

BRCL Collection Development Policy

Objectives

The purpose of the Big Rapids Community Library is to provide all individuals in the community with carefully selected books and other materials to aid the individual in pursuing education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time.

Because of the volume of publishing and the limitations of budget and space, the Library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs.

The materials selection/collection development policy is used by the library staff to select materials and serve to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.

The Library Bill of Rights and The Freedom to Read Statement have been endorsed by the Big Rapids Community Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of the policy.

The materials selection/collection development policy, like all other policies, will be reviewed and revised as the need arises.

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the library director and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

The policy guidelines of the BRCL is to adhere to a weeding schedule and adopt the CREW Method (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding) as outlined below. However, guidelines are not intended to act as a substitute for professional judgment calls and common sense:

Criteria for Deselection/Weeding

Poor Content:

- Outdated and obsolete information (especially on subjects that change quickly or require absolute currency, such as computers, law, science, space, health and medicine, technology, travel)
- Trivial subject matter, including topics that are no longer of interest or that were dealt with superficially due to their popularity at a specific point in time, as well as titles related to outdated popular culture
- Mediocre writing style, especially material that was written quickly to meet popular interest that has passed
- Inaccurate or false information, including outdated information and sources that have been superseded by new titles or editions
- Unused sets of books (although you may keep specific volumes if they meet local needs and are used) · Repetitious series, especially series that are no longer popular or that were published to meet a popular demand that no longer exists
- Superseded editions (in general, it is unnecessary to keep more than one previous edition, discarding as new editions are added)
- Resources that are not on standard lists or that were never reviewed in standard review sources

- Material that contains biased, racist, or sexist terminology or views
- Unneeded duplicates, especially if they are worn or tattered
- Self-published or small press materials that are not circulating, especially if they were added as gifts

Materials/Books of Poor Appearance:

- Worn out, ragged items
- Poorly bound or poorly printed editions
- Rebound editions that are worn and shabby or have torn pages
- Items that are dirty, shabby, warped, bug infested, or otherwise marked up, mutilated, or 'edited' by patrons
- Books with very small print or poor-quality pictures
- Scratched CDs or DVDs, brittle film or magnetic tape (in the case of video and audiocassettes)
- Media that is beaten up from wear or has broken or missing parts
- Books with yellowed, brittle, torn, taped, or missing pages
- Books with dust jackets or cover art that is dated, especially on children's and young adult books

Unused Materials:

- Items that have not circulated within the past 3-5 years and not actually used for reference or in-house research
- Duplicate copies that are no longer needed, regardless of condition
- Periodicals that are not indexed
- Periodicals that are available in full-text databases
- Unused volumes in sets or series

- Unneeded titles in subject areas that are less frequently used
- Materials on the ‘hot topics’ that were popular more than five years ago
- More books than are needed on any single subject
- Formats that are no longer popular in your community, especially if the technology needed to use the format is no longer owned by people in the community
- Material that is no longer important to the collection because of changes in local demographics, school curricula, or other factors

Checklist of Weeding Factors

For all materials, consider:

- Date—when was the item published? When was it added to the collection?
- Author—is the author still read or likely to be read in the future? Is the book a lesser work?
- Publisher—was the book self-published or published by an ‘instant’ press that may not have taken care in editing and printing?
- Physical condition—are there any factors that make the item unattractive?
- Additional copies—are more copies available that may be in better condition?
- Other books on the same subject in the collection—if this book is discarded, what else is available?
- Expense of replacement—can the item be replaced? Was this an expensive item that might benefit from rebinding or refurbishing rather than replacement?

- Shelf-time—how long has the item sat on the shelf without circulating?
- Relevance of the subject to the community—is the material of interest to anyone in the community?

For juvenile and young adult materials, also consider:

- Format—paperbacks are preferred by many young adults; board books get a lot of wear in tiny hands.
- Reading level—is the level too high or too easy for young patrons who would be interested in the item?
- Current interest in the subject matter—are young people interested in the subject? Is the treatment of the subject engaging?
- Visual appeal—are the illustrations in color? Are photographs clear? Is the layout of the book open (white space) and inviting?
- Jacket art (contemporary vs. outmoded)—does the book look like something your great-grandmother read?
- Use in school curricula—are books available for the grade level where the subject is studied? Are teachers assigning specific titles?

Weeding Schedule

January 000/100s

February 200s

March 300s

April 400s

May 500s

June 600s

July 700s

August 800s

September 900s

October Fiction and Picture Books

November Audiovisual

December Graphic Novels

Materials Selection Policy

The purpose of this policy is to: 1) serve as a guide for the librarians of the Big Rapids Community Library in the process of materials selection; and 2) inform the public of the principles upon which selections for the Library are made. Basic to this policy is the [Library Bill of Rights](#) as affirmed by the Big Rapids Community Library Board.

“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, age, 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 which 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.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information."

"Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, June 30, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill> (Accessed March 11, 2020)

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Big Rapids Community Library strives to provide current and information and to supplement and enrich individual learning, and to provide materials for recreational reading and other leisure time activities. This information should be readily available to the total community regardless of gender, age, education, language, religion, ethnic and cultural background, or mental and physical ability.

Standards for Selection

"Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the Library Bill of Rights: "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." A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and

cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the Library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the Library's selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;*
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;*
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;*
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;*
- including content in all the languages used in the community that the Library serves, when possible; and*
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.¹*

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection's diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.²

Big Rapids Community Library is a popular materials library and maintains a varied and up-to-date collection. It attempts to acquire materials of both current and lasting value. Since one Library cannot afford all the available materials, it must employ a policy of selectivity. The Library Director has the overall responsibility for the selection and development of the materials collection according to the principles established by the Materials Selection Policy and other approved policies and procedures. In practice, the responsibility for materials selection is shared with other staff.

