



**CARNEGIE-STOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

**City of Dubuque**

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# CARNEGIE-STOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Materials Selection Policy is to serve as a guide for librarians and a source of information for the public about how library materials are selected.

## II. DEFINITIONS

The term “library materials” as used in this policy includes print, non-print, and electronic resources. “Selection refers to the decision to add or keep an item in the collection.

## III. THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The Library recognizes that some material is controversial; any given item may offend someone. However, material selection is not based on anticipated approval or disapproval but on the merits of the material in relation to the needs and interests of the community and to the balance of the library’s collection.

To label or sequester material because of its potential controversial nature is an act of censorship. The Library does not restrict access to materials except for the express purpose of protecting material from mutilation or theft.

Children and young adults may use both the youth and the adult collections. Parents or guardians are responsible for the reading, viewing, and listening of Library materials by their children.

The Library Board of Trustees adopts as local policy the provisions of the Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association:

### **LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgments of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of national origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939. Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948, February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITY AND PROCEDURE FOR SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

The Library Board of Trustees adopts the Materials Selection Policy, which serves as a guideline for building the Library's collections of print, non-print and electronic materials.

The Library Director is responsible for material selection. S/he may delegate this responsibility to the appropriate staff.

All questions or concerns about this policy or how it is executed are to be directed to the Library Director. S/he may, if necessary, direct questions and concerns to the Library Board of Trustees for response and/or resolution.

Third party sources, including but not limited to professional reviewing sources, publisher's catalogs, online databases, and other media sources, may be relied upon in material selection.

As long as a requested material falls within the provisions of this policy, suggestions by Library patrons for material acquisition will be considered.

#### **V. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING PATRON COMPLAINTS REGARDING MATERIALS**

When a patron questions the inclusion of any title in the Library's collection, the patron will be referred to the Adult or the Youth Services Manager. If requested, the patron will be furnished with a "Patron Request for Reconsideration" form to issue a formal complaint or objection. (copy attached). The appropriate Service Manager will review and prepare a response to the complaint or objection, review the response with the Library Director, and notify the patron of the response within 14 days of the request.

If unsatisfied with the Service Manager's response, the patron may appeal to the Library Director within 30 days of the date on the response. The Library Director shall review the pertinent material and notify the patron about his/her decision

within 30 days of receiving the appeal. The Director's decision may be appealed to the Library Board of Trustees within 30 days of his/her written decision. The appeal will be placed on the next appropriate Board of Trustee meeting agenda as a public meeting.

If the Board of Trustees, at its sole discretion, feels it necessary, it may appoint a Review Committee to review the patron complaint or objection. The committee may include professional librarians and specialists in the subject matter of the material. The Review Committee will provide a written opinion to the Board on whether the contested material is within the scope of the Board's Materials Selection Policy.

The Library Board of Trustees may also conduct a public hearing on the issue and shall make the decision about the disposition of the material in question at a public meeting of the Board.

## **VI. GENERAL SELECTION CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Material selection is guided by the Library's Mission Statement.

The mission of the Carnegie-Stout Public Library is to improve the quality of life by providing resources for individual enjoyment, enlightenment, and knowledge and that enhance the literacy of youth.

Due to space considerations, the Library attempts to avoid the accumulation of duplicative material. However, the Library may add multiple copies of a single title in print, non-print, and electronic formats to satisfy patron demand.

The Library builds its collection to serve all segments of the community, including students. However, material selection will not be based on the curriculum needs of any educational institution, organization or group.

### **A. NON-FICTION**

The following is a non-exclusive list of factors the library considers in selecting non-fiction materials:

1. Authority and competence of the author.
2. Accomplishment of its purpose.
3. Clarity, honesty, and accuracy of presentation.
4. Relation to the existing collection.
5. Relative importance in comparison with other books on the subject.
6. Relevance to the needs and interests of patrons.
7. Timeliness of subject matter.
8. Balance of alternate viewpoints.
9. Objectivity or clear identification of a particular viewpoint.
10. Cost of materials; and
11. Inclusion of Dubuque, Iowa, and the Mississippi River history and literary efforts that also meet the above mentioned criteria.

Every attempt is made to acquire titles by local authors that are published by mainstream publishers.

Titles that are self-published are not added to the regular collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so; i.e. valuable local content, high local interest. Print on demand titles that are self-published, even though available via mainstream distributors, will not be added unless they meet the library's collection criteria.

