

Somerset Public Library

Collection Development Policy



October 20, 2020

The Somerset Public Library exists to serve as a center of informal learning, individual growth and recreation for the citizens of Somerset. The Library expects to make a contribution to the learning process and to aid individuals in the lifelong process of growth and appreciation and understanding of themselves, their neighbors, and the world around them. In addition, the library makes its building available as a setting for appropriate events according to the needs and interests of the community.

Somerset Public Library
1464 County Street
Somerset, MA 02726
508-646-2829
www.somersetpubliclibrary.org

Library Mission Statement

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Purpose

The collection development policy is intended to provide guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials which anticipate and meet the needs of our patrons. It also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection. The American Library Association's [Bill of Rights](#) and the [Freedom to Read Statement](#) have been endorsed by the Somerset Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of this policy.

Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selection of materials, as with all library activities, rests with the library director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Somerset Public Library Board of Trustees. Typically, the Library Director delegates or shares this responsibility with designated members of the staff.

Materials Selection Process

A variety of tools are used to aid in the awareness and selection of materials, including professional review journals, publishers' catalogs, purchase plan alerts, and patron and staff recommendations.

Involved in the process are the experience and knowledge of those staff members making selection decisions, their familiarity with the community, other library resources, the existing collection and the library's materials budget. Care is made to make acquisition decisions as objectively as possible.

Evaluation of a work includes the entire work, not just individual parts. A work's overall contribution to the collection is a critical determinant for acceptance or rejection. No single criterion can be applied to all materials, and various criteria carry different weights in different circumstances.

Criteria for Selection

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following criteria. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable.

- Local popular interest
- Relevance to the Library's mission
- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Authority and accuracy

- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Scarcity of information in subject area
- Creative, literary or technical quality
- Format and ease of use
- Author's significance or reputation
- Evaluations in professionally recognized critical review sources
- Remote access potential
- Relevance to existing collection
- Relevance to the history/culture of Somerset
- Availability of similar materials in other area libraries
- Price and availability
- Level of funding for materials/format

Scope of Collection

Materials are selected for utility to the citizens of the community. Materials will be selected in a variety of formats including, but not limited to:

Print – such as hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines and newspapers

Non-Print – such as audio and video formats, puzzles, games, kits, and microfilm

Digital Resources – such as online databases, e-books, downloadable audio books, videos, comics, and magazines

Materials will be selected for the following audiences:

Children: In general, the Somerset Public Library subscribes to a policy of free access to library materials for minors. Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. At the Somerset Public Library, children have access to all parts of the Library, however, collections in the Children's Department are designed to serve children, their parents and caregivers.

Young Adults (ages 12 to 18): Materials are selected to broaden the horizons of teens, help them cope with the problems of adolescence, and to encourage leisure reading. To fulfill these needs, the collection will inevitably include materials on controversial or sensitive topics. The suitability of any particular item must be determined on an individual basis by the parent or guardian of that teen. Consideration is also given to the needs of middle school students.

Adults: Materials are selected primarily to meet the varied needs of adults. This includes non-circulating reference materials as well as circulating non-fiction and fiction books and non-book materials.

Interlibrary Loan

The Somerset Public Library is a member of the SAILS consortium. Due to a limited budget and space constraints, it is not possible to provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other member libraries those materials that are not a part of our collection. In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of our patrons, the Library agrees to lend its materials to other member libraries through the same interlibrary loan network.

Electronic Materials/Website

The library has an established web presence located at <https://www.somersetpubliclibrary.org>. This website serves as a gateway to the Library's online presence which includes a growing number of services including but not limited to online databases and digital books. The online collection is selected based on the same principles set forth in the policy.

Collection Maintenance

Library collections, not being static, require an active review process. Ongoing reevaluations of materials is necessary in order to maintain a current, accurate and inviting collection. Candidates for withdrawal include but are not limited to: outdated materials, items no longer of interest or in demand, no longer needed duplicate copies and worn or damaged items. Some materials may be replaced by an alternative format as technology advances and demand increases. Worn or damaged items that are still in demand may be either mended or replaced depending on the degree of wear and damage. Withdrawn items will either be placed on our "free" shelves in the library's vestibule for patrons to take as they wish, donated to charitable organizations including the Friends of the Library for their ongoing book sale, or destroyed if the condition warrants it.

Access to Collection Materials

All library materials are available for use by all patrons. Materials will be freely and easily accessible to the public. Access to materials is ensured by the way materials are cataloged, organized, managed, and displayed and through staff interaction. Children are not limited to the Children's collection, although juvenile materials are kept together to facilitate use. Responsibility for a child's reading, listening or viewing rests with the parent or guardian.

Independently Published Material

The Somerset Public Library is often asked to include items in our collection that are written and/or published independently. This can include materials that are self-published/produced or items published through a vanity press company. We look for materials with regional connections and collection relevance that will appeal to a wide audience. The best way to bring an item to the Library's attention is through reviews. A positive review in one or more of the library review journals, such as Library Journal, School Library Journal, Kirkus Reviews, Booklist, Publisher's Weekly or in the Sunday edition of the local daily paper will give an independently published book an improved chance for selection. Information regarding the material should be sent to the Library Director. The following information should be included:

- A brief summary of the material
- Any professional reviews
- Intended audience
- Author background and contact information
- Publisher information
- Item description (price, ISBN, date of publication)

Preview copies will be treated as a donation and their disposition will be covered under our Gifts and Donations Policy.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom, which allows for every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. The Library also subscribes to ALA's Library Bill of Rights. Accordingly, the Library staff provides equal service to all library users. If an individual wishes to express concern about or objects to particular Library materials, they may complete a Material Reconsideration Form. This inquiry will be given to the Library Director who will:

1. Examine the material, as well as critical reviews of the material.
2. Contact the patron who initiated the request for reconsideration outlining the procedure and announcing the response. The patron will also be invited to discuss their issues with the material with the Director in person.
3. If the patron desires further action, the Director will ask the Chairman of the Trustees to place an item regarding the material on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Somerset Public Library's Board of Trustees. The request will be given careful consideration and a final decision will be made.

This statement of policy will be periodically evaluated and revised as times and circumstances require.

Materials Reconsideration Inquiry

Request initiated by (Name) _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Represents: Self _____ Organization _____. If individual represents an organization:

Name of Organization: _____

Address of Organization: _____

Title to be reviewed _____

Author/Artist/Editor _____

Type of material (book, periodical, music CD, DVD, etc.) _____

Item found in which collection? Adult _____ Young Adult _____ or Children's _____

What is your objection to this work? Please be specific; cite pages, sections, etc.

What do you think might be the effect of reading/seeing/listening to this work?

For what age group would you recommend this work?

Do you believe that there is anything worthwhile about this material? If yes, please comment:

Have you read/seen/listened to the entire item?

Have you read professional reviews of the work? If yes, please list the names of the critics and source of the reviews.

What would you like the library to do about this work?

Other comments:

Signature: _____ Date: _____