

# **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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## **Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of the White Plains Public Library Collection Development Policy is to provide guidelines for acquisition and withdrawal decisions, allocation of resources and long-range planning of collection needs in accordance with the Library's mission. The policy also serves as an instrument of communication, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and aids in staff training.

## **Mission Statement**

The City of White Plains by its Charter provides for a Public Library within its boundaries. This commitment to public library service derives from a basic conviction that books and other materials are powerful, indispensable agents for bringing enlightenment, knowledge, encouragement and inspiration to every member of the community.

The mission of the White Plains Public Library is to offer access to and assistance in the use of the broadest possible store of recorded knowledge, experience and ideas. The Library Staff and Trustees are committed to excellence and innovation in library service and operations, consistent with the community's ability to provide funding and support. To achieve its mission, the Library serves as a free community resource and a center of intellectual freedom that acquires, organizes and disseminates books, non-print materials and electronic resources to educate, inform and enrich.

## **Community Profile**

White Plains is located in the County of Westchester, New York. It is a city with a residential population of 53,077 (2000 Census) and a daytime population estimated at 150,000+. Situated 25 miles north of Manhattan, it is the governmental seat and transportation hub for Westchester County and is a regional center for business, retail, government and professional services. White Plains has outstanding health maintenance and medical facilities and is headquarters to many human service agencies and nonprofits. White Plains is home to a number of colleges and universities, as well as private and parochial schools. Its public schools are rated among the best in the country by major relocation firms. 90% of its graduates go on to higher education. White Plains prides itself on being a city of neighborhoods and offers diverse recreational and cultural facilities. The City's relatively high level of educational attainment and family income ensure a continued demand for materials on a wide variety of subjects. A list of "Fast Facts on White Plains" is included in the Appendix.

## **Intellectual Freedom Principles**

The Library is a community forum for all points of view on current and historical issues and adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom as expressed in *The Library Bills of Rights* and contained within *The Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Principles* (see Appendix) as adopted by the American Library Association.

The Library provides free access to all materials in a variety of formats for all patrons to select or reject. The Library's decision to acquire material does not constitute endorsement of that material's content. It is the Library's goal to offer access to materials that reflect the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which may be unorthodox or unpopular with the majority and those that are controversial in nature. Patrons are free to challenge in writing the presence of materials in the Library. "Request for Reconsideration of Materials" forms are available at the Reference Desk (see Appendix). The Library opposes any attempts by individuals or groups to censor materials in its collections. Its decisions to acquire or remove materials will not be determined by partisan or doctrinal points of view.

To facilitate their use, separately housed collections for children through grade 6 are maintained in the Children's Library. However, children are not limited to these collections and are permitted to use and borrow adult materials owned by the Library. Responsibility for a child's use of library materials, regardless of format or content, lies with the parent or guardian, not with the Library.

## **Organization of the Collection Management Program**

The Library Board of Trustees is by City Charter responsible "to promulgate rules and regulations for the adequate service of the library to the public" and "to purchase, sell, or exchange, improve and repair books and other library materials required for the proper operation of the library..." The Library Board is the ultimate authority to adopt library policy, delegate responsibility to the Library Director and make final decisions regarding the operation of the Library.

Through its by-laws, the Library Board vests the Library Director with responsibility for the collection management program, and the Library Director operates within a framework of policies reviewed and approved by the Library Board of Trustees. In consultation with management staff, the Library Director recommends policy and budget to carry out the collection development program, determines allocation of resources, assigns responsibility for carrying out the program and oversees results.

The Head of Internal Operations maintains contacts with major vendors, oversees the management system that tracks materials orders and expenditures, and supervises staff ordering, cataloging and preparation of materials for public use.

The Assistant Library Director oversees the materials budget and professional staff who choose which materials in all formats are added to or subtracted from the collection in accordance with established criteria. Decisions are made within the framework of Library policies and limitations of the budget.

In the Adult Services Department, the Collection Development Librarian, reporting to the Assistant Library Director, coordinates materials selection and weeding by the Adult Services librarians for the adult collection. The Assistant Library Director coordinates the selection of periodicals and electronic resources with staff assigned as team leaders in those areas.

