

Effective Date: 2/12/2025

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of the Collection Development Policy of the Sharon Public Library is to provide guidelines for acquisition and withdrawal decisions, allocation of resources, and long-range collection development following the library's mission.

Library Mission Statement

The mission of the Sharon Public Library is to serve the informational, educational, and recreational needs of all members of the Sharon community through acquiring and maintaining quality materials, and provide programs and services in comfortable facilities offering convenient hours in a manner commensurate with responsible fiscal planning. Emphasis should be placed on information that is of immediate relevance and interest to the community. The library's mission extends to providing access to the universe of information beyond the library's collections through interlibrary cooperation and efficient use of technology.

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.

Intellectual Freedom and Access

The Board of Library Trustees, the Library Director, and the library staff recognize the responsibility of the Sharon Public Library to provide materials representing diverse points of view on different topics. Selection is made solely on the merits of the work as it relates to collection development and the needs of Library patrons. The presence of an item in the Library's collection does not indicate an endorsement of the item's content.

Selection cannot be restricted by the possibility that certain materials might be considered objectionable by some users on moral, religious, political, or other grounds. Well-intentioned individuals or groups occasionally question the inclusion of an item in the collection because of fear or doubt about the effects of the material on impressionable persons. Although the staff and trustees understand this concern, it is our position that the risk to society is far greater if public access to ideas and information is restricted. Neither an individual, group, nor library staff has a right to decide what others may or may not read.

All materials are shelved on open shelves, freely and easily accessible to the public. There will be no labeling of any item to indicate its point of view or bias. The Library assures free access to its holdings for all patrons, who can select or reject for themselves any item in the collection.

Children are not limited to the children's collections, which are kept separate from other Library collections to facilitate use. Responsibility for a child's reading, listening, or viewing of Library materials must rest with the parent or guardian, not with the Library staff.

The staff and Board of Trustees of the Sharon Public Library believe the right to read is an important part of the intellectual freedom that is basic to democracy. The Library has adopted the American Library Association's ***Library Bill of Rights*** and ***Freedom to Read/View*** statements as official Library policy.

Resource Sharing

The Library is a charter member of the Old Colony Library Network, an automated resource-sharing network of 31 South Shore libraries. Computer terminals provide bibliographic access to the collections of the network libraries and a daily delivery system ensures fast availability. For those patrons with needs outside the scope of the Sharon Public Library's collection or the collections of network libraries, the Library can provide interlibrary loan service through cooperative agreements with the state library system.

Responsibility for Collection Development

The Library Director has overall responsibility for collection development and final responsibility for materials selection following policies set by the Board of Library Trustees. Responsibility for selection is shared with the professional librarians in the adult, teen, circulation, and children's departments. The Director has the authority to purchase materials for any collection and to change selection responsibilities among professional staff. Suggestions from Library patrons and staff are always welcome and are given primary consideration. The final responsibility for materials selection rests with the Library Director or designee.

Definition of Materials Selection

"Selection" refers to the decision that must be made either to add materials or to retain materials already in the collection. Also, selection can refer to items to be removed from the collection.

Philosophy of Selection

In support of its mission, the Library fully endorses the principles documented in the ***Library Bill of Rights*** and the ***Freedom to Read Statement*** of the American Library Association. The Library upholds the right of the individual to secure information and materials, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. Items available in the Library present a wide range of viewpoints that reflect the diverse community it serves.

Selection Criteria

All materials, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the criteria listed below. An item need not meet all of these standards to be added to the collection.

- Popular interest or demand
- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Currency of information
- Accuracy
- Local emphasis
- Relevance to community needs or interests
- Readability or ability to sustain interest
- Treatment of subject to the age of the intended audience
- The reputation of the author, publisher, producer, or illustrator
- Publisher print run
- Creative, literary, or technical quality
- Nationally recognized literary or A/V awards
- Critical assessments in professionally recognized review sources
- Format and ease of use
- Circulation statistics and trends
- Cost and availability
- Relationship to existing materials in the collection

- Whether a title is part of an existing series

Relationship to materials in other area libraries The library does not purchase obsolete formats or others that are not currently widely produced or used, except when the content is deemed appropriate for inclusion in the Sharon Local History collection and unavailable in any other format.

Scope of the Collection

The primary responsibility of the Sharon Public Library is to serve its patrons by providing a broad choice of materials to meet their informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs.

Budget and space limitations preclude the Library from duplicating locally specialized and comprehensive collections that exist elsewhere. Access to these collections is provided through cooperative networking, interlibrary loan, and direct referral.

The Library must continually assess new formats to evaluate the capabilities and enhancements it can offer over existing formats. When deciding whether to replace or augment existing formats with new media, the following factors are considered:

- anticipated improvements in information storage and retrieval
- user demand
- quality of the product
- ease of use
- equipment requirements
- cost
- staff requirements for processing, maintenance, and training

It is essential for staff to monitor technological developments so that wise and cost-effective collection decisions are made for the citizens of the Town of Sharon.

The Collections

- Fiction
- Nonfiction
- New Materials
- Children's Materials
- Teen Materials
- Electronic Materials
- Reference
- Jobs and Career
- Sharon History & Genealogy
- Music & Spoken Word
- Downloadable Media
- Videos
- Graphic Novels
- World Languages
- U.S., State, and Local Government Documents
- Digital Resources
- Online Databases
- Periodicals, Serials, Newspapers
- Library of Things (items that support community interests)
- Materials and Equipment supporting Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math

(STEAM)

- Professional Collection & Resources

Fiction

The Library's collection includes a wide variety of contemporary works of fiction representing all genres, international works of fiction, classics, and important novels of the past. The Library makes every effort to acquire fiction that is representative of the cultural and ethnic communities it serves and to satisfy the diversity of interests, lifelong learning, and recreational needs of its users. Physical formats for fiction include electronic, print, DVD, and audio. Fiction is purchased according to the selection criteria enumerated above.

