

SECTION:	PS 3	LIBRARY MATERIALS EVALUATION AND SELECTION
SUBSECTION:		
POLICY:	PS 3.1	COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
REVISIONS:		02/12/86; 10/21/20; 03/20/24

Purpose:

The Collection Development Policy sets out the broad principles and practices by which the Ashtabula County District Library staff select, acquire, and offer access to materials in its collections. The policy creates a framework intended to provide guidelines based on best practices and the needs of its unique communities. By acquiring, organizing, and maintaining materials, ACDL seeks to provide access to a broad view of society – its culture, history, and diversity of beliefs -- while protecting the collection from societal and political pressures.

Philosophy and Scope of the Collection:

The Ashtabula County District Library collects materials in a variety of popular formats which serve the general educational, recreational, and entertainment needs and interests of its patrons, and reflects the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of its communities. By providing access to a wide variety of facts, opinions, and ideas, the public library helps to create a well-informed and enlightened populace.

The Ashtabula Public Library serves as the administrative headquarters for the Ashtabula County District Library system. The Ashtabula Library offers the most comprehensive array of both circulating and non-circulating materials, serving as the central library for those living in the city of Ashtabula; within the broader Ashtabula County District Library service area; and, informally, all those living and working in Ashtabula County as a whole. This library includes the Edith R. Morrison & Mary W. Morrison Genealogy and Archive Room which is home to the Ashtabula County Genealogical Society, and houses an in-depth genealogical research collection and local history archive. This library is the only library in Ashtabula County to provide Funding Information Network access to Candid (formerly Foundation Center), an extensive database where patrons can research grants and funder data for help in fundraising endeavors.

The Geneva Public Library collections are designed primarily to serve users in the city of Geneva and its surrounding communities. The Geneva Library collections contain chiefly diverse and current general interest materials on a wide variety of subjects for all ages. It also houses a limited number of local historical materials that are retained by necessity or in the best interests of accessibility to the community.

The Library’s digital collection is fully accessible via the Ashtabula County District Library’s website and/or mobile app. The library website connects users to statewide library resources such as the Ohio Digital Library and the Ohio Web Library, as well as to numerous local and locally purchased online resources available for education, entertainment, and research.

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In accordance with the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights, materials on controversial subjects or issues, even if presented in an extreme or sensational manner, may be acquired for our collections.

Principles for Selection:

Budgetary and space constraints limit all libraries’ ability to purchase material for their collections. Therefore, qualitative selection standards have been developed to aid in material selection.

The ultimate responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. The Director delegates responsibility for the day-to-day management of the collection to qualified staff (selectors) at their discretion.

Selectors evaluate material using professional standards, relying on professional experience and tools for selection including, but not limited to, reviews in professional publications, genre and collection guides, and input from subject matter experts. Popularity and community demand are among the major criteria for selecting material.

All staff, as well as the general public are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration. Request for Purchase of Library Material forms are available online and at all public service desks.

Considerations for the selection of materials may include (in no particular order):

- Relevance to the mission, vision, values, and goals of ACDL
- Popular appeal / Community demand
- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Accuracy of content
- Competence, popularity, and reputation of author, illustrator, creator, producer, performer, and/or publisher
- Relation to / duplication of material already in the collection
- Cost and availability of funds
- Value proportionate to cost and/or need
- Literary merit
- Availability of the information in other forms or from other sources
- Representative expression of controversial or minority points of view
- Suitability of format to library purposes
- Quality of technical production
- Legal definition of obscene materials

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As ACDL intends to always reflect the interests and needs of its communities, the selection of local and Ohio authors will be given special attention, though the considerations listed above still apply.

Diverse Viewpoints:

ACDL intends for its collections to provide the community with diverse perspectives through which to study an issue by offering access to materials expressing varying views on potentially contentious topics, including those of an unorthodox and/or unpopular nature. This does not necessarily imply a numerical balance of materials representing opposing views. Materials meeting the selection criteria will not be removed from the collection, nor will materials that do not meet the criteria be added to the collection simply due to pressure by groups or individuals.

Collection Access and Selection for Minors:

As individuals of all ages have a variety of interests and information needs, it is the public library's role to support these interests and to satisfy these needs to the best of its ability, and it is the right and responsibility of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library. ACDL selectors will select a broad range of materials that are freely available to any patron engaged in lawful library use, and will not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. The Library will only stray from this principle when required by law.

Labeling:

ACDL applies only as much labeling or marking as is necessary to effectively manage the collection. ACDL does not mark or identify materials to subjectively value them, including labeling or altering materials due to controversy surrounding the author or the subject matter. The labeling included in the packaging or as part of the item that indicates outside rating services or private advisory codes will not be altered or removed. Library collections will be organized and maintained according to an accepted system of organization (Dewey Decimal, alphabetical, genre, etc.). ACDL will not remove or shield materials in the collection due to controversial content or images.

Collection Maintenance:

Library materials are continuously assessed for their condition, accuracy, currency, and performance within the context of the total Library collection, as well as for their continuing relevance to library users. The withdrawal of materials is a formal process conducted by knowledgeable staff as a necessary method to maintain collection vitality, size, and scope.

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ACDL does not automatically remove older titles with content that may not be deemed acceptable by current societal standards. Titles are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the enduring popularity and historical value of the work.

Withdrawn materials may be donated to the Friends of the Library or other local non-profit resale agencies.

Gifts:

The Ashtabula County District Library accepts donations of books and other materials. Gifts are accepted with the understanding that they become the property of the Library and can be retained or disposed of at the discretion of the library. All gift materials will be judged by the same criteria used in the selection policy. The Library can provide a receipt for tax purposes stating the number and type of items donated but cannot assign a monetary value to them.

Request for Reconsideration:

The Ashtabula County District Library selects materials using established criteria and full consideration of the varying age groups and diverse backgrounds of patrons. Library patrons requesting reconsideration and removal of an item in the collection may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form, which is available online and at all public service desks. Forms will be accepted from adult cardholders who are residents of the Library’s legal service area and who have read, viewed, or listened to the material in its entirety.

The request will be referred to the Director who, in consultation with professional librarians, will make a decision regarding the item’s disposition. The Director’s decision may be appealed in writing to the Library Board of Trustees, whose decision is final and binding. Material will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.

Future requests for reevaluating the same item will be addressed only if the grounds for reconsideration are substantially different from previous requests.

Appendices

- A. Request for Purchase of Library Material form
- B. Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form
- C. Library Bill of Rights
- D. Freedom to Read Statement
- E. Freedom to View Statement
- F. The Universal Right to Free Expression
- G. Free Access to Libraries for Minors