

## **Collection Development Policy Western Allegheny Community Library**

### **Overview**

The mission of Western Allegheny Community Library is to inspire, engage, and educate the community through high quality, fun, creative, and informative programming and services. Our collections support the educational, leisure reading and general reference needs of the community. We base our acquisition decisions on the utility of the materials to the everyday needs of our patrons and their availability elsewhere.

### **Community Description**

Western Allegheny Community Library serves the nearly 24,000 citizens of West Allegheny as well as residents throughout Allegheny County. West Allegheny is comprised of 3 municipalities: Findlay Township, North Fayette Township, and Oakdale Borough. Allegheny County encompasses 130 separate municipalities. The area is home to many universities and colleges, a large number of health care facilities, new and established high-tech industries and a broad range of other businesses and services. Their leisure reading tastes are as diverse as the types of information they need for work, school and personal interest.

### **Audience**

Western Allegheny Community Library's patron base includes individuals of all ages and abilities. Special materials for children and teens take into consideration developmental and educational needs, as well as demand for recreational reading and materials to promote literacy. The needs of seniors for materials in special formats and/or on particular topics are also addressed by the Library's collections. Materials for adults include items appropriate for business, leisure, home and personal use.

### **Diversity in Collection Development**

Recognizing that our service area incorporates individuals of all ages who represent an array of racial and ethnic backgrounds, economic and educational levels and physical and mental abilities, Western Allegheny Community Library builds collections that mirror and support this diversity. The collections include materials and resources that reflect a variety of political, economic, religious, social, racial and sexual issues and support intellectual freedom by providing free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.

### **Collection Collaboration**

The Allegheny County Library Association, of which Western Allegheny Community Library is a member, is the federated library system designated by Commonwealth Libraries of Pennsylvania. It exists to develop a county-wide plan of sharing resources and services among public libraries in Allegheny County and to encourage and promote cooperation among those libraries and to strengthen their resources. The eiNetwork, a collaboration of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County Library Association, is an organization that strives to ensure equal opportunity for residents to access information electronically and provides the

electronic infrastructure that enables the creation of a seamless educational environment to support lifelong learning.

## Parameters of the Collection

### **Content**

Western Allegheny Community Library selects materials for its collection for audiences of all ages in whatever format is most appropriate in accordance with professionally accepted guidelines. The Library does not sanction particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given item equivalent to an endorsement of the author's or publisher's viewpoint.

### **Nonfiction Criteria**

The Library obtains materials of both permanent and current interest in all subjects, based upon the merits of a work in relation to the needs, interests and demands of the community. While a single standard cannot be applied to each work, the following general criteria are to be considered, as appropriate, when selecting materials for purchase: authoritativeness of the writer and reputation of the publisher; availability of professional reviews; accuracy of information; impartiality of opinion, or clearly stated bias; timeliness of data; adequate breadth and depth of coverage; appropriateness and relevancy of subject to the Library's users; popular demand; historical value; availability of similar material amongst other area libraries in the county; organization and style appropriate to the material and to the Library's users; quality of illustrations; special features, such as bibliography and index; and/or value for price.

### **Fiction Criteria**

Works of contemporary fiction, classic works and novels of continuing value are included in the collection. Fiction is selected according to the following criteria as appropriate: popular demand; reputation of the author and publisher; availability of professional reviews; appropriateness to the Library's users; importance as a document of the times; relationship to the existing collection and to other titles and authors dealing with the same subject; interest and originality of plot and character development; style of writing; quality of illustration; literary merit; availability of similar material amongst other libraries in the county; the physical qualities of the book; cost; and whether a title is part of an existing series.

### **Periodicals**

Periodicals are publications issued and received on a regular basis in print or electronic format. They form an important part of the Library's collection. The periodicals collection is intended to complement the book collection. Periodicals are selected according to the following criteria: whether the periodical is included or excluded in standard indexing and abstracting resources; cost; requests by Library users; whether the periodical has local or regional interest; and whether a subject area needs to be expanded to help balance or enhance the collection, for example when new topics are introduced to a field of study. Periodicals are primarily in English.

General interest and popular periodicals that provide information of current interest and recreational reading are selected for neighborhood locations. Many of these titles are available for circulation.

The following factors must be considered in any retention decision: cost; usage rates; shelf space required or computer/device compatibility; availability of the title in another format such as microfilm or electronic media; and existing indexing in one of the Library's indexing services.

