Collection Development
Date Policy Approved by the Board of Trustees: March 17, 2025
Date Policy Amended by the Board of Trustees: June 15, 2026

Tuscaloosa Public Library

Purpose of the Collection Development Policy

This Collection Development Policy serves as a guiding document for the Tuscaloosa Public Library in the selection and acquisition of Library materials that supports its mission: to provide recreational and cultural opportunities and information to a diverse community through traditional series and new technologies. Recognizing that no Library can acquire all materials, the Library employs a selective acquisition process. Adult materials not owned by the Library may be accessed through interlibrary loan services.

This policy ensures transparency for the Board and the public and adheres to Alabama Public Library Service Administrative Code r. 520-2-2-03(2)(l).

Public Funds Expended to the American Library Association

All expenditures of public funds to the American Library Association must be approved by the Board of Trustees in an open, public meeting following proper notice.

Authority:
Ala. Admin. Code r. 520-2-2-.03(8)

Regulations

The ultimate responsibility for material selection rests with the Executive Director operating within the framework of Board of Trustees approved policies. The Executive Director delegates to staff members the authority to interpret and apply the policy in making day-to-day selection and acquisition decisions.

Selection

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 periodically.

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. Selection of materials will be done using 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 based on the content and style of the work, 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
Public demand and interest

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.

Selection Criteria for Minors:

The Tuscaloosa Public Library refrains from purchasing or otherwise acquiring materials for minors that are advertised for patrons under the age of 18 if they contain obscenity, sexually explicit content, or other material deemed inappropriate for children or youth. Any materials regarding transgender procedures, gender ideology, or the concept of more than two biological genders shall be considered inappropriate for children and youth. Materials related to religion, history, biology, or human anatomy that are deemed age-appropriate and serve educational or informational purposes are not subject to this policy. Such materials undergo evaluation based on their relevance to the Library's collection development goals and the needs of our patrons.

Authority:
Ala. Admin. Code r. 520-2-2-.03(2)(f)(6)
Ala. Admin. Code r. 520-2-2-.03(2)(j)

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 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.

Materials containing obscenity, sexually explicit, or content otherwise inappropriate for minors will not be placed in the Juvenile or Young Adult section. Materials related to religion, history, biology, or human anatomy that are deemed age-appropriate and serve educational or informational purposes are not subject to this policy.

The Tuscaloosa Public Library reserves the right to remove or relocate materials from the Juvenile and Young Adult sections if routine collection maintenance or the Executive Director determines that such materials have been classified/cataloged inappropriately.

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.

Authority:
Ala. Admin. Code r. 520-2-2-.03(2)(f)(11)
Ala. Admin. Code r. 520-2-2-.03(2)(i)

Recommendations, Displays, and Promotions

All materials recommended, displayed, or otherwise actively promoted to patrons under the age of 18 in the Juvenile or Young Adult departments of the Library must have advanced approval by the Library Director. Materials meeting the selection and age-appropriateness criteria outlined in this document are considered to have advanced approval for recommendation, display, or promotion to children or youth.

Materials from the Adult section are not displayed or promoted to patrons under the age of 18, or placed in non-Adult sections of the Library. Materials from the Adult section may only be recommended to patrons under the age of 18, if they have their parent or guardian's specific, written consent as required in the Library Card policy.

Authority:
Ala. Admin. Code r. 520-2-2-.03(2)(f)(12)

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Library shall not deny service to anyone on the basis of age, race, sex or creed. Exercising discretion in the location of sexually explicit material or other material deemed by the Tuscaloosa Public Library Board of Trustees to be inappropriate for patrons under the age of 18 DOES NOT constitute a denial of service on the basis of age. Taking age into account when recommending, displaying, or otherwise actively promoting Library materials does not constitute a denial of service on the basis of age.

Authority:
Ala. Admin. Code r. 520-2-2-.03(4)

Reference Collections

The Tuscaloosa Public Library provides Reference collections of non-circulating materials to serve the informational and educational needs of the community. The Juvenile 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 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. Audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs, eBooks, downloadable

audiobooks, and video streaming are format-based collections.

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, book vending machines, and a Library branch. Each of these services has collections developed specifically to meet their patrons' needs, while applying the collection development policy and guidelines.

Gifts of Library Materials

Gifts of materials are received by the Tuscaloosa Public Library and the Friends of the Tuscaloosa Public Library. Materials given to the Library must meet the same selection criteria as materials purchased for the collection. 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's 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 guidelines have been prepared to cover materials that are missing or otherwise no longer available for the public.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

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."

Upon receipt of a formal written request, the Executive 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 Executive Director will, as soon as possible, study the information provided and respond in writing to the person who initiated the request for reconsideration.

If the person who initiated the request is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive 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 was handled according to policy, review staff information, consider the patron's position, and evaluate the Executive Director's decision. The Board may then vote to uphold or overturn the Executive Director's decision.

The Board has the power to determine if the material is inappropriate, sexually explicit, or otherwise unfit for the collection and whether the item should be removed from the collection altogether or relocated to a shelf outside the Juvenile and/or Young Adult section. Ultimately, responsibility for children's access to materials rests with their parents or legal guardians.