The Manager of the Children's Department, reporting to the Assistant Library Director, coordinates materials selection and weeding by the Children's librarians for the children's collection.

### **Collection Description**

For more than 100 years, the White Plains Public Library, funded primarily by the City of White Plains, has served the community with distinction. The Library's collection has grown from a few thousand books in a small converted house to a collection of over 500,000 items, including books, magazines, newspapers, videotapes, audiotapes, compact disks, DVDs, and CD-ROMs.

The Library acquires a broad range of print and non-print materials to accommodate the diverse tastes, reading levels, languages, viewpoints and interests of users of all ages, from the beginning to the sophisticated general reader.

Subjects are covered at an introductory through community college level. The Library is not a research-level institution, therefore specialized or scholarly materials are not collected. Such materials may be accessed in the many nearby academic or special libraries (e.g. medical or law). A textbook is purchased when it is the only or best source of information on a topic or it is a classic in the field.

The Library is constantly evaluating new technologies and remains responsive to demand for new and evolving formats. Powerful new means to disseminate software, music, books, movies, pamphlets and many other media have emerged

and are evolving. It will be more critical than ever for the Library to identify and introduce new formats that are useful to patrons. With the recent explosion of electronic resources, the Library now also strives to achieve an effective balance between online and traditional print materials, onsite and remote access.

For materials the Library does not own, patrons are referred to other appropriate institutions, offered the option of interlibrary loan access, or directed to an online source.

Below is a brief description of the Library's main collections. See Appendix for copy of recent report from the Library's online management system as indication of each collection's size.

## **ADULT MATERIALS**

**Express Books:** Small collection of fiction and nonfiction bestsellers to meet demand and supplement the New Books collection with duplicate titles. Collection is weeded as demand wanes. Weeded books may be added to the main collection or discarded, if duplicates are not needed.

**Fiction:** Large collection of popular and classic fiction selected on the basis of high demand and/or literary merit. There are separate sections of genre fiction, namely, science fiction and mysteries. Multiple copies of high-demand titles are purchased.

**Paperbacks:** Ephemeral collection of high-interest fiction and non-fiction titles, with some duplication of titles in hard cover. Weeded as demand wanes, space gets tight or condition of materials warrants.

**Large Print:** Growing collection of popular fiction, classic works of literature, and nonfiction books to meet increased demand by older and/or visually impaired patrons. Weeded as demand wanes, space gets tight or condition of materials warrants.

**Nonfiction:** Extensive collection to support the community's informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs. Titles with enduring value as well as popular appeal are selected. Emphasis is on accuracy, quality and timeliness. Purchasing priorities are established annually to develop new subject areas, redevelop subject areas based on changes and developments in a field or to meet strong new patron interests.

**Reference:** Non-circulating materials with general coverage on a wide range of subjects to assist in answering queries at the Reference Desk and to help patrons get started on their research. In general, reference materials are consulted for quick informational look-ups, rather than read consecutively. They furnish historic or current, concise information or may serve as an index to other resources in the collection. The Library offers many excellent reference works online. Staff continue to evaluate best format for each title, instruct patrons and make them aware of both print and online alternatives.

**Periodicals and Newspapers:** Over 600 print subscriptions to periodicals and newspapers for informational and recreational reading. Selection and retention decisions are based on such factors as a publication's research merit, patron demand, availability of indexing, electronic accessibility of the text, price, and space considerations. A significant amount of patron use of magazine and newspaper indexes and articles has shifted to online databases in recent years, and print copies of many titles have been discontinued. It is expected that this trend will continue in the future.

**Center for Business, Jobs, and Nonprofits:** The CBJN comprises several components. An extensive business reference collection serves business professionals, investors, job seekers, and entrepreneurs. The Small Business reference and circulating materials cover all aspects of starting, running and growing a business. The Job Information Center (JIC) section includes books on career exploration, test taking, and job seeking. Finally, as a Cooperating Collection of the Foundation Center in New York City, the Library furnishes a core collection of Foundation Center publications and supplementary materials for grant seekers. The scope of these collections is being expanded as the Center is further developed. The Library will look to its patrons and partners in this endeavor to evaluate new directions for growth.

