

Hastings Public Library

Collection Management Policy

Objective

The Hastings Public Library is the community's primary resource for information and knowledge. The Library has a Collection Management Policy founded on the principles of intellectual freedom and equal access for all. This allows the Library to fulfill its purpose of "providing access to the information and resources essential for exploring the world, envisioning new possibilities, encouraging imagination, and embracing lifelong learning while fostering connections among individuals." The Library strives to provide a collection that balances viewpoints from across a spectrum of opinions and provides access to subject matter in formats that meet the needs of the community. The Library uses selection practices that are flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the community.

Scope

This policy applies to the Library's entire collection, encompassing all age groups and genres. The Hastings Public Library is primarily a popular materials library, maintaining a varied and up-to-date collection that provides a wide range of literary, cultural, educational, informational, and recreational materials. Collections are patron-focused and include popular and in-demand materials, as well as special formats, such as large-print books and other materials designed to assist those with reading challenges.

The Library does not collect textbooks, deep-research focused materials, or highly specialized scientific materials not useful to the layperson.

Intellectual Freedom and Open Access to Information

Hastings Public Library supports the American Library Association's (ALA) position that all individuals have a right to read, and strives to develop its collections in support of this position. The ALA states, in part, that:

- The freedom to read is essential to our democracy.
- Free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture.
- Every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read.
- The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them.

The entire Freedom to Read Statement can be viewed online at: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

Along with the freedom to read, Hastings Public Library believes that everyone needs open access to ideas and information, even when they differ from any one person's individually held beliefs. The Library will provide access to information from all points of

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view, including items which may reflect controversial, unorthodox, or even unpopular ideas. Materials are chosen for all age groups and are intended to be available to everyone, regardless of ethnicity, gender, language, education, age, or personal beliefs.

In support of open access to information, the Library subscribes to the ALA's Library Bill of Rights, which states, in part:

- Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

The entire Library Bill of Rights can be viewed online at: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>.

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights at: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>.

The Library will not limit access to specific items or collections based on age. Parents/guardians are responsible for determining what their children may read/listen to/watch, but should not infringe on other parents/guardians' rights to choose differently for their own children.

The Library, the Library Board, and Library staff will not censor or ban legally available materials that meet the selection criteria in this policy. The Library strives to present information on all sides of issues, where possible, so that patrons may create informed opinions for themselves. The selection of material for the Library does not indicate an endorsement of the ideas presented in the material or a judgment of its ultimate worth. Only the reader/user can determine if the material has value to them.

Collection Management

The primary goal of the Hastings Public Library is to provide an up-to-date, organized, and attractive collection, both print and non-print, that is balanced and represents all fields of knowledge and all sides of issues in a neutral, unbiased manner. The Library will provide items that are in current demand based on available financial resources.

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Selection

Selection refers to the decision to retain as well as to add to the collection. It is based upon awareness of the diverse needs and interests of the individuals who use the Library, balanced with evaluation of the material and knowledge of the collections' strengths and weaknesses. Selection decisions are also influenced by budget and space consideration and the availability and accessibility of alternative information resources.

Responsibilities

Ultimate responsibility for materials management decisions which shape the development of the collections rests with the Library Director, who functions within the policies established by the Board of Trustees. The Director is the final authority for materials selection, preservation, weeding, storage, budgeting resource allocation, and resource sharing.

The Director may delegate broad responsibility for collection development and oversight of the general collections to trained staff. Duties may include day-to-day selection activities such as perusal of reviews in professional library journals, withdrawal of materials, initiation of acquisitions, and monitoring of expenditures. The public is also encouraged to recommend titles. However final purchases and financial oversight is the responsibility of the Director.

The Youth Services Librarian will have responsibility for selecting and managing the children's and young adult collections, however final purchases and financial oversight is the responsibility of the Director.

