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Collection Development Policy

Mission

The Mission of the Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library is to support lifelong learning by responding to the community's need for information, encouraging a desire to read, and enriching the quality of life.

Introduction

A collection development policy is a written document which defines the scope and nature of a library's existing collection, and the policies and plans for continuing development of resources as they relate to institutional goals, general selection criteria and intellectual freedom. "Library collection" includes all items acquired for use by the public. Standards of selection are applicable to print, non-print, and electronic/digital media materials.

The objectives of the Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library as factors in selection are as follows:

- To meet the information needs of the community.
- To help people know more about themselves and their world.
- To supplement formal study and encourage informal self-education.
- To stimulate thoughtful participation in the affairs of the community, the country and the world.
- To support educational, civic, cultural and recreational activities within the community.
- To provide entertainment and diversions for the library users.

Responsibility for Selection

The Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library Board of Trustees delegates authority for the selection of materials to the Library Director and those members of the staff designated by the director as selectors, who are charged with meeting the goals of the Collection Development Policy.

Materials Budget

The Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library Board of Trustees develops an annual materials budget in consultation with the Library Director. The budget is certified by the Iowa Falls City Council. Each year the selectors develop budgets for the selection arenas based on factors such as circulation statistics, cost per item, annual collection goals, and support of the strategic plan.

Selection Guidelines and Practices

Selection is based on the merits of a work in relation to the needs, interests and demands of the community. The library supports and is supported by the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements which affirm that free and convenient access to ideas, information, and the creative experience is of vital importance to every citizen today. The selection of library materials is predicated on the library patron's right to read and his/her freedom from censorship by others. The library recognizes that any given material may offend some patrons, but because the library follows accepted principles of intellectual freedom, it will not remove specific titles solely because individuals or groups find them objectionable.

Materials are selected by trained staff in an effort to maintain a well-balanced, up-to-date, attractive, and useful collection of materials that will meet the needs of the community, while using demographic circulation figures, statistical analyses and customer requests. Materials will be selected based on their ability to stimulate imaginations and enhance leisure time. The selectors support the library's role as a popular materials center by selecting materials to serve the full range of ages, cultures, lifestyles, education, reading and technology skills of our citizens. The collection includes diverse points of view and a choice of formats, treatments, and levels of difficulty. Selectors achieve a balance collection through a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers.

The collection is generally not archival, and items are expected to be used frequently. The selectors oversee an annual assessment to ensure that the collection meets current needs and that a substantial percentage of the materials are less than five years old.

Multiple copies of heavily requested titles may be provided. Requests for materials from library users are given high priority. Patrons are encouraged to recommend purchases of library materials. Request to purchase forms are available at the front desk. Patron requests are evaluated using the selection criteria listed below.

Acquisition, as used in this statement of policy, includes with its jurisdiction, materials which are offered to the library as gifts, as well as those which are designated for purchase.

General selection criteria

- Suitability and sustainability of physical format for library purposes.
- Suitability of subject and method of presentation for intended audience.
- Relationship to existing collection in the same subject field.
- Relevance to present and projected community needs and demands.
- Competence and reputation of author and/or publisher.
- Accuracy and effectiveness in the presentation of the information.
- Current interest or relevance.
- Availability of space and funds.
- Favorable reviews by professional and other sources.
- Representation of diverse points of view and broad knowledge base.

An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable. Other considerations may be applicable in specific subject areas.

Formats

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate sustainable format for library use. The Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library recognizes the place of non-print formats in the collection as legitimate educational and recreational resources for the community. The Library monitors the development of new formats and may add these to the collection. The continuation of current formats and the adoption of new formats will be based on an analysis of market acceptance of the format, its ability to provide a cost-effective alternative to existing formats, and the Library's financial ability to acquire, process and maintain a sufficient collection.

The Library will maintain a limited collection of world language materials in both adult and youth collections for recreation reading and to support world language programs.

Maintaining the Collection

Systematic withdrawal of materials no longer useful is necessary in order to maintain an active, accurate and relevant collection. In compliance with standards set for library collections by the State Library of Iowa, a minimum of 3% up to 6% of the total collection will be withdrawn annually.