## **Reference**

Reference materials, whether in print or electronic formats, are those designed by the arrangement and treatment of their subject matter to be consulted for definite items of information rather than to be read consecutively. They can provide quick, concise and current information, or they may serve as an index to other materials in the collection. Since they are typically used by the public and Library staff to answer specific questions, print materials in the reference collection are designated for use within the Library.

In selecting for the reference collections, the primary criteria are users' information needs and the format in which that information is available. Electronic reference resources may be preferred over print publications. Decisions to purchase are based upon content, currency and ease of use. In addition to the general selection criteria mentioned above, the following must be considered in acquiring materials for the reference collections: favorable reviews or inclusion in basic reference collection guides; reputation of the author or publisher; currency of information; value for the price; and the expense of ongoing maintenance, especially in the case of serial publications that will require frequent updating.

To a very limited extent, items not falling strictly within the reference format but in high demand by Library users may be included in the reference collection to allow maximum use, for example, business plan, test preparation, resume resources, etc. Monographs are added to the reference collection only if they present an overview of a subject that is not available in a standard reference tool. Selected reference titles may be circulated at the discretion of the Library Director.

## **Electronic Resources**

Digital versions of nonfiction, fiction, periodical, reference, video, spoken audio, music and images are all offered through the Library. The content criteria outlined in each of those sections apply, as appropriate, to their electronic counterparts.

## **Video**

Through the Library, patrons have access to instructional, educational and entertainment videos. The following selection criteria are considered: favorable reviews in standard library reviewing sources; appropriateness of the subject to the collection; appropriateness to the interests and skills of the intended users; technical quality, i.e. clarity of picture and sound quality; authority and competency of the producer; artistic merit and reputation of the performers; the need for nonfiction and documentaries to present accurate and current information; artistic merit; customer interest; and cost.

## **Spoken Audio**

Recorded instructional, educational, fiction titles and performances that parallel most areas of the general collection are also made available to Library patrons. Due to demand, preference will be given to unabridged audio books, but abridgments may be purchased when the unabridged format is unavailable or it is otherwise appropriate. In addition to the general criteria for selection, the following criteria must be considered when selecting spoken audio: authority and competency of producer; artistic merit and reputation of the reader; technical quality, i.e. sound quality; and value for the price.

## **Music**

The Library strives to provide a collection of and about music in all formats that provides historical depth and contemporary coverage, represents a broad variety of musical genres and considers the demand and interests of our customers. The following criteria are considered when selecting music: authority and competency of producer/publisher; artistic merit; technical quality; and cost.

### **Library of Things**

The Library of Things is a collection of non-traditional library items that expands the collection beyond books and provides diverse opportunities for learning and engagement. Objects often include kitchen appliances, video games and consoles, tools, gardening equipment, electronics, toys and games, coding kits, craft supplies and recreational equipment. The following selection criteria are considered: favorable reviews in field specific reviewing sources, appropriateness to the interests and skills of the intended users; technical quality; authority and competency of the producer; patron interest; and cost.

### **Material Not Emphasized**

Due to finite resources and limited demand, Western Allegheny Community Library does not actively collect the following materials:

#### **Rare Books**

This collection will focus on material related to Western Pennsylvania and the historical development of the Library.

#### **Textbooks**

While textbooks are not routinely purchased, they are considered when they offer a broad overview of a particular subject not available elsewhere and/or when they are necessary to provide support for school curricula.

#### **Dissertations and Theses**

Western Allegheny Community Library does not collect these items.

#### **Obsolete Formats**

Formats that have been superseded by more commonly used technologies, such as VHS and Beta videotapes, audiocassettes, eight-track tapes, LP recordings, etc., are not actively collected.

### **Formats**

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate format for Library use. Much of the Library's collection is offered in the traditional print format; however, valuable information may be available in audio-visual and electronic formats. New formats are considered for the collection when industry reports, national survey results and local requests indicate that a significant portion of the community has the necessary technology to make use of the new format. The following factors must be taken into consideration when deciding whether to add a new format to the collection: availability of items in the format; cost per item; and the Library's ability to acquire, process and circulate the items in the specific format. Older formats are discontinued when customer needs and technological advances result in obsolescence.

## **Hardcover Books**

Books are purchased in hardcover editions when timeliness, value and/or durability are key factors.

## **Trade Paperbacks**

This format includes paperback books that are comparable in size to hardcover editions but which are typically lower in cost. They are preferred in those cases where the hardcover edition is extremely expensive and/or the title would be either used infrequently or would be removed from the collection in a few years.

