

Tuscaloosa Public Library Collection Development Policy

Policy Statement

The Tuscaloosa Public Library acquires and makes available materials that support its mission to provide recreational and cultural opportunities and information to a diverse community through traditional services and new technologies. Since no library can possibly acquire all print and non-print materials, the library employs a policy of selectivity in acquisitions. Materials not owned by the Tuscaloosa Public Library may be borrowed for patrons through interlibrary loan services.

The Tuscaloosa Public Library provides, within its financial limitations, a general collection of reliable materials embracing broad areas of knowledge. Included are works of enduring value and timely materials on current issues. Within the framework of these broad objectives, selection is based on community demographics and evidence of areas of interest.

The Tuscaloosa Public Library's collection development objectives are:

Provide materials in a timely manner to meet the patrons' needs for recreational materials, for information, and for independent learning

Provide materials for preschool and school-age children to encourage and promote reading and the continued use of the library

Provide a variety of viewpoints on all subjects in its collections.

Other community and library resources in the area are taken into consideration in selecting materials. Electronic resources and new formats are considered for the collection when a significant portion of the community has the technology necessary to make use of the format.

Impartiality and judicious selection will be exercised in all materials acquisitions practices. Allocation of the materials budget and the number of items purchased for each area of the collection will be determined by indicators of use, cost of materials and collection development objectives as listed above.

The Tuscaloosa Public Library supports the individual's right to access ideas and information representing all points of view. To this end, the library welcomes and solicits patron suggestions, comments and ideas about the collection and its development. The Tuscaloosa Public Library endorses the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read Statement* and *Freedom to View Statement*. (See attached copies.)

Collection Development

Date approved by the Board of Trustees: 1-17-2006

Subject: **Collection Development**

Regulations

The ultimate responsibility for material selection rests with the Director. The Director has assigned the day-to-day responsibility for managing Collection Development to the Assistant Director. The Assistant Director delegates selection of material to qualified staff members following the collection development policies and guidelines of the Tuscaloosa Public Library.

Selection

Selection of materials will be done through the use of professional journals such as *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *Publisher's Weekly*, as well as other tools such as *The New York Times Book Review*, and the *Public Library Catalog*. Other specialized materials may be used for certain areas of the collection. Suggestions from people with a recognized competency in certain subject areas and suggestions from patrons will also be considered.

Material is judged on the basis of the content and style of the work as a whole, not by selected portions or passages. The library strives to collect and make available differing points of view. Among standard criteria applied are:

- Literary merit
- Enduring value
- Accuracy
- Authoritativeness
- Social significance
- Importance of the subject matter to the collection development objectives
- Cost
- Scarcity of material on the subject
- Availability elsewhere
- Quality and suitability of the format

Material is purchased in the most appropriate format for library use. Non-book materials are selected according to the same general criteria as book materials. Collection development policies based on format considerations are appended.

Textbooks used by local schools and colleges are not necessarily purchased as it is the responsibility of the educational institution to provide copies of course materials for their students. However, textbooks may be purchased in areas where there is little or no material in any other format and the textbook would make an important contribution to the collection.

Placement

Placement of material within the Tuscaloosa Public Library is determined by several factors. The Dewey Decimal Classification system is used to group materials by subject areas. Professional catalogers use this classification system and the Library of Congress subject headings to place materials in proper subject areas and assign them to

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Adult, Juvenile and Young Adult areas of the library. Reviews in professional journals aid library staff in choosing and locating material in age appropriate collections.

Although the library facilities are divided into sections for the convenience of the public, patrons of any age may use all parts of the library collection. It is the responsibility of parents, not library staff, to monitor use of library materials by their children. The classification scheme, reviews by professionals, and the librarians' expertise contribute to the proper placement of material.

Non-print materials are usually shelved in separate areas by format to offer ease of use to our patrons.

Reference Collections

The Tuscaloosa Public Library provides Reference collections of non-circulating materials to serve the informational and educational needs of the community. The Children's Reference collection is designed for children in elementary and middle school. The Adult Reference Collection is focused on the needs of the student from high-school through the first two-years of college and the lay person in the community. Materials selected for this collection provide accurate, current and thorough coverage of general subjects.

The Reference Collection in the Main Library supports the reference collections in branch locations and on the bookmobile through intra-library lending of materials and provision of copies of requested materials.

The provision of reference electronic books allows patrons access to reference materials through computers at all library outlets, and in their homes or businesses with the use of a library card.

Special Collections

The Tuscaloosa Public Library maintains several special collections to serve the needs of the public and staff. The Local History and Genealogy collection is designed to serve the needs of patrons interested in genealogy and the history of the local area. The Archives collection provides access to back issues of local newspapers, city directories, and telephone directories. The Professional collection is designed to meet the needs of the library staff for materials concerning public librarianship. A foreign language collection of books German, Japanese and Spanish is provided.

Collections Based on Format

The Tuscaloosa Public Library maintains several collections based on the format of the material to provide ease of access by patrons. The Books-on-Tape and Books-on-CD, Music CDs, DVDs and Videos, and a supplemental fiction paperback collection are format based collections. A collection development policy related to the scope of these collections is appended.

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Extension Services and Branches

The Tuscaloosa Public Library strives to extend its services to patrons who can't easily come to the library by offering services through Books-by-Mail, a Bookmobile, a Sub-regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and library branches. Although each of these services has collections developed specifically to meet their patrons' needs, the overall collection development policies and guidelines apply to these collections. Collection development policies addressing the scopes of these collections are appended.

Gifts of Library Materials

Materials given to the library must meet the same selection criteria as materials purchased for the collection. Gifts of materials are received by the Tuscaloosa Public Library and the Friends of the Tuscaloosa Public Library. Donated materials are reviewed by library staff for addition to the library collection. Materials not added to the collection may be sold by the Friends for the benefit of the library or discarded.

Patron Requests

The Tuscaloosa Public Library encourages patrons to suggest materials to be added to the collection. These suggestions, however, are not automatically purchased. Suggested materials must meet the same criteria as applied to other library material.

Collection Maintenance

The Tuscaloosa Public Library continuously assesses the library collection to ensure that it remains a collection of current, relevant library materials that meets the needs of the community. Materials that are outdated, no longer of interest nor in demand, duplicates, and worn or damaged materials will be eliminated.

Separate collection maintenance policies have been prepared to cover materials that are missing or otherwise no longer available for the public. These policies are appended.

Reconsideration of Library Material

A singular obligation of the public library is to reflect within its collection differing points of view. The Tuscaloosa Public Library does not endorse particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsements of the viewpoint of the author. Library material will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from theft or damage.

Comments from members of the community about the collection or individual items frequently provide librarians with useful information about interest or needs that may be adequately met by the collection. The library welcomes expression of opinion by patrons, but will be governed by the collection development policies and objectives when making additions to or deletions from the collection

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The library has established a procedure to respectfully handle requests from patrons for reconsideration of library materials. Patrons will be asked to put their requests in writing using the form "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials." (See attached copy.)

Upon receipt of a formal written request, the Director will ask for background information from the library staff as to criteria used in ordering the material, its place in the collection and reasons for selecting the material. The Director will, as soon as possible, study the information provided and respond in writing to the person who initiated the request for reconsideration.

In the event that the person who initiated the request is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, he or she may request a meeting before the Board of Library Trustees. After hearing from the person making the reconsideration request, the Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with the stated policies and procedures, will review the background information provided by the library staff, will review the position of the patron and the decision of the Director. The Board may vote to uphold or overturn the decision of the Director.