



Collection Development & Materials Selection Policy

Intellectual Freedom

Definition

Collection development and materials selection policies are guided by the principles of intellectual freedom. These principles stem from the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which tacitly affirms a citizen's right to hold beliefs and to express them. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press also apply to its counterpart, the right to unrestricted access to the expressions and beliefs of others, free from government interference.

The Role of the Public Library

Public libraries play a unique role in the preservation of democracy by providing an open, non-judgmental institution where individuals can pursue their interests and gain an understanding of diverse opinions. Libraries must continue to play an essential role in safeguarding the intellectual liberty of the public and they must recognize, understand and support freedom of access.

Library Mission Statement:

The mission of the Agawam Public Library is to provide materials and services to help residents of all ages and abilities obtain information meeting their personal, educational, recreational, and professional needs. The library strives to promote and encourage lifelong habits of learning, self-improvement and self-expression. Emphasis is placed on access to and assistance in using technologies that serve as a doorway to information resources within the library and beyond the library walls. The library has a special mission to serve as a place for young children and their parents to discover the joy of reading and learning at the earliest possible age to enhance lifetime literacy.

Collection Philosophy and Responsibility

The Agawam Public Library collects materials across several formats to satisfy the cultural, educational, professional, and entertainment needs of a community with diverse interests, abilities and opinions. The library selects materials that represent all of its users containing a wide variety of material formats, including print, audio-visual, and electronic. In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, library staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. We acknowledge the subjective range of interests and respect the users' rights to access materials that may be unorthodox or even controversial to others. While the library attempts to provide a diverse collection, it is not the role of the library to make judgments on the appropriateness of the materials. Parents and guardians are the sole authority for their child(ren's) access to library materials.



Fundamental to our philosophy statement regarding collections and services is the Library Bill of Rights, as put forth by the American Library Association. “This document states in part, that “In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality or the political or religious view of the writer. There should be the fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times – international, national and local; and books or other reading material of sound factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.” The library does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given book equivalent to endorsement of the viewpoint of the author expressed therein.

Scope of the Collection

According to the 2020 US Census, the Town of Agawam is home to 28,694 residents. As part of the Springfield Metropolitan Statistical Area, Agawam is part of a larger metropolitan region with a population of 698,527 (2020). The unique socio-economic and cultural diversity of the area creates a distinct opportunity for the library to meet the various needs of its patrons in a variety of ways. The Agawam Library is a member of C/W MARS, (Central and Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing,) a library network that includes 150 public and academic libraries with more than 8.5 million physical items and eBooks. Through this consortium, the Agawam Library can locate and borrow items not owned in Agawam.

The library’s primary collections consist of three age-based groupings: Adult, Teen, and Children. The placement of materials in these collections reflect the general reading abilities of users within these categories. Access to materials is not, in any way, limited by age or ability. In all groupings, the library collects books (hardcover and paperback), CD Books, Large Print, DVD’s, periodicals, eBooks, online resources, and streaming content. The Agawam Library also has a Reference and Local History Collection, with a separate policy governing its principles.

Selection Development Policy

Purpose of Policy

- To guide the library staff in the selection of materials.
- To inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

Definition of Book Selection

“Selection” refers to the decision that must be made either to add materials or to retain materials already in the collection.



Goals of Book Selection

- To maintain a well-balanced and broad collection of materials for information, reference and research.
- To support the democratic process by providing materials for the education and enlightenment of the community.
- To provide recreational resources.

General Principles

1. Under the supervision of the Library Director, designated library staff will perform the collection development duties as set forth by this policy. Collection responsibilities include, but are not limited to: evaluating, selecting, acquiring, sustaining and deaccessioning library materials in various formats. The acquisition of digital materials will function similarly among designated library staff. Library staff are also responsible for the practical considerations of budget and various criteria to be discussed below.
2. Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection should not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children.
3. Selection should be made on the basis of whether the book presents life in its true proportions, whether characters and situations are realistically presented, and whether the book has literary merit.
4. Based on the services it is expected to perform, it is the responsibility of this library to provide circulating, reference and research material for both the diverse general public of this community as well as students, at all levels of formal and informal education.

