

Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom Policy

Purpose

The Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom Policy provides a framework for the development and growth of library collections in support of the library's mission to "enrich and improve the lives of the Alpena County community through impeccable service and equitable access to opportunities and resources. The Library strives to develop new readers, preserve, protect and share the history of Alpena and its surrounding region, and provide and program a safe space, in which the community can learn, create, and explore." The Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom Policy is designed to support the library's mission statement and serves as a guide for selecting, acquiring, maintaining, and retaining materials by establishing roles, responsibilities, and a process for addressing library user concerns.

Definitions

The term "collection" means books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, library programs, or other synonyms as they may occur in the Policy having the broadest possible meaning. This Statement of Policy applies to all library materials in the collection, including adult, young adult, and juvenile; however, this Policy and the term "Library Materials" does not apply to Internet sites available through the Library's computers or Internet collection. The Library has no control over the content of the Internet. Please see the Internet Use Policy for any issues related to computer or Internet Use.

The term "selection" refers to the decision to add, retain or withdraw materials in the collection. It does not refer to reader guidance.

The Collection

The Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library's collection aims to meet the diverse cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of Alpena County residents. To meet this commitment, the Library collects and makes information accessible in a variety of formats that represent a wide range of views, expressions, opinions, and interests.

A balanced collection attempts to represent all sides of issues as far as the availability of materials, space, and budget allow. All public library collections contain materials that some patrons may find objectionable, and in turn, public libraries may omit from the collection materials that some patrons consider important, both for purposes of balancing the collection or in instances when materials do not meet the selection criteria. This applies to materials for any age or audience. It is up to the patron to make decisions regarding the use of specific library materials, and the responsibility of parents, caregivers, and/or guardians to monitor children's use of library materials.

Responsibility for Selection

The responsibility for selection lies with the professional staff of the Library. That staff operates within the areas of service to children, young adults, and adults. Both the public and staff members may recommend materials for consideration. The ultimate responsibility for book

selection rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. The Director shall be responsible for ensuring that the funds budgeted for collection development are allocated appropriately depending upon the needs of the Library and the fulfillment of the above Goals of Material Selection.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria outlined in this section are used for all acquisitions, regardless of format, as a guide for selection decisions. An item is not required to meet all selection criteria to be accepted.

General criteria for selection:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Favorable reviews by critics that ensure serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value
- Suitability of format to library use
- Availability elsewhere including area libraries and other formats
- Price and availability within the scope of the overall budget
- Relevance to current trends and events
- Relation to the existing collection
- Extent of publicity and current or anticipated demand
- Relation to other resources in the community
- Local, state, or regional historical significance

Content criteria for selection:

- Reputation and/or significance of author, publisher, or producer
- Currency of information or comprehensiveness
- Objectivity and clarity
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Sustained interest or demand
- Usefulness of the information
- Relevance to local history collections
- Local significance of author or subject
- Provides a unique contribution to a field of study

Criteria for electronic formats:

Certain databases and digital collections may change in format or content after they are acquired. When selection involves a remote resource, such as a digital collection or database, it is possible that the content of said resource may not conform to the library's selection criteria at any given time. Professional staff will review the content of such resources on a regular basis to assess their continued value.

The following selection criteria will also be considered for electronic formats:

- Ease of use
- Available to multiple, concurrent users
- Technical quality
- Remote access
- Technical and support requirements
- Vendor data privacy practices
- Not restricted by location
- Digital licensing requirements

Gifts and Donations

Gifts of materials and items donated become the property of the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library and are accepted with the understanding that they are subject to the same selection criteria as purchased materials. Items not selected for the collection may be passed on to another institution or library, or to the Friends of the Library. Acknowledgment of gifts for tax records may be provided, but the appraisal of the value of donated items is not made.

Intellectual Freedom

As part of its value statements, the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library ensures freedom of information for all. The selection of library materials is made on the patron's right to read, listen, or view, free from censorship by others. The Library holds censorship to be a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject books and other materials of which they do not approve, they may not restrict the freedom of others.

Materials available in the Library present a diverse point of view, enabling patrons to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy. The Library selects a wide variety of materials that satisfy the diverse interests of the community. The Library upholds the right of the individual to secure these resources, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some. The library's varied collection is available to all; however, it is not expected that all items in the collection will appeal to everyone.

Responsibility for materials selected and read by children and adolescents rests with the youth's parents or legal guardians. The Library does not stand in loco parentis. Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors. Genre and shelf labels on materials exist to indicate various collections but will not be used for the purpose of restricting access or endorsing content. No materials are sequestered except to protect them from damage or theft.

The Library recognizes that a collection of diverse materials may result in some complaints or requests for reconsideration. The following procedures have been developed to ensure that complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. The following steps will be used

when an individual feels that further action is necessary to address concerns about a library resource. For the duration of this process, the material in question will remain in circulation in the library collection.

Reconsideration of Library Materials Procedures:

No material will be removed from the Library's collection until all steps in this process have been completed.

1. A patron ("Requester") who objects to library material or a program in the collection ("Library Material") will be sent to the Director.
2. The Director will discuss the Library Materials in question with the Requester, attempting to resolve the concern to both the Requester's and Library's satisfaction. The Requester will also be offered a packet of information that includes the Library's mission statement, collection development policy, the Reconsideration of Materials form, and the Library Bill of Rights.
3. If the Requester wishes to carry the request further, the Director will provide the Requester with a Reconsideration of Material form. The Requester is required to complete and submit a Reconsideration of Material form to the Library Director. The Library Board shall be notified when a reconsideration form has been received.
4. The Library Director will form a Reconsideration Committee composed of the Library Director, the Assistant Director, and either the Adult Services Librarian or Youth Services Librarian depending on the genre of the material. The Committee will review the reconsideration form and the material in question to consider whether its inclusion in the collection followed the criteria stated in the selection policy. The Reconsideration Committee will follow the operational guidelines as outlined by the American Library Association.
5. The Library Director shall make a written response to the Requester within forty (40) days of the date that the reconsideration form was submitted, informing the patron of the Committee's decision and the reasons for the decision. If the concerned patron is not satisfied with the decision of the Committee, a written appeal may be submitted within ten (10) business days after receiving the written response to the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library Board of Trustees. The Library Board will address the appeal within sixty (60) days of receiving it.

The Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library provides an impartial environment in which individuals can encounter ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. This includes materials that are considered controversial and may offend some users, but it is not in itself a reason to exclude materials from the collection. The American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements support intellectual freedom and are adopted policies of the Alpena County Public Library Board. In addition, the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q & A, the Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights, and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provide additional guidance on this subject.

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

Professional library staff regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet the educational, informational, recreational, cultural, and diverse needs of library patrons. This is achieved by routinely performing diversity audits and reviewing collections for accuracy, currency, diverse representation, and subject area gaps, and adjusting them accordingly to maintain a balanced collection.

It is the responsibility of professional staff to remove materials that are worn, obsolete, unused or underutilized, outdated, or unnecessarily duplicated from the collection, and to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed, or lost. Items are not automatically replaced, but rather, professional staff will determine if it is necessary to replace an item based on overall need, demand, budget, and shelf space.

Policy Revision

This policy may be revised and updated at any time as conditions warrant and will be reviewed at regular intervals as deemed necessary by the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted November 16, 2022