

# Somerset Public Library

## Collection Development Policy



September 11, 1974

Revision - B  
November 15, 2011  
Revision – C  
May 17, 2016

*The Somerset Public Library exists to serve as a center of informal learning, individual growth and recreation for the citizens of Somerset. The Library expects to make a contribution to the learning process and to aid individuals in the lifelong process of growth and appreciation and understanding of themselves, their neighbors, and the world around them. In addition, the library makes its building available as a setting for appropriate events according to the needs and interests of the community.*

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Somerset Public Library  
1464 County Street  
Somerset, MA 02726  
508-646-2829  
[www.somersetpubliclibrary.org](http://www.somersetpubliclibrary.org)

## **Collection Development**

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### **Introduction**

The Somerset Public Library recognizes the needs of the community are of primary importance in selection of materials available through the library. In order to meet this goal, the Library assembles and makes available a collection of materials: books, magazines and newspapers, pictures, audio and video recordings, microforms, computer software, online databases, digital resources, etc. Materials are selected for purchase, accepted as gifts, and discarded by Library personnel under the general direction of the Director of the Library, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees.

In accordance with MGL. c.78, s.19B and 605 CMR 4.01(5), regarding the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' requirement for public library certification, the library's Board of Trustees will make all attempts to reach the required Materials Expenditure Requirement figure for books and materials.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This collection development policy defines the standards and outlines the responsibility for collection development for the Somerset Public Library. Within these guidelines, the staff use their professional judgment to determine the materials which best meet the objectives of the Library and the needs of its patrons.

### **Objectives in Materials Selections**

The general objectives in collection development are to carry out the Library's goals of providing the community with a variety of significant media to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs.

### **Responsibility for Selection**

Overall responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. Typically, the Library Director delegates or shares this responsibility with designated members of the staff. No employee may be disciplined or dismissed for the selection of library materials when the selection is made in good faith and in accordance with the written policy. Suggestions from patrons are welcome and will be considered using the same criteria as all other selections.

All requests will be given serious consideration and every attempt will be made to borrow through interlibrary loan any requested item which is out of print, or that the Library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

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## **Criteria for Selection**

- Significance and permanent value to the existing collection
- Relevance to the Library's mission and service roles
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- High standards in quality in content and format
- Price and availability
- Level of funding for materials/format
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Informational and recreational needs of users
- Local demand
- Current usefulness or interest
- Authority and accuracy
- Importance as a record of the times
- Format, durability and ease of use
- Patron requests
- Relevance to the history/culture of Somerset
- Ease of use and remote access potential
- Hardware, software, networking and storage requirements
- Licensing requirements
- Comparison of content and cost with other available formats
- Long term availability and perpetual access rights,

In selection, consideration will be given to the work as a whole. No work shall be excluded solely because of specific passages or pieces taken out of context.

## **Selection Tools**

Because it is impossible for librarians to examine all items being considered for purchase, they depend on reliable selection aids. The librarians regularly depend on the reviews found in standard professional sources.

## **Scope of Collection**

The Library shelves can accommodate approximately 80,000 books and limited quantities of other materials. Materials are selected for utility to the citizens of the community: rare items, curiosa, etc. are not included unless they are of meaningful value to Somerset citizens, within the framework of the existing Library collection. Items not immediately available at the Somerset Public Library will be borrowed for patrons from other libraries through the use of the Library Network and the State Regional Networks, or patrons will be referred to other libraries where the material may either be borrowed or used in the Library's Reference area.

Materials will be selected in a variety of formats including, but not limited to

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- Print – such as hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines and newspapers
- Non-print – such as audio and video formats, puzzles, games, artwork, microfilm, etc.
- Digital resources – such as on-line databases, electronic books, recordings, images, digital historical archives, software programs, computer applications and the Internet.

Through careful selection, the Library strives to maintain a diverse collection of quality materials, including items of contemporary significance and permanent value, as well as a selection of materials concerning social issues and ephemeral items. Circulating materials are supplemented by a variety of reference materials for in-house use. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational and cultural back-grounds, and reading skills, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.

- Materials for Children

In general, the Somerset Public Library subscribes to a policy of free access to library materials for minors. Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. At the Somerset Public Library, children and young people have access to all parts of the Library; however, collections in Children's Services serve children and young people, their parents and care givers. Books are chosen to encourage the child's joy in reading and in being read to.