Nonfiction

The Library selects materials that provide a core of basic knowledge. In addition, the Library selects, makes accessible, and promotes the use of materials that:

- address contemporary or historic issues
- provide self-help information
- facilitate continuing education
- enhance job-related knowledge and skills
- increase knowledge of affairs of the community, the country, and the world
- support business, cultural, recreational, and civic interests in the community
- nourish intellectual, aesthetic, creative, and spiritual growth
- present different viewpoints on culturally or socially diverse issues

New Materials

Copies of popular, high-demand items are available as part of the Library's New Materials collection. Anyone can put holds on these items. All print materials are prioritized by the Old Colony Library Network (OCLN) for local holds but are available to all.

Collection Development for Children

Materials for children are collected to promote early literacy and educational success through STEAM, health, and recreational interest.

Items in this section are selected for patrons from infancy through age 13 and include:

- board books
- picture books
- fiction at a variety of reading levels and formats (easy readers, beginning chapter books, novels, read-along items, audiobooks)
- nonfiction (including biographies and reference materials)
- graphic novels
- music
- videos
- magazines
- electronic materials
- kits

As in the adult section, many of the items listed above also can be found in a variety of languages other than English (see the Foreign Language section for more information).

Collection Development for Young Adults

The Library selects materials for teens to encourage personal development, STEAM educational materials, lifelong learning, and recreational and literary enrichment.

Items in this collection are intended for patrons ages 14-17 (high school) and include:

- fiction (including electronic, print, audio, and video)
- nonfiction
- electronic materials
- graphic novels
- manga
- career and college guides STEAM kits

Local History Collection (see Carpeno History Room Collection Development Policy and Gift Agreement)

Special Collections:

Digital Materials

The Library collects and digitizes local historical materials of value to the community.

Digital Materials are added to the collection for one or more of the following reasons:

- To preserve materials from degenerating
- To make materials available to a wider audience via Digital Commonwealth, the Library website, and other online sources

The following factors should be considered when determining the purchase of print vs. digital format:

- Potential use of material
- How long the print format will last
- Accessibility
- Storage space
- Cost

World Language Materials

The Town of Sharon has a growing population of multi-cultural-speaking residents. As a result, the Library has responded to our community's need for materials in multiple languages.

Website Access to Information

The Sharon Public Library website has been created to advance the Library's mission as an information center supporting the educational and recreational needs of its users and providing access to materials beyond the local collection. The website guides patrons in exploring internet resources and assists internet users seeking information about Library programs and services.

General Website Link Selection Guidelines

The major considerations for selecting materials are the informational, educational, literary, and recreational needs of the Sharon Public Library community. Sites are selected to enrich, broaden, and complement material in the Library's collection. Link selection is based on grant support, Library collaboration, and local priority.

Collection Maintenance and Deselection

Maintenance

Maintenance of the Library's collection through constant reevaluation ensures its usefulness to the community. This re-evaluation depends heavily on the staff's professional expertise in providing a balanced collection and assessing community needs, using circulation statistics and trends as a guide. Multiple copies and replacements of titles are purchased in response to user demand as evidenced by the number of holds, anticipated popularity, and repeated requests.

Deselection

Weeding of collections is necessary to stay within the space limitations of the Library, but it also has positive service implications. Borrowing from CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding) guidelines, the benefits of weeding are:

- Conserving space: items no longer being used are weeded to create more space for new and popular items.
- Conserving time for staff and customers: it is easier to find desired material when searchers are unencumbered by out-of-date and non-used items. Less staff time is spent shifting to make collections fit on available shelving.
- Making collections more appealing: worn, dirty, and/or dated materials are removed, and in some cases replaced, recovered, or withdrawn.
- Enhancing Library reputation: word spreads when the collection is current and it reflects the wise management of public resources. Improved ability for customers to find what they need enhances trust and confidence in the Library.
- Enabling a systematic way to identify and act on collection needs.
- Those materials determined too worn or no longer of relative value are withdrawn from the collection.

Library materials are withdrawn for one or more of the following reasons:

- Obsolescence: subject matter is no longer timely, accurate, or relevant
- Damage or poor condition
- Space limitations
- Insufficient use

Deselected materials may be given to local community organizations that need items, such as the Friends of the Sharon Public Library's used book sale, schools, senior centers, other social services agencies, etc. All remaining deselected materials will be given to a local book re-distribution company.

Suggestions for Purchase

The Library strongly encourages input from Sharon Public Library patrons regarding the collection. Patrons can fill out a "request for purchase" slip to ask that a particular item be purchased by the Library. All purchase requests are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials, but every reasonable effort will be made to purchase the requested item. Please see the "Request to Purchase" form on the library website.

Requests for Reconsideration

Patrons from the Town of Sharon wishing to recommend the removal of a particular item in the Library collection can submit a Materials Reconsideration form, which will be reviewed by the Library Director and Board of Library Trustees regarding the Library's mission statement and the selection criteria of this policy. After evaluating the reconsideration request and the selection criteria used to purchase the item, the Library Director will decide the final placement of the item and notify the petitioner. The "Reconsideration of Materials" form can be found on the library website.

Gift Policy (see Gift Policy)

Review of Policy

To maintain a dynamic selection program that reflects current community trends, this policy will be reviewed by the Library Director and selection staff. This collection development policy will be evaluated and revised periodically as time and circumstance requires.