

Collection Development Policy

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Lehigh Public Library is to provide materials, programs, and access to electronic resources that will enrich and satisfy the personal, recreational, and educational needs of its patrons.

Purpose of Collection Development Policy

The collection development policy is intended to provide guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials which anticipate and meet the needs of the Lehigh community. It directly relates the collection to the library's mission statement and defines the scope and standards of the various collections.

As the community changes, the library will need to reassess and adapt its collection to reflect the new areas of interest and concern. The collection development policy will be periodically evaluated and revised as necessary to provide guidance for implementing changes in the collection.

Access

The library will uphold the freedom to read as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View Statement adopted by the American Library Association. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or their own minor children, the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted. The library does not stand in loco parentis (in the place of parents). Parents and guardians, not the library staff, have the responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing choices of their own minor children.

Responsibility of Selection

The authority and responsibility for the selection of Library materials rests ultimately with the Library Director. The responsibility for initial selection of materials can be shared by members of staff. All staff members and the general public are encouraged to recommend material for consideration.

Selection Criteria

All materials, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the criteria listed below. An item need not meet all of these standards in order to be added to the collection.

- Popular interest and currency information
- Historical significance of material
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Accuracy and authority
- Local emphasis
- Readability or ability to sustain interest
- Treatment of subject to age of intended audience
- Reputation of author, publisher, producer, or illustrator
- Creative, literary or technical quality
- Critical assessments in a variety of journals
- Format and ease of use
- Circulation as monitored through our automated system
- Cost and availability
- Space considerations of the existing physical library
- Relationship to existing materials in the collection
- Relationship to materials in other area libraries

Suggestions for purchase

The library strongly encourages input from the Lehigh community concerning the collection. A suggestion for the purchase procedure enables Lehigh citizens to request that a particular item or subject be purchased by the library. All suggestions for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. It is the library's intent that suggestions for purchased be used to help the library in developing collections which serve the interests and needs of the community.

Gifts and Memorials

The Lehigh Public Library accepts gifts (including publisher's gift copies) for the library's collection that fall within needed subject categories, as determined by the Library Director and the staff.

Gift additions must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials and are subject to the following limitations:

- The library retains unconditional ownership of the gift.
- The library makes the final decision on the use or other disposition of the gift.
- The library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing and access to the materials.
- Personal property, art objects, portraits, antiques and other museum objects will be accepted on the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- The library does not appraise gifts or provide evaluation of gifts for tax deductions but will acknowledge receipt of gifts in writing via the Lehigh Public Library Material Donation Form when requested at the time of the donation.
- The library will abide by the conditions set forth in the Lehigh Public Library Lehigh History Written Release Form for all Lehigh History donations.
- Monetary gifts to the collection are welcome and may be designated as memorials.
- Donations of money designated for the periodicals and newspapers collection are accepted in lieu of actual subscriptions. These contributions offset the high cost of periodical subscriptions and maintain the continuity of subscriptions year to year.
- Donor of the funds may suggest subjects or titles to be acquired with their donation, but the library reserves the right of final decision.

Controversial Materials and Reconsideration of Materials

Individual items, which in and for themselves may be controversial or offensive to some patrons or staff, may be selected if their inclusion will contribute to the range of viewpoints in the collection as a whole and the effectiveness of the library's ability to serve its community.

Despite the care taken in selection, it is natural for differences of opinion regarding suitable material to arise. Thus, individuals may discuss their personal objections to the inclusion or exclusion of a specific item with the Library Director. If the discussion does not satisfy the individual, they may

choose to complete a Request for Reconsideration available at the circulation desk. This form shall be signed by the complainant and returned to the Director for formal review. The questioned material will be reviewed, in its entirety, and once a decision has been made regarding the retention or removal of the material, the Director will issue a letter to the person with an explanation of the decision.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision made by the Director, they may appeal to the Lehigh Public Library Board of Trustees within fourteen (14) regular business days after the mailing date of the decision. The Board of Trustees will reconsider the decision at its next regularly scheduled meeting, allowing for fourteen (14) calendar days review time by the Board. The person appealing the decision shall be notified of the date, time and location of when the Library Board will hear the matter. The person may appear at the meeting to be heard. Should the person requesting the appeal be unable to appear in person, they may ask the Library Board to consider the merits of the request based upon a written statement. The Library Board of Trustees shall hear the matter and vote upon it in accordance with their by-laws. The decision of the Lehigh Public Library Board of Trustees shall be final.

*Policy updated with board approval 4/10/2023