

Collection Development Policy

The **purpose** of this policy is to act as a blueprint for Swarthmore Public Library's (hereafter referred to as "the Library") collection, guiding staff in decision-making regarding the selection, management, and preservation of the Library's collection and informing the public about its collection development process.

Ultimate responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director, who operates under the authority of the Board of Trustees. The Director then designates professional staff who make individual selection decisions.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Library defines its primary service audience as residents of Swarthmore Borough. As a secondary audience, we serve all residents of Delaware County who are eligible for service through reciprocal borrowing agreements.

Swarthmore is a tree-lined residential community of distinctive homes and quiet neighborhoods, anchored by the campus of Swarthmore College. At the center of the Borough is a downtown core of unique, independent shops and services. Our community is proud of its rich arts, philanthropic, and educational mind-set.

While surrounding areas are served by different members of the Delaware County Library System, many residents of those communities also use the resources and services of the Library. The Library has consistently ranked at the top of the list in per capita circulation; as of 2014 per capita circulation was at 13, continuing our position as the highest per capita circulating library in the state. As our community continues to change, the Library will continue to reassess and change its collection to reflect new community needs.

SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Selection Criteria

Library staff utilize professional judgment and expertise in making collection development decisions, including decisions about choosing titles, identifying quantities for purchase, and selecting locations for materials. Anticipated demand, community interests, strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, system-wide availability, physical space limitations, and available budgets are all factors taken into consideration.

The following criteria are used to evaluate and select items for the collection. An item need not meet all of these criteria to be selected:

- Content
- Accuracy of the information
- Comprehensiveness
- Enduring significance or interest
- Integrity
- Purpose
- Quality
- Representation of controversial or diverse points of view
- Cost in relation to use and/or enhancement to the collection
- Critical reviews
- Current and anticipated appeal
- Format
- Local interest
- Relation to the existing collection
- Significance of the author/creator or publisher
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Support of library programs and initiatives
- Timeliness

Gifts

The Library accepts gifts of materials for the collection using the same selection criteria that are applied to purchased materials. Decisions regarding the placement and use of gifts are the responsibility of library staff.

The following are guidelines for the management of gifted materials:

- Not all gifts are added to the collection. Gift materials not added to the collection will be given to Friends of the Swarthmore Public Library for public sale or further disposition as the Library deems suitable.
- The Library retains unconditional ownership of the gift.
- The Library does not place a value on gifts, nor provide appraisals for income tax or any other purpose.
- The Library is pleased to accept monetary gifts intended for the purchase of library materials when the donors' intentions for the gifts and the Library's collection development objectives are consistent.

Collection Evaluation & Maintenance

Library staff utilize professional judgment and expertise in deciding which materials to retain, replace, repair or remove from the collection.

De-selection is an integral part of collection development. De-selected materials will, at the Library's discretion, be donated to Better World Books, donated to the Friends of the Swarthmore Public Library, or disposed of through other means determined by the Library.

Along with the same criteria used to select new materials, general criteria for retaining, replacing, repairing or de-selecting include:

- Availability of item in alternative formats
- Cost of repair
- Historical significance, interest, or value
- Physical condition
- Relative usefulness of item
- Space considerations
- Superseded, inaccurate, or out-of-date content
- Usage
- Preservation

Intellectual Freedom

The Library is guided by the Library Bill of Rights set forth by the American Library Association. The Library has a responsibility to provide a balanced collection with access to material reflecting diverse ideas through which any side of a question, cause, or movement may be explored, provided that the material meets the outlined selection criteria. Inclusion of an item in the collection does not mean that the Library endorses any theory or statement contained in those materials and resources.

Decisions about what materials are suitable for particular children should be made by their parents or guardians. The Library does not take responsibility for supervising children in their choices of library materials.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from customers concerning materials selected or not selected for the collection. If a customer questions the content, tone or placement of an item in the collection, he/she should first address the concern with a Library staff member. Customers who wish to continue their request for reconsideration of library material may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form.

All requests for reconsideration must be made directly to the entity owning the title in question. The policies and procedures of the owning entity will govern any such request. Patrons may request ownership information of any item in the collection.

After receiving the completed request for reconsideration, the Library Director will evaluate all requests within the context of the Collection Development Policy. During this process, the material in question will remain accessible to Library customers. The complainant will be notified by letter of the Library Director's decision.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Director's decision, s/he may lodge a formal complaint with the Board of Trustees. The Board will then discuss and issue a final decision at the next scheduled meeting.

***Adopted by the Swarthmore Public Library Board of Trustees November 17, 2015
Revised September 6, 2022.***