Trenton Free Public Library Collection Development Policy

LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Trenton Free Public Library is to provide the citizens of Trenton with information resources along with programs and activities that meet and anticipate the educational, cultural, social, and recreational needs of the community. The Library is a bridge that connects the community to literacy, guides learning, and inspires curiosity. It also has a special responsibility to conserve, preserve, and make accessible the records of Trenton's rich historical past.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Trenton Free Public Library develops and maintains a balanced, diverse, and continually evolving collection of print, audiovisual, digital, and other library materials that supports the Library's mission and goals and responds to the informational, educational, cultural, recreational, and technological needs and interests of the Trenton community. The collection serves people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, interests, and reading and educational levels. Library materials are provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people and, as a collection as a whole, provide access to a wide array of materials and diverse points of view.

In accordance with New Jersey's Freedom to Read Act, the Library recognizes public libraries as centers for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas. The Library supports free expression, free access to information and ideas, and each individual's right to form their own opinions. Prohibiting censorship of library materials promotes free expression and free access to ideas by residents. Library materials shall not be excluded or removed from the Library because of the origin, background, or views of the materials or their creators or contributors. The inclusion of materials in the collection does not constitute an endorsement of their content or the views expressed by their authors, creators, or contributors.

The Library recognizes that the New Jersey Freedom to Read Act provides protections for library workers in the development and maintenance of library collections and acknowledges the professional training and education of librarians in developing and curating collections. The governing body of the Trenton Free Public Library, in consultation with Library staff, including librarians, has discretion in selecting, purchasing, and acquiring materials for inclusion in the Library's collection. Nothing in this policy or applicable law shall be construed to require the Library to purchase, acquire, or otherwise add any particular material to the collection.

Collection development and maintenance are ongoing processes of selection, evaluation, and, when appropriate, de-selection/weeding of materials. Librarians use their professional judgment and training to develop and curate collections that provide residents with access to the widest practical array of library materials available to the public. Collection decisions are guided by the Library's mission and goals, available resources, and the evolving needs and interests of the Trenton community. The Library reviews its collection on an ongoing basis to ensure that it remains relevant, useful, diverse, and responsive to the community it serves.

The Library's collection, considered as a whole, is intended to provide residents with access to a broad range of information, ideas, perspectives, and forms of expression. Individual materials need not represent every viewpoint, nor must every perspective be represented in every material or subject area. The Library seeks to maintain a collection that supports voluntary inquiry and enables individuals to pursue their own interests and form their own opinions.

POLICY GOAL

The primary goal of collection development is to provide the strongest collection reasonably achievable within the financial resources available and in support of the Trenton Free Public Library's mission and the changing needs of the community. Materials selection is a discerning and deliberative process. Library staff will use their training, knowledge, and expertise to select materials that provide a wide variety of viewpoints, address current and anticipated community needs, and contribute to the overall strength, diversity, and depth of the collection.

SELECTION CRITERIA

There is no single standard that can be used to evaluate the numerous and varied types of materials included in the Library's collection. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criterion be decisive. Neither the order of the general criteria nor the order of items within a list indicates relative importance. Selection decisions may consider the following:

- **Relevance and Community Needs:** Present and potential relevance to the interests, information needs, and anticipated needs of the Trenton community, as well as relevance to the Library's mission and strategic plan.
- **Demand and Use:** Public demand or anticipated public demand for a title, author, format, or subject, including the frequency of requests for materials on the same or similar subjects.
- **Quality and Authority:** The authority, reputation, and significance of the author, issuing body, and/or publisher; the accuracy, objectivity, timeliness, and lasting value of the content; and evaluations by critics, reviewers, and recognized library reviewing sources.
- **Literary, Artistic, Social, and Historical Significance:** The literary, artistic, creative, social, cultural, or historical significance of the work, subject, or author, including materials that appeal to the imagination, senses, or intellect.
- **Diversity of Viewpoints:** The Library seeks to provide a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives. Materials may be selected to represent differing perspectives, experiences, cultures, and communities and to strengthen the diversity and depth of the collection. The Library may also consider materials that uplift and support historically marginalized or underrepresented voices through their content and/or authorship.
- **Audience Appropriateness:** Suitability of the content, format, style, reading level, and presentation for the intended audience, including the relationship between the audience's reading level and the subject content level.
- **Presentation and Usability:** Clarity, organization, intuitiveness, readability, and overall usability of the material, including appropriate indexes, bibliographies, footnotes, illustrations, photographs, or other special features when applicable.
- **Collection Balance:** Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses; the strength of current holdings on the same or similar subjects; the importance of the subject to the overall collection; and the potential contribution of the material to the collection's diversity, depth, and balance.
- **Timeliness and Lasting Value:** The currency, timeliness, and lasting value of the content and format. Current publications will generally receive priority over retrospective purchasing when appropriate, while materials of enduring, historical, cultural, or local significance may warrant retrospective acquisition.
- **Cost and Available Resources:** The price or relative cost of the material in relation to the available budget, anticipated use, and other available or needed materials.
- **Availability and Resource Sharing:** The availability of similar materials through other libraries, appropriate resource-sharing networks, or interlibrary loan, as well as the scarcity of resources on a particular subject.
- **Space Constraints:** The availability of appropriate physical space may affect the scope, depth, quantity, and format of materials added to the collection. Space limitations may be considered

alongside anticipated use, collection priorities, and the availability of similar materials through other resources.
- **Local Significance:** Potential local use and relevance, including materials relating to Trenton, Mercer County, and New Jersey, as well as works by local authors or creators.
- **Format and Accessibility:** The suitability, accessibility, and usability of the format for the intended audience and the Library's ability to support that format.

