

**Sarasota County Public
Library System
Collection Development Policy
April 2011**

Sarasota County Libraries
Collection Development Policy

- I. [Introduction](#)
- II. [Materials Selection](#)
- III. [Responsibility for Selection](#)
- IV. [Criteria for Selection](#)
- V. [Selection Tools](#)
- VI. [Intellectual Freedom](#)
- VII. [Patron Requests](#)
- VIII. [Donations](#)
- IX. [Availability and Access to Materials](#)
- X. [Reconsideration of Materials](#)
- XI. [Rebalancing of the Collection](#)
- XII. [Materials De-Selection](#)
- XIII. [Evaluation of Collection](#)
- XIV. [Electronic Resources](#)
- XV. Appendices
 - a. [Patron Request Form](#)
 - b. [Request for Reconsideration of Materials](#)

I. Introduction

This policy is intended to guide librarians in the selection of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which library collections are developed and maintained. In making collection decisions, the Sarasota County Public Library System strives to uphold its mission statement that “The Sarasota County Library System offers equal access to information, fosters life-long learning and inspires community engagement”. Currently, the residents of Sarasota County are served by eight community libraries, each with its own distinguishing characteristics. In order to make the libraries a reliable resource for all the citizens of Sarasota County, the collections are intended to be of sufficient scope and supply for the entire county, with special consideration given to the unique patron needs within each library.

With the exception of Reference materials and a few specialized collections, all materials float within the system and belong to no particular library. Each library has temporary “ownership” of the items on its shelves. Upon circulation and return, the library to which the item is returned becomes the new “owner” and the location is automatically updated in the catalog.

II. Materials Selection

The System will select and maintain a comprehensive collection of print, non-print, audio visual and electronically accessed materials to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the citizens of Sarasota County. The System will strive to offer wide ranging collections that meet the various ages, interests, educational levels, and cultural backgrounds of all members of the community and will provide collections through which an individual may explore all points of view and issues of interest. In making selections, the library staff will do so based upon principle rather than personal opinion, reason rather than prejudice, and judgment rather than censorship. Furthermore, staff will be responsive to public demand for materials of contemporary significance and interest, while balancing this with the need to collect and preserve materials of permanent value.

While library staff makes material selections based upon county demographics, selectors recognize the distinct characteristics and needs of the populace that each library

serves. Community profiles are used to guide selectors in efforts to develop special collections and to meet the unique patron needs within each library.

III. Responsibility for Selection of Materials

The ultimate responsibility for selection materials rests with the General Manager of Libraries and the Management Team, who in turn delegates selection responsibilities to the Collection Development Librarians.

IV. Criteria for Selection

In practice it is impossible to acquire all available print, non-print, and audio visual materials; therefore, out of necessity library staff must employ a policy of selectivity in acquisitions. Selection decisions are made using professional judgment based on knowledge of the existing collection and by evaluating currently available materials using a variety of selection tools.

Audio visual media is considered an art form as well as an instructional media form and is purchased using the same methodology as print materials. Movies and television shows are considered an expression of social history and important markers of societal values. Purchasing is also driven by popular demand and current trends.

Periodical subscriptions are governed by the same selection criteria as other print materials. Staff selects those that have broad appeal and that may be difficult for patrons to obtain individually. Subscriptions are occasionally selected that fit a specific niche within the community. As with all materials purchases, price is a consideration. Staff may seek donations of subscriptions in the case of an expensive title with patron demand but limited appeal.

The expression of public demand is one of the ways that library staff becomes aware of needs. Demand is always subject to professional review and must always be considered within the context of the System's mission and budgetary limitations. Selection of materials in all areas of the library collection is governed, in whole or in part by the following criteria: (not in order of priority)

- Accuracy of information.

- Potential or known use by patrons.
- Popular demand and current trends.
- Literary merit or artistic quality.
- Importance of author.
- Significance of subject matter.
- Critical reviews.
- Reputation of publisher or producer.
- Relationship to other material in the collection.
- Current and/or permanent value to the collection.
- Scarcity of material on the subject.
- Availability of materials.
- Cost.
- Suitability of format (size, paper, print, binding, compatibility with existing library technology).
- Ease of use (in particular with regard to electronic resources).
- Quality of physical format.
- Local interest.

