

## **Stratford Library Association Collection Development and Maintenance Policy**

- I. Stratford Library Association Mission Statement
- II. Purpose & Scope
- III. Definition of a Collection
- IV. Selection Criteria
- V. Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials
- VI. Selection Tools
- VII. Gifts and Donations
- VIII. Controversial Materials
- IX. Intellectual Freedom and Censorship
- X. Request for Review and Reconsideration
- XI. Collection Maintenance
- XII. Appendices
  - a. American Library Association Bill of Rights
  - b. American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement
  - c. American Library Association Freedom to View Statement
  - d. *Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs and Materials Policy*

### **I. Stratford Library Association Mission Statement**

The mission of the Stratford Library is to empower and enrich our diverse community by providing access to innovative services, information and ideas.

### **II. Purpose & Scope**

This Collection Development and Maintenance Policy is intended to provide guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials. It outlines the philosophies which create and shape the Library's unique collection, the practices that maintain it over time and the guidelines used by library professionals to ensure that the collection is responsive to community needs. This Policy 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. Materials are provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, and provide access to content that is relevant to research, independent interests and the educational needs of residents. The Library makes every reasonable effort to provide the community with a physical and digital collection that reflects a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests. Acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the CT General Statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

In addition to its physical collections, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases and digital materials, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has

over its in-house print materials and curated digital collections. The Library will make every reasonable effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public has access to electronic information.

The Library strives to fulfill this Collection Development and Maintenance Policy by selecting and maintaining a quality collection which meets the needs and interests of the Stratford community.

This is accomplished by:

- A thorough and ongoing review of all parts of the collection for relevance, demand, timeliness, and physical condition
- Curation of a culturally diverse collection
- Evaluation of new and existing formats
- Effective publicity of available collections through the use of traditional and online outlets
- Periodic surveys to determine patron satisfaction with the collection
- Efficient use of space to accommodate changing collections

### **III. Definition of Collection**

The Library's collection is the assemblage of books and other material, in a variety of formats (print, electronic media, downloadable audiobooks, digital materials, etc.), owned or licensed and maintained by the Library and made available to the public at no cost.

### **IV. Selection Criteria**

The Stratford Library seeks to facilitate learning, recreational and research pursuits by furnishing materials of requisite and appropriate quality. In exercising its discretion to further this mission, the Stratford Library selects material based on the following criteria:

- Present and potential significance, relevance and appeal to diverse community needs and interests.
- Positive reviews in accredited journals and sources, as set forth in Section VI, below.
- Merit, awards and critical acclaim
- Cost and availability of funds.
- Public demand, interest or need.
- Contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent/historical value.
- Diversity of viewpoints within a subject area and/or the Library as a whole
- Inclusion of works produced by individuals representing their own cultural and social groups.
- Suitability of format for library use.
- Consideration of subject, quality, content, style and reading level for the intended audience
- The extent that the topic is already represented in the Library's collection/materials
- Reputation, critical acclaim, authority, qualifications and/or significance of author, artist, publisher, or producer
- Accessibility through interlibrary loan or online resources
- Historical importance or impact as a document of the times for the Stratford community.
- Consideration of the works by a local author, illustrator or performer.
- Availability of appropriate physical space to house the item.
- Those relevant factors set forth in Section IX below.

- Independently published, self-published, and vanity publishing materials are eligible for inclusion in the Library's collection, subject to these Selection Criteria.

**V. Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials:**

The Stratford Library selects material in accordance with guidelines stated by the American Library Association in the *Library Bill of Rights*, *The Freedom to Read and Freedom to View* statements, along the criteria set forth in Section IV, above. Authority and responsibility for selection of items is delegated by the Stratford Library Board of Trustees to the Executive Director and the Executive Director's designated staff, in their sole discretion. Department Heads and the librarians under their supervision are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials and are responsible for selecting and maintaining materials of all types and in all formats within their respective collections. This includes books, audio/visual materials, periodicals, software and online resources.

