

CHAPTER 3: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Adopted by Board Action 1/20/2026

EXTENT OF COLLECTION POLICY

This Policy applies to all library materials collected by the West Des Moines Public Library, including items received as donations and items purchased with private funds. Objects of art are addressed in the library's Art Policy.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTION

The Library Director is responsible for the selection of materials which conform to the Collection Development Policy. Library staff members are involved in the selection process under the Director's supervision. Other interested persons are encouraged to make suggestions and recommendations.

In general, items selected should be useful to the community and should be representative of the best materials available. The following general criteria should be considered during the selection process:

- Effective presentation of ideas and/or information
- Respected authorship
- Accessible format
- Quality of construction
- Permanent value
- Public appeal or community interest
- Relationship to materials already in the collection and balance of viewpoint
- Availability of the same or similar materials in the local area
- Intended audience
- Price

The library collection taken as a whole will be an unbiased and diverse source of information, representing as many viewpoints as possible. Subjects will be covered in sufficient depth and breadth to meet anticipated and expressed individual and community needs.

Each item should be evaluated according to its merit. Items will not be excluded because of the race, religion, or political views of the author. Items will not be excluded due to a judgment based on individual passages or images taken out of context. When possible, favorable reviews will be sought in review journals and in the literature of the library and publishing world prior to acquisition.

The library makes no attempt to assume the rightful role of parents in monitoring, controlling, or curtailing the reading, listening or viewing behavior of their children. Parents should be interested and involved in their children's utilization of library materials. The library does not assume responsibility for the possible misuse of information found in the collections by young readers. Children have access to the entire collection.

The West Des Moines Public Library supports both "The Freedom to Read" statement by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers (Appendix A), and the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" (Appendix B).

The library does not acquire resources intended for curricular use, such as textbooks, professional journals and esoteric databases, unless those resources will also be beneficial to the community. Such resources may be added if the information is unavailable in other forms.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

To encourage life-long reading habits, the children's collection provides materials in a variety of formats to satisfy and stimulate the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the children of the West Des Moines Public Library from infancy through grade six. The materials are selected regarding the stages of emotional and intellectual maturity of children. The collection also provides adults with materials that relate to the well-being of children, enrich preschool and school curriculums, and aid in the study of children's literature. Children's materials are presented in a variety of different formats:

- Board Books are developed in a sturdy format to meet the needs of infants and toddlers
- Picture books are intended for all ages, particularly for those aged 3 to 8, to foster an enjoyment and appreciation of reading
- Emerging Readers serve the needs and interests of beginning readers and are categorized based on word count and vocabulary
- Children's Books – Fiction and Nonfiction - are intended to serve children from third grade through sixth grade and are selected based on reading and comprehension level, illustrations, accuracy, type, and format.

TEEN BOOKS

These materials are intended to serve patrons between the ages of 12 and 18 (junior high and high school age). Teen books should interest and encourage young readers, increasing their sense of enjoyment in reading. Special attention is given to materials of particular interest to this group, including teen age stories of adolescence and growing to maturity.

FICTION – GENERAL

The fiction collections are intended to meet the needs and interests of readers with widely differing tastes, interests, and reading levels.

NONFICTION – GENERAL

The library aims to acquire materials which provide a core of basic knowledge. In addition, the library selects, makes accessible, and promotes the use of materials which:

- address contemporary 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
- present different viewpoints on issues
- nourish intellectual, aesthetic, creative and spiritual growth

FOREIGN LANGUAGE MATERIALS

Foreign language collections will be considered when community needs are evident. Selection of foreign language materials will be overseen by library staff who have a working knowledge of the language(s) being collected, and/or in conjunction and cooperation with community partners and/or vendors who are fluent in the language. The library will endeavor to develop foreign language collections in relation to apparent public interest, community population size/need and materials availability. The library provides bilingual dictionaries and instructional materials on major languages.

