

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy is the official statement of NEGRLS's commitment to building collections that attempt to meet the needs of the public. Identifying the needs and expectations of library users and finding the means to meet or exceed them is a fundamental principle of public library service.

This document presents policies that determine the selection of materials and the maintenance of the collection of NEGRLS. Selection policies and maintenance procedures are presented as they are currently being implemented, but collection management policies and procedures are constantly evolving and will undergo change as priorities are reevaluated and reassigned.

The System's commitment to the continued improvement of the quality of service and of the processes of delivering that service is the core principle of the NEGRLS Collection Development Policy.

The collection ranges from current bestsellers, to a special collection of genealogy materials, to audiovisuals, to children's materials. The system subscribes to numerous magazines and newspapers. Formats presently in the collection include books, audiocassettes, compact discs, DVD's, videocassettes, and periodicals. Reference materials provide in-depth and up-to-date resources for the educational, professional, and recreational needs of the community. Materials in foreign languages are available in various formats in both the adult and children's departments in response to the needs of each county's varied ethnic populations.

The Collection Development Policy has been adopted by the System Board of Trustees to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

SELECTION RESPONSIBILITY

The Director delegates to affiliated library managers, who are qualified by a knowledge of their respective communities and collections, the authority to interpret and guide the application of the selection policy in making day-to-day decisions. Standard selection tools are consulted and recommendations from all staff members and the general public are taken into consideration. The Director and/or the Acquisitions/Catalog Services Librarian may make recommendations to Affiliate Managers regarding inclusion of materials in the collection and appropriate classification of materials. When regional recommendations are not implemented, resolution of any resulting issues will rest with the county library board rather than with the regional board.

Each affiliated library manager has the authority to make final decisions on the withdrawal of circulating materials, the rebinding of books, replacement orders, and the addition of gifts to the collection.

The Affiliate Services Librarian, the Acquisitions/Catalog Services Librarian, the Program Services Specialist, and the affiliated library managers have the authority to review various collections in the library, evaluate the contents, and submit written reports to the Library Director. Each affiliated library manager has the authority to initiate any weeding projects as a result of collection evaluations.

SELECTION GUIDELINES

Selection is a discerning and interpretive process, involving a general knowledge of the subject and its important literature, a familiarity with the materials in the collection, an awareness of the bibliographies of the subject, and recognition of the needs of the community.

The System recognizes that some materials may be considered controversial and that any item may offend some patrons. Selections are made solely on the merits of the work in relation to building the collection and to serving the interests of the readers in general rather than on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval. NEGRS asserts its duty to keep on its shelves a representative selection of books on all subjects of interest to its readers, including materials on all sides of controversial questions, so long as they meet the criteria stated in this policy. Responsibility for children's use of library materials rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection decisions will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may be accessible to use by children due to lack of appropriate parental supervision.

CRITERIA - Factors to be considered in adding materials to the collection are: literary or artistic merit; enduring value; accuracy; authoritativeness; social significance; importance of subject matter to the collection; timeliness or permanence of the work; popular demand; cost; scarcity of material on the subject and availability elsewhere; quality and suitability of the format; regional interest or works by local authors, artists, publishers or producers; and availability of critical reviews. Other considerations may be applicable in specific subject areas. Selectors should choose materials that will build a well-rounded collection which includes all viewpoints and opinions and which will meet patrons' needs. The library collection will include as wide a selection as possible within the confines of budgetary and space limitations.

TOOLS - Professional journals; trade journals; subject bibliographies; publishers' catalogs and promotional materials; reviews from reputable sources; lists of recommended titles; and sales representatives for specific materials. Purchase suggestions from patrons are also an important source.

FORMATS - Materials and equipment are collected and maintained in a wide variety of formats. Not all formats are necessarily available in each member library.

DONATIONS - The library system welcomes gifts of materials or money to purchase materials with the understanding that such gifts be retained, located, relocated, or disposed of at the discretion of the affiliated library receiving the gift. Gift plates and letters of acknowledgment are appropriate stipulations by a donor, but other requirements should be evaluated carefully before the gift is accepted. All gifts become part of the general collection and should not require special circulation procedures. Material selected for the collection must meet established material selection criteria. Gifts of materials may be acknowledged but not appraised.

The library may not accept as a gift any printed or manuscript items or any objects if the condition of acceptance requires exhibition of the item or that the item be kept as a unit. In accordance with collection development policies, the library will rarely accept objects other than printed, manuscript or audiovisual materials.

WEEDING AND WITHDRAWAL

In order to maintain an up-to-date, useful collection, worn and obsolete materials are continuously weeded. Materials may also be withdrawn if they are little used or superseded by a new edition or better work on the same subject. Depth and breadth of varying degrees are desirable in various areas of the collection.

Titles are withdrawn from the collection through systematic weeding or because of loss or physical damage. The decision as to whether materials which are withdrawn because of loss or damage are replaced is made using the same criteria as for selection. Other factors applicable when deciding on replacements include the number of copies of a title the library owns, the availability of newer materials on the subject, the importance of the work in its subject area, its listing in standard bibliographies, and its cost.

Systematic evaluation and weeding of the collection is required in order to keep the collection responsive to patrons' needs, to insure its vitality and usefulness to the community, and to make room for newer materials. For this reason, subject areas should be reassessed for relevancy and currency every two years, at a minimum, although certain areas may require more frequent review.

Weeding identifies damaged items, ephemeral materials which are no longer used, out-of-date materials, extra copies which are not being used, and materials which are inappropriate for the collection. Weeding also helps a selector evaluate the collection by identifying areas or titles where additional materials are needed; older editions which need to be updated; and subjects, titles, or authors that are no longer of interest to the community. Titles can be checked against standard bibliographies in the subject to see if the items have historical or literary value. Holdings which are readily accessible in other libraries may also be considered when making weeding decisions. Withdrawn materials which are in good condition may be given to other libraries or the affiliated Friends of the

Library or put in a library book sale. Materials withdrawn from the reference collection which retain informational value may be transferred to the circulating collection or offered to other libraries.

CATALOGING

All materials cataloging will be done at the System Services Office by the Acquisitions/Cataloging Librarian. State regulations require that all cataloging be PINES/Evergreen compliant and accomplished by or under the guidance of a cataloger trained in the PINES/Evergreen system and having knowledge of the MARC record format.

INVENTORY

Inventories may be conducted by affiliated libraries as necessary so long as the work does not detract from the libraries' primary mission of public service. The Region will assist with producing the necessary reports and information to conduct the inventory, and will provide assistance when possible. Full inventories will not be conducted during high usage times, such as the Summer Reading Program. In accordance with current best library practices, affiliates are encouraged to conduct an ongoing inventory by sections to minimize inconvenience to library users.

RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

An obligation of the public library is to reflect within its collection differing points of view on controversial or debatable subjects. NEGRLS does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply an endorsement of the author's viewpoint or the contents of that item. The library will not indicate through the use of labels or other devices particular philosophies contained in an item. To do so is to establish in the reader's mind a judgment before the reader has had the opportunity to examine the item personally. The library is opposed to any group or philosophy which aims at closing any path to knowledge.

Patrons who request the reconsideration of library materials will be asked to put their request in writing by completing and signing the form included in the "Challenged Materials Policy." The procedure detailed in that section will be used to resolve the request.

Retention or deletion of materials will be determined by the Board's standards of selection as outlined in this policy.