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POLICY #001

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## KALAMAZOO PUBLIC LIBRARY

### MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

#### *Mission Statement*

*Kalamazoo Public Library champions reading, ignites imagination, and ensures access to information and ideas.*

#### INTRODUCTION

The Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees delegates the selection of library materials to the Kalamazoo Public Library Director and to members of the professional staff.

The MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY of Kalamazoo Public Library guides the professional staff responsible for selection activity and documents selection principles for Kalamazoo Public Library District residents.

Basic to the Policy are the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement. These statements are interpreted to pertain to all formats in which information is to be found, including video, audio, digital and electronic resources. The statements are appended to this document.

The library assures open access to its holdings for all patrons. The Board of Trustees recognizes that while individuals are free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, they cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, listen, and view within any guideline set forth by the library, such as the Internet Use Policy.

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## **OBJECTIVES OF MATERIALS SELECTION**

The primary objective of selection is to provide access to materials of contemporary significance and permanent value. However, the library provides some materials for entertainment. The library attends to the community's present and future needs as it adds materials to enrich the collections and maintain overall balance.

Kalamazoo Public Library builds collections and selects resources which:

- anticipate, support and respond to the diverse informational, cultural and leisure needs of community residents of all ages;
- encourage lifelong learning and intellectual growth;
- stimulate informed participation in the affairs of contemporary society;
- support civic, cultural, and educational activities within the community;
- give access to a variety of viewpoints on matters of current interest;
- reflect minority opinions as well as those of the majority.

## **GENERAL CRITERIA FOR MATERIALS SELECTION**

Each resource must be considered for its usefulness, its format and the audience for which it is intended. No single criterion is applicable to all purchase and access decisions. Some resources may be judged primarily for their artistic merit, scholarship or value to humanity; others are chosen to satisfy the informational, recreational or educational interests of the community.

Librarians apply their judgment and experience in selecting materials according to the criteria listed below. All criteria do not apply to each item. Works of imagination are judged by different standards than are works of information and opinion. Works that present an aspect of life honestly are not necessarily excluded because of frankness of expression. Materials are judged as a whole rather than on isolated portions. In considering individual titles in the selection process, librarians consult reviews, bibliographies and other evaluative sources. However, the library generally purchases best sellers, giving higher priority to demand than to reviews or other relevant criteria. The criteria include:

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- suitability of physical form for library use;
- suitability of subject and style for intended audience;
- present and potential relevance to local interests and needs;
- appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content;
- number and nature of requests from the library district public;
- historical significance;
- usefulness to patrons with special needs;
- importance as a document of the times;
- relation to existing collection, alternative formats and other material on the subject;
- reputation and/or significance of the author/artist and publisher/producer;
- authority, competence, integrity and purpose of the author/artist/publisher;
- attention of critics, reviewers, media, and/or the public;
- comprehensiveness and depth of treatment;
- clarity, accuracy, logic of presentation and/or ease of use;
- representation of a minority point of view;
- relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations;
- artistic presentation and experimentation;
- quality of illustrations;
- originality, vitality, readability or ability to sustain interest;
- effective characterization;
- authenticity of historical or social setting;

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- value of resource in relation to its cost;
- lack of availability elsewhere.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR COLLECTION AREAS**

### **1. Children's Collection**

The children's collection provides materials which anticipate the diverse needs, interest, tastes, and backgrounds of girls and boys from birth through sixth grade. These materials should provide enjoyment for children, inspire and cultivate in them a love of books and reading, stimulate their creative powers and appreciation of beauty, encourage them to develop their mental capacities, meet their personal informational needs, and help them recognize a broad spectrum of moral and social values. Additional appropriate materials are provided to help adults understand and work with children.

The library does not limit children to use of the children's collection. Therefore, a child's parent or guardian, not the library, must be responsible for the materials chosen by the child.

### **2. Electronic Resources**

Electronic resources, including websites, topic guides and electronic databases, provide opportunities to expand the scope of information available to users. Providing connections to global information, services and networks is not the same as selecting and purchasing material for a library collection. Determining the accuracy or authenticity of electronic information may present unique challenges.

Some information accessed electronically through KPL's Internet connection may not meet the library's selection policy. The provision of access does not imply sponsorship or endorsement by the library. Furthermore, the library's Internet Use Policy establishes guidelines for access. Parents and legal guardians who are concerned about their children's use of the Internet should provide guidance to their children.