Library materials are discarded for one or more of the following reasons:

- Poor physical condition.
- Superfluous because of duplicate titles or because demand no longer exists.
- Obsolete, superseded edition, no longer accurate.
- Availability from other libraries.
- Space Limitations.
- Poor or no circulation statistics w/in the last 5 years.

While the library attempts to have copies of standard and important works, it does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn. The same criteria that apply to original selection will also apply to replacements. The need for replacement is based on the following:

- The number of duplicate copies
- Existence of adequate coverage of the subject in the collection
- Demand for the specific title or subject area
- Availability of material

If suitable, discarded materials will be sold throughout the year on the Sale Cart in the library.

Placement of Materials

The Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library uses the Dewey Decimal classification system and Library of Congress subject headings to place materials in the proper subject area and to assign them to shelving categories. Selectors take into account age recommendations in reviews as they choose and classify materials.

The Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library shelving areas are divided into sections such as Juvenile, Fiction, Inspirational Fiction, Non-Fiction, Large Print, and DVDs (separated by Adult Titles and Kids/Family Titles) for ease of use, but customers of any age may use materials in all sections of the library. It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians, not the Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library staff, to monitor library use by minors.

Patron Input

The Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library's role in the community is to provide opportunities that will allow individuals to freely examine subjects and make their own decisions. While patrons are free to reject for themselves what they do not approve of, they cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of access to others.

The Library Director and the Board of Trustees are aware that patrons may take issue with the inclusion of specific items, programs, or practices, and they welcome the expression of concern by patrons. Patron concerns will be dealt with promptly and in a courteous manner.

Criticism of the library holdings may be registered and presented on a "Request of Reconsideration" form and signed by the individual challenging the item. The patron challenging the item must be a resident of Hardin County and must have read, listened or viewed in full the item being challenged. The item will be reviewed by the Director, who will refer to the selection criteria for the item and respond to the challenger appropriately. If the matter is not resolved by the Library Director, it will be referred to the full Board of Trustees whose decision will be final. Specific titles/materials will be reviewed for any given reason only once every five years.

Library Program Policy

The Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library offers programs to further its mission statement: “to support lifelong learning by responding to the community’s need for information, encouraging a desire to read, and enriching the quality of life.”

Library programs are planned public activities that are initiated or presented in partnership by the Library and take place at the Library, at locations in the community or online. Library programs include, but are not limited to: book talks, demonstrations, discussion groups, film showings, interactive presentations, lectures, panel discussions, performances, puppet shows, readings, story times, tours, training sessions, tutorials, and workshops.

The purpose of Library programming is to:

- Encourage the use of the Library and its resources
- Promote early literacy, acquisition of skills, and a life-long love of reading and learning
- Present accurate and relevant information on issues of current interest
- Foster cultural awareness, diversity, equitability, civic engagement and discourse
- Facilitate the sharing of local talent, knowledge, and expertise

Content

The Library’s goal in programming is to connect members of our community with a wide variety of ideas and perspectives. Program content is determined by the presenters.

The Library is not obligated to represent multiple and/or opposing viewpoints within any one program or series. The Library welcomes the opportunity for other viewpoints to be represented in a separate program or series. Presentation of a program does not constitute the Library’s endorsement of the content or views expressed by participants.

Charges, Sales, and Fundraising

All Library programs will be offered free of charge. Library programs must be non-commercial in nature. Although a businessperson or other professional expert may present a program, the information may not promote his or her business interest. No solicitation of future business, including but not limited to the development of prospect and mailing lists, is permitted.

Fundraising and sales are permitted with prior approval in the following circumstances:

- For fundraising to benefit the Library by the Friends of the Barlow Library or the Library itself, and
- For sale of items created by authors and artists responsible for the content of a Library program.

Exceptions to the above may be made at the discretion of the Library Director.

Attendance

All programs must be open the public. Every attempt will be made to accommodate all who wish to attend a program. Programs designed for a general audience have no age restrictions.

- Attendance may be limited if the number of participants reaches the room capacity.
- When safety or the nature of a program requires it, attendance will be determined on a first-come, first-served basis or by pre-registration.
- Programs designed for specific audiences may have attendance restrictions or requirements based on age.

Note: In the case of film programs, the MPAA ratings may be provided for information only. It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians, not the Robert W. Barlow Memorial Library staff, to guide their own children’s use of the library and its resources and services.