

Niagara Falls Public Library

Collection Development Policy

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Niagara Falls Public Library is provide the citizens of Niagara Falls with quality service, access to excellent collections, assistance in using emerging technologies, and a pleasing, safe environment.

Introduction

The Niagara Falls Public Library, located in the City of Niagara Falls, New York, serves a population of 50,193 people, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The main library is in the Earl W. Brydges building and there is another branch in LaSalle at 8728 Buffalo Avenue. It is also the Central Library for Nioga Library System which serves all libraries in Niagara, Orleans and Genesee counties.

The Collection Development Policy contains the policies pertaining to the purpose, selection, and withdrawal of library materials. This policy includes both the Earl W. Brydges Main Library and the LaSalle Branch Library.

Purpose

The purpose of the collection development policy is:

- To guide library staff in the selection of library materials.
- To inform the public of the philosophy of collection development and the policies involved.
- To establish a framework for continuous collection evaluation and improvement.
- To document the current collection management policies and procedures

In alignment with the library's Mission Statement, the Niagara Falls Public Library endorses the *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read Statement* as written by the American Library Association and attached to this document.

The library upholds the right of an individual to locate and use materials that represent many viewpoints, even controversial ones. The library selects materials that encompass the broad range of ideas and knowledge that are the hallmarks of a democratic nation.

Adopted by NFPL Board of Trustees 7-25-2012

Responsibility for Selection

The Library Director has the ultimate responsibility for the selection of library materials, in agreement with the policies approved by the Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility is shared with the members of the library staff who actually select the materials; however, because the director is accountable to the library board and the public for selections made, the director has the ultimate authority for selection or rejection of items.

General Selection Criteria

A library needs to determine to what degree of completeness it will acquire materials. Based on a scale of Basic, Intermediate, or Comprehensive, the Niagara Falls Public Library collects materials for the entire collection at the Intermediate level. As the Central Library for the NIOGA system which serves Niagara, Orleans and Genesee counties, we purchase materials well beyond a Basic collection, but only in the Local History Collection is the level Comprehensive in scope.

These general criteria are taken into account for all materials selected for the Niagara Falls Public Library, which includes the adult, young adult and children's collections. Additional specific criteria are listed when appropriate for different types of materials. An item need not meet all of these standards to be selected for the collection.

- Current and anticipated needs and interests of the public
- Accuracy of content
- Timeliness of information
- Artistic, literary, historic and/or scientific merit
- Author's, artist's or publisher's qualifications and/or reputation
- Evaluations in review media
- Format: durable binding, visual appeal, acid-free paper, clear font type
- Inclusion of title in standard bibliographies or indexes
- Receipt of or nomination for major awards or prizes
- Cost
- Support of library's mission and goals
- Addresses gaps in the collection

Selection Tools

Among the selection tools used by librarians are professional library journals, trade journals, subject bibliographies, publishers' promotional materials, and reviews from reputable sources. Other sources are materials reviewed in newspapers and magazines, local publications, television and radio, and from reputable sources available via the Internet.

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The Library subscribes to several periodicals which are used as review and evaluation sources for material selection. Among these are:

- *Library Journal*
- *Booklist*
- *Kirkus Reviews*
- *Publisher's Weekly*
- *New York Times Book Review*
- *School Library Journal*
- *VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)*
- *Billboard*
- *Rolling Stone*
- *Horn Book*
- *Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books*

Material Formats

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate format for library use. Although the majority of the Library's collection is offered in the traditional print format, valuable information is increasingly available in audio-visual and electronic formats.

- A. Hardcover Books - books are generally purchased in hardcover editions because of their durability.
- B. Trade Paperbacks - this format includes paperback books which are comparable in size to hardcover editions but which are typically lower in cost. They are preferred in those cases where the hardcover edition is extremely expensive and the title would be either used infrequently or would be removed from the collection in a few years.
- C. Mass Market Paperbacks - this format includes paperback books that are smaller in size than the typical hardcover or trade paperback book. The paperback fiction collection will be primarily limited to those titles published only in mass-market paperback format.
- D. Serials - publications issued in successive parts. This format includes periodicals, newspapers and annuals or continuations kept in the reference collections. The physical formats may be in print, microform, and/or computer-based.

Consideration must be given to storage of back issues of serials. The following factors must be considered in any decision: cost; usage rates; shelf space required; computer system compatibility; availability of the title in another format such as microfilm or electronic format.

The Library generally keeps periodicals in print format for one year; however, the Library may decide to keep print copies for a shorter period of time, particularly

newspapers. Items that the Library determines should be retained for historic value may be kept in print format indefinitely or will purchase it in a microform format.

