



Collection Development and Management Policy¹

Approved: Oct. 10, 2022

I. Purpose

This policy defines the scope of the collection and articulates the overarching principles that shape the development and management of the West Fargo Public Library (WFPL or the Library) collection. This policy guides the Library's responsibility to select, acquire, make accessible, maintain, and preserve the Library's collection.

This policy establishes a process for addressing patron questions and concerns, and defines the roles and responsibilities for addressing any questions or concerns.

II. Principles

The collection is one of the Library's major assets. It advances the Library's mission to "provide equitable access to resources and opportunities so that residents can achieve their goals, explore their passions, and develop social connections." It helps generate a future where every person has the opportunity and resources to learn, meet, share, read, play, and create.

- We value intellectual freedom and the importance of an individual's right to read, view, and listen to a broad spectrum of knowledge, ideas, opinions, and creative expression. We uphold the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox or unacceptable to others.
- We embrace the diverse ways in which people learn and acquire information.
- We believe the Library has a responsibility to be inclusive and not exclude materials solely because of the origin, background, or views of those who created it.
- We recognize the importance of resource sharing with other libraries throughout the region because it broadens access to resources and information for all library patrons.
- We expect the Library to be responsive to changing patron interests and demographics, follow professional standards, and stay abreast of the new and evolving ways information is disseminated, accessed, and used.
- We value having a collection that provides many viewpoints, including those viewpoints which have been historically underrepresented or excluded.

III. Definitions

- The Library's "collection" is the body of materials selected for and made accessible to patrons.
- "Materials" has the widest possible meaning and includes books and other print media; audiovisual, electronic, and digital formats; and other additions to the collection. Materials may

be owned or leased by the Library, housed in a physical location, downloaded, or accessed via the Library's website and other online services.

- "Selection" refers to the decision that is made by Library staff to add a specific item to the WFPL collection and make it accessible either in a physical location or via the Library's website or other online services.
- "Intellectual freedom" is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored.

IV. Collection Scope

The Library's collection is designed to support the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational interests of WFPL patrons. It reflects the interests of the general public and supports the demographics and diversity of the community of which it is a part.

The collection has materials on many topics and viewpoints. It has materials in different formats, languages, and levels of difficulty.

The Library emphasizes breadth over depth, unabridged over abridged, and general materials over highly specialized materials. Budget and space restrictions preclude the Library from duplicating specialized and comprehensive collections that exist elsewhere in the region and are reasonably accessible to WFPL cardholders. The Library is fully committed to providing access to these specialized materials through referral, cooperative agreements, and resource sharing through interlibrary loans. The Library does not serve as an archive for the City of West Fargo or any organization.

V. Access and Resource Sharing

Access to materials is ensured by the way they are organized, managed, and displayed. The Library uses standards-based cataloging and classification systems. Any labeling, sequestering, or alteration of materials because of controversy surrounding the author or the subject matter will not be sanctioned.

Patrons can access the collection via the Library's catalog and website, online services, and through interactions with staff. The Library's outreach services enable greater access to the collection. During the summer months, patrons may also access the Library's collections via the Little Red Reading Bus.

Use limitations ensure fair and equitable access to materials. Access to some items may be limited by their value, uniqueness, fragile physical condition, or a combination of these factors. In-house and remote access to digital and electronic resources is provided within technical, budgetary, and licensing constraints.

Items that are not in the Library's collection may be obtained on behalf of patrons from the Online Dakota Information Network (ODIN) or beyond via established interlibrary loan networks. Conversely, WFPL materials may be lent to other organizations that also participate in these networks. Regular evaluation of these exchanges may also influence purchasing and collection development.

VI. Intellectual Freedom

The Library provides an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. Individuals apply their personal interests and values to the materials they choose for themselves. The values of one may not be imposed on another. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for the use of library materials by their minors or wards, as per the [WFPL Library Card Policy](#).

WFPL considers reading, listening, and viewing to be individual, private matters. We believe that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for patrons to exercise their constitutional rights. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves, their own minor child(ren), or vulnerable adult(s) in their care, the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing choices of their own minor child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s). The Library does not stand in the place of parents (in loco parentis) or legal guardians.

