

Amherst County Public Library Collection Development Policy

General Objectives

The Amherst County Public Library provides materials in many formats to meet the scope of its objectives:

To meet the information needs of the Amherst County community.

To support individuals in the process of lifelong learning by supplementing formal instruction and by encouraging informal learning.

To support awareness, understanding, and participation in the affairs of the local community, the state, the country, and the world by providing a range of opinion on issues of current interest.

To support the individual's career development and job-related skills.

To add to the individual's enjoyment of life through recreational reading, viewing, and listening.

To support the educational, civic, and cultural activities of local groups and organizations.

Within the limitations of budget and space, Amherst County Public Library provides well-rounded collections of materials that meet the educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the community, based on community interests and circulation patterns. The collection includes books, periodicals and newspapers, audiovisual formats, and computer-based formats. Library materials cover a wide range of subjects on both adult and youth levels. The Library provides materials for individual patron use, whether in the Library or through borrowing privileges established through the Library's Circulation Policy.

In support of these collection goals, The Amherst County Public Library endorses the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its Libraries: an American Value statement. [See Appendix]

Selection Responsibility

The ultimate authority for library materials selection rests with the locality that established the library, usually as delegated to a Library Board. (VA Code 42.1-33: Power of local government to establish and support libraries; VA Code 42.1-35: Library boards generally.) The Amherst County Public Library Board of Trustees assigns the responsibility for material selection to the Library Director. (Code of the County of Amherst, Virginia 6-7: Duties of library director). Although the Library Director therefore has primary responsibility to the Board of Trustees for the selection of Library materials and maintenance of the general collection, other designated staff members share in collection development responsibilities as assigned by the Library Director.

The Library encourages patron input in the selection process through Library Materials Adoption, Memorial/Commemorative Gifts, and Library Resource Requests.

Library Materials Adoption

Patrons may adopt new library materials by paying for the item, thereby helping to extend the library materials budget. The donor then receives the privileges of first usage and, if desired, a bookplate acknowledging the donation. Library staff can provide suggestions of specific materials for the patron to adopt. Patrons may also recommend specific materials for addition to the collection. Orders will be placed for such titles if they meet the selection criteria of the Library.

Memorial/Commemorative Books

Patrons may donate funds for the purchase of library materials as memorials or commemorations, acknowledged with a bookplate noting the name of the honoree and the name of the donor. The donor may suggest appropriate subjects. Library staff may either select an appropriate title from current unprocessed acquisitions or may order an appropriate title. Effort is made to select items that are likely to have continuing or long-term value and interest to the community and to avoid titles that are likely to have a limited duration of interest.

The donor and the honoree or the family of the honoree are contacted to review and check out the item if they wish before it is released for general circulation. Commemorative donations presented by clubs or organizations may be released to the president or other representative for presentation or display at a meeting prior to release for general circulation.

In the event that a memorial/commemorative item is lost, missing, or significantly damaged within five years of acquisition, exact replacement will be attempted. If exact replacement cannot be obtained, another title on the same topic or in the same genre will be substituted. A bookplate noting donor and honoree will be placed in the replacement/substitute copy.

Memorial/commemorative donations, being gifts, are given without restriction upon use. Although every effort will be made to retain memorial/commemorative items in the collection for as long as possible, they will ultimately be subject to the same weeding principles as other library materials.

Library Resource Requests

Patrons may request titles that are not yet available in the library collection or recommend titles for addition to the collection by filling out a Library Resource Request form (see Appendix). Library staff will verify the bibliographic data and make the decision whether to purchase or to provide through Interlibrary Loan, if the item is available through either of these means. If the item is acquired for the library collection, the request is processed as a HOLD.

Selection Criteria

Materials selection is guided by considerations of authority and accuracy, objectivity of presentation, literary merit, and anticipation of demand, including both permanent and timely interest to the community. Selection is also made with consideration of library resources in the local area and the state, on the assumption that interlibrary loan may adequately supply the need for more specialized and academic materials.

Individual library materials are judged in terms of both the credibility of the author and the credibility of the item.

