

ROCKAWAY TOWNSHIP FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Objectives

The Rockaway Township Free Public Library acquires and makes available materials which inform, educate, entertain and enrich persons as individuals and members of society. Since it is not possible for any library to acquire all materials, it is necessary for every library to employ a policy of selectivity in acquisitions. The Library provides, within its financial limitations, a general collection of reliable materials embracing broad areas of knowledge. Included are works of enduring value as well as timely materials on current issues. Within the framework of these broad objectives, selection is based on community needs, both those expressed and those inferred from study of community demographics and evidence of areas of interest.

New formats shall be considered for the collection when, by industry report, county survey results and evidence from local requests, a significant portion of the community population has the necessary technology to make use of the format. Availability of items in the format, the cost per item and the Library's ability to acquire and handle the items will also be factors in determining when a new format will be collected. Similar considerations will influence the decision to delete a format from the Library's collection.

Impartiality and judicious selection shall be exercised in all materials acquisition practices. Allocation of the materials budget and the number of items purchased for each area of the collection will be determined by indicators of use, the average cost per item and objectives for development of the collection. The Library will be aware of the resources available in surrounding libraries and will develop its collection with this in mind. In general, scholarly, highly specialized or archival materials or artifacts are beyond the scope of the Library's collection.

Responsibility for Selection

Ultimate responsibility for the selection of library materials rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. Those staff members who are qualified by reason of education, training or experience share this responsibility. The Library Director oversees the selection process and ensures that selectors' choices reflect the Collection Development Policy of the Rockaway Township Free Public Library. Suggestions from staff members not directly involved with selection are encouraged and given serious consideration in the selection process.

Criteria for Selection

Selection is a discerning and interpretive process, involving general knowledge of the subject and its important literature, a familiarity with the materials in the collection and recognition of the needs of the community.

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To build a well-balanced collection of merit and significance, materials in all forms must be measured by objective guidelines. Since the Library does not promote particular beliefs or views, the collection can contain various positions on important questions, including unpopular or unorthodox positions. The Library actively strives to ensure that materials representing many differing views and a broad diversity of human thought and creativity are represented in its collection. A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not necessarily an equality of numbers.

Selection of material will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy. Responsibility for choosing what an individual will read or view rests with the individual. Responsibility for the use of library materials by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians.

All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following standards. An item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be acceptable. Several standards and combinations of standards may be used, as some materials may be judged primarily on artistic merit, while others are considered because of scholarship, value as human documents or the ability to satisfy the recreations and entertainment needs of the community.

General criteria:

- Existing collection holdings and needs
- Relevance to community needs
- Customer demand
- Significant or reputable author or publisher
- Attention of critics and reviewers
- Important human or social insight
- Representation of current ideas, events or mores
- Budget

Criteria for nonfiction works:

- Accurate, clear and logical presentation
- Comprehensive and complete treatment
- Author's qualifications
- Of lasting value or current need
- Original point of view

Criteria for fiction works:

- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation or experimentation
- Well-developed plot and characterization
- Authentic setting
- Representation of important genre or trend

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Selection may also be limited by the following factors:

- Physical limitations of the building
- Price and format
- Availability of low-demand materials in other library collections

Selection of library materials will not be influenced by:

- The possibility that they may come into the possession of children or young adults
- The liability of materials to theft or mutilation.

The Library does not attempt to meet curriculum needs of education programs. Textbooks are acquired if they serve the general public by providing information on subjects where little or no material is available in any other form.

Tools used in selection include professional journals, trade journals, subject bibliographies, publisher's promotional materials and reviews from reputable sources. Purchase suggestions from library customers are welcome and are given serious consideration.

Withdrawal of Materials

An attractive, up-to-date, currently useful collection is maintained through a continual discarding and replacing process. Materials may be withdrawn from the library collection after careful consideration of these factors:

- Physical condition
- Currency of information
- Lack of use
- Superseded by a new edition or better work on the same subject

Materials withdrawn from the collection may be given to the Friends of Library Book Sale or disposed of by other means. Individual items that are being withdrawn may not be saved for specific individuals.

Requests for Reconsideration

The choice of library materials by library users is an individual matter. While an individual may reject materials for himself/herself, he/she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others. Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Once an item has been approved for purchase, based on the selection policy of the board of Trustees and the criteria for selection, it will not be automatically removed upon request.

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Procedure Request for Reconsideration

Any individual expressing an objection to or concern about library materials should receive respectful attention from the staff member first approached. This staff member should use his or her best judgment in attempting to answer the concerns or clarify the situation. If the individual is not satisfied with the explanation received, the staff member should offer the options of speaking with the Library Director or filling out a "Request for Reconsideration" form.

A "Request for Reconsideration" form must be completed and returned to a staff member. The form will be given to the Library Director, who will respond in writing within two weeks to the individual, advising him/her that there will be reconsideration of the item and enclosing a copy of the Rockaway Township Free Public Library Collection Development Policy.

The inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Rockaway Township Public Library Board of Trustees. The Board reserves the right to make a decision regarding the item under reconsideration based on the overall needs and interests of the entire community and not just the concerns of the patrons requesting reconsideration.

The Rockaway Township Free Public Library Board of Trustees on November 19, 2007, approved the revised Collection Development Policy to supersede the original Materials Selection and Collection Development Policy adopted on October 9, 1991.