



# Collection Management Policy

## **Mission**

The mission of collection management is to identify, evaluate, select, organize and maintain high-quality information resources, in a wide variety of formats, to meet the needs of our diverse community for life-long learning, cultural enrichment, intellectual stimulation and recreation in support of the mission and vision statements of the Norfolk Public Library and the City of Norfolk. The Library strives to create a "City of Readers", where all citizens are literate, technoliterate, productive and contribute to and enjoy a high quality of life.

## **Purpose of the Collection Management Policy**

The purpose of the Norfolk Public Library collection management policy is to provide a general guide for the selection and maintenance of material collections offered by the library and to emphasize the Library's commitment to intellectual freedom and unrestricted access to information. The policy offers guidance to Library staff and informs the public about general selection principles. Policy statements clarifying specific subject collections are included as appendices, which will be updated as needed.

## **Background**

The Norfolk Public Library is a major urban library system, set in the business, financial, and cultural hub of the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. The Library has a rich history dating back to 1825, when the Lyceum housed an initial private circulating collection. In 1904 Norfolk's first free public library opened on Freemason Street, built with Carnegie grant funds. The Library currently consists of a central downtown library (Kirn Memorial Library), ten branch libraries, a Bookmobile and the Barron F. Black Learning Homework Center.

The Norfolk Public Library is a selective U.S. Government Documents Depository Library, automatically receiving selected federal government publications without charge. The Library selects publications that serve the immediate needs of the citizens in the Hampton Roads area and follows government procedures for making these items available to the general public and final disposition of the material. The Library does not attempt comprehensive coverage of all U.S. government publications.

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## Materials Selection Philosophy

Library materials are chosen to serve the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the entire community. The primary goal is to provide the best possible collection with the financial resources available. The Library strives to create an attractive, up-to-date, balanced collection representing all fields of knowledge and all sides of issues in a neutral, unbiased manner, as budgets, availability of materials and space permit.

Library staff select materials covering a wide range of ideas, issues and lifestyles. Due to this diversity there will always be some materials that appeal or do not appeal to specific individuals. The existence of a particular viewpoint in the collection is an expression of the Library's policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of that particular point of view. The Library encourages free expression and free access to ideas, both essential elements in a democratic society, and does not knowingly discriminate in its material selection regarding age, race, beliefs or affiliations of the author or producer. The Library subscribes to the principles of the "Library Bill of Rights", the "Freedom to Read Statement", and the "Freedom to View Statement" of the American Library Association, which are included as appendices in the Norfolk Public Library Policies and Procedures Manual.

## Responsibility for Materials Selection and Collection Management

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Library managers and professional staff make selections, based primarily upon material reviews and knowledge of a publisher's expertise in specific subject areas. The public and other Library staff are encouraged to recommend titles, which are evaluated according to the Library's selection guidelines. Library managers are responsible for the overall maintenance and quality of their individual collections in collaboration with the Collection Management Librarian.

## Definitions

- "Selection" is the decision to add a piece of library material to the collection or to remove it from the collection.
- "Library material" is any format of material added to the collection, including but not limited to: books, magazines, audiocassettes, videos, photographs, maps, pamphlets, clippings, microfilm or microfiche, compact discs, and online databases. New formats that become available as technology changes shall automatically be included in the term "library materials".
- "Material review" is an evaluation written by a person knowledgeable about the material's subject matter. Reviews occur in library review journals, professional journals, newspapers, online sources and in other popular media. Primary review sources include:

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Booklist, Book World, Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal, New York Times Book Review, Publisher's Weekly, School Library Journal, Science Books and Films, Video Librarian, Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)

- "Deselection" is the component of selection that involves removing items from the collection.
- "Collection management" includes selection, deselection, preservation, storage, budgeting and resource allocation, collection evaluation, resource sharing, and other functions related to improving the collection and facilitating patron access to library materials.

## General Selection Guidelines

Selection is based upon the merits of a work in relation to the needs, interests and demands of the entire Norfolk community. Due to the large volume of materials published in a variety of formats each year, selection criteria are used for evaluating materials. Selection guidelines, listed below, form the basis for decision making. Whenever possible, a material review is preferred.

It is important to remember that selecting materials for the collection is more an art than a science and requires staff well attuned to patron information needs, regional library collections, publishing industry trends, and a general history of recorded knowledge. Professional library staff have the education, training, and work experience required to make important selection decisions.

## Specific Selection Guidelines

The following factors will be taken into consideration when selecting items for the collection:

- Relevance to community needs and interests
- Current and projected demand
- Availability and suitability of physical format for library purposes
- Suitability of presentation for intended audience
- Relevance to existing subject coverage in the collection
- Reviews from library professional, subject specific journals and popular publications
- Clarity, readability and ease of use
- Timeliness or permanence of material
- Accuracy and authenticity
- Literary merit and inclusion in standard bibliographies and indices
- Current and historical significance
- Authority and reputation of the author, publisher, and/or producer
- Local authorship or production
- Initial and ongoing costs

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- Overall quality
- Technical aspects of audiovisual materials
- Regional availability and accessibility
- Space and maintenance requirements
- User interface and content of electronic products
- Online, network, and remote access capabilities
- System resource demands (hardware and personnel)
- Vendor training, support guides and technical support
- Lease or ownership of electronic products

## Patron Reconsideration of Materials

Individuals have the right to question the suitability of library materials for the collection. Patrons can express their opinions by filling out a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials (Appendix 7), including their complete name, address and signature. The form will be forwarded to the Selection Review Committee, which will handle the complaint in an objective and timely manner and will examine the material in its entirety. Material purchased according to Library selection criteria will not automatically be removed from the collection.

