

Collection Management Policy

Policy Statement

The Collection Management Policy is meant to document current collection management, further public understanding of the purpose, nature, and philosophy behind the library's collection management practices and direct the library staff in the development and maintenance of the collection.

This policy is designed to support the Library's mission and service priorities, within budgetary and space limitations, and serve the needs of all citizens of Free Library of Northampton Township regardless of age, sex, race, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, political or social views.

An effective collection management plan begins with a strategic plan that states the vision and purpose of the library and defines service priorities to guide staff in what actions to take. The library is a single entity consisting of many services that should be integrated and work together to provide outstanding service to county residents. The library collection is at the core value of these services and is integral to making Free Library of Northampton Township (FLNT) a vibrant and innovative part of the community.

Regulations

Collection Responsibilities

The Township of Northampton delegates to the Library Director the responsibility for selection and purchase of all materials for the library. The Director delegates the development and maintenance of the print collection to FLNT's staff of professional Reference Librarians.

Securing funds for materials is included in the library's annual budget process. Funds for materials come from the Township, the County, the State, and self-generated revenue. The Director is responsible for overseeing the purchase and processing of the physical materials of the collection for FLNT. In a consortium agreement with the Bucks County Library District, FLNT also provides access to a large number of electronic materials. This part of the collection is developed and maintained by the Bucks County Free Library's Collection Management Director and Collection Management Department (CMD) staff.

The Collection Management Director is responsible for preparing a detailed collection spending plan for administrative review for the Bucks County Library District. CMD provides collection continuity through system-wide planning and budgeting for selecting, acquiring, and managing library materials.

All staff members contribute to the development of a collection driven by customer needs and expectations by:

- Anticipating customer needs
- Engaging in open communication with customers and other staff
- Interacting with understanding, respect, and responsiveness to all
- Handling all requests equitably
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to needs
- Understanding and responding to changing demographics as well as societal and technological changes
- Balancing individual and community needs
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement

The community has a role in shaping library collections by participating in the collection development process through suggestions and feedback.

As a designated Pennsylvania district center library, Bucks County Free Library (BCFL) hosts electronic resources that are available to all residents of the County. Free Library of Northampton Township supplements those electronic resources with additional electronic resources that are available to the residents located within our service area of the County.

Scope of the Collection

The collection offers materials in various formats, languages, and levels of difficulty. “Materials” includes print, audiovisual and electronic formats. “Collection” is defined as materials that are selected for FLNT and BCFL; those materials may be physically owned by the library or may be accessed via the internet. “Selection” refers to the decision to add a given item to the collection and make it accessible either in a physical location or via the internet. Not all materials and information accessed over the internet are part of the collection.

FLNT and BCFL selections, organizes, and makes available a collection of user-focused materials to meet the wide variety of needs and interests of residents of all ages. Collections are current and popular and titles and quantities are selected to reflect the characteristics of the community and provide general coverage of subjects. Online resources will satisfy general information inquiries and FLNT hosts a large collection of reference materials as well. The collection is reviewed on an ongoing basis and materials are withdrawn from the collection to maintain its usefulness, currency, and relevance.

Although the Library attempts to provide material on most subjects and grade levels, no attempt is made to match the collection to a particular curriculum. The Library may serve as a limited, supplementary source to meet the educational needs of students, but not to serve in an adjunct capacity to schools. The Library usually does not purchase textbooks and its materials are selected for the general reader rather than the specialist.

FLNT and BCFL recognize and respect intellectual property rights and conform to legislative mandates regarding copyright protection.

Collection Development and Management Criteria

Materials selectors use their knowledge, education, training, expertise, and the following criteria when making collection management decisions. A selection need not meet all criteria:

- Popular interest/projected demand
- Demonstrated potential for use as evidenced by collection statistics
- Currency of information
- Accuracy
- Reputation and qualifications of author, publisher, producer, or illustrator
- Suitability for the intended audience
- Creative, literary, or technical quality
- Listing in professionally recognized review journals
- Format and ease of use
- Cost and availability
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Space required to house the material
- Local emphasis
- Accessibility to multiple users
- Enhancement of the print equivalent (if any) in terms of speed, flexibility, cost, ability to combine search terms, or continued access to retrospective information.
- *Public Library Core Collections* series, published by H. W. Wilson

Self-published / self-produced material may be considered using the same selection criteria listed above.

