

**Library Materials Selection Policy**  
**Woodburn Public Library**  
February 2008

**Introduction**

A written library materials selection policy aids librarians in selecting and acquiring a useful, well-rounded collection of materials to meet the demands of the community. This policy is intended to guide, and defend, the selections made for the Woodburn Public Library by its librarians. At a philosophical level, the policy is informed by the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*, which states:

“I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.”

The principles espoused in this document should not be construed as comprehensive, as it is probably not possible, or desirable, to construct a policy that is sufficiently descriptive as to determine each and every item that is chosen for the collection. Rather, the policy should support the librarian in the use of her/his professional judgment to shape the collection.

**General Principles**

The purpose of the Woodburn Public Library is to obtain, organize, and make conveniently available to all the people of the community recreational, educational and informational materials in convenient forms, including books, audiobooks, periodicals, electronic databases, musical works, and videos. It is the policy of the library to maintain an up-to-date collection of standard materials on current issues and items in current demand.

The library will seek to meet the needs of the general public. The library will also maintain materials for the use of patrons who do not speak English, with particular emphasis on Spanish and Russian collections.

## **Responsibility for Selection**

Selection of materials is the responsibility of the librarians. Other library employees may participate in the selection process by reading reviews and making suggestions for purchase.

## **Method of Materials Selection**

Each item must be considered in terms of its own merit and intended audience. All selections, both purchases and donations, must meet some of the following criteria.

- Appeal to the interests and needs of individuals in the community.
- Long-term value as source material or interpretation.
- Vitality and originality of thought.
- Contemporary significance.
- Artistic excellence.
- Entertaining presentation.
- Accuracy and objectivity.
- Suitability of physical form to library use.
- Skill, competence and purpose of the author.
- Relation to other materials and existing areas of coverage in order to maintain a well-balanced collection.

Reviews in professionally recognized periodicals are a primary source for materials selection. Standard bibliographies, book lists by recognized authorities, and the advice of competent people in specific subject areas may also be used.

All requests from patrons for specific titles or subjects will be considered. Whenever there is enough demand or interest in a title or subject, an item with unfavorable reviews may be purchased unless it is completely without literary or social value, or the subject in question is already adequately covered by better materials.

Specialized materials of limited community interest will not ordinarily be purchased. Referral to other library collections and interlibrary loan will be used to supply patrons with these materials. Textbooks are purchased only when the information also serves the general public or is unavailable in other form.

The library keeps its collection vital and useful by retaining or replacing essential materials and by removing, on a systematic and continuous basis, those works that are worn, outdated, of little historical significance, or no longer in demand.

## **Access**

Processing and shelving materials shall in no way reflect a value judgment of the materials. There will be no labeling of any items, or records thereof, to indicate a point of view or bias. All materials will be shelved in their proper order on open shelves, freely

and easily accessible to the public, except to protect irreplaceable or frequently stolen items from theft or damage.

The library assures free access to its holdings for adults who are free to select or reject for themselves any item in the collection. Individual or group prejudice about a particular item or type of material in the collection may not preclude its use by others.

Children are not limited to the juvenile collection, although juvenile collections are kept together to facilitate use. The library cannot be responsible for a child's choice of materials. Librarians will use professional judgment in approving requests for circulation, but librarians cannot know the maturity of every child nor know every parent's wishes in this area.

The collection includes materials for the wide range of interests of the general public, including classic and popular works. Materials that are obviously pornographic, or that come within Oregon's definition of obscenity

[matter is obscene if:

(a) It depicts or describes in a patently offensive manner sadomasochistic abuse or sexual conduct;

(b) The average person applying contemporary state standards would find the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest in sex; and

(c) Taken as a whole, it lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.]

should be excluded, but no item should be eliminated solely because of coarse language, or violence, or frank discussion of sexual episodes, any one of which may be objectionable to some people, if the author is justified in what he portrays, or when such episodes are pertinent to the plot or character delineation in a work. It is the library's responsibility to protect the rights of mature patrons.

## **Gifts**

The library will encourage and accept monetary donations and gifts of library materials with the understanding that gifts of materials will be added to the collection only if they meet the same standards of value required of materials purchased. Gift materials not meeting those standards, those that are out-of-date, unneeded duplicates of items already owned, or those in a format unsuitable for library use, may be given to other organizations, sold, exchanged, or discarded.

## **Request for Withdrawal or Addition of Material**

Whenever any patron objects to the presence or absence of any library materials, the complaint will be given a fair hearing. All complaints to staff members will be referred immediately to the library manager, who will discuss the matter with the complainant.

If the patron wishes, he/she will be supplied with the “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form, appended hereto. The library manager will examine the item if it is a request for withdrawal, check reviews, and determine whether it conforms to the standards of the materials selection policy. If it is a request for addition of an item that has been rejected by the library, the library manager will consider its addition. The library manager will decide whether or not to add, withdraw, or restrict the material in question and will write to the complainant giving the reasons for the decision. The Library Board of Trustees will also be notified of the complaint and the library manager’s decision.

Materials subject to complaint shall not be removed from use pending final action. If the complainant wishes to contest the decision, he/she may present the complaint to the Library Board of Trustees for final review by letter or by making prior arrangements to be on the agenda of a board meeting. The board will consider the complaint and the library manager’s recommendation and will make the final decision.

### **Official Approval**

This Library Materials Selection Policy is approved as the official policy of the Woodburn Public Library by the Library Board of Trustees.

Nancy Kirksey  
President, Library Board of Trustees

Anna Stavinoha  
Library Manager