

Town of Chester Public Library

Selection of Library Materials Policy

March 2025

Objectives

The Town of Chester Public Library places major emphasis on the informational, recreational and educational functions of its collection and recognizes the importance of basic materials of permanent value as well as timely materials on current issues. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the enhancement of the library's collection.

Guidelines

The Town of Chester Public Library supports the Library Bill of Rights promulgated by the American Library Association, and it serves as the basis for this policy and other lending policies of this library. Choice of materials will result from a variety of professional activities on the part of the Library Director. Reviews of new books from both popular reviewing media and professional journals form an important tool in the selection process. Recommendations from the staff and the public are also welcome and evaluated within the framework of the acquisition process.

Responsibility

It is the Director's responsibility to provide materials that are of both current interest and permanent value, that are up-to-date, that are responsive to the interests and needs of every segment of the community and that do not discriminate against any political, religious, racial, economic group or social view through deliberate exclusion of their views. The Director shall try to provide for a diversity of materials without exercising either direct or implied censorship. The Director shall be responsible for expending available funds in an equitable manner so that all divisions of the collection receive a just proportion of said funds. Regardless of the mode of acquisition, the Library Director has the final responsibility for the selection and purchase of all materials to be incorporated into the library's collection. While the Library Director may delegate some selection responsibilities to other staff members who will adhere to accepted professional practices when making such recommendations, the final authority on purchases remains with the Library Director.

Selection Criteria

To build collections of merit and significance, materials must be measured by objective guidelines. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the standards listed below. However, an item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be acceptable. Materials are evaluated on the significance of the entire work rather than individual parts. When judging the quality of materials several standards and combinations of standards may be used. The following principals will guide selection:

- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Community interest
- Accuracy of content
- Reputation and/or authority of the author, editor or illustrator
- Literary merit
- Relation to existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Price, availability, and demand • Format and ease of use, durability
- Scarcity of information in the subject area
- Availability of material in other area libraries
- Attention of critics, reviewers, media and public

The library recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may offend some patron. Selection or retention of materials will not be made based on anticipated approval or disapproval of any group of patrons, but solely based on the principles stated in this policy. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from theft or injury. Selection of materials for the adult collection is not restricted by the possibility that children or adolescents may obtain materials their parents consider inappropriate. Responsibility for the reading and borrowing practices of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of materials does not constitute or imply Library agreement with or approval of the content, viewpoint, implications, or presentation of the materials.

Gifts to the Library Collection

A gift for the library collection may consist of materials or of funds for the purchase of materials. Funds may be given for acquiring materials recommended by the library or for the purchase of specific items suggested by the donor. When the library receives a cash gift for the purchase of materials, the selection will be made by the Library Director, or in restricted cases, in consultation with the donor. The library encourages unrestricted gifts not earmarked for specific items in order to permit the most flexible use of the donation for the enrichment of the collection. Gifts of books and other items, to the collection, will be accepted on the condition that the Director has the authority to make whatever disposition he or she deems advisable. Gifts will be judged using the same criteria as purchased materials.

Gifts to the Library Collection are subject to the following limitations:

- ◆ The library retains unconditional ownership of the gift
- ◆ The library makes the final decision on its own use or other disposition of the gift
- ◆ The library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing, and access to the materials

Collection Maintenance

To maintain the effectiveness of the library's total collection, the library will systematically remove materials no longer useful. The library does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. Need for replacement is weighed with regard to several factors: number of duplicate copies, existence of adequate coverage of a field, similar material in the collection, later or more authoritative materials as well as current demand for the particular subject or title.

Reconsideration of Library Collection Materials

Only residents of the Town of Chester may propose the reconsideration of any item in the library collection. Steps in this process are outlined in the Reconsideration of Library Materials policy.

Book Arts Collection

The Friends of the Town of Chester Library maintain a Book Arts collection of rare and handmade items. The Friends maintain ownership of this special collection and its cabinets despite the fact that it is housed within the library and its items are included in the library collection.

Approved by Library Board of Trustees

Date: October 19, 2022

Revision: *Challenged Item Removal Disclaimer* replaced with *Reconsideration of Library Collection Materials*. Approved by Library Board of Trustees Oct. 25, 2023

Approved with no changes by Library Board of Trustees March 19, 2025