**Foreign Language:** Growing collection of Spanish language fiction and non-fiction to meet demands of rapidly expanding Spanish-speaking community. Also, small collection of materials in French and Italian, mostly classic works of literature. Foreign language materials pose special challenges in terms of selection, ease of acquisition, cataloging and marketing. Professional staff work proactively with community partners and vendors to meet these challenges.

**Literacy:** Rapidly expanding collection of print, audio and video materials for new readers of English. Materials cover life skills such as job-hunting, language practice, reading and test preparation. The Library is a site for adult literacy mentoring through Literacy Volunteers and classes through its New Americans Resource Center, a cooperative project with Southern Westchester BOCES and the Westchester Library System. Library staff coordinates with these partners to ensure that this collection meets the needs of program participants.

**Local History:** Non-circulating collection with particular emphasis on the City of White Plains, plus limited coverage of other towns within Westchester County and the County itself. Historical materials about surrounding counties are not included. The collection includes, but is not limited to, books and pamphlets produced by local city, town and village historical societies, plus magazine and newspaper articles that are historical in nature. Further resources are available through the City of White Plains Archives which is located at the Library, but accessed by appointment through the City Clerk's Office. The Library also coordinates with the Westchester Historical Society and other local historical societies to refer patrons and meet their needs.

**Government Documents:** Focus is on pertinent print materials made available by City of White Plains and Westchester County governmental departments. Length of retention is based on continued usefulness of a document as evidenced by public demand, legal requirements, and ongoing availability elsewhere. New York State, federal, and international government documents are acquired and retained on a very selective basis.

**Pamphlets:** The type of information formerly collected in pamphlet form is now largely available online from the web sites of companies, institutions, government agencies and public and private organizations. The Library does not maintain a print collection of these materials.

**Recorded Books:** Growing, high-demand collection, primarily recreational, of unabridged books on tape and compact disks, both fiction and nonfiction, popular and classic titles. Weeding tends to be vigorous based on tendency to loss and damage of these multi-part sets; lack of use is another important factor in discard decisions.

**Recorded Music:** Compact disk collection of instrumental and vocal recordings focuses in the following genres: classical, jazz, rock, folk, world, opera, and musicals. The collection has a mainly recreational purpose, and selection criteria include: authority and competency of producer, artistic merit, technical quality, availability, and patron requests.

**Video/DVDs:** Focus of this large and high-circulating collection is divided between feature films (popular and classic) and documentary and instructional materials. New releases of feature films are not added to the collection until after they have been in the marketplace for about six months. Some closed-captioning videos are available, as well as some American Sign Language (ASL) videos on a variety of subjects. Weeding is based on continued demand, condition, uniqueness and importance.

**CD-ROMs:** Small circulating collection of recreational and educational software reflecting patrons' interests.

**Electronic Sources:** The Library, independently and in consortium with the Westchester Library System (WLS) and Westchester Academic Library Directors' Organization (WALDO), subscribes to a growing number of electronic databases. The subscriptions are either Internet-based or delivered via CD-ROM's mounted on the Library equipment. Depending on licensing, they may be accessed online in the Library, outside the Library via the Internet ("remote access"), or both. The collection includes but is not limited to citation and full-text periodical indexes, directories, encyclopedias, and electronic versions of print reference sources. In addition to the standard library criteria for materials selection, the following are considered: ease of use for the general public (e.g. searching, printing, downloading), amount of full text, advantages over print equivalent, vendor reputation and assistance, licensing and remote access, and technical adaptability to existing hardware.

The Library also provides access to the Internet, a global, unregulated and rapidly changing communications network. Given the impossibility of controlling access points to Internet sites, patrons are responsible for the choice of sites accessed. Internet access on adult workstations is unfiltered. Filtering software operates on Internet workstations in the Children's Library.

## **YOUNG ADULT (YA) MATERIALS**

**Fiction:** Focus is on the recreational, developmental and informational needs of youth in grades 7 and 8. Shelved in area designated YA.

**Summer reading:** Multiple copies of titles on summer reading booklists of middle and high schools in the City. This collection is designed to support the summer reading program in these schools, not to supply a copy of every title required by the schools to each student. Shelved in area designated YA.

