Collection Development Standards

Statement of Purpose -- 2017
These standards serve as the guiding principles for collecting library materials for DC Public Library. It is a plan and a guide for those who are responsible for developing and managing the Library’s collection of books and other library materials. Its goal is to:

- Support the mission and values of the library
- Define the purpose and scope of the collection
- Guide staff in their work around the collection in the library.

Collection development standards do not replace the judgment of staff. However, in combination with the Library’s Weeding Guidelines, they:

- provide a written framework for planning, building, selecting and maintaining the Library’s information resources in a cost-effective and user-relevant manner
- state priorities and indicates boundaries to assist staff in choosing, maintaining and evaluating materials that best meet the needs of the community while maintaining budgetary responsibility
- spell out limits of acceptable action and grant freedom to exercise professional judgment when operating within those limits
- describe how library materials are selected, maintained and evaluated
- inform the public about the principles of material selection and the use of criteria to select and remove materials

Mission of the Collection
DC Public Library supports the diverse residents of the District, whose needs and interests can vary by neighborhood. The collection should reflect those differences, and meet those needs whenever possible. To do this the Library purchases and promotes works that can be entertaining, well-written, meaningful, educational and informative. As a result the Library’s collection is a series of contradictions. It contains old and new, low tech and high tech, the predictable and unexpected. The Library’s collection offers District residents what they want and need in an efficient and timely manner. While the past is valued in both content and context, the Library is constantly preparing for future developments. We strive to balance both while meeting the current expectations of the District’s residents.

To do this the Library:

- regularly reviews different information sources to remain aware of the characteristics of the communities we serve.
- seeks and responds to public input concerning materials.
- choose materials based on the DC Public Library’s “Know Your Neighborhood” strategic plan.
- investigate and purchase appropriate innovative platforms and formats that enhance the collection and/or meet community needs.

The collection:
• is available from all library locations, home, work, and online 24/7
• is available using current communication and mobile technologies
• is available in many formats, including digital
• is responsive to changes in the District
• is guided by the Library’s goals and priorities, as well as its limitations
• provides efficiency and good value for the people we serve
• is fresh and weeded regularly, using the Weeding Guidelines
• is fun and popular
• is thought provoking
• contains works of lasting value
• is supportive of school curriculum when possible, but not a substitute for school provided content

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
Materials available in the library present a diversity of viewpoints, allowing people of all ages access to the information needed to make informed decisions, be entertained, support new interests or any other myriad of needs. The Library must do this while operating as a good steward of public funds. This requires constant re-evaluation of current selection and distribution plans.

The subject specialists, and the Collections Department as a whole, are responsible for the addition of new materials to the collection. All staff members and the general public are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration. In order to facilitate this, the Library maintains a Suggest a Title form on the website.

In general DC Public Library makes materials purchases based on:
• user interest
• importance of subject matter
• contemporary significance or permanent value
• timeliness of material
• value of maintaining already established collection depth
• prominence of the author
• accuracy
• local emphasis
• suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
• critical reception
• award and recognition
• format suitable for a library collection

Collection strategies may include:
• purchasing multiple, or additional, copies of titles in response to demand
• following best practices for urban public libraries
• building or creating discrete collections to meet the needs of a community
• changing purchasing strategies based on trends in format and/or technology
Materials selectors, working in conjunction with vendors and publishers, use a variety of methods to purchase new publications. They consult professional review sources, such as *Library Journal, Publisher’s Weekly, Kirkus*, along with numerous other sources. Selection practices also rely on the subject expertise of other library staff or community members, suggestions from library users, promotions in local bookstores, media and standard bibliographies. Selection methods are constantly evolving and vary for different types of materials. All formats are made available from the library’s website. DC Public Library also includes items in languages other than English.

**GIFTS**

Due to costs associated with adding items to the collection the Library does not usually accept non-cash gifts for library materials borrowed by the public.

**COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

A Library’s collection is constantly changing to keep up with the needs of the community it serves. Staff are involved in this process in a number of ways on a daily basis. The Library’s weeding guidelines help to lay out reasons and the process for removing materials from the collection.

The Library’s collection is maintained through constant evaluation by library staff to ensure its usefulness and relevance to the community. This evaluation relies on the staff’s professional expertise to assess the content of the collection and the ever-changing needs of the community. Library materials may be removed from a location or the overall collection for any of the following reasons:

- obsolescence: the material is no longer timely, accurate, or relevant
- damage or poor condition
- space limitations
- number of copies in the collection
- insufficient use or lack of customer demand
- availability at other library locations or in other formats

**GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS**

DC Public Library collects both federal and local government documents. It is a virtual selective depository for the federal government. A selection of digital and hard copies of D.C. government materials are available in Special Collections for reference.

**PURCHASING DECISIONS**

The Library takes into account intellectual freedom, censorship and the law in its purchasing decision process. We recognize that at times residents may voice concerns about a title and that sometimes a title in the collection may need to be reconsidered.

To challenge an item, use the [Contact Us](#) form available on the website. DC Public Library supports the American Libraries’ Bill of Rights and the principles of intellectual freedom which are laid out below.

- We will provide books, programs and other library resources that present a wide
range of views on current and historical issues for the interest, information and enlightenment of the community.

- We will not exclude materials because of their origin or background or the views they express, nor will we remove materials because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- We will challenge censorship and cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting the abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.
- We will neither deny nor abridge a person's right to use a library because of his/her age, economic levels, beliefs, race, personal or physical characteristics.