



ALGANSEE • BRONSON • COLDWATER
QUINCY • SHERWOOD • UNION TWP.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

Adopted: May 18, 1998

Last Revised: June 16, 2025

Reason for Policy

The Materials Selection Policy of the Branch District Library (BDL or “Library”) guides the staff responsible for selection of materials and informs the public about the principles upon which the selection of library materials is based.

The Library and the BDL Board of Trustees consider reading, listening, and viewing to be individual, private matters and believes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for all patrons to exercise their constitutional rights.

Underlying the Materials Selection Policy are the BDL’s Mission Statement, the Library Bill of Rights from the American Library Association (ALA), the ALA Freedom to Read Statement, and the ALA Freedom to View Statement. The Library, the BDL Board of Trustees, and Library staff will not ban or censor any material, either directly or indirectly. The presence of materials in the Library does not indicate any endorsement of their content by the Library.

The Library seeks to acquire the broadest range of materials within budgetary constraints. Due to the varied nature of the collection, patrons may find that not all materials will be suitable for all audiences. Though some patrons may reject certain materials for their personal use, they cannot restrict the freedom of others to use Library materials.

Responsibility for Selection

The BDL Board of Trustees delegates the selection of materials to the Library Director, who may in turn delegate parts of the selection process to other staff. All materials selection will operate within the framework of the budget and policies adopted by the BDL Board of Trustees.



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Budget Allocation

As part of its annual budget, the BDL Board of Trustees allocates funds for the purchase of library materials. The Library Director will decide how to divide those funds among the BDL branches and departments.

Objectives in Materials Selection

The collections of a public library exist to communicate the breadth of the human experience to its community, encompassing both information and entertainment. The collections are intended to offer options in the choice of viewpoint, format, as well as reading, educational, and accessibility level. Materials in the collection should both reflect the demographics and interests of our community and also provide a window onto the larger world.

A public library's collection is comprised mostly of popular materials and is not intended to be comprehensive or archival. Every effort is made to avoid needless duplication, but also provide an adequate number of copies for materials in demand due to popularity, class assignments, etc. Specialized resources may be obtained from other libraries via interlibrary loan.

The Library exists to support, but not to extend, local school libraries. Materials will not be purchased for local curricula, except as such materials might either serve or be requested by the general public.

The collection of physical materials remains the Library's primary focus. However, the Library will maintain a robust virtual collection of materials and resources that is accessible at all times and from any location.

Selection Guidelines

Acquisition of new materials and withdrawal of old materials are both influenced by current and historic circulation rates. The number of holds placed, as well as patron requests, are closely monitored and directly influence the purchase of additional copies of high-demand items.

In addition to these considerations, the Library attempts to meet the community's present and future needs as it adds materials, considers emerging formats, and seeks to enrich the collection.

No single guideline is applicable to all selection decisions. Some resources may be selected primarily for their artistic merit, scholarship or value to humanity; others are chosen to satisfy the informational, recreational, or educational interests of the community. In considering

individual items in the selection process, Library staff will consult reviews, award lists, and other evaluative sources.

The Library will acquire materials representing various points of view, and materials are judged as a whole rather than on isolated portions. Works are not typically excluded because of language, explicit content, or illustrations, if they meet criteria in this policy.

In addition to the above, the Library will examine the following criteria in selecting materials:

- Relevance to interests and needs of the community.
- Local significance of the author or subject.
- Suitability for use of the material's physical or digital format.
- Reputation and/or significance of author/artist and publisher/producer.
- Relevance to the existing collection.
- Current or historical significance.
- Scarcity of materials on the subject.
- Attention given by critics, reviewers, professional book selection aids, and the public.
- Relevance to the experience and contributions of diverse and historically underrepresented populations.
- Cost of material and available funds.
- Space available in the collection.

Selection of digital content can vary among the vendors who supply digital content to the Library. In instances where individual title selection is not available, selection of the service will be based upon the reputation and overall content offerings of the vendor.

Small Press and Self-Published Works

The Library is often asked to add materials to our collection that are published by a small press or self-published by the author. All suggestions are assessed with the same selection guidelines as other materials added to the collection. If selected as a good fit for the collection, the Library will accept such materials as a donation, subject to our [Gifts and Donations Policy](#), but Library funds will not be used to purchase them.

In addition to the selection guidelines above, to be considered for the collection, small press and self-published works must also meet these additional guidelines:

- The title has been reviewed in a professional resource or local media outlet.
- There is demand for title as demonstrated by patron requests or an appearance on a bestseller list.
- Bindings should be sewn or glued. Spiral or comb bindings will not be considered.

Patron Suggestions

Suggestions are welcome and often provide valuable information about community interests and unmet collection needs of patrons. All suggestions are assessed with the same selection guidelines as other materials added to the collection.

Donated Materials

The Library will evaluate materials donated for the collection with the same criteria it uses for newly acquired materials. See the [Gifts and Donations Policy](#) for additional details.

Collection Management

The Library's collections are constantly changing. The collections are reviewed on an ongoing basis and materials are added and withdrawn frequently, with an emphasis on contemporary popularity and an attempt to maintain the collections' enduring value to the community. Collection management decisions are influenced by patterns of use, the physical capacity of each location, and the availability of similar materials from other locations or other library systems.

Materials withdrawal is an important aspect of collection management. When materials lose the value for which they were originally selected, they should be withdrawn so that the collection remains vital and useful. The withdrawal of materials is overseen by the Library Director and is based on the following guidelines:

1. To remove physically worn out or damaged materials from the Library.
2. To eliminate materials containing obsolete information.
3. To remove duplicate copies of materials which have waned in popularity.
4. To consider withdrawing materials which have not been checked out for determined period of time.

The Library Director, or designee, makes the final decision regarding the disposition of materials withdrawn from the collection. Withdrawn materials suitable for further use may be donated to the Friends of the Library, other libraries, or other community organizations.

Materials unsuitable for further use may be disposed of or recycled. Withdrawing specific materials due to a lack of popularity will not be construed as representative of a lack of interest in a broader topic or perspective.

The transfer or disposition of sizeable or special collections requires approval from Library Director, in accordance with BDL policies.

Special Collections

The Library will collect materials with a specific focus on Branch County and the surrounding region.

The Library collects language materials for all ages. The Library is committed to developing and maintaining language collections which meet the needs of a changing Branch County population, as well as materials in support of those patrons learning additional languages. Local demographics and U.S. census information are factors in determining which languages are collected.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Patrons who find any portion of the Library's collections objectionable are welcome to discuss their concerns with Library staff. If those discussions are not satisfactory, patrons residing in the BDL service area who have a BDL library card may file one formal request every six months for re-examination of the materials by completing a Reconsideration Request form, which can be requested at any public service desk or found on the Library's web site. Typically, the Library will not remove materials challenged over any Constitutionally-protected category.

Submitted reconsideration request forms will be reviewed by the Library Director, along with relevant Library staff. The Library Director will respond in writing within sixty calendar days, describing the action the Library will take regarding the challenge. This Materials Selection Policy will act as the basis for the response. If unsatisfied, patrons may appeal the reconsideration request to the BDL Board of Trustees.

If an item is judged to be allowed to remain in the collection, that item cannot be challenged again for a period of three years. Due to staff efforts involved in processing and responding, the number of reconsideration requests to be considered simultaneously during a six-month period will be limited to two.