

Collection Development Policy

Library Collection Development Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- a) Provide guidance to the staff of the Mount Vernon Public Library in its selection of materials;
- b) Provide the public with information regarding selection principles;
- c) Assure continued growth of the collection appropriate to defined roles and goals;
- d) Provide a means for the library to evaluate its selection process;
- e) Provide a response to public questions regarding the content of the library's collections.

1.2 The City of Mount Vernon, the Library and its Clientele

Mount Vernon is a city of approximately 67,153 people (1990 census), an increase from 66,713, which was recorded for the 1980 census. The 1990 census counted 37,138 African Americans, 26,698 Whites, 10,440 Other (including 5,237 of Hispanic origin). Median household income was \$34,850, and per capita income \$16,106.

There has been an influx of foreign language speakers to the city. French, Spanish, Portuguese, Korean and Chinese are increasingly heard on city streets. The community also includes a large Italian-American population, and a declining Jewish population.

The Mount Vernon Public Library was chartered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York, and is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of 5 persons appointed by the Board of Education. It is operated in accordance with applicable sections of New York State Education Law, and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

The Mount Vernon Public Library serves the educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the citizens of Mount Vernon by acquiring and maintaining a broadly-based, professionally selected and managed collection of books, periodicals, recordings, videos, and other materials. The library serves other citizens of the County of Westchester who hold library cards from other Westchester towns. The library also serves individuals who work or go to school in Mount Vernon, but who may reside elsewhere. The clientele of the library includes a full range of citizens of all ages and backgrounds. The Mount Vernon Public Library is open to all.

1.3 Goal of the Collection Development Program

The library provides materials and services to the community to help residents obtain information meeting their personal, educational, and professional needs. The library serves as a learning and educational center for all residents of the community, providing a diverse collection representative of many points of view.

1.4. Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Copyright Issues

The Trustees of the Mount Vernon Public Library have adopted the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its Interpretations. The library supports the copyright laws of the United States and the interpretations of Fair Use of copyrighted materials. In pursuing its mission the library tries to make available diverse views and expressions, including those that may be considered by some to be unorthodox or unpopular. A given work may be considered controversial for a wide variety of reasons, such as political, racial, religious or ethnic bias of the work itself or of its author; sexual content or language, distorted facts or disputed scientific or pseudo-scientific theory; espousal of violent or illegal activity, etc. These reasons may be subjective on the part of an individual or group, but may also have an objective basis.

The library will not select, reject or remove any work solely because it is considered to be controversial for these or other related reasons. Divergent points of view on controversial issues will be represented, but the library is not obligated to provide materials on any single, biased or doctrinal issue. The decision will be made on the basis of the needs and interests of the community and the library as understood by the professional staff. Certain works that may be patently offensive to some, may also have special historic interest and should be represented in the Central Library collection.

1.4a Reconsideration Procedures

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. Responsibility for the reading materials of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. While a person may reject materials for himself, he may not exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others. A citizen's request for the library to reconsider holding an item in the collection shall be made in writing and given to the Library Director. A form for this purpose is available from the Director. Appeals are directed to the Board of Trustees for final decision.

1.4b Internet Policy

The library provides access to the Internet via the World Wide Web. The library cannot be responsible for the content or quality of the information accessed. The library cannot monitor the information accessed, and parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's use of the Web.

1.5 Brief Overview of the Collection

The Mount Vernon Public Library maintains a general circulating collection and a non-circulating reference collection to serve the needs of the local community. The collection

consists of some 490,000 catalogued books, 21,000 serials, 17,000 audio and visual recordings and 158,000 other material holdings (including government documents).

1.6 Responsibility for Collection Management and Development

1.6.1 Authority and Staffing

By authority of the Board of Trustees, the Library Director is responsible for the selection of materials in accordance with the principles set forth in this document. Responsibility for the selection of particular types of materials including, but not limited to, reference works, periodicals, children's books, young adult materials, recordings, videocassettes and CD-ROMS is routinely delegated to the appropriate professional staff members because of their expertise and experience.

1.7 Budget Structure and Allocation Policy

A significant amount of the budget will be allocated to the purchase of materials for the collection. The Library Director will present an annual collection budget to the Board during the annual budget process. The collection budget will be allocated to each of the areas of the collection described in Section Two of this policy. Allocations may shift, as necessary, at the discretion of the Library Director.

1.8 Preservation, Replacement, Removal and Access

All materials added to the collection through gifts and purchase will be made accessible in a timely fashion via the computer system maintained by the Westchester Library System. Materials which have become obsolete, outdated, or outlived their usefulness shall be withdrawn at the discretion of the Library Director. Materials that have been damaged, lost or destroyed will be replaced at the discretion of the Library Director. Storage and accessibility within the building are factors considered in retaining or discarding materials.

1.9 Gifts

Gifts of material to the collection shall meet the same collection criteria as purchased materials.

Gifts are accepted subject to the following limitations:

- 1) The library makes the final decision on acceptance, use or disposition;
- 2) The library retains unconditional ownership.

Cash contributions for the purchase of gifts may be restricted to specific collecting areas, but they must meet the same criteria as materials purchased with budgeted funds.

2. GENERAL COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

2.1 Types of Publications

The library's collection will include, but will not be limited to, the following types of publications: books (hardback and paperback), periodicals, newspapers, audiocassette books, music CDs and cassettes, videos, microforms, computer software and electronic information. The library's circulating collection will generally not include textbooks, reprints, dissertations and theses, maps, art works, posters or sheet music.

2.2 Multiple Copies

The library will purchase multiple copies, when possible, of works in high and/or continuous demand, including, but not limited to, bestsellers, classic titles on reading lists, and books sought by local reading clubs. Multiple copies will be discarded if demand decreases.

2.3 General Selection Criteria

Any acquisition, whether purchased or given as a gift, must be considered in terms of its own excellence and the audience for whom it is intended. No single standard can be applied in all cases. Some materials may be judged primarily in terms of artistic merit, scholarship or value to humanity; others are selected to satisfy the informational, recreational or educational interests of the community. The following criteria will generally be followed in evaluating a work for selection.

- Present or potential relevance to community needs
- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Accuracy
- Reputation and significance of the author
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Popular demand
- Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Attention given by critics, reviewers, professional book selection tools, and the public

2.4 Weeding

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained by retaining or replacing essential materials, and removing, on a systematic and continuous basis, those works that are worn, outdated, of little historical significance or no longer in demand. To ensure a vital collection of continued value to the community, books that have outlived their usefulness are withdrawn. These materials may be donated to the Friends of the Library for sale to the public. The library does not set aside individual items for sale to particular patrons.

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