

Geauga County Public Library
Operating Policy Manual

Section: Materials Selection Policy
Number: 610
Effective Date: April 19, 2022

The Geauga County Public Library plays an active and positive role in the community. The Board of Trustees, administration, and staff of the library are committed to these tenets: (1) that free and open access to information is necessary for citizens who think and make choices for themselves; (2) that by providing access to a wide variety of facts, opinions, and ideas the library helps to create a well-informed and enlightened populace.

The library fulfills its mission when it selects and makes available materials for the education, recreations, entertainment, and enrichment of the public: that public includes patrons of all ages, of many levels of interest and ability, and of differing views and opinions. The library's collection should include both materials that represent topics of current interest, as well as those of enduring value.

The Standards for Public Library Service in Ohio, 2002 Revision, states: "The library considers the diversity of community needs, interests and demands for titles and formats in the materials selection process." Material that inspires one patron may also sometimes offend another. However, by providing free and open access to diverse information and viewpoints, the public library may serve as a cornerstone of the principles of democratic society. Inclusion of materials in the library's collection acknowledges the importance of a diversity of views and interests; it does not represent an endorsement or imply agreement with any particular viewpoint or suggest approval or certification of the content of any item.

The library does not label materials except to aid the public in finding them in the library. Labels or ratings that provide assessments such as "This material contains language which some may find offensive" are not applied by the library.

The responsibility for monitoring a child's reading, listening, and viewing rests with the parent or legal guardian. Selection of materials for the library is not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials that their parents or guardians consider inappropriate. The library staff is willing to work with the parent or guardian to determine what materials are best suited for a child's needs, within the framework or guidelines established by the parent or guardian.

All libraries are likely to contain some materials that some patrons may find objectionable. In addition, collections may not contain all materials that some patrons feel are important. In both cases, the library has established procedures to hear the voices of the community

Board of Trustees supports the latest revisions to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.

The policies and mandates of the board govern the inclusion of materials in the library collection. Overall responsibility for the collection is delegated to the director, and through him or her to library staff who are qualified by education, training, interest, and job classification to select materials.

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Because its ability to purchase and store materials is limited by the size of both its budget and its building, the library has established criteria for the addition and retention of library materials. These criteria may be applied to all formats, and include, but are not limited to:

- Current interest
- Timeliness
- Patron requests
- Educational significance
- Positive reviews
- Recommendations by professionals
- Accuracy
- Contribution to the breadth of representative viewpoints
- Value commensurate with cost and/or need
- Reputation of author/publisher/producer

The library strives to provide material that promotes continuing, independent learning, and makes an effort to provide some curriculum related materials for area schools and other teaching situations. However, the library does not usually acquire textbooks, subscriptions to professional or academic journals, or other materials that directly support a particular curriculum except as such materials might also serve the general public, e.g. basic science books. Nor does the library purchase multiple copies in sufficient quantity to meet the assigned demands of local institutions, schools and colleges, or non-library reading groups.

In order to maintain a collection that is current and relevant to the community's needs and available shelving space, library staff periodically evaluate the collection as a whole and specific items within it. When deciding what items to withdraw from the collection, staff may consider the material's condition, use, timeliness, and accuracy, among other factors.

The library serves a diverse public, and, on occasion, a patron may think that the library should add a particular title to the collection. Patrons may request the addition of a title by contacting library staff in person, and most requests are handled in this manner. However, if a patron wishes, the request may be handled more formally by using the "Materials Request" form available on the library's website. The completed form will be referred to the staff member responsible for selecting in that area of the library's collection, and the patron will be contacted about the library's decision.

The library serves a diverse public, and, on occasion, a patron may believe that a specific title or source should not be in the collection. In this instance, the patron should first discuss his or her concerns about the material with the branch manager. If, following the discussion, the patron still wishes the library to reconsider the title or source, he or she must fill out a "Materials Reconsideration" form. Forms are available at the library service

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desks. Because items are evaluated as a whole, a title will not be reconsidered unless the patron making the request has read/viewed/heard the entire item. A reconsideration form submitted without the name of the person making the objection will not be considered. Also, if the material has been previously reconsidered, it will not be reconsidered again unless the more recent request is based on substantially different reasons than an earlier request.

The request will be referred to the Library Director for committee review. The patron and Library Board of Trustees will be informed in writing of the committee's decision. If the patron is not satisfied with the decision, he or she may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees. The letter should be addressed to "President, Board of Trustees, Geauga County Public Library, 12701 Ravenwood Drive, Chardon, Ohio 44024. The board will make a decision and inform the patron in writing, usually following the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

The title under consideration will remain in the collection throughout the process to support the freedom of other patrons to read, view, or listen.

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