Credibility of the author may be judged by:

- The author's authority or status as an expert: The author's background, experience, and education are considered.

- The impartiality or bias of the author: The author's statement in the preface or introduction of the item may clearly declare a specific point of view or purpose. The text may contain strong opinion, emotion, or prejudice. The author may profit in some way by persuading others to one particular point of view.
- The publication record of the author: If the author has published other materials, comparison of the past publications to other works on the subject may be considered.

Credibility of the item may be judged by:

- Balance in the presentation of issues: Opposing or alternative views may be ignored entirely, treated superficially, or discussed with due consideration even if rejected by the logical argument of the work.
- Level of presentation: The item may be a new contribution to knowledge, a summary or explanation of the current state of knowledge or thought on the subject, or a simplification of the current knowledge. The book may be academic or intended to interest the general reader. It may be on an adult or a juvenile level.
- Logical support and documentation: The text of nonfiction materials may be supported with notes, index and bibliography.
- Impact on the literature of the subject: The item may have been cited by others who publish on the subject or included in standard bibliographies.

Generally, textbooks are not added to the collection unless they represent the best or only coverage of a topic. Self-study materials may be added, but workbook type materials based on filling in written answers will usually be avoided, since they are specifically intended for individual use.

Selection Aids

Consideration of materials for selection is based on reviews in library and other publications; listing in bibliographies, indexes, and catalogs; publisher's catalogs and flyers; patron requests; and Library staff observation of actual circulation and other use patterns. The final decision to add materials to the collection is based on the value of the item to the collection and not on the personal tastes of the selectors.

Specific Collection Considerations

Youth Collections and Family Literacy

The youth collection emphasizes books, periodicals, AV materials, and computer-based materials that stimulate imagination, mental growth, and the development of appreciation of reading. Materials selected for consideration are based on anticipated and demonstrated demand for the author, illustrator, or subject matter as well as appropriateness for the age and grade level.

Board books are books for the youngest pre-reading library users, who are in the 0 to 2 age range.. These are manipulative trainer books which have heavy cardboard pages more easily handled by small fingers with less developed fine motor skills and which better stand up to use by these youngest library patrons.

The **JE** collection consists of books for pre-readers, beginning readers, and developing readers. The age level is basically pre-K through grade 3. The items in this collection are illustrate, and the text is geared to the reading levels of this age group.

The **J** collection consists of books for more skilled readers, whose age level is grade 4 through grade 8. They are full length books with chapter divisions and whose topics appeal to this age range.

The **YA** collection is based on school reading lists and on the appeal of fictional and nonfictional subject matter to the young adult population. Young adults are upper middle and high school ages.

Chapter books are books specifically written for developing readers and categorized by reading level. They introduce children to the typical structure of standard fiction books in a simplified format. They are shelved as a special collection as an aid to parents and teachers.

All **Newbery and Caldecott Award Books** are included in the youth collections and are identified through spine labels and through the library catalog. Newbery Awards are for J and YA books, awarded to the author. Caldecott Awards are for JE books, awarded to the illustrator.

Comics and graphic novels

Comic collections and graphic novels appropriate for youth and young adults are acquired for the Youth Services collections. Collections of comic strips or other previously published comics are acquired; however, individual comic books are not included in the Youth collections. Graphic novels, a contemporary visual format of fiction, emphasize illustration as being equally as or even more important than the text. Graphic novels appeal for artistic reasons and may also appeal to struggling readers.

Youth Paperbacks

Individual paperbacks and paperback series are included in the Youth collections on the JE, J, and YA levels. The paperback format is attractive to youth due to their lesser weight, smaller size, and ease of handling. Series books are acquired for the Youth collections because they appeal to youth readers and encourage reading.

Juvenile periodicals

A selection of periodicals appealing to youth is provided in the Youth Department.

Youth Program Educational Outreach

The Library includes in its collection educational materials that support the statewide public school Standards of Learning and the homeschooling process. Parenting materials specific to reading readiness and the encouragement of reading skills and interests are included in the library collections. Materials intended primarily for parents and teachers are selected for the adult collection; materials for children are selected for the youth collections.

