

# Fletcher Free Library Collection Development Policy

**Mission:**

In keeping with the Fletcher Free Library's mission statement, the Collection Development Policy serves to ensure that the Library's collection serves the diverse educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community. We strive to develop a robust, up-to-date, well-rounded and relevant collection that reflects and enhances the cultural interests of Burlington.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the Collection Development Policy is to provide a framework to guide selection decisions, and establish practices to maintain the collection.

**Profile:**

As the largest public library in the state of Vermont, serving an immediate population of over 42,000 people, The Fletcher Free Library provides access to information to a diverse community. Sixty languages are spoken in the homes of Burlington's school children. Burlington is the home city for several corporate headquarters, supports a thriving creativity sector, and hosts the University of Vermont, Champlain College, and Burlington College.

**Philosophy:**

The Fletcher Free Library collects materials to support the Library's mission. Materials are collected in a variety of formats for all ages.

Member use and demand is the most powerful influence in collection development decisions. Circulation statistics, title requests, and hold levels are regularly evaluated to monitor the demand for materials. High demand may lead to the purchase of additional copies to provide access to materials in a timely manner.

In keeping with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, efforts are consistently made to avoid bias in the collection. No beliefs, be they from Librarian, Selector, Commissioner, or Library member, may prevent another's access to information. The Library provides materials to support each individual's journey, and does not place a value on one member's needs or preferences over another's. The Library upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others.

The Library's collection is an ever-changing entity. As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes removed from the collection. Great care is taken to retain or replace items that have enduring value to the community. Decisions are influenced by patterns of use, budget, and space limitations, as well as local needs which preclude the Library from duplicating the specialized and comprehensive collections that exist elsewhere in the state of Vermont. Access to these collections is provided through interlibrary loan.

The Library's Youth and Young Adult collections serve to encourage recreational reading, support scholarly enquiry, and develop life-long learning. The collections should serve to stimulate interest, enhance reading skills, and reflect the diversity of the community. The reading and viewing activity of children is ultimately the responsibility of the parents/guardians who oversee and guide their own children's development. The Fletcher Free Library does not intrude on that relationship.

**Responsibility for Collection Management:**

Implementation of the Collection Development Policy and management of the collection is assigned to Library staff. Staff review the collection regularly to maintain its viability and usefulness to the community. The Fletcher Free Library disposes of materials that have been withdrawn according to the Criteria for Weeding and Withdrawal outlined below. The Friends of the Fletcher Free Library serves as an instrument for the Library, reselling or redistributing withdrawn Library materials.

**Budgeting and Funding:**

Funding for the purchase of materials comes primarily from the City of Burlington's General Fund. In 1995, a ½-cent tax was approved by Burlington voters to ensure the vitality of the Library's collection. Additional funding may come in the form of grants or donations.

**Selection Criteria and Maintenance:**

General criteria for selecting materials to be added to the Library's collection shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Relevance to the needs and interests of the community
- Price, availability, and the Library's materials budget
- Date of publication
- Suitability of the format for library circulation
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject
- Reputation and qualifications of the author, publisher, or producer, with preference generally given to titles vetted through the editing and publishing industry
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths or weaknesses
- Local significance of the author or subject
- Extent of publicity, critical reception, and anticipated demand

Certain topics and types of materials become out-of-date more quickly than others. It is the Selector's responsibility to ensure that the Library is keeping up with current trends in their selection assignment ranges.

**Selection Aids:**

Selectors have a variety of tools to use in their selection process. Selectors employ their training, knowledge, expertise, and familiarity with the Burlington community in making selection decisions. Additionally, the Library provides library and publishing trade journals, attendance to professional conferences, vendor databases, and catalogs to keep Selectors abreast of trends and forthcoming publications.

**Criteria for Weeding and Withdrawal:**

The decision to remove an item from the Library's collection is as important as the decision to add an item. The process of removing items from the Library's collections is undertaken on an ongoing basis. Criteria for weeding and withdrawal of Library materials includes, but is not limited to:

- Damage or poor condition
- Number of copies in the collection
- Accuracy or timeliness
- Current demand and frequency of use
- Updated materials covering the topic available for acquisition
- Relevance to the needs and interests of the community
- Local interest
- Potential availability in other formats or from other libraries
- Enduring value of the content
- Coverage of the topic within the Library's collection
- Limitations of shelving space

If the Selector directs, damaged or dated materials may be replaced with newer copies or editions when available. Other factors in the decision to replace materials may include need, demand, and budgeting constraints.

**Format:**

The Library seeks to provide material appropriate for a wide range of users and their needs. The Library reserves the right to limit use of materials due to formats not suitable for circulation. These may include materials that may sustain damage from normal library wear-and-tear that may prove difficult to repair or replace.

**Gifts and Donations:**

The Fletcher Free Library accepts unrestricted, irrevocable gifts of books and other library materials in good condition. Gifts and donations are accepted with the understanding that they will be evaluated by the same criteria used to select and purchase materials for addition to the collection. If gifts do not meet these criteria, they may be conveyed to the Friends of Fletcher Free Library for sales to benefit the Library, recycled or otherwise distributed. Gifts will not be returned to the donor if they are not selected for the Library's collection.

**Requests for Reconsideration:**

A member may submit a formal Request for Reconsideration in writing. The form is available online or at the Circulation Desk. Upon receipt of a completed Request for Reconsideration, the Library Director will appoint an ad-hoc committee from the professional staff including, but not limited to, the Selector for the subject area of the item in question and the appropriate department head. The committee will consider the request in relation to the Library's mission, policies, and selection criteria. They will then make a written recommendation to the Library Director, who will make the final decision regarding the disposition of the material. The Library Director will communicate the decision, and the reasons for it, in writing to the member who initiated the Request for Reconsideration. The Library Director will inform the Library Board of all Requests for Reconsideration and the issued decision.

If the member who initiated the Request for Reconsideration is not satisfied with the written decision of the Library Director, the decision may be appealed to the Library Board of Commissioners and Trustees by making a written request to the Chair of the Board. The member making the request will receive a reasonable opportunity to present an oral argument at a regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board reserves the right to limit the length of the presentation. The Board will consider the merits of the written decision in light of the Library's policies, and will vote to uphold or override the decision. The Board's vote determines the final disposition of the material.

**Policy Revision:**

Approved by the Library's Board of Commissioners 07/20/2015.

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**Definition of Terms and Glossary:**

**Acquisitions:** Used to describe the process where a title chosen by a Selector is ordered, received, invoiced, and paid for before becoming part of the Library's collection. Also used to refer to the team of Library staff members responsible for performing these tasks.

**Collection management:** Umbrella term covering all decisions made after an item is part of the collection. Caring for the collection includes repairing, replacing, or withdrawing damaged materials, as well as replacing dated materials with newer editions.

**Selector:** A Librarian responsible for the choosing and weeding materials to be added to the Library's collections. A Selector will be assigned a range of topics or genres, and is expected to develop subject familiarity and awareness within their assigned topics. Using professional resources, the selector identifies items for acquisition that will enhance the Library's members' experience and knowledge. A selector is expected to set aside any personal bias, and to serve the community by covering issues from all sides.

**Weeding:** The process of identifying items that have become damaged, dated, or have had low demand, amongst other considerations. These items are removed from the shelves and removed from the catalog. Selecting items to be weeded from the collection is as important to maintaining a healthy collection as selecting items to be added to the collection.