

Collection Development Policy

Purpose:

- A. This policy exists to guide librarians in selecting materials and to inform the public about the principles guiding collection decisions.
- B. The responsibility for initial selection of materials can be shared by members of staff. All staff members and the general public are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration. The authority and responsibility for the selection of Library materials rests, ultimately with the Library Director who applies professional knowledge, experience, and this policy in making decisions.
- C. As the community changes, the library will need to reassess and adapt its collection to reflect the new areas of interest and concern. The collection development policy will be periodically evaluated and revised as necessary to provide guidance for implementing changes in the collection.

Access:

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. The Lehigh Public Library affirms the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View documents as statements of each individual's right to freedom of choice in information and materials use (see Appendix). The library's collection is not limited to the viewpoints of any one individual, agency, or government. Each individual is free to accept or reject materials on an individual basis regardless of age. No one may restrict or abridge the rights of others to access, read, hear, or view library materials. The library does not restrict access to materials, except for the express purposes of protecting materials from mutilation or theft. Children and young adults may use both the youth and the adult collections. The library does not stand in loco parentis (in the place of parents); parents and guardians, not the library staff, have the responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing choices of only their own minor children.

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.

- Patron demand
- Historical significance of material
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Accuracy and authority
- Local emphasis
- Readability or ability to sustain interest
- Treatment of subject to age of intended audience
- Reputation of author, publisher, producer, or illustrator
- Creative, literary or technical quality
- Critical assessments in a variety of journals
- Format and ease of use
- Circulation as monitored through our automated system
- Cost and availability
- Space considerations of the existing physical library
- Relationship to existing materials in the collection
- Relationship to materials in other area libraries

Suggestions for Purchase:

The library strongly encourages input from the Lehigh community concerning the collection. A Suggestion for Purchase procedure enables Lehigh citizens to request that a particular item or subject be purchased by the library. All suggestions for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as all other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. It is the library's intent that suggestions for purchase be used to help the library in developing collections which serve the interests and needs of the community.

Replacements:

The Library will purchase replacements for materials which have been lost either through damage or theft. Theft or damage in a particular subject area will never serve as justification for refusal to collect in that area. Other, more positive means, will be used to protect a given subject area from continual theft or damage. The patron responsible for the theft or damage

to any item will be fined the replacement cost of the item(s) in accordance with our Fines and Fees policy. When a book or other item is damaged or lost, the Director will consider whether it is wiser to purchase a replacement copy of to order a newer edition of new title to act as a replacement.

Gifts and Memorials:

The Lehigh Public Library accepts gifts (including publisher gift copies) for the library's collection that fall within needed subject categories, as determined by the Library Director.

Gift additions must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials and are subject to the following limitations:

- The library retains unconditional ownership of the gift.
- The library makes the final decision on the use or other disposition of the gift.
- The library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing and access to the materials.
- Personal property, art objects, portraits, antiques and other museum objects will be accepted on a case-by-case basis and only with the advanced approval of the Board of Trustees.
- The library does not appraise gifts or provide evaluation of gifts for tax deductions, but will acknowledge receipt of gifts in writing via the Lehigh Public Library Material Donation Form when requested at the time of the donation.
- The library will abide by the conditions set forth in the Lehigh Public Library Lehigh History Written Release Form for all Lehigh History donations.

Monetary gifts to the collection are welcome and may be designated as memorials and are subject to the following:

- Donations of money designated for the periodical and newspaper collections are accepted in lieu of actual subscriptions. These contributions offset the high cost of periodical subscriptions and maintain the continuity of subscriptions year to year.
- Donor of the funds may suggest subjects or titles to be acquired with their donation, but the library reserves the right to make the final decision on all materials acquired by the library.

Textbooks: As standard policy, the Library will not collect textbooks unless there are no other sources on a given subject. Textbooks are considered more properly included in school or area media center collections.

Controversial Materials and Reconsideration of Materials:

Individual items, which in and for themselves may be controversial or offensive to some patrons or staff, may be selected if their inclusion will contribute to the range of viewpoints in the collection as a whole and the effectiveness of the library's ability to serve its community.

Despite the care taken in selection, it is natural for differences of opinion regarding suitable material to arise. Thus, individuals may discuss their personal objections to the inclusion or exclusion of a specific item with the Library Director. If the discussion does not satisfy the individual, they may choose to complete a Request for Reconsideration of Materials form, available at the circulation desk. This form shall be signed by the complainant and returned to the Director for formal review. The questioned material will be reviewed, in its entirety, and once a decision has been made regarding the retention or removal of the material, the Director will issue a letter to the person with an explanation of the decision.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision made by the Director, they may appeal to the Lehigh Public Library Board of Trustees within fourteen (14) regular business days after the mailing date of the decision. The Board of Trustees will reconsider the decision at its next regularly scheduled meeting, allowing for fourteen (14) calendar days review time by the Board. The person appealing the decision shall be notified of the date, time and location of when the Library Board of Trustees will hear the matter. The person may appear at the meeting to be heard. Should the person requesting the appeal be unable to appear in person, they may ask the Library Board of Trustees to consider the merits of the request based upon a written statement. The Library Board of Trustees shall hear the matter and vote upon it in accordance with their by-laws. The decision of the Lehigh Public Library Board of Trustees shall be final.