

# **CHELSEA PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

## **PURPOSE OF A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The volume of materials available and increased material prices and processing costs make it mandatory that the library have a written collection development plan which stresses wise selection to strengthen the resources of the library. This selection policy will not only serve as a guideline for adding purchases and gifts to the present collection, but will also help determine which materials to bind, which lost or worn-out items to replace and which to withdraw.

The purpose of this policy is to guide the library staff in the selection of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

# **LIBRARY PROFILE**

## **Purpose**

The Chelsea Public Library is part of the Mildred B. Harrison Regional Library System. This system comprises ten independent, autonomous libraries operating within a legal framework of written contracts to provide services to the residents of Shelby County regardless of place of residence. The Public Libraries of Shelby County form a public service system whose purpose is to provide a collection of materials in a variety of media that record man's knowledge, ideas, and culture; to organize these materials for ready access and to offer guidance and encouragement in their use. The libraries are dedicated to serving all members of the community with reliable and easily available sources of information.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the Chelsea Public Library are:

- To meet the basic needs of the community
- To facilitate continuing education, both formal and informal
- To supply sources of information in all fields of knowledge
- To provide practical and vocational information that will improve occupational capabilities
- To stimulate thoughtful participation in family life and the affairs of the community
- To support educational, civic, and cultural activities within the community
- To promote the use of books and other library materials for recreation and enjoyment
- To encourage the maximum use of the collection by the greatest number of people
- To give access to a variety of opinions on matters of current interest and encourage freedom of expression

## **DESIGNATION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATERIALS SELECTION**

Ultimate responsibility for the selection of materials purchased with local funds rests with the director of the Pelham Public Library operating within the framework of their policies and objectives. Ultimate responsibility rests with the Board of Trustees of the Pelham Public Library.

The selection of library materials is a cooperative effort involving input from professionals on the library staff and professionals within the system. It is the responsibility of everyone working with the public to record patron requests and needs so that they may be considered in selection. . All staff members are encouraged to suggest areas or titles for consideration.

## **CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

### **General Criteria**

Suitability of physical form for library use

Insight into human and social conditions

Present and potential relevance to community needs

Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content . Importance as a document of the times

Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject

Reputation and/or significance of author

Attention of critics and reviewers

Public demand

Price

### **Specific criteria for the evaluation of works of information and opinion**

- . Authority
- . Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- . Objectivity
- . Clarity. Accuracy, and logic of presentation
- . Statement of challenging or original point of view

### **Specific criteria for the evaluation of works of imagination**

- . Representation of an important movement (literary or social), genre, trend, or national culture
- . Vitality and originality
- . Artistic presentation and experimentation
- . Sustained interest
- . Effective characterization
- . Authenticity of historical, regional, or social setting

The selection of material is a judgmental and interpretive process applied by professional librarians. The process involves recognition of the needs of the community, familiarity with materials in the collection, awareness of

appropriate bibliographies, a general knowledge of relevant subjects and their literature, and consideration of the financial resources of the library. Because the library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages,

educational backgrounds, and reading skills, the process results in the selection of materials at many intellectual levels and in a variety of formats.

Materials should be selected and services planned to satisfy residents both as individuals and as members of groups.

The collection must contain the various positions expressed on important, complicated, or controversial questions, including unpopular or unorthodox positions. The public library does not promote particular beliefs or views. It provides a resource where the individual may examine issues freely and make his or her own decisions.

This selection process is better understood as one of collection development. The collection is developed to provide the resources required to satisfy the needs of the population served in accordance with the objectives of the library.

#### Individual community considerations

Different communities will have different library needs. The director of each municipal library must obtain an accurate profile of the population served in order to know and ultimately to meet that population's needs.

While the term "need" requires no definition, it is necessary to specify the major ways in which the library's staff becomes aware of the needs for library materials. The conscious expression of public demand is one of these ways. Items having widespread demand may not meet all the criteria contained in this policy; however, demand is considered a valid factor in item selection. It is the policy of the library to treat demand as an indicator of need and to be as responsive as possible to it. The other major means of determining need are through the analysis of census data, circulation records, reference and interlibrary loan statistics, user and non-user studies. Each municipal library director and staff in consultation with the regional library does this. Such analysis enhances service to the community as a whole, meeting the information needs of as many segments of the population as possible.

The library has an obligation to serve not only its current habitual users, but also to search for materials and methods that will meet the needs of members of the community who have not traditionally been library users.

The library must also be alert to anticipating future needs. As the social and intellectual climate of the community changes, materials that were not recommended for purchase earlier may become of interest in the future. Such materials will be reevaluated on a continuing basis.

### **Selection for children**

The library staff selects materials to satisfy and stimulate the informational, recreational, and cultural needs of children from preschool through the age of 14. Beyond selecting materials with general appeal to the majority of children, the staff recognizes that children have interests, limitations, stages of emotional and intellectual development, and all appropriate formats are considered.

Criteria for selection include literary and artistic worth, suitability of content and vocabulary to the age of readers, and the contribution of the item to the balance of the total collection. Informational books are chosen because of their interest to children and the quality of the writing and illustrations, not because of any relation to school curriculum.

The juvenile reference collections consist primarily of standard children's encyclopedias and dictionaries. A few adult reference books are also included.

