
Omaha Public Library (OPL) Collection Development Policy



PURPOSE:

OPL serves its patrons in an essential way by providing a wide range of materials. The library selects materials of interest to all community members which reflect a variety of viewpoints, ages, backgrounds, and education levels. The purpose of this policy is to state the principles the library uses to develop and maintain its collection.

POLICY:

OPL selects materials to support its mission, vision, and values. The library upholds the freedom to read, as stated by the American Library Association in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement, and is protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

- OPL does not restrict selection based on the expressed opinion of an individual or group.
- Parents and legal guardians are solely responsible for deciding and monitoring what their children and wards read, view, or hear. Only parents and legal guardians have the authority to limit the access of children and wards to specific library materials. The library does not impose age-based restrictions or adjust its selection of materials based on the possibility that children might access them.
- Access to the collection will not be limited or denied because of national origin, race, creed, ethnicity, religion, age, background, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or views. These factors shall also not be cause to exclude any materials, authors, artists, or other creators from the collection.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Selection

The collection is for patrons of all ages, backgrounds, interests, education, and opinions. It will reflect the diversity of the community it serves while also working within the realities of OPL's collection space and budget. The responsibility for selection and weeding is vested in the library's executive director. Staff, qualified by pertinent expertise and experience, will exercise this responsibility under the director's direction. When selecting materials for purchase, the following criteria are used:

- Subject
- Style and presentation
- Format
- Genre
- Appeal
- Comprehension level
- Quality
- Availability
- Scope
- Overall demand
- Variety of viewpoints

Additional Criteria:

- Not all selection criteria may apply equally to all content or formats.
- Selection of materials does not imply agreement with or approval of the viewpoints expressed.
- Materials are evaluated as a whole work and not by selected passages or scenes.

- Individual items which may be considered controversial or offensive by some may be selected if it will contribute to the overall variety and balance of the collection.
- OPL does not offer textbooks or other school curriculum. As general practice, OPL does not duplicate resources already provided at local academic and special libraries.
- Staff use a wide variety of selection resources, including but not limited to professional journals, popular media, publishing trends, local interests, patron recommendations, and circulation data.
- Patron recommendations for the collection are welcomed and evaluated by the criteria listed above.

Accessibility

OPL will not restrict access to any library materials in public areas.

- All library cardholders may check out materials in accordance with circulation policies and procedures.
- Materials are labeled by classification as determined by OPL
- Children, young adult, and adult collections are differentiated based on reading level, language comprehension, and audience. These collections may be housed in designated areas to aid in discovery.
- Determining the appropriateness of materials for minors or persons under a guardianship is the sole responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.
- Some materials are designated for use in the library only.

Special Collections

OPL maintains several collections that are specialized, rare, not readily available elsewhere, and/or of special interest to our community.

- Examples of special collections include genealogy, government documents, microfilm, Nebraska reference, and local history.
- Special collections are established and maintained by library administration based on space, funding, local interest, and other criteria.
- Many items in these collections require special handling due to their age and/or uniqueness. The goal is to provide access to these items while also preserving them for continued use.
- OPL does not house private collections unless the collection is presented as a gift and meets the necessary criteria for inclusion.

Weeding

OPL staff remove worn, dated, and damaged items from the collection through procedures known as weeding. This process helps maintain the quality of the library collections. It is not intended to sanction the removal of items due to controversy of any kind. When weeding, staff consider the selection criteria in this policy. Weeded materials are disposed of according to a contract that OPL and the City of Omaha have with the Friends of the Omaha Public Library. These materials may be disposed of through book sales or recycling.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

OPL recognizes that full information about issues of public concern requires access to resources that represent all those concerns. Individuals who wish an item to be reviewed may fill out a Request for Review of Library Materials form that is available at all library locations. A completed form will be reviewed by library administration. Material under review will remain in the circulating collection until a decision is made.

Gifts

OPL accepts gifts to enhance library services through materials. Money gifts are the responsibility of the executive library director. Material gifts are subject to the evaluation criteria stated in this policy. Processing

costs and shelving limits are also considered before adding materials. Donations are accepted with the understanding that OPL has the right to determine the disposition of gift items. Materials not accepted by OPL are offered to the Friends of the Omaha Public Library for book sales.



Approved by the Board of Trustees
of the Omaha Public Library, August 20, 2025