

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Director, Children's Librarian, Young Adult Librarian, and Senior Outreach Manager are primarily responsible for the selection of books and all other materials for the collection, but final authority rests with the library board in any question of controversial or challenged material. The staff selects on the basis of information found in standard library selection aids; on the advice of experts who may be consulted in cases where director feels this is warranted, and when feasible; on the direct examination of the material itself. Other important criteria for selection are the specific needs and interests of the community, the library's chosen public service responses selected according to the American Library Association's New Planning For Results, materials currently available in the library's existing collection or through interlibrary loan, programming, services, and budget.

The American Library Association's Public Library Division has developed thirteen service responses to assist local libraries in organizing policies, collections, and services to meet local needs. The library decides on which responses it will choose and what level of emphasis to place on each response. Spencer Public Library has chosen 2 primary responses and 2 secondary responses to meet the needs of Spencer citizens.

Primary responses selected by Spencer Public Library are:

Lifelong Learning Center: A library that provides Lifelong Learning services helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.

Current Topics and Titles Library: A library that provides Current Topics and Titles helps to fulfill community residents' appetite for information and popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.

Secondary responses selected by Spencer Library are:

Formal Education Support Center: A library that offers Formal Learning Support helps students who are enrolled in a formal program of education or who are pursuing their education through a program of home-schooling to attain their educational goals.

Local History and Genealogy Center: A library that offers Local History and Genealogy services addresses the desire of community residents to know and better understand personal or community heritage.

Qualities sought in selection and inclusion of materials include permanent or timely value, authoritative content and author, clear presentation and readability, social significance, high popularity, demand by patrons, physical durability, other materials already available on the subject, and selection guided by the library's long-range plan. Materials deliberately distorted or sensational are avoided. Proselytizing materials are not considered appropriate for the public library. Textbooks are generally not acquired, nor are collector's items as such. Special group

interests are balanced with general demand, current availability, circulation history, and cost. The library is happy to receive suggestions from the public, and specific requests for materials are met when possible as long as they meet the criteria of policy and budget restrictions.

In general, books and other materials may be excluded for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Inadequate characterization, plot, literary style, or atmosphere.
2. Inaccurate information.
3. Lack of integrity
4. Over-sentimentality.
5. Sensationalism.
6. Written to incite hatred or intolerance, or presents any individuals or groups in a prejudicial manner.
7. Religious books that are not of general interest or demand.
8. Professional books in law and medicine. Exceptions may be codes of the law and books on medicine written for lay readers.
9. Obscene or pornographic materials, or books that, as a whole, are without library merit or social value. However, serious works, which present an honest picture of some problem or aspect of life, are not necessarily excluded because of coarse language or frankness. The quality of the material shall be judged on the content as a whole, not by detached excerpts.
10. Textbooks for students. This is the function of the school and university libraries. The library may buy supplementary texts for students if this material will also be of use to the general reader. On the children's level, texts are purchased if no other type of information is available. Texts will not be furnished in quantity.
11. A variety of materials may be excluded because of cost, slight demand, or availability elsewhere.
12. The material may add nothing new to a field already well covered in other books. Books heavily requested by patrons but not in the library collection will be purchased so long as they conform to the selection policy of the library.
13. Format of the book may be unsuitable for library circulation ie: poor binding, loose-leaf, broadside, etc.

Gifts are accepted with the stipulation that the library director shall have complete control over the disposition thereof. Gift materials may be cataloged in a separate collection, scattered throughout appropriate areas of the total collection, declined, or disposed of in any other way the director deems necessary to best serve the public and library goals. Bookplates will be inserted to honor the donor if this is desired. All gift materials are governed by the criteria outlined in the library's selection policy.

The library supports the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" and "Freedom To Read" documents (see following pages).

In coverage of current issues, as well as historical patterns of ideology and thought, the library attempts to present quality works on all sides of any controversial issue. The library does not

impose, nor will it submit to any kind of censorship of thought through the exclusion of a particular facet of a controversial issue. The library believes strongly that books and other materials are vehicles for thought, and that as such, their censorship represents a violation of the freedom of thought, which is an implied part of the freedom of speech. While the library does select its materials in an attempt to maintain a quality collection, it does not censor any material for reasons of religions or political belief expressed, but does reserve judgment as to what is political and religious in nature and what is distorted or sensational.

Furthermore, judgment is based on a thoughtful review of the entire book (or other item), as well as a consideration of reviews found in responsible publications. In general, an item is not excluded from the collection on the basis of its faults alone. Each item is judged in terms of a weighing of faults and merits.

While collections are provided for children and for young adults, use of adult library materials is not restricted by staff according to the patron's age. Limitation in juvenile reading and viewing is considered a parental responsibility and not a function of the library.

Because it is the library's responsibility to acquire a wide range of subjects and treatment, the choice of which materials will suit each personal taste is left to the individual patron.

Complaints about the inclusion of a particular item in the library's collection should be directed to the library director, should be in writing, and will be presented to the library board according to the library's procedure and policy for handling patrons concerns (see policy pages C10 – C11).

The library exists in a dynamic world. Its collection must not remain static if it is to serve the identified needs of its users and the future. Spencer Public Library's collection is maintained as a flexible, growing entity, which reaches out to embrace new formats, as well as new ideas, sciences, and arts, while at the same time weeding out the outdated, inaccurate, duplicated, and non-used materials. No material, with the possible exception of local history and genealogy, is considered sacred. All materials, including gift and memorial books, may be weeded from the collection if they have not circulated at least 1 time in the last 2 years, are beyond physical repair, or no longer meet the needs of the citizens of Spencer.