Additional Criteria for Digital Resources

- **Ease of Use:** The resource's functionality, navigation, search capabilities, intuitiveness, and overall user experience.
- **Licensing and System Requirements:** Licensing terms and restrictions, number of simultaneous users, authentication requirements, and hardware, software, networking, storage, and other technical requirements.
- **Content Quality and Relevance:** The quality, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and relevance of the content, as well as its contribution to the strengths, weaknesses, diversity, and depth of the existing collection.
- **Accessibility:** The accessibility and usability of the resource for all users, including compatibility with assistive technologies and applicable accessibility standards, when available.
- **Usage and Community Demand:** Current and anticipated use, usage statistics when available, and demonstrated or anticipated demand from the community.
- **Cost and Value:** The cost of the resource in relation to the available budget, anticipated use, content quality, and the cost and availability of comparable resources or formats.

PATRON RECOMMENDATIONS

Patron suggestions for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as all other materials and are not automatically added to the collection.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

The Trenton Free Public Library does not generally accept gifts of books or other library materials, except for materials specifically relating to the history or community of Trenton, New Jersey. Such gifts may be accepted at the discretion of the Librarian in the Trentoniana Department.

The Library reserves the right to accept or reject any gift or donation. By donating materials to the Library, the donor acknowledges that the Library retains sole discretion regarding the use, housing, display, sale, transfer, or other disposition of donated materials. Library staff and/or authorized representatives will make all decisions concerning the use and final disposition of gifts. Materials that do not support the Library's objectives or materials selection criteria may be refused.

The Library does not evaluate or appraise donated materials for tax or other financial purposes. Donors are responsible for obtaining any desired appraisal or documentation for tax purposes.

TRUSTS

Trusts that have been set up for the purchase of Library items will be used according to the implications of the Trusts.

WHAT IS EXCLUDED FROM PURCHASE

Textbooks and manuals are not purchased or added to the collection unless they have earned a reputation as classics in their fields or are the only or best sources of information on a particular topic. The Library does not select materials in proprietary, nonstandard or obsolete formats.

DISPOSITION OF MATERIALS

The Library collections are periodically assessed and evaluated to ensure that coverage remains current, relevant, balanced, and responsive to changes, real or anticipated, in community interests and needs. Ongoing review and judicious weeding of library materials by professional staff are essential to maintaining an active, useful, and high-quality collection. The same guidelines used for selection of library materials provide the underlying principles for de-selection/weeding.

As part of the ongoing review process, library materials may be considered for de-selection/weeding from the collection based on criteria including, but not limited to:

- Relevance to the needs and interests of the community
- Physical condition, including damaged or worn materials
- Accuracy and currency of information
- Continued demand, frequency of use, and lack of anticipated demand
- Availability of duplicates or multiple copies
- Availability of newer or more current material
- Enduring or continuing value
- Local interest
- Availability of the material elsewhere, including through digital platforms or other libraries
- Space limitations

De-selection/weeding provides quality control for the collection through the removal of outdated, inaccurate, damaged, or otherwise unsuitable materials. Materials are not removed solely because of the viewpoint, ideas, or opinions expressed in them.

The Library also acknowledges the necessity of preserving library materials when appropriate and supports the American Library Association's Preservation Policy.

TRENTONIANA COLLECTION

The purpose of the TFPL’s Trentoniana Local History & Genealogy Department is to collect, organize, and preserve the history of the City of Trenton, its residents, and to an extent, surrounding areas.

The library has maintained a selective archive since 1906 and for some time was a government publications depository. Printed, as well as non-printed material, such as film, audio and videotape, digital files, artwork, and artifacts are collected. All subjects relating to Trenton are considered within its realm of collecting – it may be about the City or by or about someone who lives or lived here. Trentoniana also collects material on subjects that have relevance to Trenton history, such as the history of industry in New Jersey or the history of state government in North America.

Trentoniana does not include active personnel or City records, and rules of confidentiality are observed for sensitive materials.

REASON FOR POLICY

The purpose of the policy is to provide standards for the curation of library material; establish criteria for removal of existing library material or library material selected for inclusion in the public library; and provide protection against attempts to censor library material.

DEFINITIONS

Censorship. Means to block, suppress, or remove library material based on disagreement with a viewpoint, idea, or concept, or solely because an individual finds certain content offensive, but does not include limiting or restricting access to any library material deemed developmentally inappropriate for certain age groups.

Diverse and inclusive material. Means material that reflects any protected class as enumerated in the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L. 1945, c 169 (c.10:5-1 et seq); material produced by an author who is a member of a protected class as enumerated in the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L. 1945, c 169 (c.10:5-1 et seq); and material that contains the author's points of view concerning contemporary problems and issues, whether international, national, or local.

Governing body. Means a board of trustees, director or other chief administrative officer, a county library commission, or board of county commissioners of a public library

Individual with a vested interest. Any resident who is served by the public library or residents in a county or municipality where the library is situated.

Library material(s). Means any material, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books; magazines; reference books; supplementary titles; multimedia and digital material; software and instructional material, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a public library.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Library Board – Establishes, reviews and updates policy. Serves as governing body.

Library Director – Coordinates implementation of policy, trains staff, approves purchases, serves as first responder for patron complaints. Reports to and advises the governing body.

Collection Development Librarian(s) – Selects materials for the library collection that help achieve the library's mission and follows the Collection Development Policy. Manages the de-selection/weeding of materials from the collection according to the library's established criteria. Reviews requests for reconsideration of library materials, evaluates challenged materials in accordance with the Collection Development Policy and applicable procedures, deliberates on the request, and makes recommendation(s) to the governing body.

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