Selection Criteria

Collection development staff use their training, knowledge and expertise along with the following general criteria to select materials for the collection:

- a. Relevance to interests and needs of the community
- b. Permanent value as a source material
- c. Vitality and originality of thought
- d. Contemporary significance
- e. Artistic excellence
- f. Entertainment presentation and value
- g. Accuracy and objectivity
- h. Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
- i. Relationship to other materials and existing areas of coverage in order to maintain a well-balanced collection
- j. Technical quality in selection of non-print materials
- k. Critics' reviews
- l. Significance of the author
- m. Importance as a document of the times
- n. Currency of information

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- o. Format, durability and ease of use
- p. Scarcity or availability of materials elsewhere
- q. Multiple copies of popular titles will be provided within the confines of the budget

Specific sub-categories or genres of material may vary based on the above criteria, but at a high level, the Library will collect and maintain collections as follows:

- **Fiction:** The Library maintains a representative collection of novels and works of fiction to satisfy a wide range of interests. Some materials represent “core” titles of classic literature, while others reflect popular in-demand titles that are often represented on various Best Sellers lists. What constitutes literary merit varies significantly from person to person, so the Library purchases fiction across many genres and categories.
- **Non-fiction:** The Library strives to provide materials across a wide assortment of topics to support both casual interest, practical usage, and educational needs. The Library cannot offer the depth of a larger public or academic institution, but it will cover popular and desired topics.
- **Youth (Under 18):** Materials are selected to facilitate the joy of reading, to promote early literacy, and to provide educational support. The collection includes materials covering a wide range of knowledge and reading levels in both fiction and non-fiction.
- **Media:** The Library will provide material across a range of currently popular and viable media formats. As new media formats are introduced, they will be evaluated for inclusion and use by patrons. Older media formats may be removed from the collection, as they fall into disuse or become unmanageable to maintain. See [Replacement and Maintenance](#).
- **Periodicals:** The Library will collect both physical and/or digital versions of popular periodicals, as available, and based on demand. Materials may include, but are not limited to, magazines, journals, and newspapers.
- **Digital/Electronic:** Digital materials selected by Hastings Public Library are selected using the same criteria as print/physical materials. As new technologies and/or delivery methods become available, they will be evaluated for inclusion in the collection. Please note that many digital items collected on web-based platforms (e.g. Libby) are selected at the consortium level, and therefore final decisions on what is collected on those platforms may be outside of the control of Hastings Public Library.
- **Databases:** The Library will provide access to online information databases as demand, cost, and availability allow. These databases are intended to

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supplement the Library's in-house resources, and availability is subject to change. Please note that some databases (e.g. MeLCat eResources) are selected at the consortium level, and therefore final decisions on what is collected may be outside of the control of Hastings Public Library.

- **Objects:** The Library collects and makes available unique physical objects that patrons may not typically have access to. These are often high-priced items and/or items patrons do not need on a continual basis. Adding objects to the collection provides access to tools, resources, or technology that are intended to be helpful or enriching in some way.

Notes on Series

Whenever possible, the Library will purchase all related editions of any given book, movie, television show, or other "series" of materials. This is intended to minimize the occurrence of "orphaned" items that prevent patrons from reading, viewing, or otherwise consuming the entire series. Purchases will still primarily depend on availability, cost, and demand. Series may also be purchased across multiple material types, such as some book copies in regular print and some in large print editions.

Note that due to high costs and potential availability challenges, the digital collection may not contain a complete series.

Notes on Authors

The Library will purchase new titles by authors already contained in the collection based on availability, cost, and demand, as well as other selection criteria where appropriate. Resources are ultimately limited, so every title by a given author cannot be guaranteed to be purchased.

The Library will consistently look to present new authors to patrons to provide fresh perspectives and new voices.

Selection Process

In most cases, the Library will not purchase self-published materials and/or materials that have not been reviewed in appropriate industry publications. Exceptions may be made for items of local interest, whether current or historical.

All materials selected must:

1. Meet the criteria defined above.
2. Be manageable by Library staff without creating undue burdens.
3. Have reviews available from qualified industry personnel and publications, except as noted above.

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Reviews for print and digital materials should be available in, but not limited to, respected sources like Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal/School Library Journal, New York Times Book Review, Publishers Weekly, BookPage, etc. User reviews on popular retail websites, such as Amazon, or library-adjacent websites like LibraryThing, may be considered, but should not be the sole resource justification for purchase.

Object purchases may be informed by reviews in industry periodicals, such as Popular Mechanics or Consumer Reports, reputable online sources, trade journals, or local expert opinions.

Database purchases may be part of a larger group purchase with other libraries or made specifically by Hastings Public Library. These will still be evaluated, among other criteria, for the accuracy and timeliness of information, ease of use, demand, and cost.

Patrons may also request specific materials be purchased by formal and informal methods, as made available by the Library. This might include, but not be limited to, email, suggestion box notes, phone calls, website requests, and any other viable means the Library offers. Requests are not guaranteed to be purchased and must still follow the normal selection process. If purchased, the requesting patron can request to be the first to have access to the material once it is processed.

