

3:1 Policy on Selection of Library Materials

Policy Statement

The Library acquires, makes available, and encourages the use of materials in a variety of formats to serve the general information, cultural, educational, and recreational needs of the community. The Library believes in freedom of information for all, and endorses and subscribes to the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" and its interpretations, as well as the American Library Association's "Freedom to Read Statement" and "Freedom to View Statement."

The Alleghany Highlands Regional Library will provide patrons with free and equal access to the printed and recorded word and to the visual image. However, because no public library can afford to acquire or to house all materials available to libraries, a selection process must take place.

Philosophy

To support the mission of the Alleghany Highlands Regional Library, library materials are selected and made accessible to the public. The Board of Trustees adopts this materials selection policy to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. While a policy cannot replace the judgment of librarians, stating goals and indicating boundaries will assist in choosing from a vast array of materials available.

Collection Management

The Technical Services Coordinator reports to the Library Director and is responsible for the management of all aspects of collection development and maintenance, acquisitions, and cataloging/processing of all library material in all formats.

Selection and Use of Materials

1. The Library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some Library patron. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to building the Library's collections and to serving the interest and needs of the entire community.
2. The Library does not promote any particular beliefs or views in its selection of materials. Materials containing different viewpoints on controversial issues will be acquired including those that may have unpopular or unorthodox positions. The Library will strive to be as objective as possible with all sides of controversial issues

in order to maintain a balanced collection of materials.

3. The race, religion, nationality, or political views of an author or creator; language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; or subjects which may be offensive to some patrons do not automatically disqualify materials which, in their entirety, are judged to be of value.
4. Objective criteria for the selection of materials for the Library's collection includes the following, and are listed below in no particular order.

All additions to the collection, whether purchased or donated will reviewed in terms of these criteria. An item does not need to meet all criteria in order to be included in the collection. Materials are evaluated based on the merits of the entire work rather than individual parts.

- a. Quality of writing/production
 - b. Relevance to community needs and interests
 - c. Current and projected demand
 - d. Relevance to existing subject coverage in the collection
 - e. Importance of subject matter
 - f. Timeliness
 - g. Accuracy and authenticity
 - h. Reputation of the publisher/producer
 - i. Reviews from library professional journals, subject specific sources and popular publications.
 - j. Readability and popular appeal
 - k. Authoritativeness
 - l. Current and historical significance
 - m. Reputation and significance of the author/artist/composer/producer, etc.
 - n. Format and price
 - o. Regional availability and accessibility
 - p. Requests from patrons
 - q. Literary merit and recommendation of work in standard review sources or inclusion in standard bibliographies.
5. The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history and genealogy. The Library will systematically obtain as many materials to support this collection as possible.
 6. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading abilities, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.
 7. The Library does not label or censor materials. The choice of reading and viewing materials is a purely individual matter. Patrons are free to reject books and other materials of which they do not approve, but may not exercise censorship to restrict

the freedom of others.

8. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no item will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft. The use of rare and scarce items may be controlled only to the extent required to preserve them from harm.
9. Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.
10. Once an item has been accepted as qualifying under the Library's Selection of Materials Policy, it will not be removed at the request of those who disapprove of its selection unless it can be shown to be in violation of Library policies.

Electronic Resources

In keeping with the mission of the Library, we recognize the importance of providing technology and electronic resources to our patrons. Electronic resources including online databases, ebooks, and digital audiobooks are seen as important enhancements and extensions of the Library's print materials collection. Criteria for selection is the same as those used by the Library for all types of library materials and books.

Gifts to the Library

The Library accepts gifts of unsolicited materials, including audiovisual materials, with the understanding that upon acceptance, they become the property of the Library and will be evaluated with the same criteria applied to purchased materials and subjected to the same weeding standards as other library materials. The Library reserves the right to use any gift as it sees fit. These gifts may become part of the Regional Library collection, sold at a regular book sale, or disposed of. Donors may not place any special conditions on the use or disposition of material.

See also Policy on Gifts to the Alleghany Highlands Regional Library.

