

Materials Selection Policy

The Board of Trustees of the Kalamazoo Public Library has adopted the Materials Selection Policy to guide library staff and inform the public on the methods and principles behind the selection of the materials in the library's collections. The policy directly relates the collection to the Kalamazoo Public Library's Vision and Core Values.

Vision and Core Values

The Vision Statement and Core Values of Kalamazoo Public Library guide the selection of materials as well as the development of services and allocation of resources:

Vision: Leading a stronger community through literacy, learning, and innovation.

Core Values: At the Kalamazoo Public Library:

- **We are committed to excellence in programs, services, and collections.**
- **We are community-focused.**
- **We are committed to and intentional about equity and anti-racism.**
- **We have safe, beautiful, and comfortable spaces.**
- **We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation.**
- **We have a passionate, engaged, knowledgeable, and creative staff.**

The Kalamazoo Public Library is bound by the democratic principles expressed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Furthermore, the Kalamazoo Public Library supports the principles of intellectual freedom and the individual's right to open access to ideas, information, experiences, and perspectives representing multiple points of view. These principles are affirmed by the American Library Association's LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, THE FREEDOM TO READ and FREEDOM TO VIEW statements.

Objectives

Physical Collection

The Kalamazoo Public Library acquires and lends materials to the community it serves. This is the principal means by which the library fulfills its vision to inform, educate, entertain, and enrich the community. The library seeks to develop a meaningful collection that is constructed to meet the wide-ranging interests of the general public and aligns with the Kalamazoo Public Library's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion; however, financial and physical space restrictions means that no single library can acquire every published title or loanable material available. Therefore, guidelines must be employed to select which materials are acquired by the library and which are not selected. Within the physical and financial limits of its physical locations and approved budgets, the library provides a general collection of works that are

broadly based on the community's needs, both those directly expressed and those inferred from sources such as circulation data, demographic makeup, community focus, and media attention. The collections at individual branch locations all adhere to the guidelines outlined in this policy, but with consideration for the unique needs and interests of the surrounding neighborhoods in which each location is situated.

MeLCat and Digital Collections

Access through other community resources or library collections is considered in selecting materials. Kalamazoo Public Library participates in the Michigan Electronic Catalog (MeLCat), a resource-sharing service that allows sharing of collections among all types and sizes of libraries across Michigan. Through the library's participation in the MeLCat service, Kalamazoo Public Library patrons have access to an enormous collection of materials beyond those owned by Kalamazoo Public Library; however, these materials are owned by other libraries and so do not fall under the Materials Selection Policy.

License agreements enable the library to offer access to a variety of downloadable and streaming digital resources through the library's website. The nature of these digital platforms does not always allow for Kalamazoo Public Library to apply the Materials Selection Policy to each title available on the platform. In these cases, the policy will be applied to the platform as a whole, and every effort will be made to monitor the content available in order to ensure it meets the general criteria for selection.

Controversial Content

The Kalamazoo Public Library recognizes that certain material the library purchases may be considered controversial, and that some patrons may be offended by that material. Selection decisions are not made based on anticipated approval or disapproval, but on the ability of the item to serve the needs and interests of the entire community served by the library. By attempting to reflect the diversity of views and expressions represented in our community, including those which may be considered unorthodox or controversial, the library aims for a balanced approach to controversial topics which allows the individual to examine the issue freely and to form their own opinions.

Responsibility for selection

The Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees delegates the selection of library materials to the Kalamazoo Public Library Director. The director determines the budgets, guidelines, and organizational structure for the library staff responsible for selecting materials (Selectors).

Selectors are responsible for:

- Choosing appropriate materials for the collection areas under their responsibility
- Monitoring budgets to ensure that spending is timely and organized
- Monitoring circulation of those materials

- Deselecting (weeding) collections to maintain appearance, physical condition, and relevancy standards

Equity

The Kalamazoo Public Library prioritizes providing equitable service to our entire community. We believe that a diverse collection, that represents a broad range of experiences and viewpoints, ultimately promotes better understanding and tolerance for perspectives that may differ from one's own. We strive to have historically oppressed, underrepresented, and underserved groups represented in our collections, in addition to all other demographic groups. The library regularly reviews the current and emergent demographic trends for the library's constituent populations to inform collection development and management. Through its own internal procedures and/or using systems provided by outside vendors, the library periodically assesses the adequacy of existing collections to ensure they meet the needs of the library's constituent populations.

Formats

The Kalamazoo Public Library began as a collection of physical books for adult readers, and printed material remains the cornerstone of our collections. However, Kalamazoo Public Library has regularly expanded its collections to include materials in new formats as they become relevant to the general public and make sense for circulating library collections.

New formats and emerging technologies shall be considered for the circulating collection when, by survey results, patron requests, industry reports, etc., it is determined that a significant portion of the community has the necessary technology to make use of the format. Availability of titles, cost per item, and the library's ability to package and sustainably circulate the new format will also factor into decisions to include a new format in the collection. Similar considerations will influence decisions to no longer circulate a format from the library's collection.

Criteria for selection

Kalamazoo Public Library's selectors use their training, knowledge, and expertise to select materials for the collection. All materials are considered in terms of the criteria listed below, but each item does not need to meet all of the criteria in order to be added to the collection.