Materials created, either partially or completely, with or by Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) may be added to the collection if they meet the selection criteria listed above. These materials will not be rejected based solely on the work being created with or by Generative AI. However, materials created with or by Generative AI that are added to the collection will be given increased scrutiny regarding the quality and accuracy of the work, given the known limitations of Generative AI technology.

Access

The Library is committed to unrestricted access to the collection and on-line resources. The Library adheres to Michigan State law concerning Internet access to minors (MCL 397.606) which states that the library must use one of two ways to restrict access and prevent minors from “viewing obscene matter or sexually explicit matter that is harmful to minors.” The Library meets this requirement by appropriately filtering computers available to minors and by making all public computers available with age restrictions. Children’s Area computers may be used by those ages 12 and under. Teen Room computers may be used by those aged 13-17 and adult computers may be used by those 18 and older.

Processing and shelving of materials shall in no way reflect a value judgment of the materials.

- There will be no labeling of any item to indicate its point-of-view. Labels will be used to identify special collections such as holiday and award books, or to identify a primary genre to aid browsing, such as “mystery” or “western.”
- All materials will be shelved on open shelves, freely accessible to the public.

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- Patrons are free to accept or reject for themselves any item in the collection.
- Children are not limited to the juvenile collection or young adult collections. Responsibility for a child's reading must rest with the parent or guardian.

The Hastings Public Library will maintain stand-alone access computers to the online catalog of HPL materials in locations convenient to the fiction and non-fiction collections.

To provide easy access into collection accessibility Hastings Public Library provides a link to the online catalog of materials on its website, <https://hastings.bibliocommons.com/>. Interlibrary loan holds are placed through the library's catalog or MeLCat at <https://mel.org>.

Format

The Library acquires materials in a variety of formats including hardcovers, paperbacks, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, microforms, CDs, DVDs, downloadable resources, electronic databases and non-traditional collections. In certain circumstances the same work may be acquired in more than one format, i.e. book and graphic novel. Local newspapers will be collected and preserved in various formats for historic and genealogical research.

Requests

All requests for specific titles or subjects will be considered.

Whenever there is enough demand or interest in a title or subject, an item with unfavorable reviews may be purchased unless it is deemed to be without literary or social value or is already adequately covered by better materials.

Specialized materials of limited community interest will not ordinarily be purchased or added, and the requestor will be referred to interlibrary loan sources. Supplementary materials for students and information for specialists are provided in a limited number of fields.

Replacement and Maintenance

The Library continuously evaluates the collection to keep it vital and up-to-date. When materials no longer fit the collection, they are withdrawn, or "weeded."

The following criteria are used in selecting materials for withdrawal:

- Damage or poor condition
- No longer relevant to the needs and interest of the community
- Infrequent use and lack of demand
- No longer accurate
- Unnecessary duplication
- Availability elsewhere, including other libraries and online

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Materials weeded due to damage/condition issues, or if they are lost or otherwise missing, may not be replaced. Examining their historical use, current demand, replacement cost, availability through inter-library loan, and other selection criteria may result in a decision not to replace an item.

Exceptions to the weeding guidelines may include items of historical interest, items within a series if the remaining items are being retained, award-winning titles, and materials considered core to the Library's collection, such as classic literature. Other exceptions can be made at the Director's discretion.

Digital collections may be managed by personnel external to the Library. They may therefore be subject to different weeding guidelines and timelines outside the Library's control. Any digital material purchased and owned by the Library, however, is subject to weeding following the same guidelines as physical materials.

Disposal of Materials Guidelines

Items removed from the collection, as well as refused donations that donors do not want returned, will be disposed of in the most appropriate manner. Disposal methods can include, but are not limited to: transfer to the Friends of the Library, donation to charity/Goodwill, donating to schools or social support organizations, selling the item as the law allows, or recycling/trashing based on the item's condition.

Materials Not in Collections

The library has access to interlibrary loan through the Lakeland Library Cooperative's catalog and the statewide MeLCat catalog. Requests for materials may be placed electronically directly by patrons in each of these catalogs. Assistance in placing requests is available from library staff.

Gifts and Donations of Materials

The Hastings Public Library accepts gifts for its collection that fall within needed subject categories as determined by the Director/their designee, and the Youth Services Librarian. For an item to be added, it must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials.

See the Gift Acceptance policy for full details on accepting donations for the collection.

Request for Reconsideration

All requests for reconsideration of materials are subject to the guidelines and procedures as outlined in the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Policy.