## **Mass Market Paperbacks**

This format includes paperback books that are smaller in size than the typical hardcover or trade paperback book. Mass-market paperbacks are purchased for recreational reading and the collection both reflects and extends those titles purchased in hardcover.

## **Graphic Novels**

Graphic novels are print titles that include sequential art. Narratives, fiction or nonfiction, may be complete in one book or extend through a series of volumes. The Library collects in the graphic novel format for all audiences: children, teens and adults. Content criteria outlined above for fiction and nonfiction works are applied to graphic novels.

## **Large Print Books**

Books printed in 14-point or larger type serve a variety of purposes including making materials accessible to those with visual impairments, learning disabilities and other special needs. The Library attempts to provide a variety of titles in this format, including fiction, popular nonfiction and limited reference titles.

## **Serials**

Serials are publications issued in successive parts bearing numeric or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. This format includes periodicals, newspapers and annuals or continuations retained in the reference collections. They may include print and electronic.

## **Government Documents**

The Library may contain local government documents that are considered timely and relevant to residents of the community.

## **Video and Blu-Ray**

Entertainment, instructional and educational films are available for borrowing in either the DVD/Blu-Ray format or as downloadable content.

## **Audio**

Spoken audio is purchased in the compact disc format and downloadable audio are collected as well. Music is purchased in the compact disc format; streaming and downloadable music is also purchased.

## **Electronic Resources**

This format includes, but is not limited to, online databases, ebooks, digital audio (book and music) and digital video. Electronic access to materials offers storage, manipulation and access options that may be difficult or impossible in other formats. The following criteria may be used when considering electronic formats for the collection: ease of use, including enhanced searching capabilities; anticipated demand; training requirements; remote access capability; licensing fees and usage restrictions; device compatibility; availability of usage statistics; authentication options; and catalog integration.

## **Gifts**

Donated materials are subject to the same thoughtful review as purchased materials. Timeliness, usefulness, out-of print status and condition are among the criteria considered. The Library reserves the right to decide which items are added to the collection and to dispose of gifts as it deems appropriate. The Library also reserves the right to decline gifts.

## **Weeding and Replacement**

Weeding is an integral part of effective collection development. An active and continuous weeding program is essential in maintaining a viable and useful collection. Materials are withdrawn from the Library's collection through systematic deselection or because of loss or physical damage. The following categories of materials should be considered for weeding: worn or mutilated items; duplicate copies of seldom used titles; materials which contain outdated or inaccurate information; superseded editions of specific titles; and materials no longer of interest or in demand.

## **Materials Reconsideration**

In order to represent the diversity of thought within the community, it is very important that the public library's collection contain materials representing differing points of view. Western Allegheny Community Library does not endorse particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item convey or imply an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed by the author.

There may be occasions when a member of the community objects to a particular item in the Library's collection. If a Library user wishes the Library to reconsider material that is in the collection, a Materials Reconsideration Request form is available both online and at the circulation desk. A committee of professional librarians will be convened to review such requests and a written response will be sent to the patron.

## **Selection Process**

Professional librarians educated in the field of Information and Library Science oversee all aspects of collection development, including selection, maintenance and deselection. Selections are made using resources that include, but are not limited to the

following: ABPR, Booklist, Choice, Ingram Advance, Kirkus, Library Journal, New York Times Book Review, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal, Video Librarian and Book Page. Publishers' catalogs, subject bibliographies, suggestions from professional staff and customer requests are also considered.

Under the leadership of the Library Director, staff examines reviewing tools and popular culture resources on a regular basis and identifies items to be added to the department collections following prescribed procedures. Librarians are responsible for the overall management of the department materials budget and for assuring that the materials selected meet standards set forth in the collection development policy.

The Head of Library Services manages the selection of electronic materials. Electronic content is purchased in one of three ways: 1) selected for statewide access from Commonwealth Libraries as part of the Access Pennsylvania POWER library project; 2) available in all libraries throughout Allegheny County and selected by Library staff members or the Downloadables or Electronic Resources Evaluation Committees of the Allegheny County Library Association; or 3) selected by Library staff members and available only at Western Allegheny Community Library.

Materials for the Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians are selected by LAMP staff.

## Evaluation of Collections

The continuous review of Library materials is necessary as a means of maintaining an active Library collection of current interest to users. Statistical tools such as circulation reports, collection turnover rates and withdrawal reports, as well as other specialized collection analysis methods, provide useful data. The professional expertise of staff is also an important component in the ongoing evaluation of our collections.

## Review of Western Allegheny Community Library Collection Development and Management Policy

At a minimum, this policy will be evaluated every 3 years and updated as necessary.