

Policy: Collection Development

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The Bristol Public Library offers materials in a variety of formats to represent a wide range of viewpoints and opinions, enrich life-long learning, contribute insight into human and social conditions, foster civic engagement and provide enjoyment.

The Library seeks to balance its collection of materials and resources so that it is broadly inclusive rather than exclusive of ideas. In a democratic society, individuals are free to form and express their own opinions. The Library does not take sides on issues, but takes seriously its role to provide information on opposing sides of issues, even when they may be controversial.

The responsibility for the reading, viewing and listening of minors rests with parents or guardians. The Library affirms its support for and adoption of the principles set forth in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its Freedom to Read statement.

Materials are judged as a whole rather than on isolated passages. The criteria for the selection of Library materials include:

- Community interest and demand
- Literary or artistic merit
- Accuracy and authoritativeness
- Enduring value
- Social significance
- Collection balance
- Availability
- Cost
- Digital availability and access

Ultimate responsibility for selection rests with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. Selection responsibility is delegated to Library staff, who base purchase decisions on information gathered from a wide variety of media, including publications that provide reviews of materials as a service to libraries.

As indicated above, community interest is an important consideration. In order to gauge community interest, the Library welcomes customer suggestions for new materials. Suggestion forms are available at the public desks of the Main Library and the Avoca Branch Library.

The Library reserves the right to defer to interlibrary loan as an option to purchase in providing materials to patrons.

The Library does not provide textbooks or specialized materials for public school, community college, or university curricula unless such is needed for collection purposes.

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate format(s) for Library use. New formats are considered for the collections when need and interest from the community has been established, budget support is available, and the format can be successfully adapted for Library circulation or use.

Library staff reviews materials regularly for condition, relevance and frequency of use to maintain dynamic collections that meet customer interests and information needs. Materials withdrawn from the Library collections are sold in the Gift Shop, donated to local non-profit organizations, or recycled.

Objections to materials in the collection are handled through the Library's Request for Reconsideration Policy.