

Collection Development Policy of the Wilkinsburg Public Library

Policy Number: 101

Date adopted: October 11, 2022

Replaces: All prior Wilkinsburg Public Library Collection Development Policies

The mission of the Wilkinsburg Public Library (WPL) and its Eastridge branch is to enrich and improve the lives of its patrons through information, education and recreation. The library seeks to serve the interests of all ages and backgrounds.

Statement of purpose

The purpose of this collection management policy is to guide staff and inform the public of the library's underlying philosophies behind collection development decisions in both development and maintenance of the collection. The policy defines the standards and outlines the responsibility for selection of materials at WPL.

The library recognizes and supports the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement adopted by the American Library Association (see Appendices A and B).

Our Collection Priorities

The following have been listed in order of priority for our collection development:

Fiction

DVD

Non-fiction

E-Resources

Online databases

Periodicals

Reference

Materials we do not collect:

Textbooks (May be added to the collection or if there is little or no material in any other form

or if it would substantially add to the collection

Rare books

Computer software

Obsolete formats (VHS and Beta videotapes, audio cassettes, eight-track tapes)

Ephemera (pamphlets, handbills, leaflets, broadsides, position papers, minutes of meetings, information sheets, bulletins, newsletters, posters, moving images and photographic documentation)

Selection criteria

WPL selects material for its collection in accordance with professionally accepted guidelines. The library will attempt to represent all approaches to public issues of a controversial nature. The library does not sanction particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any item an endorsement of the author's viewpoint.

The selection of materials is based on the library's attempt to have a well-balanced collection which has been defined by the American Library Association as containing a variety of views surrounding any issue, but not necessarily containing a one-to-one equivalence.

The selection of materials is governed by the library's general objectives, its assessment of the community's present and future needs, its recognition of and cooperation with other library collections in the consortium which are readily available to our patrons usually within days.

Self-published material and desktop publishers produce works of varying quality and are seldomly reviewed by professional review sources. As those works do not comply with our selection criteria, these items are generally not added to the collection. However, the material may be examined by our professional librarians and found to have merit, the material may be added to the collection.

Selection criteria by genre:

Fiction criteria. The library aims to provide a variety of types of fiction to satisfy readers of different tastes, interests and skill. There is no single standard by which to judge fiction, but some or all of the following will be considered:

Author popularity

Local demand

Reputation of author and/or publisher

Literary merit

Physical qualities of the item

Representation of important genre or trend

Writing quality

Professional reviews

Content created by and representative of marginalized or underrepresented groups

Part of an existing series

Cost

DVD and other non-print materials criteria. The goal of the library is to provide a collection of feature films, instructional, educational and literature-based videos that will enhance the library's collection. The following criteria will be considered:

Popular demand

Appropriateness to the interests and skills of the intended users

Artistic merit and/or reputation of the performers

Technical production quality

Content created by and representative of marginalized or underrepresented groups

Cost

Nonfiction criteria. The library acquires materials of interest in all subjects based upon the reader's right to make decisions for themselves about the material. Each

item is evaluated in its entirety. The following will be considered when selecting nonfiction materials:

Popular demand

Authoritativeness of the writer and reputation of the publisher

Accuracy of information

Appropriateness and relevancy of the subject to library users

Date of publication/ timeliness

Content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups

Cost

Periodicals criteria. The library acquires periodicals of interest to our patrons, recognizing these interests may change over time. We will not subscribe to highly technical, specialized, or professional journals except for those in the field of library science. The following criteria is used when selecting periodicals:

Indexed in one of the standard indexing resources (such as the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature)

Magazines for Libraries by Bowker

Popular demand

Local or regional interest

Cost

Selection Process

Responsibility for administering this policy rests with the Director. The Library Board approves the Collection Development policy. Review journals are used to aid in the selection of materials. These can include Library Journal, Booklist, School Library Journal, Baker and Taylor Peer Reviewed Titles, Kirkus, New York Times Book Review, Publisher's Weekly, and Choice. Librarians selecting materials may also consult catalogs, bibliographies, reviews online, broadcast, weekly news magazines, national and local newspapers, and other social media. The library is committed to collecting materials representing the widest possible diversity of viewpoints.

Community participation

The library encourages members of the community to be involved in the selection process. There are several ways an individual can be involved.