Specific Principles for Selection

The following principles will help to condition selection

1. Contemporary significance or permanent value
2. Accuracy
3. Authority of author
4. Relation of work to existing collection
5. Price, format and ease of use
6. Scarcity of information in subject area



7. Availability of material elsewhere in this community (holdings of the school libraries in Agawam are considered in developing this library's collection)
8. Popular demand – The library should make available materials for enlightenment and recreation even if not enduring in value, interest or accuracy. A representative sampling of experimental or short-lived material should be purchased
9. Considered items need not meet every standard for inclusion, and every standard need not be considered for every item. Under the supervision of the Library Director, library staff will exercise professional judgement and expertise regarding the selection of library materials. Favorable reviews in standard, professional reviewing sources, such as Booklist, Library Journal, Publisher's Weekly and Kirkus will guide the library staff in selecting library materials. Specialized subjects or formats will be considered according to relevance to the library collections, scarcity or abundance of other material, or balance of different points of view. The Agawam Library will not include books in the collection which have had their contents altered without the author's consent. The library welcomes requests for the purchase of materials from Agawam residents. Such requests will be subject to the same criteria for inclusion as purchased materials and considered within the perspective of budgetary priorities and constraints. Requested items may not always be purchased.
10. Additional factors to be considered when purchasing digital materials and subscribing to electronic resources include, but are not limited to:
 - Hardware/System Requirements
 - Comparison of Content and Cost
 - Useful/Relevant Content
 - Licensing and Access Restrictions
 - Vendor Reputation/Customer Support
 - Privacy Policies

Adult Non-Fiction:

Chief points considered are readability of material, authenticity of factual matter presented, quality of writing, cost, format, existing library holdings and suitability of material to the community. Non-fiction may be excluded for inaccurate information, lack of integrity, sensationalism, intent to incite hatred or intolerance, and text material of too limited or specialized a nature.



Titles are selected on the basis of the content as a whole and without regard to the personal history of the author. Important books of all persuasions should be carried. In no case is any book included or excluded merely because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer. In the case of controversial questions, variety and balance of opinion are sought whenever available.

Adult Fiction:

Selection of adult fiction is made with reference to one or more of these criteria. It should contribute positively to the individual's awareness of self, community and social heritage. It should contribute to the value of the library's collection as a whole by representing all types and styles of literature. It should provide pleasant reading for recreational and creative use of leisure time. Serious works which present an honest aspect of life are not excluded for frankness of expression.

Young Adult Materials:

The teen collection consists of material considered to be of particular interest to adolescents, particularly in grades 6-12. Materials are selected for this collection to broaden the horizons of teens, help them to cope with the problems of adolescence, and encourage leisure reading. To fulfill these needs, the collection will inevitably include materials on controversial or sensitive topics. Because of the wide range of maturity and reading levels among individual teens, the suitability of any particular item must be determined on an individual basis by the parent or guardian of that teen. It is not intended to be a comprehensive collection serving all the needs and interests of teens.

Children's Materials:

The first objective in selecting children's materials is to encourage the child's joy in reading and in being read to. Books are selected which offer adventure of mind and spirit to the growing child, cultivating an appreciation of literature both oral and written and encouraging the creative use of leisure time by inquiring minds. Special attention is given to books of use and value to parents and teachers, or other adults working with children.

The public library does not provide basic texts or materials needed in quantity for school work. Supplemental materials of varied kinds may be provided to enrich the resources available to the individual student and teacher.

Reference Materials:

Factors considered in the selection of reference materials are authority, reliability, scope, treatment, arrangement, format, cost, and existing holdings.

Documents/Special Collections:

The library collects and preserves documents primarily of local importance or historical value.

Local History:

The library considers local history and genealogical materials pertaining to Agawam and Feeding



Hills of great importance. Consideration is also given to material pertaining to the surrounding towns and Hampden County. Genealogical materials unique to Agawam and Feeding Hill may also be accepted. Materials such as books, vital records, maps, photographs, town-specific articles and pamphlets can be acquired or donated. Donors must fill out a Deed of Gift form to acknowledge the transfer of ownership to the Agawam Library. The Local History collection is accessible to the general public in the library only. The library will participate in preservation whenever possible.

Local Authors:

The library will attempt to acquire material written by authors from or living in Agawam and Feeding Hills that meet the general selection criteria. Consideration will also be given to regional authors and self-published material that meet the selection criteria above. Books donated by local authors will be subject to the same criteria for inclusion. Local author materials will be integrated into the library's general collections. We cannot accept review or advance copies.

Magazines and Newspapers:

Basic popular, general informational, and scholarly magazines are selected to supplement the book collection, bring book information up to date, and fill in those areas where book resources are weak, inferior, or non-existent.

Newspapers are selected to meet reference and research needs of patrons, to provide current information, and to satisfy casual interest in current events. Local and National newspapers are supplied upon sufficient demand and within budget and space limitations.

Non-Book Materials:

The library recognizes the importance of non-book materials both as a supplement to its book collection and to its concept of service. Within budget limitations music CD's, audiovisual items, streaming and Internet based services and other materials will be purchased in accordance with criteria outlined for adult and children's materials.