PERIODICALS

The library's newspaper and magazine collection, both print and electronic, provides current information aimed at meeting the research and recreational reading needs of the community. The collection also contains periodicals that serve the professional reading and material review needs of the library staff. Periodicals supplement the book collection by providing up-to-date information, covering current topics not yet available in books, and presenting a less in-depth treatment of a subject than is usually found in books.

NON-PRINT – REALIA

The library collects puppets, games, toys, and other materials for circulation or in home use, as a response to strong community interest. Quality, durability, ease of periodic cleaning, and safety for young children, should be considered in the selection of these materials.

NON-PRINT – KITS

Kits can include books, DVDs, music CDs, educational games and toys, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) activities designed to educate children or adults on various subjects. Kits are secured in durable containers that allow for easy transportation. Guidelines for selection include storage capability, lasting value of contents, and popular interest.

NON-PRINT – MEDIA

The library purchases a diversified collection of visual and sound media. This collection consists mainly of informational, how-to, and popular entertainment titles for all ages. Most of the titles purchased do not include public performance rights. Videos produced specifically for instructional use in the classroom are not purchased. Visual and sound media review and selection decisions are based primarily on the same criteria used for print purchases. The library normally does not purchase edited versions of recordings and movies. Additionally, the library purchases visual and sound media in the predominant format.

NON-PRINT – SOUND RECORDINGS / SPOKEN WORD

The library selects, acquires and maintains a diversified collection of sound recordings. Review and selection decisions are based on the same criteria used for print purchases. The library tries, when possible, to buy unabridged versions of sound recordings for all collections.

NON-PRINT – ONLINE RESOURCES

The library acquires access to some materials in digitized formats. These formats include databases and downloadable or streaming text, audio or print resources. These resources will be acquired to complement or enhance the library materials that have historically been provided in physical formats. Acquisition may be by licensing, rather than outright purchase.

Factors to be considered in evaluating and selecting digitized resources include:

- patron demand, including preferred formats
- available format(s), with a preference for fully online (no local storage) resources
- value
- accessibility, including digital rights management
- ease of use
- availability of equivalent resources
- accuracy, authority and uniqueness of content
- frequency of updates
- training requirements for any new formats for staff and patrons

NEW FORMS OF MEDIA

From time to time new forms of media are introduced into the marketplace. New media formats are studied carefully to assess their suitability for public library use, and sufficient time is often needed to properly determine whether they will receive lasting and wide-spread public acceptance before collections of such new forms of media are added to the library. Among the criteria used to evaluate the appropriateness of any new media are:

- Market penetration of the media format compared to existing and competing media formats
- Expense of any required playback equipment
- Complexity of use
- Cost per use
- Copyright and digital rights management licenses

SELF-PUBLISHED WORKS

The library enthusiastically embraces the reading and written literacy and creative endeavors of its patrons; however, self-published creative works and vanity press publications (i.e., works designed, created, published, and paid for by the creator) are considered for acquisition only if they meet the General Principles For Selection and

are favorably reviewed by recognized review sources. To have a self-published work considered for selection, a Local Author Title Suggestion Form must be completed.

LABELING AND RESTRICTED SHELVES

Library materials are not marked or identified to indicate approval or disapproval of their content or suitability for any specialized audience demographic. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for supervising the reading of their children. Selection of materials for the adult collections will not be restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials that are considered inappropriate by their parents or guardians. No items are placed on restricted shelves with the intent of limiting access to the contents. Controlled or restricted access to certain items may occur when it is apparent to the Director or Board that such a step is necessary to preserve items from physical damage or theft.

OBJECTIONS TO SELECTED MATERIALS

Once an item has been selected, it will not be removed from the collection at the request of persons or groups who object to it unless it is in violation of the principles set forth in this policy statement. Patrons who wish to object to materials in the library's collections should discuss their concern with the Library Director. Patrons who wish to have an item reconsidered may do so by completing a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form. The library welcomes such interest in its collections and assures patrons that all formal requests for reconsideration will be given serious attention. When completed, Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials forms are referred to the Director, who will review - with the subject area selector - the request and the item in question, and who will respond to the complainant. After receiving the Director's response, the complainant may present the matter to the Library Board of Trustees for further consideration. Challenged materials will not be removed from the public shelves while awaiting resolution of a request for reconsideration.