V. Selection Tools

- Current review sources/professional journals.
- Catalogs and flyers.
- Current sources for in print books.
- National and subject bibliographies.
- Online databases.
- Award, Recommended, Best, and Core collection lists.

VI. Intellectual Freedom

An informed public is possible only through unrestricted access to materials that reflect a variety of opinions and ideas. The Sarasota County Library System supports and

promotes this freedom by selecting and providing materials that encompass many diverse issues. In supporting unrestricted access to information, the library system does not promulgate or support specific beliefs or viewpoints. Likewise, the selection of materials for inclusion in the collection does not constitute endorsement of the viewpoints contained therein. On occasion, library materials may include opinions that are controversial and may be unpopular with segments of the public. Sarasota County affirms the public's right to free access to information by supporting the American Library Association's Bill of Rights <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.cfm> and its companion statements of Freedom to Read <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/ftstatement/freedomreadstatement.cfm> and Freedom to View <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/ftvstatement/freedomviewstatement.cfm>

With respect to the use of library materials by children, the Library System places the responsibility for the selection choices of children with their parents or legal guardians Furthermore; it supports the American Library Association's viewpoint that "parents and only parents have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children – and only their children—to library resources" as stated in their Free Access to Libraries for Minors, An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/statementsif/interpretations/freeaccesslibraries.cfm>

VII. Patron Requests

Library's patrons may suggest materials for the library to purchase. To do so, patrons should complete a ["Suggestion for Purchase"](#) form in person or on the library website and return it to any Sarasota County Library where it will be forwarded to the staff responsible for Collection Development. Suggestions from the general public are encouraged and will be evaluated by selectors based on the System's [criteria for selection](#). All suggestions will be considered although not all suggestions may be added to the collection.

VIII. DONATIONS

The System accepts donations of books and media with the understanding that they may not necessarily be added to the collection. All donated materials are evaluated by library staff, using the same [selection criteria](#) employed for the purchase of new materials. Donated materials which become part of the Library System's collection are governed by the same policies as purchased materials and may or may not float, depending upon the classification. If the material is not suitable because of condition, out-dated information or other considerations, the library staff reserves the right to discard or to refer such material to the appropriate Friends Group for resale. Upon request, library staff will supply a donation receipt to the donor, who may fill it out if desired. Library staff does not make recommendations, estimates or appraisal on the value of the donated items. The Library System will try to comply with the donor's wishes, but does not accept donations with restrictions on their use.

The System encourages cash gifts, endowment funds and other bequests for improving library resources. Please see the Gifts and Bequests Policy for more information on monetary donation opportunities.

IX. Availability and Access to Materials

The Library System makes its collections available to all. However, not all library materials can be immediately accessible at all locations within the system. Collection Development Librarians decide how many copies to buy and where to initially locate them by considering anticipated demand, the interest of local library users, physical space limitations and available budget. Libraries with larger or specialized collections act as resource libraries for other branches.

The Library System is committed to the expeditious delivery of materials and information to its users. Some library materials, however, may be subject to use limitations and storage due to considerations of rarity, high level of demand, cost, physical condition and the permanent value of their content. Reasonable efforts will be made to provide access to materials and information beyond the holdings of a community library, by means of requests

placed either in person or through online services, licensed electronic resources, and access to the Internet.

The rapid expansion of electronic and Internet information resources continually poses challenges in fulfilling the information needs of the public. Many materials once available in print are now available solely through the Internet or proprietary database products. Providing access to electronic resources is an integral part of the library's collection development efforts.

X. Reconsideration of Materials

When a member of the community wishes the Library to reconsider a book or any other material in the collection, he or she should submit a "[Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources](#)" This form is available at all library locations. A completed form should be returned to the Library Manager or to the Manager of Public Services, where it will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate staff for research and recommended action. The General Manager will review the documentation and make the final decision regarding the recommendation, which will be communicated to the requester and will apply to all copies of the item held by the Library System.

XI. Rebalancing the Collection

Due to the floating collection, there are times when a library is a net-lender or net receiver, and the collection will need to be adjusted in order for it to remain in balance. Each library has a designated Gaps and Overflow contact, who communicates with Library Administration when these situations occur. This provides for a centralized assessment of need and distribution, and keeps Collection Development staff current with collection popularity.

