

Wright County Library Collection Development Policy (Adopted July 10,1997)

A. Objective

1. The objective of the Wright County Library is to select, organize, and make accessible library materials to meet the expressed and anticipated needs and interests of the diverse public in the library district. As a public service agency, the Library must strive to provide the residents of Wright County with a comprehensive collection of materials in a variety of formats that record human knowledge, ideas and culture; to organize these materials for ready access; to offer guidance and encouragement in their use; and to serve the community with reliable and easily available sources of information.

2. Materials should be selected and services planned to satisfy residents both as individuals and as members of groups, with concerns for all ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities, and levels of education.

3. The Library not only has an obligation to serve its current users but also to search for materials and methods that will meet the needs of community members who have not traditionally been library users. Cooperation with governmental, academic, and special resource centers in the area continues to be increasingly important in meeting needs of library patrons.

4. Priorities of selection are:

a. Materials to meet informational needs, both expressed and anticipated, of patrons of all ages. b. Materials to meet the recreational needs of patrons of all ages. c. Materials to meet the educational needs of pre-school children, out-of-school adults, and all other patrons who are not served by an educational institution. d. Materials to meet the needs of the business community. e. Materials to support civic and cultural activities of individuals, groups, and organizations.

B. Selection

1. The Library should plan to acquire within its budgetary limitations, all types of library materials needed to meet its obligations. Library materials include books, pamphlets, documents, periodicals, maps, audiovisual materials, software, online databases and artifacts.

2. When lack of funds limit purchases, current in-print publications of lasting value, regardless of format, will be given priority over out-of-print publications.

3. Holdings of other area libraries will be considered when selecting subject areas for intensive collection or large purchase items. Consideration will be given to both the privileges and responsibilities of cooperative acquisition plans and interlibrary loan procedures.

4. The purchase of copies of any title shall be dependent upon demand by patrons and the size and population served. Demand is a valid factor in materials selection. Materials that receive poor reviews may be purchased if there is a demonstrated local demand. For the purposes of this policy, demonstrated local demand is interpreted as three individual written requests for the item.

5. The Library will not purchase text books except in cases where no other material on a given subject exists or where the demand of the patrons is greater than can be met by the existing collection.

6. Addition of an item to the Library's collection in no way represents an endorsement of any theory, idea, or policy contained in the material.

7. The responsibility for selection of library materials is delegated to the Director. The judgments of experts, of professionally trained staff members, and of qualified book reviewers provide a balance of opinion as the basis for selection. Though a variety of criteria is used for each subject, final decision is based on the value of the materials to the Library and its public, regardless of the personal taste of the selector.

8. Librarians will strive to find a review of any item before considering it for purchase. However, because only a portion of all published material is ever reviewed, librarians will also consider purchase of items based on advertisements, author tours, television and radio coverage, and direct mail. If possible, librarians should preview unreviewed materials before purchase.

9. The Library should attempt to buy all publications of local authors and all materials about the county and region of the State of Material.

C. Weeding and Discarding

1. In order to maintain an active working collection of high quality, the Library staff will periodically examine the collection for items that should be withdrawn. The Director will make the final decision before an item is discarded from the collection.

2. Weeding should be a regular and continuous process to eliminate titles that have outlived their usefulness.

3. Weeding should not bias the collection in favor of or against any viewpoint.

4. Reasons for discarding:

- a. Material is dated or no longer of interest.
- b. Physical condition (dirty, shabby, torn or damaged pages, or generally ragged)
- c. Use patterns (declining or nonexistent)

5. Obvious candidates for weeding:

- a. Duplicate titles of books no longer in heavy demand
- b. Superseded editions of books
- c. Items considered "shelf-sitters" that do not circulate
- d. Books which have become obsolete or incorrect in style, content, or theme.

6. Materials that are weeded from the collection will be disposed of in the most appropriate manner, which may include sale to the public, donation to another library or organization, exchange with another branch or library, or discarding as waste.

D. Censorship

1. The Library recognizes the pluralistic nature of the community and the varied needs of Wright County

citizens. The public library does not promote particular beliefs or views. It provides a resource where the individual can examine issues freely and make his or her own decisions.

2. The Library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some library users. Selection will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection. The collection must contain the various positions expressed on important, complicated, or controversial subjects, including unpopular or unorthodox positions. The choice of library materials for personal use is an individual matter; while anyone is free to reject materials of which he or she does not approve, no one has the right to exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of use and/or access to others.

3. The selection of adult material will not be limited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of minors. The freedom of access to minors may be restricted only by the child's own parents or legal guardians. The Library will not restrict the in-house use of materials by any patron because of the patron's age.

4. The Library affirms the principles of each individual's freedom to read and view. No book or other library material shall be removed from the collection because of a complaint except under the orders of a court of competent jurisdiction.

5. Each item considered for selection must be evaluated on its own merits. Works that depict an aspect of life honestly will not be excluded because of frankness of expression, vivid descriptions of sex or violence, the philosophy, politics, or religion of the author, or any other factor which might be objectionable to some library users.

6. All materials will be judged as a whole rather than by isolated passages.

7. The Library has adopted the American Library Association's Freedom to Read and Library Bill of Rights.

E. Procedure for Challenged Book

1. If a Library staff member is approached by a patron who wishes to complain about Library materials, the complainant must be treated with dignity and courtesy. Under no circumstances is any Library employee to express agreement with the patron's complaint.

2. The employee should refer the complainant to the Library's Collection Development Policy.

3. If the complainant wishes to file a written complaint, the employee should provide the complainant with a copy of the Complaint Form. (Available at the library)

4. The employee must advise the complainant that no employee has the authority to remove any item from the shelf.

5. If the complainant insists on seeing someone in authority, the staff member should request the complainant make an appointment after completing the Complaint Form. The Director will not be expected to discuss a complaint about materials without an appointment.

6. Librarians are expected to defend the principle of the freedom to read and view as a professional responsibility. Only rarely is it necessary to defend an individual item. Laws governing obscenity, subversive material, and other questionable matter are subject to interpretation by courts. Library materials found to meet the standards set in the selection policy will not be removed from public access.

7. After receiving a complaint form submitted by a patron, the Library Director will respond to the complaint on the response form.

8. The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing library selection policies. The Board will not be asked to rule on individual items that may be the subject of a complaint.