

Bucks County Free Library

**Collection Management Policy**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

An effective collection management plan begins with a strategic plan that states the vision and purpose of the library system and defines service priorities to guide staff in what actions to take. The library is a single entity consisting of many services that should be integrated and work together to provide outstanding service to county residents. The library collection is at the core of these services and is integral to making Bucks County Free Library (BCFL) a vibrant, innovative part of the community.

Selections will promote the library’s vision of using programs and materials to stimulate the imagination, explore creativity, promote social interaction and provide pleasurable reading, listening, and viewing experiences for all library users.

**REGULATIONS**

Collection Responsibilities

The Board of Library Trustees delegates to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) the responsibility for selection and purchase of all materials for the library. The CEO delegates the development and maintenance of the collection to the Collection Management Director and Collection Management Department (CMD) staff.

Securing funds for materials is included in the library’s annual budget process. Funds for materials come from the County, the State, and self-generated revenue. The CEO is responsible for overseeing the purchase and processing of materials for seven BCFL branches.

The Collection Management Director is responsible for preparing a detailed collection spending plan for administrative review. CMD provides collection continuity through systemwide planning and budgeting for selecting, acquiring and managing library materials.

All staff members contribute to the development of a collection driven by customer needs and expectations by:

- Anticipating customer needs
- Engaging in open communication with customers and other staff
- Interacting with understanding, respect, and responsiveness to all
- Handling all requests equitably
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to needs
- Understanding and responding to changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Balancing individual and community needs
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement

The community has a role in shaping library collections by participating in the collection development process through suggestions and feedback.

As a designated Pennsylvania district center library, BCFL hosts electronic resources that are available to all residents of the County.

### Scope of the Collection

The collection offers materials in various formats, languages, and levels of difficulty. “Materials” includes print, audiovisual and electronic formats. “Collection” is defined as materials that are selected for BCFL; those materials may be physically owned by the library or may be accessed via the internet. “Selection” refers to the decision to add a given item to the collection and make it accessible either in a physical location or via the internet. Not all materials and information accessed over the internet are part of the collection.

BCFL selects, organizes and makes available a collection of user-focused materials to meet the wide variety of needs and interests of residents of all ages. Collections are current and popular, and titles and quantities are selected to reflect the characteristics of the community and provide general coverage of subjects. Online resources will satisfy general information inquiries and branches will also have small reference (non-circulating) collections. The collection is reviewed on an ongoing basis and materials are withdrawn from the collection to maintain its usefulness, currency, and relevance.

BCFL recognizes and respects intellectual property rights and conforms to legislative mandates regarding copyright protection.

## Collection Development and Management Criteria

Materials selectors use their knowledge, education, training, expertise, and the following criteria when making collection building decisions. A selection need not meet all criteria:

- Popular interest/projected demand
- Demonstrated potential for use as evidenced by collection statistics
- Currency of information
- Accuracy
- Reputation of author, publisher, producer, or illustrator
- Suitability for the intended audience
- Creative, literary, or technical quality
- Listing in professionally recognized selection tools
- Critical assessments in trusted review journals
- Format and ease of use
- Cost and availability
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Space required to house the material
- Local emphasis
- Accessibility to multiple users
- Enhancement of the print equivalent (if any) in terms of speed, flexibility, cost, ability to combine search terms, or continued access to retrospective information

Gifts, donations, and self-published/self-produced materials may be considered using the same selection criteria listed above.

Materials are purchased through a variety of local, regional, and international vendors. Vendors will be evaluated regularly using a competitive bidding process. Criteria for the selection of vendors include:

- Discount
- Speed of delivery
- Reliability
- Stock availability
- Availability and quality of value-added services including processing and cataloging

## Access

The library provides access to the collection in library buildings throughout the county, open seven days a week, and through a public website which is always available.

Access to materials is ensured by the way materials are organized, managed, and displayed, through staff interaction, and through the delivery of materials housed at other branches.

BCFL organizes its collection through a standards-based cataloging and classification system. Staff members are available to assist customers in the selection and location of materials of interest. Materials which are not on the shelf can be placed on hold. The library participates in interlibrary loan networks to assist customers in obtaining materials not in the collection. Some of those items will be considered for immediate purchase.

## Intellectual Freedom

The public library is an instrument of democracy, encouraging an informed citizenry by providing an impartial environment and offering free access to ideas. BCFL supports the rights of individuals to secure information, even when the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. BCFL upholds the principles in the American Library Association's "[Library Bill of Rights](#)," "[Freedom to Read](#)," and "[Freedom to View](#)" statements.

BCFL seeks to meet the needs of all the residents of the county and recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may offend someone. The inclusion of an item in the library collection in no way represents an endorsement of its contents. Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval or the contents, nor are materials sequestered. Only individuals can determine what is most appropriate for their needs and can define what material is consistent with their personal or family values. Library users may not restrict the freedom of others to read, view, or hear what they desire. The responsibility for children's use of library materials rests with their parents or legal guardians.

Individuals wishing to question materials in the collection or those excluded from it should first have a conversation with a librarian at their local library. If the concern cannot be addressed to the customer's satisfaction, he or she may submit an opinion in writing to the Collection Management Department (CMD) via the Request for Reconsideration form (available at any branch of the BCFL and on the [library's website](#)). The Collection Management Department will coordinate the review process and respond to the customer in writing regarding the outcome of the material's review. That decision may be appealed in writing to the Bucks County Free Library Board of Directors in care of the Chief Executive Officer. The Board will consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting, to which both the customer and representatives from CMD or their designees will be invited.

The decision of the Board will be final. Material under question will remain in the active collection during the review process.

Review and Revision

This collection management policy will be reviewed and updated when a new strategic plan is adopted.

Approved by the BCFL Board of Directors on May 16, 2018