- Materials for Young Adults

Materials are selected to broaden the horizons of teens, help them cope with the problems of adolescence, and to encourage leisure reading. To fulfill these needs, the collection will inevitably include materials on controversial or sensitive topics. The suitability of any particular item must be determined on an individual basis by the parent or guardian of that teen. Consideration is also given to the non-fiction needs of middle school/junior high students.

- Materials in Adult Services

Materials are selected primarily to serve the needs of adults. The collection includes reference and circulating non-fiction books, fiction books, and non-book materials.

- Non-Book Materials

Non-book items purchased by the library for in-house use or for circulation may include pamphlets, art prints, computer software, microfiche, compact discs and emerging audio formats, kits, games, toys, puzzles, puppets, on-line databases, digital video discs (DVDs) and download, images, digital historical archives, and emerging technologies.

The acquisition of a variety of non-book materials is under constant evaluation and is subject to change, but the basic criteria for selection of items is used.

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## **Collection Maintenance**

- A. Duplicate Copies: The number of copies purchased varies with the expected use of any item. As extensive use for individual titles is demonstrated, duplication to meet the demand is implemented.
- B. Deselection: In order to maintain the best possible collection of materials, a continual weeding process takes place. Items are deselected if they are outdated, if they no longer circulate, if there are more duplicate copies than needed, or if they are in poor physical condition.
- C. Materials will be selected and deselected by Library personnel according to recognized public library practices, in terms of the needs and interests of the community at the time of their selection. All selection and discarding of materials will be guided by the spirit of the American Library Association's statements of Freedom to Read, Labeling and the Library Bill of Rights.

## **Disposal**

**Sell:** Most items (non-digital) deselected from the library are donated to the Friends of the Somerset Public Library and sold through their booksale(s) per Town Meeting approval.

**Recycle:** The library reserves the right to "pass along" items that may be beneficial to other non-profit agencies (i.e. other libraries, Somerset school district, historical societies, etc.).

**Destroy:** Books would be donated or recycled whenever possible; however, if the condition warrants, the item would be discarded (i.e. moldy, wet or other damage).

**Requests for purchase:** Occasionally the Somerset Public Library will receive a request from a reader to be given the opportunity to purchase or otherwise acquire a book or item from the library's collection when that item is deselected. Because of the volume of materials, the library must handle it is unreasonable to assume library employees can track such requests, nor will such requests impact the library's decision whether an item should be deselected.

**Gifts please** *see the Library's separate policy statement regarding gifts.*

## **Revision of Selection Policy**

As a result of the ever-changing needs of the community, this materials selection policy is revised as needed and/or is reviewed at least every five years.

## **Procedures for Handling Complaints about Library Materials**

1. If patrons wish to file a complaint about library materials or to have materials reconsidered, the complaint should be brought to the attention of the Library Director. The Library Director will examine the material, as well as critical reviews of the material.
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2. The Library Director will write a letter to the patron who initiated the complaint or request for reconsideration outlining the above procedures and announcing the response to the complaint. The letter may also include a statement inviting the patron to the library to discuss the matter with the Library Director.
  3. After an interview with the Library Director, a patron desiring further action can make a request in writing for a hearing before the Library Board of Trustees, which has final authority.
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1464 County Street  
Somerset, MA 02726

## RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Please fill out the form below and return it to the Library Director. Your request will be given careful consideration and you will be notified in writing within 14 days of the decision regarding your request. If further action is requested, a meeting with the Library Director will be arranged.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

LIBRARY CARD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF MATERIAL:

Adult Fiction		Magazine	
Adult Non-fiction		Picture	
Juvenile Fiction		Video	
Juvenile Non-fiction		Audio	
YA Fiction		Electronic Resource	
YA Non-Fiction		Other:	

Title of item \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Please state your Specific objections to this material. Be as comprehensive as possible:

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TRUSTEE APPROVAL DATE	CURRENT REVISION	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
09/11/1974	-	Original release.
11/21/1995	A	Update to policy
10/18/2011	B	Reviewed by Town Counsel
11/15/2011	B	Revision approved by Trustees
5/17/2016	C	Revision approved by Trustees

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