**VI. Selection Tools:**

The selection tools used by librarians include:

- Professional library journals
- Trade journals
- National magazines & newspapers
- Reputable local publications
- Reputable broadcast and online sources
- Subject bibliographies
- Publishers' events, trade shows and promotional materials

As we welcome suggestions from our patrons (subject to the Library's discretion under Section IV, above), a *Request for Purchase* procedure is in place to enable Library users to suggest that a particular item be purchased by the Library. All requests are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. It is the Library's intent that requests for purchase be used to help in the development of a collection which serves the diverse interests and needs of the community. Requests may be made in person or online at <http://stratfordlibrary.org/borrowing/request-for-purchase/>

**VII. Gifts and Donations**

The Stratford Library welcomes the opportunity to review with potential donors the possibility of contributing materials to the collection. Gifts are added to the Library collection only as such gifts are useful and conform to the Library's needs, goals, programs, and the foregoing Collection Development and Maintenance Policy, including but not limited to the Guidelines set forth in Section IV, above. The Library reserves the right to refuse items, designate items for sale, or give them away.

With few exceptions, the Library does not accept the following types of gift materials:

- Textbooks
- Popular Magazines & Journals
- Material in poor condition
- Material that has been stored in damp conditions
- Superseded formats (i.e., VHS tapes, cassettes, floppy disks, etc.)

- Material that is in violation of copyright law
- Independently published, self-published, and vanity publishing materials are eligible for inclusion in the Library's collection, subject to the criteria and factors as outlined in Section IV.

#### **VIII. Controversial Materials:**

The Library recognizes that some materials may not be considered appropriate by all patrons. Selections will not be made based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to developing a collection which serves the needs and interests of the community.

The Library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Materials may be reassigned among these sub-collections based on the age appropriateness of the content. However, responsibility for the selection, reading, listening and viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians.

Selection of material for adults will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. Library materials will not be marked by Library staff to indicate controversial contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not be considered sufficient reason alone for the Library to withdraw it from the collection.

#### **IX. Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

The Library recognizes that not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Therefore, some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial and even distasteful to some Library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any Library user or users to deny access to Library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a broad range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged. When evaluating library materials, *the Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read* and *Freedom to View* statements from the American Library Association are used as guiding documents.

#### **X. Request for Review and Reconsideration:**

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from the public about library materials. Concerns or questions should first be addressed to the Department Head responsible for the service area offering the library material. If this does not resolve the issue, see the Library's *Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs and Materials* policy for more information.

Only *Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs and Materials* from current Stratford (Connecticut) residents will be subject to the process for response (Organization and Teacher Cardholder requests will not be considered). Any resource which is subject to reconsideration by the Stratford Library Board will not be eligible for further reconsideration for a period of 36 months.

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

**XI. Collection Maintenance:**

Active and continuous maintenance is essential to providing a current and useful collection. The deselection of materials from the collection is necessary for effective collection maintenance. It is the responsibility of a librarian to review library and educational material within a public library using professionally accepted standards: material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age appropriate or grade-level material, continued demand of material. Deselection or removal of items from the Stratford Library collection is based on the following criteria:

- Poor physical condition
- Contains outdated or inaccurate/incomplete information
- Low or no use/circulation
- No recent circulation
- Multiple copies no longer needed
- Strength of comparative holdings within a subject area, including information that is no longer the consensus of the field
- Earlier or outdated editions or format; availability of updated/newer/more comprehensive editions
- Stable electronic equivalent

While the Library attempts to maintain a collection of standard and important works, it does not automatically replace all withdrawn items. Replacement will be determined by the appropriate Department Head, designated staff members, or the Executive Director who will take the following factors into consideration:

- Historical value of the item
- Availability of a replacement copy
- Patron need or demand to replace the item
- The availability of another item which might better serve the same purpose
  - Availability of updated or revised materials
  - Availability of the item (or comparable item) from another lending source

**XII. Appendices**

In the interest of protecting the individual's right to have access to programs, and implementing this Policy, the Library in its discretion may utilize and rely upon the following documents/resources:

**a. American Library Association Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. 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.

