

NEW BEDFORD FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The New Bedford Free Public Library, through free and equal access to materials, information, and technology, enriches the lives of the community by cultivating lifelong learners and readers. The Collection Development Policy provides a framework for maintaining and growing the collection of materials to support this mission. The library assembles, preserves, and makes readily available these materials to help meet the needs of its patrons. The collection reflects a wide range of views, expressions, opinions, and interests.

The library primarily serves the residents of New Bedford regardless of age, race, creed, color, occupation, education level, or financial position. As a library certified under the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) State Aid to Public Libraries, the library participates in resource sharing with all other certified libraries in the cities and towns in Massachusetts. Residents of nearby communities who have relatively easy access to New Bedford often use the library.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Freedom to Read Statement, the Freedom to View Statement, and the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association are guiding documents to the collection development policy and are endorsed by the Board of Trustees.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY AND ITS COMMUNITY

With a population of approximately 100,000, the City of New Bedford is the world's most famous whaling era seaport, and the number one fishing port in America. This city is a wonderfully diverse, culturally rich community, with a proud present, past and future.

THE COLLECTION

To serve the varied population, the library assembles, preserves, and makes readily available a wide range of literary, cultural, education, informational, and recreational materials to help meet the needs of people of all ages. The collection reflects a wide range of views, expressions, opinions, and interests and includes popular and in demand materials, as well as special formats, in languages that reflect the community. The Paul Cyr History Room collection preserves and documents the history of New Bedford and Bristol County and includes some statewide resources.

The variety of formats collected include:

- Print: books, documents, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and maps.
- Audiovisual Media: videos on DVD and Blu-ray, books on CD and digital audio player, and music on compact disc.
- Electronic Media: databases, software, electronic books, research tools, and downloadable audio books, videos, and music. The library also provides access to the Internet. Selected Internet sites are linked to the library's website.
- Other: art works, multimedia kits, microforms, educational toys, selected audiovisual and other equipment, tools, and other miscellaneous items of interest to the community.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATERIALS SELECTION

It is the responsibility of the Board of Library Trustees to establish policies for the selection of library materials consistent with state and federal law. The actual selection of materials is delegated to the library's professional staff and based on the criteria cited below. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection under the direction of the library Director. The responsibility for selection ultimately rests with the library Director within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees of the New Bedford Free Public Library.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

General criteria for selecting library materials are listed below. An item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be acceptable.

- public demand, interest or need;
- contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent value;
- authority and accuracy in presentation;
- scarcity of information in the subject area;
- attention of critics, reviewers, and subject specialists;
- inclusion in indices for public libraries;
- merits of a work in relation to the interests and demands of the public;
- prominence, authority and/or competence of author, creator or publisher;
- timeliness of material;
- relation to existing collections;
- statement of challenging, original, or alternative point of view;
- authenticity of historical, regional or social setting;
- price, format, and ease of use;
- accessibility for multiple electronic formats.

The needs of the service area are constantly changing and the process of assessing these needs is continuous. Patrons contribute to this process by recommending materials for purchase which will be evaluated per criteria above. Staff monitor titles that are reserved by the public and subject areas which receive the heaviest use, as well as keep aware of trends, and needs in the community. Materials are not excluded from the collection solely because of frankness of expression or detail.

SELF-PUBLISHED MATERIALS

Self-published books or other materials created by local authors or producers who wish to donate a copy will undergo the same evaluation process as all other library materials.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

Professional library staff regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet customers' needs. Materials that are worn, obsolete, or unused, old editions, or unnecessarily duplicated items are removed. It is the responsibility of professional staff to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed or lost. Items are not automatically replaced. Decisions are based on need, demand, and budget.

While the same criteria used for selection are considered in removing materials from the collection, lack of use by the public, and outdated information, are prime considerations.

Selection and retention criteria may vary for specific areas of the collection and for various types of materials.

ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

Because of the diversity of library users, it is almost inevitable that materials selected to serve the needs, interests, or tastes of one group may be of no interest to, be repugnant to, or inappropriate for another segment of the library-using public.

Responsibility for children's reading, listening, or viewing material rest solely with their parents or legal guardians. In particular, the selection of materials for the adult collection is not restricted by the possibility that children or adolescents may obtain materials considered inappropriate by their own parents or legal guardians.

The library will not remove from its collection items that meet its selection criteria. It will, however, review the selection of materials to determine whether existing policies have been followed correctly. In all cases involving free access to and selection of materials, the staff and trustees are guided by the Freedom to Read Statement, the Freedom to View Statement, and the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association adopted by the Library Board of Trustees.

STORAGE OF THE COLLECTION

The library allows open access to all materials. For convenience of administration, however, materials that would suffer from damage or theft, are little-used, or require special handling, are stored in the closed stacks. Materials are not stored in these areas because they are controversial or offensive to some library patrons.

The library does not characterize library materials by labels or other devices which by intention or effect prejudice the library user against particular items.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

In accordance with the Freedom to Read Statement and the Library Bill of Rights, a wide variety of books and other materials is made available to the public. Requests to remove materials will be considered within the context of the policies set forth in this document.

Any New Bedford resident who wishes to request that a specific item be reconsidered for inclusion in the collection of materials is asked to complete the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form, available at the Information Desk. The form will be forwarded to the Director and the request will be reviewed in a timely fashion, in consultation with the librarian who selected the material. The questioned material will be reviewed, in its entirety, and once a decision has been made regarding the retention or removal of the material, a letter will be sent to the person, explaining the decision. If the person indicates dissatisfaction with the resolution, the person may appeal to the Library Board of Trustees. At their next board meeting the Board will reconsider the decision based on whether or not the particular item conforms to the Board-approved Collection Development Policy, as outlined in the "Criteria for Selection" above.

Adopted by the Board of Library Trustees

March 28, 2023