- E. Microfilm/Microfiche - microforms are used primarily for long-term storage and preservation of periodicals and newspapers.
- F. Digital Videodisc (DVD) - through popular demand, the majority of films are purchased in DVD or Blu-Ray format. The following selection criteria will be considered for videos and digital videodiscs:
 - Favorable reviews in standard library reviewing sources
 - Appropriateness of the subject to the collection
 - Public demand
 - Technical quality, i.e. clarity of picture and sound quality
 - Authority and competency of the producer
 - Artistic merit and reputation of the performers
 - Availability of public performance rights
 - The need for non-fiction and documentaries to present accurate and current information
 - Cost
- G. Audio Books - recorded books are available in compact disc, MP3, and Playaway (pre-recorded device) format. Both abridged and unabridged titles are included in the Library's collection.
- H. Compact Discs - musical recordings are most readily available on compact disc. This format is distinguished by its durability and technical quality. Therefore, the Library will collect recorded music primarily in this format.
- I. Large Type Books - books printed in larger than 16-point type are in demand by those persons in the community with visual impairments. The Library attempts to provide a variety of titles in this format, particularly in fiction.
- J. Computer-Based Resources - this format includes on-line databases available via the Internet and CD-ROM resources mounted on local computer servers. Full-text databases include complete articles, documents, and other resources that provide entire articles and information. Citation databases provide references to sources of information rather than the actual text or information.

Adult Fiction

The Library's collection includes a wide variety of contemporary works of fiction representing all genres, classics and important novels of the past, and international works of fiction. The Library selects items that are of interest to the community for their informational, educational and recreational needs.

Additional considerations for the evaluation of works of fiction:

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- Patron interest and demand
- Creativity and originality
- Importance of the work
- Readability

Adult Non-Fiction

The Library aims at acquiring 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 school course work
- Support business, cultural, recreational and civic interests in the community
- Nourish intellectual, aesthetic, creative and spiritual growth
- Present different viewpoints on issues

Additional considerations for evaluation of non-fiction:

- Timely, accurate and useful information
- Up-to-date material
- Scope of the work and subject matter
- Author/producer's qualifications
- Artistic excellence
- Value to the community
- Historical value
- Quality illustrations

Young Adult Collection

Fiction titles of interest to persons aged 13-18 are shelved in the YA section of the Library. Non-fiction items, including biographies, are interfiled with the Adult books in the same categories. The General Selection Criteria standards of the Niagara Falls Public Library apply for the Young Adult Collection, with the additional consideration of subject matter of interest to the young adult.

Children's Collection

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The Children's Room of the Library has items of interest to children from birth to age 12. The collection for children is chosen with an emphasis on materials that develop reading ability, inform children about the world around them, stimulate the imagination, and entertain. Materials are purchased in print and non-print formats including, but not limited to books, periodicals, audio titles and computer software. These materials conform to the General Selection Criteria standards, with the interests of children in mind. There is also a collection of books of interest to parents and those working with children.

The Library does not stand in loco parentis; responsibility for the choice of reading, listening and viewing material for minors rests with their parents or guardians. If parents or guardians do not want their children to access certain library materials or services, it is their responsibility to so advise their children.

Reference

Reference materials provide quick, concise and up-to-date information. Included are indexes, encyclopedias, bibliographies, biographical resources, dictionaries, almanacs, atlases and directories. Since they are typically used daily by the public and by library staff to answer specific questions, books in the reference collection are designated for use within the library only.

- A. Ready Reference - a selection of high use reference items including directories, dictionaries, maps, almanacs, encyclopedias, phone books, investment resources, local government information.
- B. Consumer Information - which aid consumers in purchasing decisions, such as buying of cars and appliances.
- C. Readers Advisory - a selection of bibliographic books to assist readers in selecting recreational materials in various genres.
- D. Local History Department - Local History is a research library containing extensive collections of books, photographs, maps, newspapers, videotapes, scrapbooks, realia and files of articles about Niagara Falls, both city and the cataract. These materials document the history of the Niagara Falls area from before the founding of the villages of Niagara Falls (1848), Niagara City (1854), (Suspension Bridge) and the present day Niagara Falls.

The Local History collection accepts contributions of materials that the Director and staff judge to be of value to the community. New items that complement the collection are purchased as well as occasional valuable historical items that are significant to the Niagara Falls area.

Additional Selection Criteria for Reference:

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- Authoritativeness
- Scope and depth of coverage
- Frequency of use
- Demands on subject areas which circulating collection cannot meet
- Format

Periodicals

The Library provides periodicals in a wide range of subjects for reference purposes and recreational interest. These range from popular magazines to medical journals; financial publications to antiques.