XII. Materials De-Selection

De-selection and selection are similar yet different facets of the same continuous process that defines collection development. Like the selection process, de-selection reflects the goals and mission of the Library. The Library maintains an on-going process of

discarding materials based upon the elimination of unnecessary items, outdated materials, materials no longer of interest or in demand, duplicates, and materials in poor condition. Frequency of circulation, community interest and availability of newer and more up to date materials are of prime consideration. The responsibility for the de-selection of all materials lies with the professional staff within each library. Although de-selection is a professional responsibility, other staff may assist in identifying material that should be weeded.

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XIII. Evaluation

Collection evaluation is used to identify areas of strength and weakness within the collection, to inspect the physical condition of the collection; remind staff of standards of collection maintenance; to meet with staff to discuss specific areas of the collections overall needs; and identify community changes which affect the selection process. Evaluation criteria includes but is not limited to circulation statistics, in house use, and. availability of material in the system.

XIV. Electronic Resources

Databases

Online Databases are selected using the same [selection criteria](#) as all other library materials. Special consideration is given to proprietary materials that otherwise may not be available to the public. In selecting databases, cost and access are considered. Whenever possible, online databases are purchased that allow patrons direct access from home.

Web Site Links

The mission of the System's Web site is to allow access to timely, accurate and useful electronic information for community residents beyond the physical walls of the library. The System Web pages highlight the Library System and its services and provide a subject-approach to selected Internet sites.

Links to Internet sites from the Library System Web site are selected to broaden, enrich and complement the Library System's print and audio-visual collections. These online resources may be selected to provide home or in-library access to types of material available in other formats at the library or they may be selected to provide more current and more diverse material than available at the library. Web site links are selected that are consistent with the library's collection development policy with the overall goal of providing accurate and timely information that will meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of our diverse community.

Linking to a Web site does not indicate that the Library System or Sarasota County Government endorses or sponsors the site. Sites are carefully selected and reviewed by Sarasota County librarians in accordance with established selection policies to help library users find information on the Internet. The Web sites are separate and independent from the System and the System does not control the information contained on remote Web sites. The Library System cannot ensure the availability or accuracy of external electronic resources. As with print materials, not all electronic sources provide accurate, complete or current information.

Web sites are checked and reviewed periodically for content, accessibility, accuracy and usefulness. If a site no longer meets the selection criteria or is inactive or out-of-date, it may be removed. Links to Web sites may be also removed if they change and no longer meet the Libraries' selection criteria. The Library System Web site will continue to change in response to the ever-changing nature of the Internet.

Appendix A

System Suggestion for Purchase

Author _____

Title _____

Publisher & Copyright Date _____

List Price _____ **Today's Date** _____

Your Name _____ **Phone** _____

Library Branch _____

Thank you for your interest in suggesting this title for review.

This suggestion does not imply automatic purchase, nor does it place a reserve on the title for you. Please check with your library for availability.

Once this item is in the library catalog you may place a reserve on it.

Appendix B
Request for reconsideration of Library Resources
Sarasota County Public Library System

The Sarasota County Public Library System has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about library materials. This form is the first step in these procedures. Please answer each question as completely as possible and return this form to either the Manager of your nearest library or to the Manager of Public Services, Sarasota County Library Administration, 5th Floor, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL, 34236. Designated library staff will consider your request. After review, you will receive a letter communicating the decision of the Library System. This review will occur within 45 days of receipt of your request for reconsideration.

*****Please note that this is a public document under Florida Law. Your name and address are subject to disclosure upon request.*****

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone: _____ Email _____

Library Card # _____ (optional)

Material to be reconsidered

Book DVD Compact Disc Other

Author: _____

Title : _____

1. Did you read/listen/view the entire item? Yes No

2. Why would you like this material to be reconsidered? Please be as specific as possible. Use the other side of this paper if necessary.

3. What are your specific recommendations regarding this item?

4. What material would you suggest to provide additional information or other viewpoints?

The System's Collection Development Policy can be found on their website

<http://www.sclibs.net/Services/CollectionDevelopment.aspx>

Rev. 3/15/10