The library provides access to selected Internet sources through its web picks based on informational, educational and recreational needs for patron usage and staff needs in answering patron questions. Internet sites are selected based on quality, relevance, currency, comprehensiveness and accuracy of the information; ease of access, interface and navigability; and have identifiable content authority attributed to an individual or

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organization. Commercialized sites must include informative and accurate information, not just for product promotion.

The General Criteria for Selection of Materials in traditional formats apply to the selection of electronic databases as well. However, because electronic formats require non-traditional means of acquisition, storage and access, some additional criteria must be considered:

- ease of navigation and training requirements;
- ease of access and number of access points;
- hardware and software requirements, including maintenance;
- vendor support and reasonable contractual requirements;
- comparison of cost and content with other formats available;
- vendor delivery of timely updates and retention of historical data;
- networking capabilities;
- availability of remote access;
- ownership of product: purchase or lease.

### 3. Local History/Community Information

The library makes a commitment to provide information for its patrons about the community and the state. It selectively acquires and provides access to relevant resources about Kalamazoo city and county, the southwest Michigan region, and the state in general. The library also provides basic historical and genealogical material about the areas from which Kalamazoo was predominantly settled.

Especially in regard to works by local authors, materials in the local history collection may or may not meet selection criteria in other respects, the local interest taking precedence over other factors.

Since "local history" is a discipline as well as a place, the library acquires instructional materials in the effective use of local history sources. To aid patrons who have interests in

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other communities, the library provides materials to help them identify and contact institutions that house materials appropriate to their needs.

Since local information is not always available commercially, it is necessary to develop indexes and other tools in-house. Both current and historic entries are added to the library's Community Information Database to fill local needs, interests, and demand.

#### **4. Government Information and Publications**

The library holds federal, state, regional and local government materials. It collects federal depository publications selectively, through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), adhering to the acquisition and retention requirements of chapter 19, Title 44 of the US Code, and the expectations of the Michigan Plan for the FDLP.

Federal agencies currently publish over 90% of new government publications in electronic format; hence the library's role is to empower patrons to access government information electronically. Print materials are selected when electronic sources do not provide adequate, convenient access to information needed by library patrons.

Regular efforts are made to increase bibliographic and inventory control of print materials and to assess the needs of library patrons in light of changing demographics and the collections of neighboring depository collections. Library district resident patrons may access government publications from other Michigan depository libraries via MeLCat.

#### **5. Periodicals and Newspapers**

In order to serve a diverse population, the library provides a wide range of reference and recreational interest periodicals and newspapers. Emphasis is given to titles included in periodical indexes or published locally. Specialized titles are considered in relation to subject need, cost and availability in area libraries.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **1. Local Interest**

Some materials evaluated are subject to widespread local demand, and such items may or may not meet the selection criteria outlined in this policy. While the volume and nature of requests by members of the public are influential factors, the library makes the final

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selection and retention decisions.

In accordance with established procedures, the library makes available systems through which patrons can make purchase recommendations or express concerns about library materials. However, inordinate responsiveness to any individual or group is not the library's practice. As the social and intellectual climate of the community changes, materials not purchased earlier may generate interest. Such items are re-evaluated on a continuing basis.

## 2. Gifts

A gift to the library may consist of materials or funds for the purchase of materials. The library accepts restricted gifts funds only if the material to be purchased has been jointly approved by the donor and the library. Gift additions must meet the same selection criteria as purchase materials and are accepted subject to the following limitations:

- The library retains full ownership of the gift.
- The library makes the final decision on its own use or other disposition of the gift.
- The library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing, access, and retention.

## 3. Withdrawal and Replacement

The library regularly withdraws outdated materials, items no longer of interest or in demand, unused duplicates, worn or mutilated copies, and selected periodicals, newspapers and serials for which there is insufficient space to house older issues. This procedure is an integral facet of collection development that ensures that the collections are up-to-date and in good physical condition. The library strives to use environmentally sound practices when disposing of withdrawn items. The library makes replacement decisions based on specific selection criteria and does not necessarily replace all lost, damaged, worn or obsolete items.

Except for the transfer of discarded materials to other library collections or to the Friends of the Kalamazoo Public Library for their store and release of materials to recycling services, the library does not give or sell materials from its collections to individuals or organizations without the express permission of the Library Director.

## CONCLUSION

The library acquires and provides access to new resources and formats as they are judged feasible, suitable, and relevant to the community. Expanding areas of knowledge, technological advances, changing social values, and cultural differences require flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness in the evaluation and re-evaluation of all library resources.

This revised MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY, as adopted by the District Library Board, will be reviewed by the Library Director, professional staff, and the Board of Trustees at least every five years.