

The Public Library of Brookline

Collection Development Policy

Mission

The Public Library of Brookline promotes discovery, connection, and opportunity for all residents. Through our diverse resources and innovative programs, we aim to enrich the lives of our citizens through free access to information in many different media and formats. We are a cultural destination and a site for learning and recreation, as well as a place where people come together to exchange ideas. We strive to be both a cornerstone of our community and a gateway to explorations of a wider world.

Purpose

This policy guides staff decision-making in the evaluation, selection, and management of the collection to meet community needs and interests while balancing the Library's budget and space. It also serves to reinforce the Library's commitment to the foundational principles of intellectual freedom and access to diverse perspectives. Additionally, this policy is intended to inform the general public of the principles which guide staff through the selection process.

Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for collection development resides with the Library Director in accordance with the policies established by the Board of Library Trustees. The Supervisor of Collection Development and other professional library staff assist the Director by performing duties such as recommending materials budget allocations, selecting materials and removing materials from the collection.

About the Collection

The Library's collection includes materials in various media formats to meet the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of patrons at all levels of literacy and with respect to the languages spoken in the community. The collection is distributed among the three Library locations and include a host of electronic resources available to patrons for in-library and home use. Select electronic resources are available only to Brookline residents.

The Library is a member of the Minuteman Library Network, the Massachusetts Library System and OCLC, Inc. all of which provide access to materials beyond Brookline's collection. When patrons request materials not owned by the Library, every effort is made to locate these items through either the Commonwealth Catalog or interlibrary loan.

Selection and Evaluation Guidelines

Budget allocation by subject and format is based on public demand, usage statistics, and available resources. Library staff utilize professional judgment, subject knowledge and the criteria listed below in making collection development decisions, including decisions about choosing titles and identifying appropriate quantities for purchase. Reserve levels in the circulating collection are monitored after purchase to respond to public demand.

Materials are acquired in multiple formats when appropriate, including print, audiovisual, and digital resources. Certain materials are selected to address local community needs.

Materials and collections are not necessarily identical between library locations. An item need not meet all of these criteria to be selected. An item need not meet all of the criteria listed below to be selected.

The following general criteria are incorporated to evaluate, select, and/or replace materials for the collection:

- Relevance to the interests and needs of the community
- Extent of publicity, critical review, awards won, and current or anticipated demand
- Local, historical, and/or cultural significance of the author or subject
- Contribution to a well-rounded collection
- Reputation and qualifications of the author, publisher or producer, with preference generally given to titles vetted in the editing and publishing industry
- Accuracy and timeliness
- Publication date, price, availability and materials budget
- Relevance to early literacy
- Responsiveness to school age and teen interest, and scholastic support and enrichment
- Format's durability, relevance, suitability, and ease of use
- Availability of content through the internet, subscription databases, or the Minuteman Library Network
- Physical space limitations
- Condition of the material

Materials may be excluded from the Library's collections for inaccurate information, lack of integrity, sensationalism, intent to promote hatred or intolerance, and content that is too limited or specialized. In the case of controversial topics, variety and balance of opinion are sought whenever available. Textbooks are excluded unless they provide the best or only source of information on a subject or provide another perspective on existing collection materials.

Deselection and Collection Maintenance

The Library's collection is subject to continual change. Deselection of material from the circulating collections is a vital part of successful collection maintenance. Continuous evaluation is necessary and materials are regularly removed to maintain a current, accurate, and appealing collection and to facilitate its ease of use. Decisions are influenced by patterns of use, the capacity of each location, and the holdings of other libraries that may specialize in a given subject matter. Consideration is given to retaining items that have enduring value to the community.

The following criteria are used in selecting materials for deselection:

- Damage or poor condition
- Number of copies in the collection
- Relevance to the needs and interest of the community
- Current demand and frequency of use
- Accuracy and timeliness
- Local interest
- Availability elsewhere including other libraries and online

- Professional judgement

Deselected items may be offered to other libraries or disposed of through the Friends of the Brookline Library book sale, literacy focused non-profits, or recycling.

Patron Requests for Purchase

Patrons may request that the Library purchase items it does not own using the online Purchase Request form. Each request is reviewed for inclusion in the collection using the selection criteria listed above. An item's availability through the Commonwealth Catalog or through interlibrary loan is also considered when deciding whether or not to add an item to the Library's collection.

Gifts and Donations

When the Library receives a monetary donation for the purchase of materials, selection is made in accordance with this Collection Development Policy.

The Library occasionally accepts donations of materials in usable condition for consideration as additions to its collections. All gift materials added to the collection must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. The Library reserves the right to use any donation as it sees fit, including the conditions of display, storage and access. Upon receipt, all donations become the property of the Library. The Library does not return nor track the status of donations.

Donations not added to the collection may be given to the Friends of the Brookline Library for their book sale. Proceeds from the Friends Book Sale directly benefit the Library. Donations may also be given to a third-party vendor or may be disposed of through other means determined by the Library.

Intellectual Freedom and Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Library respects the freedom of information for its users and adheres to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Freedom to Read](#), and [Freedom to View](#) statements. The Library seeks to provide information on all viewpoints.

Language, situations, or subjects that may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify material whose value is to be judged in its entirety. The Library recognizes parents and legal guardians as the parties responsible for the reading and viewing habits of their children. The selection of materials for the adult collection is not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate.

Brookline residents requesting reconsideration and removal of items in the collection may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form. Residents may only fill out one Request for Reconsideration form per item. The Library Director or their designee will carefully review all such requests in relation to the Library's mission and selection criteria and will respond to the patron in writing.

Review of Collection Development Policy

In order to maintain a dynamic and responsive collection that meets the current needs of the community, this policy will be reviewed regularly by the Supervisor of Collection Development, the Policy Committee and the Board of Library Trustees.

Voted by the Board of Library Trustees 11 April 2007

Amended: 12 April 2011

10 May 2016

12 November 2025

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF BROOKLINE
RESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

AUTHOR:

TITLE:

FORMAT (book, magazine, recording, other):

What is it about this material that you object to? Please be specific (cite pages, for example).

What are your concerns about this material?

Do you see anything good about this material?

Have you read the entire book, seen the entire film, listened to the complete recording?

Are you aware of the critical opinion (published reviews, for example) of this material?

What other materials of quality or relevance on this subject would you recommend?

Have you read the Library's Collection Development Policy?

Do you think that the selection of this material is in accordance with this policy?

Is there a more suitable location in the Library for this material? If so, where?

Do you represent a group? If yes, what group?

Your name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email:

Voted by the Library Board of Trustees November 10, 1987

Amended: May 10, 2016; November 12, 2025