The decision of the Selection Review Committee may be appealed by writing to the Norfolk Public Library Board of Trustees in care of the Director of Libraries. The Board will consider an appeal at their next regularly scheduled Board meeting to which both the patron and representatives from the Selection Review Committee will be invited to share their views and concerns. The decision of the Board will be final.

## Collection Maintenance

To insure that library collections provide timely service to the public, out-dated materials no longer of regional interest, and damaged materials, whose physical condition makes them unsuitable for circulation, will be removed from the collection or preserved for archival use. Materials which are out-dated because of changes in their fields, will be discarded as soon as new publications are available, unless there is a local demand for historical perspectives on the subject. The Library will retain first editions and last copies of significant works or major authors.

Factors to be considered in removing materials from the collection include:

- Physical condition of the material
- Items containing misleading or inaccurate information
- Multiple copies of titles no longer in demand

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- Seldom used material not listed in standard bibliographic sources. (e.g. *Fiction Catalog*, *Public Library Catalog*, *Children's Catalog*)
- Subject matter no longer of current interest, or historical or literary significance
- Old editions replaced by later revisions of non-fiction titles
- Retention of materials by authors located in the Hampton Roads metropolitan area, and the state of Virginia.
- Retention of valuable or unique "out of print" titles of potential local interest

Library Branch Managers and subject specialists at the Kirn Library will supervise all collection maintenance activities and make final decisions related to removal of items from their collections, or designate librarians to make these decisions. Removal of worn or outdated materials will be based upon current professional library standards. Before removing the last copy of a title from the collection, Branch Managers send last copies of titles they think should be retained in the collection to the Kirn Library for review. A Materials Evaluation Form (Appendix 10) can be used to assist with the deselection process.

Discarded materials become surplus property and may be sold by the Friends of the Library for fund raising purposes or discarded in another manner at the Library's discretion.

## Replacements

Materials, which have been deselected or lost, will be replaced with new titles or new editions of classic titles on a continuing basis, based upon budgetary constraints and subject needs. Bibliographic tools and review journals will be used to ascertain the best and most timely publications in a subject field. The Library does not automatically replace items withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear.

## Collection Evaluation

The Library collection is continually evolving. In order to maintain a strong, vital, relevant, useful, up to date collection, the Collection Management Librarian will work with Library Managers to evaluate individual collections, in addition to the overall collection. Evaluation techniques will include but not be limited to the following:

- Circulation use data
- Collection holding data
- Evaluation of standard bibliographic catalogs
- Online database use statistics
- Patron and staff recommendations
- Patron surveys

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- Lists of "Best Materials" published by library organizations, library and professional review sources.
- Formal evaluations of library collections

## Gifts and Donations

A gift for the library collection may consist of (1) library material donations or (2) monetary donations to purchase materials, equipment or support various library activities or (3) other material donations.

### • Library Material Donations

The Library accepts donations of books and/or other library materials, which meet the same selection guidelines used for purchased materials. Material donations are accepted with the following understanding:

- The Library does not appraise donations or provide evaluation of gifts for tax deductions or other purposes. However, upon request the Library will provide acknowledgement of material donations.
- Once the donation is given, the Library retains the unconditional ownership of the gift and its disposition.
- The Library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display and access to the materials.
- The Library will not accept damaged material, most magazines, condensed books, software, most textbooks and recordings other than compact discs.

### • Monetary Donations

The Library welcomes individuals and organizations to support its activities through gift funds. Contributions will enable the Library to purchase materials, equipment, or support special programs. Selection of specific titles will be made by library staff.

- The Library encourages unrestricted monetary gifts to allow for the greatest flexibility in supporting the Library.
- Donors can recommend how they would like funds to be used, such as type of equipment, type of program or type of material, their area of subject interest, and a preferred library branch location.
- Recommendations for purchasing specific titles are discouraged and the Library reserves the right to decline such monetary donations.
- All monetary donations will be acknowledged by the Library, including but not limited to items purchased "In Memory of", "In Celebration of" and "In Honor of".

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- Gift plates, identification plaques or other appropriate recognition identifying the donor or person being honored may be displayed in items purchased from gift funds, upon request.

- **Other Material Donations**

Other real or personal property donated to the Library will be accepted at the discretion of the Library Director. All other conditions above apply to these gifts.

This Policy was presented to and approved by the Norfolk Public Library  
Board of Trustees.

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Date Ann K. Sullivan, President

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October 1999

The following **Appendices** are listed as separate PDF files:

1. Norfolk Public Library Collections
2. Further Collection Considerations
3. Sargeant Memorial Room for Local History and Genealogy Collection  
Development Policy
4. Government Documents Collection Development Policy
5. Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form