The Library's selection of materials for the collection does not constitute an endorsement of the content. Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor are materials sequestered except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

The WFPL Board acknowledges the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements in support of intellectual freedom. In addition, the American Library Association's [Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q & A](#) provides additional guidance on this subject.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities

The West Fargo Board of Commissioners appropriates Library funding. The WFPL Board approves the Library's monetary allocations, which includes collection development. Additional funding support is provided by the Friends of the WFPL, local groups, trusts, and other donations.

The Library Director works under the direction of the West Fargo Library Board and within the framework of this policy. The Library Director delegates to staff the authority to interpret and apply this policy in daily operation.

Library staff provide continuity for the development and management of the Library's collection. They plan, budget, select, acquire, catalog, process, replace, remove, and generally manage library materials. The Library recognizes and respects intellectual property rights and conforms to legislative mandates regarding copyright protections.

Library staff participate in collection development and management to serve all members of the community.

WFPL staff:

- Engage in open, continuous, two-way communication with patrons and other staff.
- Handle all requests equitably.
- Understand and respond to demographic, societal, and technological changes.
- Identify materials of varying educational levels and formats.
- Balance individual patron and local community needs.

- Seek continuous improvement through ongoing data collection and evaluation

Patrons also play a key role in the development of the Library's collection. They make suggestions and provide feedback via the [web form](#) or directly to staff.

VIII. Selecting Materials for the Collection

Patron interest, both expressed and anticipated, as well as the Library's understanding of current collection and material availability, are the primary influences for the materials and formats that are selected. Collection Development staff use a set of criteria to guide selection decisions. *Not all criteria are applied to each selection decision.* General criteria for selection:

- Patron requests gathered through the public web form, emails, phone calls, or in-person visits
- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Format options
- Physical design is suitable for library use
- Subject and style are suitable for the intended audience
- Publicity, critiques, and reviews
- Price of material
- Relevance to current trends and events
- Relation to the existing collection
- Potential appeal
- Relation to other community resources

Content criteria for selection:

- Competence, reputation, and qualifications of the author or publisher
- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Currency of information
- Objectivity and clarity
- Comprehensiveness
- Technical quality
- Represents a diverse point of view
- Representative of movements, subjects, genres, or trends of lasting patron interest
- Sustained interest or demand
- Usefulness of the information

Additional considerations for electronic formats:

- Ease of use
- Available to multiple concurrent users
- Remote access
- Vendor data privacy practices
- Technical requirements and compatibility with existing equipment and systems
- Technical support and training

IX. Reconsideration of Library Materials

A selection decision may be reconsidered by submitting a “Request for Reconsideration of Materials” form (attached) to the WFPL. Library Administration responds in writing (via email or letter) to an individual's written request.

The Library Board, upon request, hears appeals of the Library’s response. Appeals must be presented in writing to the Library Board at least ten (10) days in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Decisions on appeals are based on a careful review of the objection, the material, and this Collection Development policy. Additional guidance for an appeal may come from the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View documents. Appeals are heard and decisions finalized at Library Board meetings.

X. Collection Maintenance

The collection is reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis in order to maintain its usefulness, currency, and relevance. Items may be kept, repurchased, re-cataloged, or withdrawn.

Staff rely on a set of criteria to guide their decisions to withdraw items from the collection. While not all criteria are applied to each de-selection decision, multiple factors are considered in most cases. Criteria include:

- Space limitations
- Insufficient use or lack of patron demand
 - Examples include circulation over the item’s lifetime, current year, and year-to-date.
- Purchase and item record creation date
- Format or physical condition is no longer suitable for library use
 - Examples include damage, wear and tear, or missing parts.
- Obsolescence
 - Examples include information that is no longer timely, accurate, or relevant.
- Little or no relevance to current trends and events
- Content is available in multiple formats to WFPL patrons
- A sufficient number of copies in the collection
- Ease of availability to WFPL patrons through other regional collections

Withdrawn materials may be sent to third-party vendors, the Friends of the WFPL, or outreach sites, sold, recycled, offered to the public, or discarded.

Materials of longstanding or historical value are donated to the North Dakota State Library and other regional archives.

XI. Referenced Policies and Resources

This policy is subject to all federal, state, and local laws and policies including, but not limited to:

- WFPL Board. [Interlibrary Loan Policy](#)
- WFPL Board. [Reciprocal Borrowing Policy](#)
- American Library Association (ALA). [Library Bill of Rights](#)
- ALA. [Freedom to Read](#)
- ALA. [Freedom to View](#)
- North Dakota Statute [WFPL]. Chapter [40.38](#)