- Relevance to interests and needs of the community
- Anticipated demand and publicity
- Critical reception and professional reviews
- Prominence of the author
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations

- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Accuracy and timeliness
- Receipt or nomination of awards
- Local significance of the author or subject
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject
- Available physical space
- Reputation and/or significance of the author/artist and publisher/producer
- Price and availability in relation to library materials budgets
- Effectiveness and suitability of format in communicating the content

Youth Collections

Materials suited to patrons from infancy to 18 years of age are added to the collection using the selection criteria listed above. These materials are selected by Kalamazoo Public Library staff who specialize in materials for children and teens and are located in specifically designated "children's" or "teen" areas in each location. This placement is not intended to restrict use in any way and all Kalamazoo Public Library collections and resources are available to any Kalamazoo Public Library cardholder. The library recognizes the responsibility of parents/guardians in monitoring the use of the library by their minor children and takes no legal responsibility to act as parent/guardian to minor children.

Local History Collection

The Clarence L. Miller Family Local History Room collects a wide variety of material related to the development of Kalamazoo County's history as well as genealogical resources focused on assisting the genealogical research of local residents. Materials related to the history of the region and to a lesser extent the state of Michigan are also collected. Along with the general selection criteria listed in this policy, Local History selectors use the following additional criteria to determine inclusion in the Local History Room collection:

- Relevance to the history of Kalamazoo County and surrounding areas
- Suitability of the subject to the Local History Collection
- Available space in the library to house materials
- Non-duplication of material within the collection
- Authenticity and completeness of record
- Quality of the physical form of material
- Ability to store, display, or otherwise care for the item properly
- Cost to preserve, store, and process
- Security requirements to store and/or display

Law Library Collection

The Raymond W. Fox Law Library provides current and comprehensive legal materials that meet the legal research and information needs of library users. Prioritization is given to acquiring and maintaining major primary and secondary Michigan legal works, along with some selected primary and secondary U.S. Federal and general legal works. The collection is focused on current and accurate legal materials and does not include historical laws and resources. Along with the general selection criteria listed in this policy, Law Library selectors use the following additional criteria to determine inclusion in the collection:

- Relevance of legal topic for the community, with a focus on common topics such as family, probate, employment, and criminal law
- A practitioner-oriented or law for the layperson approach is preferred over scholarly/academic approaches
- Format, frequency, manner, and cost of updating a title

Library of Things Collection

The Library of Things collection is a collection of non-traditional library items that has the goal of providing access to an assortment of products that improve the lives of community members. Along with the general selection criteria outlined in this policy, selectors of items to be included in the Library of Things collection consider the following special criteria:

- Suggestions from organizations that provide services to or represent marginalized communities
- Suggestions from patrons or other members of the community
- Cost of the item, with special scrutiny given to items that cost above \$100
- Items are aimed at a temporary need of the patron
- Prioritizes the needs of our community
- Practicality of circulating the item and sustaining the collection
- Durability of the item for circulation

Collection Maintenance

Library collections are routinely monitored for use and relevance to the community. Items are removed from the collection or replaced using the following criteria:

- Damage or poor condition
- No longer relevant to the needs or interests of the community
- Infrequent use or demonstrated lack of demand
- Misleading and/or factually inaccurate
- Superseded by a new edition or a better source
- Availability elsewhere including at other libraries or free online sources

Kalamazoo Public Library reserves the right to determine how materials are removed and/or disposed of. Materials that qualify for removal from the system are often sold via the Friends of KPL Bookstore, if appropriate, or otherwise recycled for further use through book distribution vendors.

Patron Suggestions for Purchase

Kalamazoo Public Library encourages input from the Kalamazoo community in developing our collections. A link to our “Suggest an Item” form is available from any page within the library’s online catalog allowing community members to request a particular item or subject that is not already owned by the Kalamazoo Public Library. All suggestions for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. Patrons will be notified of the status of their suggestions and, if the item is purchased, a hold on the item will be placed for the requesting patron.

Duplication of Material

Multiple copies of a single title are routinely purchased in response to patron demand for the item. Patron demand can be anticipated by monitoring indicators such as media attention and news coverage, or it can be demonstrated through holds placed on the item or repeated requests for the item. A ratio of holds placed to copies purchased is maintained for popular collections, with adjustments made to account for the cost of the item, the temporal nature of the demand on the item, or other budgetary constraints that limit the number of copies purchased.

Requests for Reconsideration of Library Material

The library provides a standard procedure for patrons to request that a particular item within its collections be removed or reclassified. The procedure begins with a conversation about the concern between the patron and a member of library leadership in order to help clarify the concern and find possible mutually agreeable alternative solutions to simply removing the title. If no solution is reached, the patron is supplied with the *Citizen’s Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form* to complete. The item in question is then examined as a whole to see that it meets the criteria outlined in this policy. Relevant professional reviews are collected, outside collections containing the title are consulted, and the title along with the stated reasons for the request are discussed by Selectors and library leadership. A formal written response to the patron, outlining the discussion and the rationale for the decision, is sent within ten (10) business days of the request.