- II. 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.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

*Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019; Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.*

#### **b. The American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement**

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.
2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

*This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.*

*Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.*

**c. American Library Association Freedom to View Statement**

The freedom to view, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

*This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989. Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council*

**d. Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials**

**I. Stratford Library Association Mission Statement**

The mission of the Stratford Library is to empower and enrich our diverse community by providing access to innovative services, information and ideas.

**II. Purpose**

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from the public about displays, programs and materials. This policy outlines the process for submitting a Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs and Materials and the process for evaluation by the staff, Executive Director and Board of Trustees. All library materials (including programs and displays) are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. The Library is prohibited by state statutes from removing, excluding or censoring any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive. A Stratford, Connecticut resident who wishes to formally request that a specific item, program or display be reconsidered must complete and submit a *Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs and Materials Form*.

In accordance with Public Act 25-168 Sec. 322, 323 the Stratford Library Association abides by the following statutory requirements:

- No library material, display or program shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program or because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program.
- Library materials, displays and programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and maintenance policy or the display and program policy.
- The materials review and reconsideration process for library cardholders/town residents to challenge any library material, display or program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics.
- The individual completing a reconsideration form must include specific information about which portion or portions of such material they object to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection. The Request for Review and Reconsideration form must include the individual's full legal name, address and telephone number.
- Reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes.
- Any library material being challenged will remain available in the library according to its catalog record and be available for a resident to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made by the Executive Director.
- Any employee of the Stratford Library Association who, in good faith implements the policies described herein 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.



### III. Process

The Executive Director, along with appropriate staff, will review the Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs or Materials form and evaluate the request using the standards set forth in the Display Policy, Program Policy or Collection Development & Maintenance Policy. The Executive Director will provide a written response no later than 60 (sixty) days from the date of receiving such request.

Appeal of the Executive Director's decision: This policy permits the individual who submitted the Request for Reconsideration form to appeal, in writing, the Executive Director's decision to the Library Board of Trustees or other governing body for the Library. The final authority regarding the removal or retention of library materials ultimately resides with the Library Board of Trustees.

The Library Board, after evaluating the challenged material under the Collection Development & Maintenance Policy, Display Policy, or Program Policy shall:

- a) consult with (i) the Executive Director, (ii) the State Librarian, or the State Librarian's designee, (iii) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined in section 11-9e of the general statutes, (iv) the president of the Connecticut Library Association, or the president's designee, and (v) the president of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards, or the president's designee,
- b) deliberate on such request for review and reconsideration,
- c) provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration or refusal to reconsider the library material, and
- d) provide any final decision that is contrary to the decision of the Executive Director.

In the event that a single resource, program or display is challenged multiple times, the Executive Director is permitted to consolidate any requests for reconsideration of the same challenged library material (including programs and displays). A resource that has previously been reconsidered by request shall be exempt from additional requests for reconsideration for 36 months following a Library Board of Trustees decision to retain. The Executive Director shall summarize the previous decision in response to any new request for review and reconsideration during that 36 month time period.

Concerns or questions should first be addressed to the Library Department Head responsible. If not satisfied, the patron may utilize the Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials process. Formal requests are welcome from current Stratford (Connecticut) residents only (Organization and Teacher Cardholder requests will not be considered).

The process for a formal Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials is as follows:

1. The patron will meet with the Department Head responsible for the service area hosting the display, program or material. Based on the area of concern, the Department Head will provide the patron with the Library's Display Policy or Program Policy or Collection Development Policy. The patron will be asked to read the policy prior to submitting a *Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials* form.
2. The patron will then be given a *Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials* form to complete, detailing their objections. This form can be obtained from any service

desk in the Library. A completed, hard copy of the *Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials* form is then to be submitted to the Executive Director, Stratford Library, 2203 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06615.