Reserve requests. An individual may reserve materials that are currently checked out. This can be done at the circulation desk, on the library catalog (done by the individual), or on the library app (done by the individual). The library may consider adding duplicate copies of materials in high demand

Purchase suggestions. Individuals are encouraged to suggest titles or subjects they would like to see added to the collection. This can be done by telling a staff member or filling out an online form.

Access to library materials

All patrons have access to library materials. Anyone is free to choose not to look at or check out any item in the library, however the freedom of someone else to access these materials cannot be restricted. Parents and guardians have the responsibility to guide the reading, listening and viewing choices of their own minor children. The library does not stand in loco parentis. We cannot inhibit selection of adult materials because of the possibility that a child may access the material.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

An individual who is a resident of Wilkinsburg may express their objections to a particular library item by completing a “request for Reconsideration of library material form” (see Appendix C). After the form is completed, it should be given to staff who will give it to the Library Director who will answer within 10 days (unless off of work for longer). The Director will review the request using the criteria for selection of the item, its place in the collection, and reasons for including the item in the collection. The Director will respond in writing to the patron.

If the library user is not satisfied at this level, they can come to the next scheduled Library Board meeting and let it be known they would like a review of the material. The Board will convene a review committee including the Director, at least two board members and (optionally) an outside party with expertise in the field. The review committee's decision is final and the patron will be notified of the decision. The municipality does not make decisions about library materials.

Donation Guidelines

It is understood that gifts are freely given without conditions attached, unless specifically negotiated beforehand, and that all donations will be used or disposed of as the Library deems appropriate.

Donations *must* be dropped off with library staff for approval. Donations put in book drop or left at the door will be immediately discarded.

We will accept:

- Hardcover and paperback books that are new or gently used
- Commercially published media (e.g. CDs, DVDs, Audiobooks on CD)
- Recent editions of magazines that can be put directly into the "Free Magazines" bin

We cannot accept:

- Reference books (e.g. dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.)
- VHS tapes
- Textbooks
- Cassette Tapes (music or audiobooks)
- Damaged books with broken bindings, missing pages, soiled, musty, moldy, with smoke or water damage, or with excessive writing in the text
- Books with outdated or inaccurate information
- Software
- Reader's Digest condensed books
- Vinyl records
- Travel books published 4 or more years previous to current year
- Health books published 4 or more years previous to current year
- Financial books published 4 or more years previous to current year
- Large amounts of books (more than 10) not in boxes

Memorial Guidelines

The library accepts monetary donations that are applied to memorial or honor materials. All material purchased as a memorial or honor item will be subject to the library's deselection policy. Donated materials become the library's to keep, withdraw, or donate as we see fit.

Evaluation of Library Materials

It is necessary for the library to continuously review our materials as a means of maintaining an active library collection of current interest to users. Statistical tools such as circulation reports, collection turnover rates, withdrawn reports, as well as other collection analysis methods assist in providing useful data to make these decisions. The professional expertise of the library staff is also important in the ongoing evaluation of our collection.

Deselection of materials

Deselection of materials (weeding) is an important part of collection development. This is essential to maintaining a useful collection. Materials are withdrawn for a number of reasons. The following criteria are used to determine if an item needs to be deselected from the collection:

Worn or damaged copies

Duplicate copies of seldom used titles

Materials which contain outdated or inaccurate information

Superseded editions of specific titles

Materials no longer of interest or in demand

Availability of newer or more comprehensive materials

Ease of borrowing materials from another library

Date of last circulation and number of circulations

Number of copies in collection or in the consortium

Replacement of materials

The library strives to maintain copies of standard and important works, however, it does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn due to loss or damage. Decisions concerning the replacement of materials are based on the following considerations:

Demand for the item

The number of copies held by the library or the consortium

Existing coverage of the subject in the collection

The currency of the contents

The availability of the title to reorder

The cost of mending versus the cost of replacement

Availability of the item in the consortium

Appendix A

The 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.

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

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The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

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5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

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Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Wilkinsburg Public Library Request for Reconsideration Form

The Library Board of the Wilkinsburg Public Library has established a materials selection policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the library director.

Wilkinsburg Public Library
605 Ross Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent self? Or an organization? Name of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Book (e-book) Movie Magazine Audio Recording
 Digital Resource Game Newspaper Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

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4. What concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?