There is a specifically designated young adult fiction section reading material section. Young adult nonfiction reading material is incorporated with the adult nonfiction section.

Children may use adult collections, even though those materials have not been specifically selected for them. Responsibility for the reading of minors rests with their parents or legal guardians.

### **Format**

The library materials covered in this policy may be in any form or language, which meets the needs of the public. Presently, materials may include books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, sound recordings, films, filmstrips, video tape cassettes, DVDs, Spoken word tape cassettes and compact discs, framed pictorial reproductions, computerized databases, as well as various kinds of microforms.

Because the library functions in a rapidly changing society, it must keep flexible attitudes toward changes in communicative materials in relation to both new forms and new styles of expression. It must be, for example, responsive to the increased output and improved quality of such forms as recordings, films, and paperbacks. Materials in these forms are selected when they are suitable in content and effective in treatment. They are judged in terms of their own kind of excellence and the audience for whom they are intended.

### **Special collections**

**Books by Mail:** Paperbacks and spoken word audiotape cassettes and compact disks mailed to patrons who are unable to visit the municipal libraries. This collection is provided by the Harrison Regional Library.

**Talking Books:** A sample selection provided by the Alabama Public Library Service for those who are certified blind or physically disabled. Qualified patrons interested in this program may establish access to the large collection held by the Alabama Public Library Service.

**Large Print Collection:** Fiction and nonfiction books of current interest maintained by the Pelham Public Library for patrons with visual impairments.

**English as a Second Language:** Bilingual fiction books used to instruct patrons in learning English.

### **Selection Aids**

Since Librarians are seldom able to examine a work under consideration, the following selection aids are ordinarily used to evaluate a particular title:

- . Booklist
- . Library Journal
- . Wilson Library Bulletin
- . Kirkus Review
- . New York Times Book Review . Reference Quarterly
- . Publisher's Weekly
- . School Library Journal

Selection will not be limited to the above. Other sources are also used. All sources



used are considered authoritative. Bibliographies and lists prepared by other libraries and subject authorities are checked. Occasionally publisher's brochures are consulted. Public Library Catalog, Fiction Catalog, and other standard catalogs are checked when considering replacements.

### **Duplication**

Duplication of materials occurs in response to community demand taking into consideration budget limitations and resources available within the county. Current popular books are duplicated to meet patron demand.

### **Material Withdrawals**

The professional library staff continuously reevaluates collections for physical condition, accuracy, currency, and responsiveness to user needs.

Materials that do not meet the above criteria are withdrawn. This is an integral part of collection development and maintenance.

### **Replacements**

Libraries do not necessarily replace items that are lost, damaged, or worn out. Current demand for the subject or title is considered as well as several other factors: duplicate copies, existence of adequate coverage in the field with remaining materials, copies elsewhere in the system, and availability of later or more authoritative materials. Every attempt is made to replace materials regarded as essential.

### **Gifts**

Gifts of print and non-print materials from individuals and organizations are evaluated according to the same selection policy that governs the acquisition of purchased materials. The acceptance of a gift or gifts by the library does not mean that the library will automatically add the gift/gifts to the collection. Book sales and interlibrary exchanges are examples of other ways in which gifts may be used beneficially.

Anyone desiring that gift materials be returned if they cannot be added to the library collection should make this stipulation known at the time of donation.

The library will acknowledge all gifts, but cannot determine values. This is the responsibility of the donor, who may wish to seek the opinion of a recognized authority.

### **Memorial and Honorary Donations**

Suggestions of specific subjects or titles are welcomed when memorial or honorary donations are given. Final decision, based on the library collection, rests with the library.

### **Request for Purchase Consideration**

A patron may request that the library purchase a particular item not presently included in its collection by filling out a "Request for Purchase

Consideration" form. These requests will be subject to the same criteria as all other purchased materials.

### **Public Inquiries Concerning Selection**

The library recognizes that many books are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. 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 collections and to serving the interests of readers.

A copy of this policy will be placed in every library in the system and will be available to the public should they request it. Members of the public interested in the library's collection development policy are invited to examine these pages, with the understanding that the policy includes a dedication to the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement. (See Collection Development Policy) If a complaint is made, staff members are expected to follow the policy below:

### **Complaints About Selection**

All complaints should be brought to the attention of the appropriate municipal library director. If the director is not immediately available, the staff member on duty should:

1. Listen empathetically to the patron's complaint.
2. Note the specifics of the patron's concern in writing.
3. Take contact information from the patron.
4. Personally transmit the complaint to the director at the earliest opportunity.

In answering a complaint, the library director should:

- Prepare a courteous letter stating the reason for the selection decision.
- Cite appropriate quotations from the Collection development Policy and related statements, which support the decision. (The Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement.) These are the best resources available to the patron when questions concerning selection arise.
- Make explanations brief and to the point, stating the case in terms of library policy, not as personal opinion.
- Encourage patron consultation of published reviews in authoritative journals.

## **Reconsideration of Material**

If a citizen wishes to request reconsideration of an item of an item in the collection, the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Material" form (See forms) should be completed and submitted to the local library board. The local library board and the local director will discuss and act upon a request for reconsideration, notifying the patron in writing of their decision. The director of the county library system or a designated representative will be present at any reconsideration hearing.