Resident Library Card Holder Request for Purchase Consideration

The Library welcomes suggestions from holders of Resident Library Cards, who reside in Alleghany County or the City of Covington, for print, electronic, and audiovisual materials to purchase as additions to its various collections. All suggested titles are considered according to the criteria outlined in the Policy on Selection of Library Materials. Not all titles suggested will be purchased.

Resident Library Card Holder Request for Reconsideration

Allegheny Highlands Regional Library has established a formal process for Resident Library Card Holders, who reside in Allegheny County or the City of Covington, to express concerns about materials in the Library's collection.

AHRL Resident Card holders, who reside in Allegheny County or the City of Covington, may request reconsideration of an item in the collection. AHRL Resident Card holders, who reside in Allegheny County or the City of Covington, wishing to have an item reconsidered will be asked to fill out and submit a fully completed *AHRL Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form, stating reasons for the request, to the Library Director.

- A requester must have a valid AHRL Resident Library Card and reside in Allegheny County or the City of Covington to have their request considered.
- Materials submitted for reconsideration must be owned by the AHRL.
- As materials are evaluated for addition to the Library's collection based on the merits of the entire work rather than individual parts, it is expected that the requester has read/reviewed the entire material before submitting a *Request for Reconsideration* form.
- Forms that are not fully completed will not be considered and will be returned to the requester to be completed and resubmitted.
- Only one title can be submitted per form and only one form can be submitted by the same individual or household at one time. Forms containing more than one title will not be considered.
- Additional reconsideration requests can not be submitted by the same individual or household until all of their prior requests have been processed and responded to with a final decision.
- Any item under reconsideration will remain in circulation until a final decision has been reached.
- Once material has been accepted for the collection, it will not be removed at the request of those who disagree with it unless it can be shown to be in violation of the AHRL Selection of Materials Policy.

Upon receipt of a fully completed request by an AHRL Resident Card holder, who resides in Allegheny County or the City of Covington, the AHRL Reconsideration Committee, consisting of two Library staff members and a Member of the Board of Trustees, will review the material in question and meet within 6 weeks of the filing of the request. Following the Committee's review, the Committee will make a policy-based decision regarding the material in question.

Within ten (10) days of the Reconsideration Committee's decision, the Library Director will respond to the requester, in writing, with the action to be taken and the reasons for the decision. The decision of the Reconsideration Committee is final, unless it is appealed in accordance with the appeal process below.

Any appeal of the Reconsideration Committee's decision, to the Board of Trustees, must be made in writing by the original requester, to the Library Director within fifteen (15) days of the Library Director's written response. All appeals must address the portion of Selection of Materials Policy that the requester believes is violated by including the material in question in the Library's collection.

The Board of Trustees will review the appeal and material in question based on Library Policy and address the appeal at a regularly scheduled board meeting. The requester will be invited to the meeting as a public commenter and will be permitted to speak before the Board during the Citizen's Time of the Board meeting. In accordance with the Citizen's Time section of the By-Laws of the AHRL Board of Trustees, the requester shall be permitted to speak for up to five (5) minutes.

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to table action on the appeal to the next scheduled board meeting in order to allow board members additional time to review the appeal and the material in question.

The Board of Trustees' decision, by majority vote, after review of the material in question is final.

Within ten (10) days of the Board of Trustees' decision, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees will respond to the requester, in writing, with the action to be taken and the reasons for the decision.

Once a final decision is made on the reconsideration of a Library material by the Board of Trustees, no further Requests for Reconsideration will be accepted for the same material.

Please note: Timelines for the review and decision making process may be extended due to existing staff workload, limited staff availability, unavailability of materials, or the prioritization of previously submitted requests.

Withdrawals/Discards

Materials which are no longer useful in accomplishing stated objectives will be removed from the collection at the Library Director's discretion and according to accepted professional practices as described in the publication, *The CREW Manual*.

The Library uses weeding as a collection development tool. Its purpose is to maintain a library collection of high quality that is appropriate in size to the capacity of the facility and that is current, accessible and appealing to users.

Items are withdrawn from the collection when they are dated, worn, or damaged beyond repair, or if interest in a title or subject has decreased. Withdrawn items will be disposed of through book sales, recycling, or donations.

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