The Library Director and/or Library Board will only consider objections to library materials which come from residents of the City of West Des Moines or contract communities. An individual item in the collection will be reviewed for any given reason or set of grounds only once per calendar year, Library Director/Board decisions regarding objections or challenges will be kept on file for public review for that duration. In the case of a patron challenging or objecting to multiple items at once, the challenges will be reviewed based upon the availability of the Library Director, Library Board members and staff or stakeholders comprising any review committees deemed necessary.

THEFT AND MUTILATION

The library will make a reasonable attempt to replace stolen or mutilated items which are necessary for maintaining a well-rounded collection. (See "Borrowing Policies")

WEEDING

A continuous weeding program represents a conscientious effort to keep collections well balanced, up-to-date, and suited to the current needs and interests of the community. Weeding should be thorough and consistent. Materials are weeded when they are no longer in useable physical condition; or when they are no longer used, as indicated by patron demand; or when they are out of date.

BOOK SALE

Pursuant to Iowa State Code 256.51, the Library Board of Trustees of the West Des Moines Public Library designates the West Des Moines Public Library Friends Foundation, a 509(a)(3) supporting organization founded and maintained for the exclusive benefit of the West Des Moines Public Library, as the agency empowered to sell on a consignment basis any and all physical items owned by or donated to the library after such time as library staff determines items are obsolete, worn out, no longer needed or no longer appropriate to the mission of the public library, in accordance with the Collection Development Policy.

Proceeds from the sale of discarded library materials may be remitted directly to the West Des Moines Public Library and may be used by the West Des Moines Public Library for the purchase of books and other library materials or equipment, or for the provision of library services.

The West Des Moines Public Library Friends Foundation may deposit proceeds from the sale of discarded library materials into funds, interest bearing accounts, charity investments or endowments for the purpose of growing the investment to better support the library.

ITEMS DONATED TO THE LIBRARY

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Donated materials must be in excellent condition and meet specific criteria to be accepted by the library. Potential donations must be delivered to the library Accounts and Checkout desk in a limited quantity, fitting in two standard paper grocery bags (12"x7"x17") or two boxes of the sort in which reams of paper are purchased (11"x18"x7.5"). West Des Moines Public Library reserves the right to check all donations prior to acceptance for compatibility with the collection development policy. If accepted, materials may be added to the library's collection, placed on the Friends Foundation Book Sale shelves, offered to other local agencies, or disposed of. The library will not attempt to appraise or assign a valuation to any donated item. All donations become the sole property of the library. No gifts of this nature are accepted unless freely given, without restriction, to be used as the library sees fit. The library reserves the right to reject any donation outright. At the discretion of the Director, other materials or specialized collections not mentioned below may be considered.

Materials ACCEPTABLE for donation:

- Hardbound materials in gently used or like new condition published in the last five years
- Current or popular fiction titles
- Non-fiction books with current information
- Biographies and autobiographies
- Children's books
- Paperback books – published in the last five years
- Books of local interest
- Media material: Books on CD, DVDs, Blu-Rays, puzzles
- Magazines/periodicals published within the last two years

Materials NOT ACCEPTABLE for donation:

- Outdated encyclopedias, textbooks, and Information books (e.g. technological, tax, investment, medical, educational, legal, etc.)
- Reader's Digest abridged or condensed books
- Books that are grimy, musty, moldy, have water damage, or contain other physical damages
- Books with strong perfumes or odors
- Books with torn pages, yellowed pages, broken/damaged spines, or missing covers
- Books with editorial comments either written in or typed in
- National Geographic Magazines
- Media material that is copied from TV or from other media
- Media material in poor or not-working condition – this includes scratched DVD or CD discs