and may be provided in print and/or electronic formats. Newspapers are selected to meet reference and research needs of patrons, to provide current information, and to satisfy casual interest in current events. Local and national newspapers are supplied upon sufficient demand and within budget and space limitations.

6. Reference

The library maintains a small print reference collection, and a more comprehensive electronic collection. The Massachusetts Library System and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners provide some online products, with additional products purchased by the library for use by Westborough residents. Access to online products from the Boston Public Library with a BPL eCard is also available. Factors considered in the selection of reference materials are authority, reliability, scope, treatment, arrangement, format, cost, and existing holdings.

7. Local Authors

An effort is made to acquire titles by Westborough authors, artists, and producers that are published by mainstream publishers and whose work fits within our collection development guidelines. Titles that are self-published are not added to the collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so (valuable local content, high local interest). Local authors' works are integrated into the general collection.

8. Children's and Teen Materials

The library collects print and audiovisual materials to stimulate creativity and to satisfy children's and teens' needs for information. The materials are organized for easy access, given the varied capabilities of children and teenagers. As stated in *Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, the library recognizes parents and legal guardians as the parties responsible for the reading and viewing habits of their children - and only their children.

1. Teen materials include fiction, non-fiction (shelved in the Adult collection), test prep materials, and audiobooks.
2. Parenting materials for adults with children or caring for children are provided in the Children's collection. Materials include books, DVD's, and magazines.
3. The Children's Department purchases a wide variety of materials to appeal to children and teenagers of varied ages and abilities, who come from varied backgrounds and families, religious affiliations, ethnicities, and sexual orientations.
4. The library makes every effort to provide titles that appear on school reading lists in multiple formats.

9. Academic Titles

Many books are published that are too specialized, too narrowly focused, or too academic for the library's collection. These books may have received excellent reviews, but do not meet the needs of the general audience that frequents a public library. Unless the content of the book is of local interest and generates significant local demand, the library does not generally purchase and add these titles to our collection. School and college textbooks are also excluded from purchase.

10. Genealogy and Local History

Please see the separate policy for the Westborough Center for History and Culture. Decisions about whether items from the Center are allowed to circulate are made by the Local History Librarian.

Requests for Purchase

The library welcomes requests for purchase of materials; however such requests will be subject to the same criteria for selection as other considered materials.

Collection Maintenance

Library collections should be fresh, exciting, and attractive. Systematic removal of materials no longer useful to the library is essential. Collection analysis is the continuous examination and thorough analysis of library materials for the purpose of maintaining and strengthening the collections. Removal of materials requires judgements as important as those used in original selections. With the exceptions of the collections of the Westborough Center for History and Culture, the library does not serve an archival function. Materials which are no longer appropriate for the collection because of outdated or incorrect content, bias, poor condition, lack of relevance to the needs and interests of the community, or lack of use will be identified by appropriate staff members and discarded from the collection according to current, accepted professional practices.

Materials discarded because of loss, vandalism, poor condition, or outdated content may be considered for replacement.

Removed materials are handled in compliance with legal requirements regarding the disposition of public assets.

Gifts

The Westborough Public Library welcomes and appreciates donations to its collections. The library accepts new and used books, audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs, BluRay discs, video games, and other items in good, clean condition as donations. The library does not accept textbooks, outdated reference/nonfiction books, encyclopedias, VHS tapes, cassette tapes, or items in poor condition (torn, worn, dirty, moldy, smelly).

Library staff evaluates donations for addition to the collection by the same criteria for which materials are selected for purchase. See the Materials Selection part of this policy for more information. All gifts will become the property of the Westborough Public Library and are retained or disposed of according to this policy's Selection Criteria. Donations that are not added to the collection may be given to the Friends of the Westborough Public Library for their book sales to benefit the library.

For gifts of art, photography, non-print items, or other specialty items, please contact the Library Director to discuss your donation. No conditions may be imposed relating to any gift after its acceptance by the library.

The library does not appraise gift materials for tax purposes. Staff will, upon request of the donor, provide a written receipt for gifts, indicating the approximate number/quantity and general description of materials donated.

Objection to Library Materials

The Westborough Public Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom, which allow for every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. The library provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored.

The library also subscribes to the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. Included in this statement is the commitment to honor the rights of an individual to use the library regardless of age, race, religion, national origin, or social or political views. Accordingly, the library staff provides equal service to all library users.

If an individual wishes to express concern about, or objects to particular library materials, the library staff will ask the individual to complete a "**Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form**," which is available as an appendix to this document, on the library website (westboroughlibrary.org), and at the Reference Desk. The Library Director will review the title, meet with staff selectors to evaluate the original decision for the purchase of the material, and meet with the individual to review the complaint. The Director will make a written ruling on the request, based on the Collection Development Policy and the Statement of Concern. The written ruling will be discussed at a Library Trustees meeting, and the Library Trustees will vote on the ruling at that time. The Trustees' decision is final.

Library employees are protected by Chapter 78, Section 33, of the General Laws of Massachusetts: Policy for Selection and Use of Library Materials and Facilities, which states that no employee shall be dismissed for the selection of library materials when the selection is made in good faith and in accordance with the standards of the American Library Association. In addition, the Westborough Public Library will not discipline an employee who has selected materials in good faith and in accordance with ALA standards.

Policy Review and Revision

This Collection Development Policy will be reviewed annually by collection development staff and the Board of Trustees.

Guiding Principles

In the interest of protecting the individual's right to have access to materials, the library recognizes the guiding principles of the following documents:

[The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution](#)

The American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#)

[Access to Digital Resources and Services: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)

[Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors; An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)

[The Freedom to Read Statement](#) (A Joint Statement by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers)

Approved by Board of Trustees: August 2021



Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form

If you wish to request reconsideration of a library resource, completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. Please return the completed form to the library director. Incomplete forms (i.e. no contact information) will not be considered.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent yourself? _____

Or an organization? _____ Name of Organization _____

Or a group? _____ Name of Group _____

1. Title/Name of Item _____

Author/Producer _____

2. To what in the work do you object? Please be specific (cite page numbers if it is a print work)

3. Did you read/view/listen to/use the entire work? If not, what parts did you review?

4. What concerns you about the item?

5. Have you read reviews about the item? If so, please cite.

6. In your opinion, is there anything good about this work?

7. What action are you requesting the library take in regard to this work?

8. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information on the topic covered by this work?

Return the completed form to the Library Director, 55 West Main St, Westborough, MA 01581 or email it to mamyot@town.westborough.ma.us. All submissions will be acknowledged, and you will be informed of the decision and the date your Request for Reconsideration will be discussed by the Library Trustees.