**College materials:** To assist with college selection and applications, a small collection is maintained in the area designated YA.

**Nonfiction:** Geared toward youth in grades 7 through 12. Interfiled with Adult nonfiction with a special spine label. Priorities are curriculum-related materials, books on teenage development, and popular topics such as sports and music.

## **CHILDREN'S COLLECTION**

The Children's collection, housed in the Children's Library, serves children from birth through sixth grade, as well as parents, caregivers, teachers and other professionals in service to children. The collection provides books and nonbook materials of the best available quality for recreational use, general information and elementary level curriculum support. Literary excellence, high quality of art and illustrations, and accuracy and timeliness of factual material are criteria of special importance in selecting these materials.

**Special Collections:** The **Alice Collection**, named after Carroll's literary character from *Alice in Wonderland*, is a special historical, non-circulating collection of children's literature sources serving librarians, teachers, parents, authors, students and researchers in the field. The collection concentrates on the history and criticism of children's literature and the history and practices of children's library services. It includes award-winning titles, books on storytelling and folklore, biographies and criticisms of children's authors and illustrators, copies of landmark books, bibliographies and other important resources.

The **Parenting Collection** consists of adult guides and materials covering a wide range of topics on children from infants to teens that are of interest to parents and caregivers. Among the topics included are health and nutrition, education, child development, and family recreation. This collection is located in the Children's Library to be accessible to busy parents and caregivers visiting the Library with their children. Some titles are also duplicated and housed in the Adult nonfiction collection.

## **General Criteria for Selection**

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Literary and/or artistic merit.
- Evaluation in standard review media.
- Reputation or qualifications of author, performer, or publisher.
- Receipt of or nomination for major awards or prizes.
- Accuracy, clarity, currency, and comprehensiveness.
- Quality of art and illustrations. Especially significant for children's materials.
- Durability, ease of use, and ability to be housed in a library collection. Except in the case of the paperback collection, hardcover is preferred when available.
- Demand. Demonstrated or perceived interest by patrons. An item in great demand may be purchased despite negative reviews.
- Present and potential relevance to the community served.
- Appropriateness. Supports library's mission and role and relates to existing collection.
- Price. Has value in proportion to its cost.

## **Selection Tools**

Library staff rely on standard review sources such as *Library Journal* and *Booklist*. Other tools may include patron or staff recommendations, reviews or notices in the general media, publishers catalogs and promotional materials, as well as subject bibliographies compiled by authorities in the field. In addition, reports noting missing, overdue, or heavily requested items affect selection decisions. Materials being mended or weeded (deselected) also demonstrate what needs to be acquired. Selections are sometimes made from materials brought on site by individual sales representatives. This is done on a limited basis when higher discounts, unavailability of similar materials or need to examine actual products are critical factors.

## **Gifts and Donations**

See "Guidelines for Donations" (Appendix).

## **Collection Evaluation and Maintenance**

Collection evaluation and maintenance is an ongoing process. Librarians in both the Adult Services and Children's Departments participate in a yearly appraisal of collection development goals. Library staff weed their assigned subject areas regularly to ensure that collections have current and appropriate information. This

is especially important in areas such as travel, health and computers where dated information is wrong information. Professional sources such as *Reference Sources for Small and Medium-sized Libraries* and *Public Library Catalog* serve as guides in the weeding and replacement process. In addition, inventory records provided by the Library's online circulation system are used to help assess patron demand and interest. Procedures are also in place to identify items that are lost, missing, or damaged and evaluate need for replacement or mending.

### **General Criteria for Weeding** *(also called de-selection, de-acquisition, discard)*

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Dated material: not accurate, not reliable.
- Condition: damaged, or missing parts.
- Low use.
- Too many multiple copies.
- Ephemeral material: no enduring value.
- Space limitations: must make room for newer materials.
- Lost or missing (decision not to replace and to remove from library catalog).
- Unavailable for replacement. Out-of-print.
- Not relevant to community needs or scope of the Library's collection.

### **Policy Review and Revision**

This Collection Development Policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Adopted by  
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