Adult Fiction

The adult fiction collection includes literary classics, bestsellers, general fiction, historical fiction, romances, mysteries, westerns, science fiction/fantasy, inspirational fiction, and short story collections in both hardcover and quality paperback formats. Multiple copies are added according to demand.

Classic works of literature are available in both hardcover and paperback formats, in both the adult and the young adult fiction sections. Classics are generally retained in the collection, although usage may require periodic replacement.

Popular fiction exhibits the greatest variation in acquisition and weeding in the entire collection. Duplicate copies are considered when reserve requests build up to five or more requests. As an author becomes popular, there is some attempt to build a back run of earlier titles, either through new acquisitions or donations. Weeding of copies and titles occurs as popularity fades and dies.

There is some effort to include titles by Virginia authors, but titles are added on their individual merit rather than relying on state residency as the major criterion for selection.

To ensure timely availability of popular authors, standing orders are entered for those authors recommended by circulation staff and for whom there are recurring reserves.

Adult Nonfiction

The Library provides a wide range of topics based on community interests, anticipated need, and demonstrated circulation patterns. The collection includes both hardcover and quality paperback formats. The collection focuses on specific subjects of interest to the general community and also to the needs of local special interest groups, such as garden clubs, doll collectors, antique dealers and collectors, chess, farm and horse community, quilters, artists and art club, and writers.

000s

General encyclopedias are made available for circulation as well as for reference. Encyclopedias are made available in both print and electronic formats. Subject encyclopedias may be placed in the subject area of the collection.

Computer and Internet books are maintained as current as possible and are retained as long as patrons find them useful. While computer and software companies frequently update their products, patrons find the manuals and instruction books useful for longer periods, since not every user switches to upgrades, and some users rely on secondary markets for both hardware and software.

100s

Philosophical thought, philosophers, and the history of philosophy are covered as broad surveys and general introductions. Specific topics are included only as there is general popular interest in the subject.

Psychology coverage includes psychology as both an area of study and a matter of general interest. Mental health topics, including specific mental disorders and self-help approaches, will be covered in addition to specific psychological topics of continuing and current general interest.

200s

The focus of the religion collection includes survey and exploration of the basic tenets and doctrines of individual religions; history of religion, both generally and specifically; the major sacred texts, their study and explication; prayer and spirituality; and religious-based thought on contemporary cultural and social issues.

Effort is made to provide a spectrum of religious thought, although predominant religions in the community will receive wider coverage.

300s

The social science collection generally emphasizes contemporary thought and practice, although historical surveys may also be included.

Law materials in particular is kept as current as possible so that confusion caused by misleading or inaccurate information is avoided.

Materials on government and politics covering the structure, functions and history of political institutions reflects the broad political spectrum. Materials published prior to an election year that are intended to influence the outcome of the election generally have a definite point of view or bias. Such materials tend to be more ephemeral in their value for the collection, but they are useful for decision-making within the democratic political process. Such materials may include candidate biographies, party platform statements, candidate statements on election issues, and commentaries on candidates and issues. The Library attempts to provide balance of these types of materials even though individual materials may be polemical.

The Library includes materials on homeschooling, adult GED, and literacy in the collection in both print and electronic formats in support of family literacy. Test preparation manuals are included in the collection as an aid to lifelong learning and career development.

Tax guides are acquired annually, but only the current and previous year are retained.

400s

Study of the English language, its development, and current state and practices are emphasized in the language collection.

Foreign language dictionaries and grammars support the most commonly taught foreign languages.

Some materials for speakers of English as a second language are provided through both print and computer-based programs in support of the citizenship process.

Some materials written in foreign languages will be provided in support of language study and instruction. Fiction written in foreign languages, whether originally or in translation, is part of the 400 section rather than Fiction so that they may be more readily located.

500s

General science and mathematics topics meet the broad interests of general readers and also support the needs of students. Science materials are kept current to avoid confusion and misinformation.