Materials are selected to meet patron needs and reflect a variety of viewpoints and opinions. Criteria for consideration include popular demand, literary merit, enduring value, accuracy, authoritativeness, local interest, social significance, importance of subject matter to the collection, timeliness, cost, scarcity of information on the subject, availability elsewhere, and quality and suitability of format.

Fiction

The Library maintains a representative collection of novels and works of fiction to satisfy a wide range of tastes. Ideas of literary merit vary greatly with individuals. Therefore, the Library purchases fiction in many categories.

Non-Fiction

The Library attempts to provide a large general collection of reliable materials embracing the broader fields of knowledge. Legal and medical works will be selected to the extent that they are useful to the lay person.

Juvenile

Materials are selected to encourage children and families to discover the joy of reading. In order to meet the varied abilities and interests of children, the collection includes materials covering a wide range of knowledge and reading levels. The illustrations in books for young people are given as much critical attention as the literary quality of fiction.

Media

The Library recognizes its responsibility to provide access to information, cultural enrichment, and recreation through as wide a variety of media as possible. Media is evaluated by the same criteria as printed materials. As new technologies are developed, the

Library will investigate the appropriateness of new media formats and acknowledge the need for experimentation.

Digital Materials

Digital items such as eBooks and eAudiobooks shall be selected using the same criteria as printed materials, as described above.

Online Databases

The Library makes available a variety of online resources purchased to supplement and enhance the Library's collection. These resources are evaluated based on timeliness, ease of use, and ability to meet patrons' information needs.

Interlibrary Loan

Because of limited budget and space, the Library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan/MeL.org is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this Library's collection.

In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy our patrons' needs, the Big Rapids Community Library agrees to lend its materials to other libraries through the MeLCat. And to try to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries throughout the state.

Patron Initiated Purchase

Patron requests are given top priority, and when not selected for the collection, are fulfilled via MeL. *Patron requests are limited to 1 patron request per month.* Patrons must have a card in good standing. The card cannot be expired or have fines over \$5.00. All patron requests are considered, but not all may be purchased if the anticipated demand is low or the work has no permanent value.

The Collection Development Team purchases books requested through the ILS that meet specific criteria and within a certain price limit. These items are then cataloged and placed on hold for users. Requests may be denied due to cost, relevance, or exceeding the annual request per patron limit of 12 items. Once an item is requested, it is the patrons' responsibility to monitor their request's availability.

We will not accept requests for any materials that are not yet published. Due to the high volume of patron requests, we must consider only those items which are readily available.

Popular authors, titles, and movies (a.k.a. Bestsellers) will be regularly ordered. Patrons interested in these materials should monitor the Library's catalog and place a hold when the item appears in the catalog.

The Library will only purchase items that are available from the Library's regular vendors. Used materials are never considered for purchase.

Academic work and professional materials have limited appeal to the general public. Per our Collection Development Policy, since we wish to avoid “... duplicating the role of the academic and the school libraries, area library resources are considered in selecting materials.” For this reason, we cannot include textbooks, workbooks, study materials for classroom settings, or academic work. We must consider public demand in the Library’s service area.

- [American Library Association Freedom to Read](#)
- [American Library Association Freedom to View](#)
- [American Library Association Library Bill of Rights](#)
- [American Library Association: Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)
- Selection
 - Criteria and Schedule
 - Responsibility
 - Methods and Procedures
 - Evaluation

Gift Policy

The Big Rapids Community Library appreciates the thoughtfulness of its customers who donate a variety of print and media materials to the Library. Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that ownership passes to the Library. The Library reserves the right to transfer items to the Library’s bookstore, Friends of the Library, or other suitable agency, and to discard or recycle materials as necessary. Monies accrued from the sale of items not placed in the collection directly benefit the Library.

The Library will accept books, DVDs, CDs, and other items circulated by the Library in new or used condition. All donations are accepted with the understanding that the Library selectively adds donations to its collection. Items not selected for the collection will be sent to the Library’s book sale. Staff may send items with little retail value to other nonprofit organizations. At the time of donation, staff will

accept the donation and will fill out the Deed of Gift form with the donor transferring ownership of the donated items to the Library. The Library staff does not appraise the value of donated books or other materials. Individuals or organizations interested in donating large quantities of materials are asked to call 231-796-5234 for review and delivery instructions prior to donation.

The Big Rapids Community Library will consider adding donations to its collection based on several factors. Items to be added to the collection are restricted to those in “as-new” condition. The list is restricted to:

- Books that have been on a best sellers list within the past two years
- Books that have won literary awards within the past two years
- New book releases
- Mass-market paperbacks that have OCLC records
- DVDs and Blu-Rays that have OCLC records
- Audiobooks on CD that have OCLC records

If an item has been published within the past two years, is in “as-new” condition, has received positive published reviews, and has a cataloging record in OCLC, librarians will use professional judgment to determine if the item meets the Library’s materials selection policy and will enhance the Library collection. In addition, the Library will selectively accept donations of items produced by local authors and items of local interest, regardless of the availability of an existing cataloging record. For the general collection, donations of special gift collections carrying stipulations are not accepted.

Potential Problems or Challenges

The Big Rapids Community Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made based on anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely based on the principles stated in this policy.

Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

Challenged Materials

Although materials are carefully selected, there can arise differences of opinion regarding suitable materials. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection may complete a "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" form which is available in the Library. The inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Big Rapids Community Library Board of Trustees.

"Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, July 26, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/diversecollections> (Accessed March 11, 2020)

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