

# **The Westport Library Collection Development and Maintenance Policy**

## **I. Purpose and Scope of the Collection Development and Maintenance Policy**

The Westport Library is committed to maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and balanced Collection that reflects the varied interests, backgrounds, and viewpoints of its community. The Library makes every effort to provide library materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. Library materials represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole. The Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents. The Library selects, acquires, and maintains resources in all formats to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community. These materials are made conveniently accessible within budgetary and space limits.

### **Digital Collections and Databases**

This policy covers digital materials and databases, as well as print materials in the Library's Collection. All Library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the General Statutes.

## **II. Objectives**

### **Preservation of the Library's Public Role**

The Library is an important place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents. The Collection is provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of residents.

### **Controversial Materials**

Some materials may be unpopular or controversial; their inclusion does not signify endorsement but affirms the Library's commitment to intellectual freedom and open access to information. The Library does not assume the role or function of parental authority. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to determine their children's access to Library resources.

### **Roles and Responsibilities for Selecting Library Materials**

Ultimate responsibility for the Library's Collection rests with the Library's Executive Director who operates in accordance with this policy and other relevant policies approved by the Library's Board of Trustees. Librarians oversee selection and maintenance processes for specific areas of the Collection, working collaboratively to help assure alignment with the Library's mission, objectives, and policies. The Executive Director and their librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop a Collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials. Decisions regarding acquisition, retention, replacement, and withdrawal shall be guided by professional expertise and recognized industry standards.

### III. Selection Criteria and Guidelines

In order to build and maintain its high quality collection, the Library has a procedure for a librarian to review library and educational materials within the Library using professionally accepted standards: material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age-appropriate or grade-level material, and continued demand of material. The Library applies selection criteria as detailed in the next paragraph of this section. Selection of materials is based on the professional knowledge and judgment of Library staff whose expertise includes familiarity with all types of materials, knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing Collection and awareness of the needs and interests of the community. Suggestions from patrons are always welcome and are given serious consideration. Staff will determine which will be acted upon. Library materials, displays, and programs shall only be excluded based on legitimate professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the Collection Development and Maintenance Policy, Display Policy, and Program Policy. Any librarian or staff member of a public library who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation. The inclusion of a given item in the Library's Collection does not constitute an endorsement of a particular viewpoint. No single criterion will determine inclusion or exclusion; selection decisions are made holistically, using professional judgment.

#### Professional Selection Criteria

##### Content Based Considerations:

- **Authority and Accuracy:** Authored by credible sources; factually reliable and consistent with established scholarship.
- **Relevance:** Addresses current community interests, educational goals, or research needs.
- **Timeliness and Significance:** Current, historically important, or culturally valuable.
- **Audience Appropriateness:** Suitable for the intended age group or developmental stage.
- **Format and Usability:** Practical, cost-effective, and accessible in presentation.
- **Diversity of Perspectives:** Reflects multiple cultures, backgrounds, and viewpoints.
- **Community Demand:** Supported by demonstrated use, interest, or patron requests.

##### Format and Accessibility Considerations:

- Appropriateness of format for the intended audience.
- Cost, durability, and ease of upkeep.
- Availability in alternative or accessible formats (e.g., large print, digital, multilingual editions).

## **Collection Maintenance**

To ensure the Collection remains relevant, balanced, and of high quality, materials are evaluated on an ongoing basis against accepted professional standards, including:

- Continued accuracy, authority, and relevance.
- Historical, cultural, or local significance.
- Appropriateness for age or grade level.
- Sustained circulation and use over time.

## **Deselection Criteria**

Materials may be removed when they:

- Are worn, damaged, or available only in an obsolete format.
- Contain outdated or inaccurate information.
- Show minimal circulation or declining community interest.
- Are superseded by newer, more comprehensive, or more accessible resources.
- Exist in excess of current demand.

In accordance with section 46a-64 of the Connecticut general statutes, no material shall be excluded, retained, or removed on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or the background or viewpoints of the creator.

## **IV. Intellectual Freedom and Censorships**

The Library upholds intellectual freedom, offering materials that reflect diverse — even controversial or unpopular — viewpoints. Consistent with state law, no book shall be removed, excluded, or censored solely because an individual finds it offensive or objects to its viewpoint.

The Library supports the following foundational documents:

- The Library Bill of Rights (ALA)
- The Freedom to View Statement (ALA)
- The Freedom to Read Statement (ALA)

## **V. Procedures for Questioning Materials in the Library's Collection**

The Library has a Material, Program and Display Review and Reconsideration Policy that limits requests to reconsider material, program, and display to individual residents of Westport. For details, see the Material, Program, and Display Review and Reconsideration Policy and the Library's Reconsideration Request Form. Both are also available on the Library's website. No materials from the Library's Collection will be canceled, altered, or removed during the review process unless there is a credible safety or legal concern. Requests and decisions are not treated as confidential patron records. Decisions resulting from a reconsideration request remain in effect for three years.

## **VI. Donations and Gifts**

The Library welcomes donations and gifts of materials, funds, or other resources that support its Collection goals. All donated items will be evaluated according to the same professional standards used for purchased materials, helping to assure alignment with principles of intellectual freedom, diversity of thought, and equitable access. The Library reserves the right to accept, decline, or dispose of donations in accordance with this policy.

## **VII. Staff Implementation and Legal Protection**

Pursuant to Connecticut Public Act 25-168, Sec. 322, 323, any librarian or staff member of the Library who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this Collection Development and Maintenance Policy is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

## **VIII. Public Availability**

In compliance with state legislation, this policy will be made publicly available on The Westport Library's website and will be included in the Library's official policy manual for public review upon request.

*Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on November 19, 2025*

*The Board of Trustees may revise this policy at any time and will review it at least once every five years.*