

West Hartford Public Library POLICY MANUAL

Title: Materials Selection Policy

Revised April 26, 2010.

Library Mission Statement

The West Hartford Public Library will be the leading provider of information-through free access to collections, programs and services- for our diverse community.

Purpose of Materials Selection Policy

The purpose of the Materials Selection Policy is to guide the librarians and to inform the public of the principles upon which selections are made. Basic to the Policy are the “Library Bill of Rights,” as adopted by the American Library Association and the “Freedom to Read Statement” issued jointly by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers. These documents are included as Appendices A and B. The policy is directed toward building and maintaining, within the limits imposed by available funds and space, a collection of library materials representing a comprehensive range of interests, tastes, viewpoints, values and levels of ability. The intent is that the system-wide collection be balanced in order to serve the greatest number of library users and potential library users within the West Hartford community. To further serve our diverse community, the selection and types of materials may vary according to the interests and needs of the local community of each branch library. In following this policy, neither the library nor its Board endorses every thought, expression or belief represented in the library’s collections.

Types of Materials

The library provides access to information in a wide variety of print and non-print formats. Presently, books, newspapers, magazines, DVDs, audio books, downloadable audio books and e-books, videocassettes, audiocassettes, compact discs, CD-ROMs, microfilm, government documents, maps and educational toys are included in the library’s collection. In addition, the library purchases access to information through subscription databases, e-reference books and other online services. The majority of these electronic services are available via computer in all library locations and to library card holder’s offsite through the library’s website. In the future the types of materials acquired will change as new technologies become available.

Criteria of Selection

Materials selection is an interpretive process based on the professional knowledge and judgment of the staff. This knowledge includes familiarity with all types of materials, familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, and awareness of the needs of the community. Staff members consult standard bibliographic works and published reviews in

professional and general periodicals for evaluations of available materials. In most cases, the library will not purchase self-published materials that are not reviewed in these established review journals. Suggestions from patrons are welcome and are given serious consideration. General criteria applied in selecting library materials include:

1. Suitability of physical form for library use.
2. Suitability of subject and style for intended audience.
3. Present and potential relevance to community needs.
4. Insight into human and social condition.
5. Importance as a document of the times.
6. Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject.
7. Availability of similar materials through interlibrary loan.
8. Reputation of publisher or producer.
9. Reputation and/or significance of author.
10. Skill, competence and purpose of author.
11. Attention of critics, reviewers and public.
12. Local Interest.
13. Heavy demand for popular items.
14. Budget Limitations.

The library will collect local and state historical materials. Legal, technical and medical works will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the general public.

Textbooks may be purchased when the subject content constitutes the best available source of needed information. It is not the responsibility of the library to supply textbooks or curriculum material used in the local schools, nor multiple copies of a title sufficient to meet the simultaneous need of every student in a class.

Children's Materials Selection

The Children's Division provides materials for children from infancy through fifth grade; for example, books, magazines, DVDs, audio books, compact discs, CD-ROMS, toys, educational aides, as well as materials for parents. Juvenile materials are selected with the same care and judgment as adult materials, and are kept on open shelves where they are available to all children. Children may borrow materials from the adult collection. Ultimate responsibility for children's reading, viewing and listening rests with their parents or guardians.

Teen Materials

Teen Services provides materials to meet the special personal, topical and recreational needs of teens in middle school and high school; for example books, audio books, DVDs, magazines,

compact discs and other new materials as they become available. The adult non-fiction, fiction and references collections of the West Hartford Public Library as well as the children's collections will continue to provide library print materials, electronic services and media that will meet the general cultural, education and informational needs of its middle and high school age residents. Ultimate responsibility for teen's reading, viewing and listening rests with their parents or guardians.

Gifts

The West Hartford Public Library accepts donations of materials with the understanding that items added to the collection must meet the same criteria as purchased materials. The library reserves the right to refuse gifts and to make all decisions about use, housing and disposition of materials. The library does not appraise gifts nor provide evaluations of gifts for tax purposes. Donations of funds to be used for the West Hartford Library Foundation's purchase of materials are also welcome. With regard to monetary gifts, every effort will be made to respect the intent of the donor's wishes.

De-Selection Criteria and Disposal of Withdrawn Materials

The West Hartford Public Library discards books on a regular basis to maintain the usefulness of the collection. The library has an obligation to discard materials that are obsolete or in poor condition, as well as duplicate copies of titles no longer in demand.

Materials withdrawn from the collection can be made available for transfer to other organizations and agencies such as the West Hartford Schools, other town departments, or the Friends of the West Hartford Library, provided the materials are sold and the net proceeds of such sale are donated to the Library. Materials which are unsuitable for transfer or sale will be recycled or discarded.

Controversial Materials

The library recognizes that some materials may offend some patrons. Selections will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collections and to serving the interests of library patrons. Responsibility for the reading, viewing and listening of children and teens rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of adult materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents and no materials will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of storage or protecting it from mutilation or theft.

The selection of any material is not a library endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. A patron wishing to recommend the exclusion of an item from the collection must submit to the Library Director a signed statement giving reasons for such exclusion. Such recommendations will be considered by the Library Director, the staff and Library Board. The decision, based on the principles in this Materials Selection Policy, will be forwarded to the patron. This decision will be final unless overruled by a court of competent authority.

Responsibility

The Library Board delegates authority to the Director and staff to interpret and apply the Materials Selection Policy. Final responsibility for selection lies with the board.

Revised and adopted by the West Hartford Library Board, April 26, 2010; Adopted September 17, 1996. Includes *Withdrawn Materials Policy*, June 20, 1995, *Young Adult Collection Policy*, December 16, 1996, *Collection Development for Internet Resources*, September 18, 2001.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources

The West Hartford Public Library Board has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to the Library Director and staff, and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of library resources, please return the completed form to: Library Director, 20 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____ or Email address: _____

Do you represent yourself? _____ Organization? _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

____ Book ____ DVD/Video ____ Display ____ Magazine ____ Library Program

____ Audio Recording ____ Newspaper ____ Electronic information/network (please specify) _____ Other _____

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource?

4. What concerns you about the resource? (use other side or additional pages if necessary)

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?