

NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide the staff of the New Britain Public Library (hereinafter referred to as the Library) in their decision making and to inform community members and other stakeholders of the principles on which the Library bases materials selection and collection maintenance decisions.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The Library supports the principles documented in the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements of the American Library Association. These three documents can be accessed online through the following links:

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/Librarybill>

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/freedomreadstatement>

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/freedomviewstatement>

The Library upholds the right of the individual to access information even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. Race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and political/social view will not be used as criteria for exclusion of materials. Library materials should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole.

Library materials are provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. The Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas. Materials are intended to broaden perspectives, support recreational reading, encourage and facilitate reading skills, supplement educational needs, stimulate and widen interests, lead to recognition and appreciation of literature and reflect the diversity of the community and our world. The reading and viewing activity of children is the responsibility of parents and caregivers, who guide and oversee their children's development.

SCOPE

The Library aims to build an accessible collection of materials in a variety of formats and languages that represent the broad experiences, viewpoints, and cultural values of the entire New Britain community, while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

The Library print collections include regular and large print books, and periodicals, Non-print materials include a wide variety of audiovisual materials and electronic media. Library staff regularly evaluate the collection and the user needs to ensure the relevance of the collection.

Reference materials may support school instruction, some independent study and routine public inquiries, but may not be sufficient to support higher-level academic courses or advanced independent study.

Additionally, the Library also offers opportunities for learning and discovery through online resources and a variety of physical items through its Library of Things collection.

Digital Collection

The digital collection includes research and learning databases, e-books and other downloadable and streaming media. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials.

The digital collection evolves as new formats and products become available. Subscription services are continuously evaluated based on usage.

Library of Things

The Library of Things collection provides access to games, technology and other objects. The collection is an extension of the Library's commitment to community resource sharing and its holdings will continue to adapt as user needs change.

Local History Room

The New Britain Public Library's Local History collection focuses on materials related to the history of New Britain, Connecticut, as well as genealogies and family histories for those with significant ties to the city. To a lesser extent, it includes materials about the surrounding region and the State of Connecticut, as long as they help place New Britain in a broader historical context. The collection prioritizes acquiring resources that contribute to the understanding of the city's social, civic, religious, economic, and cultural life, both past and present.

COLLECTION GOALS

Within its physical and financial limitations, the Library builds collections and provides access to materials that will:

1. Address community needs
2. Introduce and define a subject
3. Support school instruction and public inquiries
4. Facilitate lifelong education and self-understanding
5. Provide various points of view
6. Increase cultural awareness
7. Represent formats as community member demand warrants
8. Entertain

The Library assists community members in securing information not found in its collections by offering Interlibrary Loan services and providing access to online catalogs and databases.

SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTION

Responsibility of Selection

Responsibility for the selection of materials rests with the Library Director under the authority of the Board of Trustees. The Library Director will delegate selection of materials to staff members qualified for this duty by education, training, interest, and job classification.

Community members and staff are encouraged to recommend materials to be added to the collection. All recommendations will be evaluated using the same criteria as general purchases.

Selection Criteria

Library staff apply training, knowledge, and expertise along with the following criteria to select materials for the collection. An item need not meet all of these standards to be added to the collection. Some materials may be selected primarily in terms of artistic merit or scholarship, while others are selected to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of our community members.

The Library collection, taken as a whole, will be an unbiased and diverse source of information, representing as many viewpoints as possible. The Library does not add materials of a strictly proselytizing nature and may decline donations of materials for which there is no demonstrated demand.

All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following criteria:

- Quality, accuracy, and timeliness of content
- Diversity of perspectives and representation of marginalized communities
- Relationship to the existing collection and other material on the subject
- Format accessibility, durability, and ease of use
- Present and potential relevance to community needs and interests
- Significance of author, subject, or creator of the work
- Cultural and/or local importance
- Critical assessments in a variety of professional journals and media sources
- Date of Publication
- Limits of space, budget, and availability

Additional Selection Criteria for Library of Things:

- Staff resources
- Level of ongoing maintenance required
- Ease of use
- Liability concerns
- Community needs and local availability
- Environmental sustainability

Additional Selection Criteria for Local History Room

- Materials that preserve the history of New Britain
- Physical condition of the item
- Staff resources available to process collections

Gifts & Donations

The Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials for the collection and applies to them the same standards of selection that govern purchases. All donations must be in good condition and free of odor, mold or other damage. Donations are evaluated by the Friends of the New Britain Library for their disposition. When appropriate, donations may be added to the Library collection.

The Library reserves the right to decline any donation that is not relevant or does not fit the scope of the collection; is a duplicate of existing materials; is in a condition that would require excessive conservation efforts; or consists of unidentified photographs, letters, or documents. Three-dimensional objects will generally not be considered due to space constraints.

Self-published works

The library will consider self-published works for acquisition when they include unique local content, fit the scope of the library's Collection Development Policy, and meet the selection criteria. Materials receiving an independent, positive review in one or more of the major review journals are given preference. The library does not accept works in electronic format.

Local authors

Local authors (those who reside in Connecticut or wrote their work while they were residents) may fill out our Local Author donation form. Only one donated copy of a work will be accepted. Upon donation, books become library property and will be cataloged, shelved, and withdrawn at the library's discretion. Donated books must be in new condition, professionally printed in a format suitable for library circulation, and published within the last three years.

Collection Maintenance

Collections are regularly and systematically reviewed by staff members who have been assigned to this task by the Library Director. It is their responsibility to maintain quality and to preserve the physical condition of materials. Materials which no longer meet Library collection goals will be withdrawn according to accepted professional practices such as those outlined in this policy. The disposition of withdrawn Library materials will be at the Library Director's discretion, although most will be sold through Friends of the New Britain Public Library book sales. Materials that are donated, or have been given in memory of others, will be evaluated using the same criteria as other purchased materials.

Criteria for withdrawing materials:

- Age of material and currency of format
- Current demand and frequency of use
- Factual accuracy
- Physical condition
- Whether the item has been superseded by a new edition or better copy
- Number of copies in the collection
- Literary or scientific merit, or awards received
- Relevance to the needs and interests of the community
- Space availability

Criteria for Replacement

Library staff assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, withdrawn, or lost. Replacement of withdrawn materials is not automatic. The decision to replace items is determined by:

- Availability through consortium libraries or Interlibrary Loan
- Popular interest
- Adequacy of coverage in the subject area
- Significance in subject area
- Cost and availability to purchase

Controversial materials

As part of its mission to provide ready access to the wide diversity of ideas and information, the Library strives to collect materials that provide a variety of viewpoints on issues and subjects. It recognizes that some of these may be controversial and that any given item has the potential to offend some members of the community. Selection of materials is not made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but on the basis of the principles and guidelines stated in the Collection Development Policy. Likewise, the Library will not eliminate items purchased under due consideration solely because they might displease a particular individual or group.

Request for reconsideration

Reading is a private activity, and individuals must examine materials as to suitability for their own purposes and make their own decisions to read or not to read particular items.

Responsibility for the use of children's Library materials rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of Library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Community members may raise an objection to an item in the Library's collection. Please see the Reconsideration Policy for further information and guidelines.