

Collection Development Policy

The mission of the Saint Paul Public Library is to anticipate and respond to the community's need for information; to facilitate lifelong learning; to stimulate and nurture a desire to read in young people; to provide materials to meet the interests of all ages; and to enrich the quality of life in the community.

Purpose of the Collection Development Policy

The policy reflects the mission of the Library and a commitment to intellectual freedom. The policy serves as a blueprint to guide staff in the selection and retention of materials and to inform the public of the principles supporting selection decisions. The Library serves a diverse population possessing an unlimited range of interests and tastes but the Library has limited means and must make choices to serve all said interests. Therefore, the Library partners with other libraries through consortia and organizational commitments in order to expand its capacity to make more information and materials available to citizens than would otherwise be possible.

Basic to this policy is the **Library Bill of Rights** as adopted by the American Library Association. This statement, together with other official interpretations by the American Library Association is considered to be adopted by reference in this document. Final responsibility for materials selection lies with the Director of the Saint Paul Public Library who delegates to the Collection Management Librarian and other staff selectors the authority to make individual selections. The Library seeks to meet the needs of the total community, recognizing that some materials may be controversial. It is the responsibility of the individual library users to choose materials which suit his or her tastes and needs. Users are free to restrict for themselves materials of which they do not approve, but they may not restrict the freedom of others to read what they desire. Responsibility for children's use of library materials rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of materials for adults will not be inhibited by the possibility that such materials may be accessible to children. For more complete explanation of this policy see the section of this policy, **Intellectual Freedom**.

The Roles of the Library's Public Agencies

The Saint Paul Public Library system is comprised of a Central Library, 12 branches, and Bookmobile service. The Central Library is the system's primary reference and resource center. The branch libraries primarily serve their neighborhoods, with collections and services tailored to the characteristics and information needs of the various communities. All these resources are easily accessible to users systemwide through interlibrary delivery, fax transmission, online holds, and reserves for customer pickup.

As the primary reference and resource center of the Saint Paul Public Library system, the **Central Library** collection is the most inclusive and comprehensive. However, the Central Library does not necessarily collect a copy of every title that is held in the system. Often the Central Library will be the first site in the library system to initiate a new service, such as new databases offered through computer access or other technological advances. The Central Library houses very expensive resources which cannot be widely purchased and materials which are less frequently used. Both reference and circulating materials are available at Central since it is the neighborhood library for those who live, work, go to school or day care in the downtown area. Included in this neighborhood base are those on job assignments for city agencies.

Branch libraries collect and access materials to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of their communities. These needs are continually assessed by studying population demographics; evaluating the use of the collection; monitoring community interests and activities; monitoring other services and programs available in the community; and collaborating with appropriate neighborhood organizations and schools.

Collection Priorities and Objectives

The Library's primary collection priority is to support its mission and the roles it serves in the community. Specifically these include:

To provide popular and factual materials, reference tools, materials that assist in life-long learning and multi-lingual collections. Materials will be purchased in multiple formats and will always strive to reflect the diversity of the communities the Library serves.

To defend the Library's commitment to the protection of every person's freedom to read, establishing a balanced collection that reflects many aspects of our society and not avoiding acquiring materials that some may find controversial.

To continue the Library tradition of meeting new demands with thoughtful innovations that respectfully build on past achievements.

Basic Selection Principles

Selectors use their training, knowledge and expertise along with following standard criteria to select materials. An item need not meet all criteria to be selected.

General Criteria

Relevance to current and anticipated community needs

Suitability of subject and style for intended audience

Critical reviews

Reputation and qualifications of the author and/or publisher

Cost

Relation to the current collection and other materials on the subject

Local significance of the author or topic

Potential user appeal

Content Criteria

The selection of materials includes, but is not limited, to:

Comprehensiveness of treatment

Authority, competence, reputation and purpose of the author

Currency and accuracy of the information

Long-term significance or interest

Representation of diverse points of view

Selectors decide how many copies to purchase based on anticipated demand, the interests of library users in our many neighborhoods, physical space available in branches and total cost of the materials. The Library recognizes that users have differing abilities and backgrounds and thus provides materials on varying levels of difficulty and scholarship. The library does not attempt to be an historical repository of all materials which have contributed to the development of various fields of interest. The Library does not serve as an archive for the city of Saint Paul or any organization. It maintains a selective, not complete, collection of materials which document local history. Some of that material is featured in the Saint Paul Collection.

Electronic Formats Criteria

Ease-of-use of the product

Availability to multiple users, usually simultaneously

Equipment, technology and training requirements.

Enhancement of the print equivalents in terms of speed, flexibility, combinations of search terms, full text

Access to retrospective information

Reduction of space requirements over print products

Reduction or elimination of need to purchase multiple copies of a print source for multiple locations

Cost

Gifts

The Library welcomes gifts of materials, with the understanding that the same standards of selection are applied to gifts as to materials purchased for the collection. If gifts are accepted, they will be accepted without commitment as to their final disposition and with the understanding that they may not necessarily be added to the collection. The library may choose not to accept some gifts. Those gifts added to the collection will be housed in the agency the library deems most appropriate. They may be sold if not needed in the collection.

Prospective donors should contact the library to discuss appropriate donations and procedures before dropping off gifts. A general guideline is that materials should be less than three years old. All material should be in good condition. The library will give a donor an acknowledgment of receipt, which may be used for income tax purposes, stating the number and type of materials donated. The library does not assign a value to the materials. It is a donor's responsibility to determine the value of the donated materials.

Intellectual Freedom

As the Library meets its mission it is expected that some of the materials acquired will be controversial, not suiting everyone's taste, interest or code of ethics. The Library does not select its materials on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval. It considers the merits of the works and the need for the material in its collection. Users are free to choose what they like from the collection, to reject what they don't like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to read what they desire. Selection of materials for adults is not inhibited by the possibility that such materials are accessible to children. Moreover, the responsibility for children's use of library resources rests with their parents or legal guardians who are free to guide their children according to their particular family values.

Library selectors make a concerted effort to present various points of view on controversial subjects and to have a balanced collection. The fact that an item is included in the collection does not mean that the Library endorses any theory or statement contained in it.

The Library may include proselytizing works representing political, economic, moral, religious or other vested positions when they meet the selection criteria and the needs of the collection.

The Library does not remove, restrict or withdraw materials solely because they are regarded as discriminatory or inflammatory by an individual group.

The Library does not label materials to indicate approval or disapproval of the content or philosophy of the author, nor does it expurgate any material in the collection. Access to materials is restricted only to ensure they are available to all. For example, materials may be designated reference to insure a copy is always available.

Because the Library is committed to freedom of information, and because information is neither intrinsically good or bad, materials are not excluded from the collection because they describe an illegal act or explain how to commit an illegal act. Materials that argue that the law is bad and should be changed are not excluded. However the Library does not collect materials which are intended to persuade the reader to commit an illegal act.

All that being said, the library staff welcome input from library users on the quality, balance, and responsiveness of the collection. **Suggestion for Purchase** forms are available at all library agencies to recommend books or subject areas of importance to the user.