600s

The useful arts section of the collection is generally intended to meet specific needs of daily life. Topics covered range widely – agriculture and gardening, medicine, building and home repair, cookery, all forms of transportation, technology and the trades, pets and farm animals, business. The collection in this area is kept current, with some attempt to retain items of reference value

beyond normal considerations of circulation. This is the area of highest circulation, and probably also of publication. The topics are more commonly represented by multiple titles in this area than any other.

Because of the need for accurate, up-to-date information in the medical collection, these materials are generally replaced or discarded if they exceed five years after publication.

Because sexuality is part of the human condition, patrons have need of objective, factual, educational nonfiction materials that help them deal with this area of life. This type of material is regarded as a valid acquisition because of its informative rather than prurient intent, even though graphic descriptions and depictions may be included.

700s

The fine arts section of the collection includes architecture and landscaping; visual arts, including cartooning, comics, and graphic novels as well as the more traditional drawing, painting, and watercolor; plastic arts, such as sculpture and ceramics; fiber arts; photography; film, theater, and television; music, sports and fitness. Materials selected for these areas are intended primarily to interest the general reader and secondarily to have an introductory/instructional purpose in serving the needs of students.

800s

The writing and literature section of the collection includes general books on writing skills, editing, and writing for publication as well as the study of great literature. Emphasis is on American literature and English language literature, with lesser emphasis on world literatures in translation. Surveys and critical interpretations of major authors and major works are included. While there is some focus on school reading assignments and SOL topics, there is primary emphasis on providing materials with appeal to general adult readers. Individual classic works of literature are placed in the adult and young adult fiction collections.

900s

Individual and collective biographies and autobiographies cover individuals of current and historical interest to both the general reader and to students.

Geography and travel guidebooks are maintained as current as possible, and ideally are replaced after three years, since they are most often used for travel planning. Recognizing that there is interest in reading travel books for the personal enjoyment of armchair travel, broader and more lasting travel books are also included.

The history section of the collection includes historical periods and events of specific countries and regions, with emphasis on the United States, the South, and the local region.

Virginia Collection

Adult nonfiction books focused on the Commonwealth of Virginia are kept in a separate collection at both libraries. The collection includes any subject area focusing on any city or region in Virginia, particularly geography and travel guidebooks, flora and fauna, art and architecture, biography, history, and government. Emphasis is placed on Amherst County, with lesser emphasis on nearby counties and cities. Both reference and circulating materials are included. Fiction by Virginia authors is not included in this collection.

Because Amherst is the county seat and the location provides additional access to Courthouse records and the Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, the Virginia Collection at Amherst is more extensive than at Madison Heights. It includes general and state genealogical materials and family histories relevant to Amherst County in addition to the other types of Virginia materials. Materials of local significance that are out of print or otherwise unavailable are limited to reference or other restricted use.

Mass-Market Paperbacks

The adult paperback collection includes general fiction, mysteries, westerns, science fiction/fantasy, action/adventure/suspense, horror, media tie-ins, romance series, general romance, historical romance, inspirational romance, and non-fiction. The paperback collection is a recreational reading collection, and is regarded as supplemental to the fiction and nonfiction collections. The collection is weeded on a regular basis to make room for new titles; therefore, this is not a permanent collection. No attempt is made to provide all titles of an author or all series sequels.

Audiobooks

The audiobook collection includes both audiocassettes and CDs, and consists of both permanent and rental selections and both unabridged and abridged selections. The rental materials are switched between the libraries on a regular basis. Audio titles may or may not duplicate book format titles. Juvenile and Young Adult audios are shelved separately in the Youth Departments of both libraries. Juvenile audios are often accompanied by the print version in order to help facilitate the development of reading skills.

CDs

CDs other than audiobooks may be added to the collection in limited numbers. Adult and Juvenile music CDs are included in the collection but are not all-inclusive of music genres.