3. The Executive Director, or their designee, with a committee of at least three Stratford Library staff members, at least one who holds an MLS/MLIS Degree, will evaluate the submitted *Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials* form and determine the alignment of the objection with the Library's policies.
4. Within 60 (sixty) business days of receipt of the *Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials* form, the Executive Director, or their designee, will respond to the concern by sending a letter or email, outlining the results of the evaluation, to the patron.
5. If the patron is not satisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted to the Library Board of Trustees within 15 (fifteen) business days of the issuance of the Executive Director's decision. Appeal of the Executive Director's decision: This policy permits the individual who submitted the Request for Reconsideration form to appeal, in writing, the Executive Director's decision to the Library Board of Trustees or other governing body for the Library. The final authority regarding the removal or retention of library materials ultimately resides with the Library Board of Trustees.
6. If the Board of Trustees plans to address the appeal at their Board Meeting, the individual will be notified of when and where the meeting will be held.
7. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments at this meeting (and the length of the portion of the meeting dedicated to the appeal); the Board will not restrict the viewpoints presented but will require that all speakers offering testimony/comment on the appeal observe appropriate decorum at the meeting and restrict their comments to the appeal.
8. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final and will not be subject to any further appeal or Request for Review and Reconsideration for 36 months. In the event that a single resource, program or display is challenged multiple times, the Executive Director is permitted to consolidate any requests for reconsideration of the same challenged library material (including programs and displays). A resource that has previously been reconsidered by request shall be exempt from additional requests for reconsideration for 36 months following a Library Board of Trustees decision to retain. The Executive Director shall summarize the previous decision in response to any new request for review and reconsideration during that 36 month time period.

*Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials Policy*

*Approved by the Board of the Stratford Library Association 11/20/2025*

**Stratford Library Association**

**Request for Review and Reconsideration of Library Displays, Programs & Materials**

*Please include your full name, address, and telephone number on this form or it will not be accepted. Only requests from current Stratford (Connecticut) residents will be considered (Organization & Teacher Cardholder requests will not be considered).*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Library Card#: 24003 \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent yourself? Y or N

Do you represent an Organization? Y or N

Provide the name of the Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

|                |                       |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| _____ Book     | _____ Music           |
| _____ Display  | _____ Newspaper       |
| _____ Movie    | _____ Artwork         |
| _____ Magazine | _____ Library Program |
| _____ Other    | _____                 |

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Artist/Producer/Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

**For the following questions, answer in the space provided or on additional pages as needed. Please be specific.**

1. Specify which portion or portions of the material is objected to and explain the reason for your objection (Use additional pages, if necessary.).
2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you read or viewed the material in its entirety? Y or N.  
If the answer is "no", what, if any part(s) did you read or view?
4. Explain your concerns about this material. Please be specific.
5. For what age group should this material be recommended?  
\_\_\_\_Adults \_\_\_\_Teens \_\_\_\_Children \_\_\_\_All Ages
6. Did you share your concerns with Stratford Library staff? What was their response?
7. What, in your opinion, were the positive aspects of this resource?
8. Are there resources you can suggest which provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?
9. Explain how your recommended resource(s) would comply with the Library's Display Policy, Program Policy or Collection Development and Maintenance Policy.
10. Why do you feel your opinion about this resource should prevent other members of the Stratford, Connecticut community, who may not share your concerns, from accessing this resource?
11. What would you like the Stratford Library Association to do about this resource?

*Reconsideration requests are not confidential patron records under section 11-25 of the CT General Statutes. Please return this completed form to the Executive Director of the Stratford Library Association, 2203 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06615.*

*Collection Development and Maintenance Policy Approved by the Board of the Stratford Library Association 11/20/2025*