The Niagara Falls Public Library maintains current files of these newspapers: The Niagara Gazette; Buffalo News; Wall Street Journal; New York Times; USA Today; Christian Science Monitor. The Niagara Gazette and New York Times back files are retained on microfilm. The Local History Department maintains indexes for topics of local interest.

Electronic Databases

Online computerized databases compliment and extend the collection by providing access to information in electronic format. Databases are used by the Library staff to enhance and supplement reference service. Many of the databases contain specialized information beyond the scope of the Library's print collections; others have information that does not exist in print format.

Collection Development on the Web

Through its website, the Niagara Falls Public Library directs users to informational resources on the Internet that complement, enhance, and in some cases, parallel resources housed in the Library collection. Over time, new resources will become available via the Internet and the reference collection will be evaluated to determine whether to add them taking into consideration access, cost, ease-of-use and other selection criteria.

Access

The Niagara Falls Public Library recognizes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for patrons to exercise their rights as citizens. The Library believes that reading, listening, and viewing are individual, private matters. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or their own minor children, the freedom of others to read or inquire cannot be restricted. The Library strives to maintain materials representing all sides of an issue in a neutral, unbiased manner. Selection of materials by the Library does not mean endorsement of the contents of views expressed in those materials. The existence of a

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particular viewpoint in the collection is a reflection of the Library's policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of that particular point of view.

Reconsideration

The Niagara Falls Public Library supports the *Freedom to Read* statement and *Library Bill of Rights* and therefore, accepts the responsibility to provide materials that reflect a wide range of ideas and experiences for our patrons. We understand that our efforts may prompt some individuals to object to the inclusion of certain materials in our collection. No item is to be removed or restricted because of a complaint except under the direction of the Board of Trustees after the following procedures have been executed:

1. The patron will complete a "Request for Review of Material" form (a copy of the form is attached to this document).
2. The complaint will be reviewed by the librarians, director, and the Board of Trustees of the N.F.P.L.
3. The patron will be notified in writing of the decision.

Gifts and Donations

The Library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or dated information the director can dispose of them as she/he sees fit. The same criteria of selection which are applied to purchase materials are applied to gifts.

Memorial gifts of money or books are also accepted with suitable bookplates placed in the book. Gifts and donations to the Library are welcomed and appreciated.

By law, the Library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor.

Weeding

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Weeding is an integral part of the collection development procedure. Materials are withdrawn from the Library's collection through systematic weeding or because of loss or physical damage. The Niagara Falls Public Library uses the CREW (Continuous, Review, Evaluation, Weeding) Method in its de-selection process. This is a constant focus on reviewing and evaluating each book to ensure materials with little value are purged efficiently.

Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as

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donated materials and disposed of at the library director's discretion and in accordance with state education law.

The following categories of materials should be considered for weeding: worn or mutilated items; duplicate copies of seldom used titles; materials which contain outdated or inaccurate information; superseded editions of specific titles; and materials no longer of interest or demand.

Replacement

While the Library attempts to maintain copies of standard and important works, it does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn due to loss or damage. In making a decision as to whether or not an item will be replaced, staff will consider the following factors:

- Whether the item is still available and can be replaced
- Whether another item or format might better serve the same purpose
- Whether there remains sufficient demand to replace the item
- Whether updated, newer, or revised materials might better replace a given item
- Whether the item has historic value
- Whether another library could better provide that item
- The number of copies held in the collection
- The existing coverage of the subject within the collection
- The cost of mending versus the cost of replacement.

The Collection Development Policy will be reviewed and/or revised as needed.

Written by: L. Fossa with additional input provided by M. Ornat, M. Timby and T. Wheeler

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#).

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

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1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals

must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

5. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

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**Request for Review of
Material**

Title _____ Author _____

Publisher _____ Material Type _____

1. Have you examined the material in its entirety?

2. What did you find objectionable? (Be specific, including page number)

3. What harm do you feel will result from it's use?

4. Did you find anything valuable in this material, if so what?

5. What do you think is the main idea of the author's purpose in writing this material?

6. Do you know of any material that would better suit the purpose?

7. Would this material be better suited for a different age level? _____
8. What action do you feel should be taken on this material?

9. Will you be willing to discuss this material with the Niagara Falls Library Board of Trustees? _____

Your Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Do you represent an organization? _____ Name of Organization _____

Date _____ Signature _____

Send your request to: Michelle Petrazzoulo, Executive Director
Niagara Falls Public Library
1425 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14305