General selection criteria considered for print and non-print materials apply to electronic formats as well. In addition, the following criteria are considered:

- Compatibility with hardware and equipment
- Ease of use and searching capabilities
- Frequency of updating
- Remote capability
- Authority

- Design
- Print vs. electronic pricing and availability

Materials are purchased through a variety of local, regional, and international vendors. Vendors will be evaluated regularly using a competitive bidding process. Criteria for the selection of vendors will be:

- Discount
- Speed of delivery
- Reliability
- Stock availability
- Availability and quality of value-added services including processing and cataloging

Access

The library provides access to the collection in library buildings throughout the county, open seven days each week, and through a public website which is always available.

Access to materials is ensured by the way materials are organized, managed, and displayed, through staff interaction, and through the delivery of materials housed at other County libraries.

FLNT and BCFL organizes its collection through a standards-based cataloging and classification system. Staff members are available to assist customers in the selection and location of materials of interest. Materials which are not on the shelf can be placed on hold. The library participates in interlibrary loan networks to assist customers in obtaining materials not in the collection. Some of these items may be considered for immediate purchase.

Intellectual Freedom

The public library is an instrument of democracy, encouraging an informed citizenry by providing an impartial environment and offering free access to ideas. FLNT supports the rights of individuals to secure information, even when the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. FLNT upholds the principles in the American Library Association's "[Library Bill of Rights](#)," "[Freedom to Read](#)," and "[Freedom to View](#)" statements.

FLNT seeks to meet the needs of all the residents of the Township of Northampton and recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may offend someone. The library believes it would be in conflict with the public's interest to establish its own political, moral, or aesthetic view as a standard for determining what material the library selects. The library attempts to develop and maintain a balanced collection, representing diverse points of view on a subject. A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not equality in numbers. The inclusion of an item in the library collection in no way represents an endorsement of its contents. Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor are materials sequestered. Only individuals can determine what is most appropriate for their needs and can define what material is consistent with their personal or family values. Library users may not restrict the freedom of others

to read, view, or hear what desire. The reading and viewing activity of children and their use of library materials rests solely with their parents or legal guardians who are overseeing their development. FLNT does not intrude on that relationship.

Individuals wishing to question materials in the collection or those excluded from it should first have a conversation with a librarian at FLNT. If the concern cannot be addressed to the customer's satisfaction, they may submit an opinion in writing to the Library Director via the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form. This form may be requested from the Library Director at Free Library of Northampton Township. The Library Director will coordinate the review process and respond to the customer in writing regarding the outcome of the material's review. That decision may be appealed in writing to the Free Library of Northampton Township Board of Directors in care of the Library Director. The Board will consider the appeal at an upcoming regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting, to which the customer will be invited. The decision of the Board will be final. Material under question will remain in the active collection during the review process.

Gift Donations

All donated materials become the property of FLNT and may be used or sold by the library according to the criteria established in this policy. In accepting a gift of materials, the library reserves the privilege of deciding whether the donated items should be added to the collection. Library staff makes no judgment as to the value of the donated materials.

General Guidelines for Collection Weeding

Weeding will be an ongoing process in relation to the *obsolescence* and *condition* criteria as listed below.

Criteria

Obsolescence:

- Material contains inaccurate or outdated information;
- New editions of this item have been published
- Material no longer conforms to Collection Management Policy

Frequency of Use:

- Circulation records or in-house statistics indicate lack of use. In addition to frequency of use, consideration may be given to such factors as archival significance.

Duplication:

- Multiple copies are no longer heavily circulated or used, or information contained is readily available in another source owned by the library.

Condition:

- Material is damaged or worn and no longer suitable for circulation; availability and need will determine replacement of material.

Other Considerations

New editions:

- Previous editions of annual publications are retained unless the older material serves a definite research purpose for the library.

Reference materials:

- These items are subject to the same semi-annual review process for weeding purposes.

Historical materials:

- Material of an historical nature will be maintained in the collection when it provides needed information relevant to the library, its mission, and its services.

Periodicals:

- Periodical subscriptions are subject to annual review by the professional staff.

Sources

Materials will be weeded in accordance with accepted professional practices outline in sources such as the following: The CREW Manual, by Joseph Segal; Guide to Review of Library collections: Preservation, Storage, and Withdrawal, ed. By Lenore Clark; Collection Development: the Selection of Materials for Libraries, by William A. Katz; and Public Library Core Collection series, published by H.W. Wilson.

Disposal of Withdrawn/Weeded Library Items

Library items withdrawn from the library's collection may be:

- Offered to the Friends of the Free Library of Northampton Township for their in-library book sale;
- Sent to consignment company(ies) for sale;
- Recycled or thrown away.

Review and Revision

This collection management policy will be reviewed and updated when a new strategic plan is adopted.

Approved by the FLNT Board of Directors on September 8, 2022.