Videos

Videos are selected on both adult and juvenile levels. Selection is based on reviews, anticipated interest, and documented circulation patterns. The rating system of the film industry is considered in selection but is not a major criterion for either including or excluding. Coverage is intended to be selective and focused on materials judged to have long-term appeal.

New AV Media

Although the Library adapts to changing AV technology, careful consideration is given to adding materials, equipment, and alternative shelving before formats are standardized and costs become acceptable.

Large Print

Both adult and youth fiction and nonfiction selections are available in large print format in order to serve the visually handicapped. Large print titles may duplicate regular print titles or may expand upon the regular collection.

Reference

Reference titles are selected based on positive reviews, anticipated need, and demonstrated demand or use, and relationship to subject areas in the general collection. The reference collection may include local information, county documents, telephone books, and pamphlets as well as computer-based databases and programs. Because reference materials are generally consulted to obtain specific facts or information rather than read in their entirety, and because they tend to have potentially recurring use, they do not circulate.

Some traditional reference type materials are placed in the circulating collection, based on the nature of their use. Price guides and product rating guides are placed in the circulating collection so that patrons can use them for more extended analysis and comparison. Some specialized subject encyclopedias or handbooks are placed in the circulating collection for extended study. Juvenile Reference materials are maintained in a separate collection in order to meet school and individual age-appropriate needs.

Periodicals and Newspapers

The Library provides the local and major regional newspapers in print format primarily for current reading purposes. The Amherst New Era-Progress is retained for five years or longer as space permits; other newspapers are not retained beyond the current week. The Internet provides other newspaper holdings, although some may require fees for viewing or printing.

Periodicals are selected for the collection based on broad popular appeal, general interest, and anticipated circulation. The magazine collection is only incidentally intended to meet the academic needs of students; academic libraries in the area have more appropriate holdings for academic research. Holdings are limited to the current and the previous year except in selected cases of longer retention. Free or gift titles are retained either for the normal two year period or for current display only.

Gifts and Donations

All gift materials are judged by the same selection criteria used in the selection of new materials. All gifts, which may only be accepted without restriction, become the property of Amherst County Public Library, which reserves the right to dispose of those materials not added to the collection in the manner deemed most appropriate.

Maintaining the collection

Selection is only the first step in collection development. Attention is given to needs to add additional copies, to reduce multiple copies, to replace worn or damaged copies, and to make physical repairs. Effort is made to retain library materials in the collection as long as possible and as appropriate to do so, in order that the Library may be a good steward of the community resources.

Weeding

Library materials have limitations on their useful shelf lives. Materials which no longer meet the objectives of the collection are systematically eliminated according to accepted professional practices. Removal from the collection is appropriate under the following circumstances:

- The item has not circulated within the last three years and there is little expectation of future use (The three year period is primarily a guideline for examination and is not an absolute criterion for removal.)
- The item has multiple copies no longer needed to satisfy demand
- The information it contains is outdated or superseded and therefore is misleading or useless
- The item is in such poor physical condition that it cannot be repaired

Weeding proceeds as a professional responsibility, necessary to maintain the usefulness and vigor of the collection. Outdated, unnecessary, and unusable materials clog the collection and distract patrons from the materials that are more useful.

Repair and Replacement

Simple repairs extend the life of library materials. More extensive physical damage requires either discarding or replacement. Library materials will be replaced when the individual item has continuing value and usage. In other cases, substitution of more current titles will be preferred.

Intellectual Freedom and Requests for Reconsideration

The Amherst County Public Library follows the guidelines for objectivity within the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights. The Library neither practices nor endorses prejudicial labeling of materials (any form of cautionary advice or warning regarding content).

The personal prejudices, tastes, or moral standards of any staff member or any member of the public will not be allowed to interfere with the free access to materials intended for general community use.

The Library rejects censorship but assumes an objective position concerning any issue of challenged materials. Patrons may request that a specific item be reconsidered for inclusion in or removal from the collection according to the established procedure. [See Appendix for the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials procedure and request form.]

Policy Review

The Collection Development Policy is reviewed periodically by the Library Director and the Library staff. Changes in the Collection Development Policy must be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.