Gifts/Donations:

The Agawam Public Library selectively welcomes gifts of library materials, money or real property with the understanding that the gift will be evaluated in accordance with the library's selection criteria used in purchasing materials for the library. Monetary contributions are added to the library's Gift Fund, which is used for the purchase of materials too specialized or expensive for the operating budget. Books may be donated in honor or memory of a friend or relative and are marked with a special bookplate. The Library staff will be pleased to help select appropriate titles in memory of a loved one. The library applies the same criteria for evaluating gift items as it applies to purchased materials. Items are considered with the explicit understanding that such factors as duplication, lack of community interest, processing costs or inadequate shelf space may prevent their addition to the collection or permanent retention on the shelves. Gifts are accepted with the understanding that the library, if it cannot use them, may at



any time dispose of them in any way it sees fit.

Gifts will be withdrawn in the same manner as purchased materials. Items not needed by the library are donated to the ongoing book sale sponsored by the Friends of the Agawam Public Library. The library does not accept responsibility for notifying donors of withdrawal or replacement of gift items.

Used books, paperbacks and AV material can often be added to the library's collection. The library does not accept textbooks, condensed books, encyclopedias, magazines or books in poor physical condition.

Monetary gifts are tax deductible and the library will furnish an acknowledgement of the gift, if asked, for tax purposes. The library will not place a financial value on items donated.

No conditions may be imposed relating to any gift after its acceptance by the library.

A Gift/Donation Policy Form may be furnished to any prospective donor.

Collection Maintenance

The library will conduct collection maintenance on an ongoing basis to provide a well-rounded, current, relevant, and fiscally responsible collection. These activities include, but are not limited to: weeding, replacement, preservation and disposal. Weeding is a necessary part of collection development and designated library staff will weed according to professional standards. The following criteria will be considered when weeding:

- * Poor condition
- * Low circulation
- * Space restrictions
- * Inaccurate or obsolete information
- * No longer relevant or appropriate
- * C/W Mars availability

A combination of these factors may determine whether an item will be weeded. Every attempt will be made to mend damaged items. Material that is damaged or lost may be reconsidered for replacement. Currency, demand and availability will determine whether items are replaced.

The library will make every effort to ensure that the discarded library materials are donated or disposed of in the most appropriate manner. This may include, but is not limited to: Friends book sale, Agawam Senior Center, transfer to another library, give-away or disposal.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The library is willing to reconsider any item in the Library's collection. The following formal procedure for reconsideration ensures all parties that the proper steps are taken to re-evaluate the item(s) in question.

Requests are accepted from residents of the Town of Agawam. Those wishing to recommend the removal of a particular item must submit a fully completed Reconsideration of Library Materials



Form. Forms will be submitted to the Library Director, who will review the reconsideration, discuss with appropriate library staff and render a decision on the request.

The Library Director may meet with the person filing the request.

Withdrawing

Materials are withdrawn regularly in accordance with the criteria for selection. Replacements are based on the same principles.

Stolen or mutilated materials will be replaced when deemed necessary to the maintenance of a well-rounded collection. Materials of marginal importance whose use cannot be adequately controlled may not be replaced.

Approved, September 2023



Appendix A

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.



Appendix B - Agawam Public Library Reference Collection Development Policy

Library Mission Statement – please refer to page 1.

Objectives of the Reference Collection

Materials are selected and collected in a variety of formats to answer questions asked by library patrons and to fulfill the first three of the four primary roles of the library, as stated in the library mission's statement.

- To select materials that help residents obtain information that meets their personal, educational, recreational, and professional needs.
- To select materials that promote/encourage lifelong habits of learning, self-improvement, and self-expression.
- To select electronic resources that provide access to technologies that serve as a doorway to information resources within the library and beyond library walls.

Materials are purchased in a variety of subjects and formats: print and electronic, directories, dictionaries, atlases, general and subject encyclopedias, almanacs, reader's advisory materials, and other resources with a special emphasis on current legal, medical, career, and business information. Whenever possible, electronic resources are made available for both in library and remote use. Many items are placed on standing order to ensure the library has the most current information on the topic.

Withdrawing Materials from the Reference Collection.

The Reference Librarian may offer any of the old editions to the Adult Services Librarian for the circulating collection. Any title the Adult Services Librarian does not want may be offered to libraries belonging to Regional Library Listservs.

Some items, such as legal statutes, are not offered to anybody, as the information is dangerously out of date and misleading, and therefore are discarded. In addition to replacing editions, the Reference Librarian uses the CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding) method for withdrawing items from the collection. This includes withdrawing items that are: misleading or factually inaccurate; damaged, soiled or worn; outdated or superseded by a newer title on the same subject; trivial or have no discernable literary or scientific merit; irrelevant to the needs or interests of the community or contain information that may be more easily obtained elsewhere.