

# Materials Selection Policy

## A. Service Philosophy

In support of the St. Albert Public Library's mission, materials are selected to meet the needs and interests of the citizens of the community. Collections are the heart of the Library and are essential in fulfilling its goals and mission.

## B. Responsibilities

### i. Library Responsibilities

Ultimate responsibility for selection of materials rests with the Library Director, who operates within the policies established by the Library Board. This authority is delegated to Library staff who are members of the selection team.

### ii. Patron Responsibilities

The Library notes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. While library staff are available to assist individuals and groups to select material, the ultimate responsibility for the choice of materials lies with the patron.

### iii. Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Responsibilities

The Library provides access to its materials to all patrons. Responsibility for children's use of materials rests with parents and guardians. Selection decisions are not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials that their parents consider inappropriate. The library believes in the freedom of the individual and the rights and obligations of parents to maintain their own values in their children.

## C. Selection Principles

### i. Community-Focused

Selection is focused intently on materials people in St. Albert want. Close attention is paid to statistics, surveys and demographic information to ensure collections reflect the needs and interests of the evolving community.

The St. Albert community is diverse and evolving, consisting of individuals of various ages, races, faiths, education levels, incomes, sexual orientations, ethnic backgrounds and languages spoken. St. Albert, as part of the metro Edmonton area, has a stable economic climate, a vibrant arts community, many higher educational institutions and a wealth of active civic and cultural organizations.

The Library meets the needs of this diverse community with collections that emphasize:

- Recreational reading, listening and viewing for all ages
- Early literacy and other initiatives for children
- Lifelong learning for adults
- General research, especially in areas of local interest and subjects in high demand
- Artistic, creative and literary resources
- Information and fact-finding services
- Business career and professional development materials

### ii. Customer-Driven

Patron demand is an over-riding principle of selection. Other criteria for selecting materials are secondary to the question, "Will someone want to use this material?" Popular materials are the focus of selection, with frequent review of waiting lists and other measures of demand. Multiple copies of popular books are added as required.

Patrons are encouraged to suggest titles for the collection. Unless the material requested falls outside the Materials Selection Policy the suggestions will be purchased. Out-of-print, prohibitively expensive or unusually esoteric titles will be borrowed from other libraries.

### **iii. Intellectual Freedom**

The St. Alberta Public Library endorses the Canadian Library Association *Statement on Intellectual Freedom: All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society. Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.*

*It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials. It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.*

*Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups. Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.*

In accordance with this statement, the library staff select materials to represent diverse viewpoints, within constraints of budget, space, and availability of resources. The presence of materials in the Library does not constitute endorsement of their contents by the Library.

### **iv. Cost-Effective**

Economy and efficiency are the guiding principles for acquiring materials. While Canadian and Albertan suppliers are preferred, the Library will use whoever can get materials to patrons as quickly as possible for the lowest possible cost.

### **v. Community Partners**

The St. Albert Public Library exists in a context of a larger metropolitan area, with a rich variety of other information providers and other community resources available to St. Albert citizens. The Library has partnerships and cooperates with many local and area organizations with the goal of providing the best possible service to patrons, including:

#### **a) Other libraries**

Selection reflects the reality that through The Alberta Library and other cooperative arrangements, access to the specialized collections of a large city public library system and high quality academic libraries is available nearby.

#### **b) Other community resources**

Selection acknowledges that cooperative arrangements exist with community information providers, literacy organizations, business information providers and each has expertise in its niche.

#### **c) The education community**

It is the responsibility of schools to provide materials which support their curricula. The library does not duplicate the school library collections. The library provides materials which complement and augment the needs of students. The library acquires textbooks if they are useful sources of information on a subject for general readers.

## **D. Selection Criteria**

Following from the Selection Principles above, materials selection shall take the following criteria into consideration:

- Relevance to community needs
- Community demand

- Suitability of format for library use
- Relationship of subject to existing collection
- Timeliness and/or permanent value
- Quality of writing, production, and illustration
- Recommendations by critics, reviewers and patrons
- Budget and space considerations
- Availability at other area libraries
- Local, Alberta or Canadian content
- Accuracy, authoritativeness, originality, insight, importance
- Contribution to balance of treatment of a controversial subject

## **E. Selection by Format**

New formats are considered and collections established when a significant portion of the community wants the format and has access to the necessary technology. As with traditional formats, selection follows the principle of listening and responding to community needs.

## **F. Special Collections**

Notwithstanding the selection principles above, the Library maintains special collections of materials based on criteria other than community demand. These include:

- French Language Materials
- Multilingual Materials
- Government Publications
- Local History
- Adult New Reader (Literacy and ESL)
- Career Resource Centre

## **G. Donations**

The Library accepts gift materials with the explicit condition that they are not necessarily to be added to the collection. The library reserves the right to dispose of gifts not added to its collection. Generally donated items not added to the collection are sold at Library book sales.

## **H. Weeding and Replacement of Materials**

Weeding is the continuous systematic review and withdrawal of materials to maintain a viable and useful collection. Staff use criteria including use, duplication, age and damage to determine items for withdrawal. Replacement of items depends upon the demand for the title, the availability of more current or better materials on the subject. In general, withdrawn materials are sold at Library book sales. Occasionally last copies of Adult Fiction books are sent to the University of Alberta's BARD (Book and Record Depository) collection.

## **I. Reconsideration of Materials**

Any individual who objects to specific materials in the collection may fill out a *Patron's Request for Reconsideration of an Item* form available from any service desk. The material will be reviewed by appropriate staff and a written response will be sent to the individual making the request. The final decision concerning materials rests with the Library Director.