## B. FICTION

The following is a non-exclusive list of factors the library considers in selecting fiction materials:

1. Satisfying the heavy demand from recreational readers for popular new titles.
2. Relevance to the needs and interests of library users and the community.
3. Relation to the existing collection.
4. Cost of materials.
5. Classics of literature, film, and music.
6. Critically acclaimed authors, directors, actors, and musicians.
7. Representative titles from a broad range of literary, cinematic, and musical genres.
8. Authority and competence of the author.

Inclusion of Dubuque, Iowa literary efforts meeting the above mentioned criteria. Every attempt is made to acquire titles by local authors that are published by mainstream publishers. Titles that are self-published are not added to the regular collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so (valuable local content, high local interest). Print on demand titles that are self-published, even though available via mainstream distributors, will not be added unless they meet the library's collection criteria.

## VII. GIFTS

The Library accepts gifts of materials from patrons if the material fits within the scope of the Materials Selection Policy. The Library will not accept materials which are not outright gifts. The Library reserves the right to dispose of gift materials (see "Discarding Materials" below) as its needs dictate. All materials approved for addition will be integrated into the existing library collection. The Library cannot provide donors with an estimate of the gift's value for tax purposes.

A letter of appreciation, signed by a Manager and/or Director, will be offered to all persons identified as donating gift material. (*See also the Library Board of Trustees policy on "Gifts".*)

## VIII. DISCARDING MATERIALS

The Library continually examines its collection to remove "materials which are out-of-date, in poor condition, or used infrequently." In determining what

materials should be removed, the titles are checked against bibliographies of recommended public library materials and may be examined by the appropriate Service Manager and/or the Library Director.

Removed items may, be sold, given to the Friends of the Library on consignment for public sale, or transferred to a company that deals with the resale of books to raise funds. If an item is damaged, it may be discarded.

Discarded materials are not to be presented to individual persons, groups or organizations because of possible resultant impressions of favoritism.

#### **IX. REVISION OF THE MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

The Material Selection Policy is regularly reviewed by the Library Director. If a change is required, the Library Director will make a recommendation to the Library Board of Trustees for consideration and action.

#### **X. CONCLUSION**

The intention of this policy is to provide a guideline for meeting the varied needs and interests of Dubuque's community members who look to the Library to meet their informational and recreational needs.

*By the Carnegie-Stout Public Library  
Library Board of Trustees  
Adopted November 8, 1973  
Revised 1981  
Revised 1985  
Revised 1986  
Revised 1997  
Revised 2000  
Revised 2002  
Revised January 22, 2009  
Revised January 24, 2013  
Revised, February 25, 2016*



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*Jenny Weiss, President  
Library Board of Trustees*

**CARNEGIE-STOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
PATRON'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION  
OF LIBRARY-OWNED MATERIALS**

Please fill out all of the items below:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Do you have a Carnegie-Stout Library card?  Yes  No

The material that you are recommending for reconsideration is:

book  DVD  audio  magazine  music CD  other

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Publication Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you read, watch, or review the entire book, video, etc.?  
 Yes  No (How much? \_\_\_\_\_)

What part or parts of the material do you object to?

What part or parts of the materials were false or inaccurate?

What point-of-view was the author/producer trying to convey?

Who would be harmed by reading or viewing this material? How would they be harmed?

Do you think that the average Library user should be able to decide for himself/herself about the suitability of this material? Why or why not?

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please mail to the Library or drop off at a Library service desk. The procedure for handling these requests is contained in the Library's "Materials Selection Policy." It includes review by professional Library staff and the ability to appeal to the Library Director and, if necessary, the Library Board of Trustees.)*

**CARNEGIE-STOUT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
PATRON'S REQUEST FOR PURCHASE  
OF MATERIALS**

The Library welcomes suggestions for materials. Before making a suggestion, please check the online catalog to see if the Library already owns or has ordered the material. If the items is in the catalog, you may reserve it.

To make a suggestion, please provide the following information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Library Barcode 218250 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to reserve this item? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

If the Library does not purchase your suggested title, would you like us to try and borrow the materials from another library for a fee of \$3 (three dollars)?

Format

\_\_\_\_\_Book    \_\_\_\_\_Audio Book CD    \_\_\_\_\_Music CD    \_\_\_\_\_Periodical  
\_\_\_\_\_DVD    \_\_\_\_\_Digital    \_\_\_\_\_Blu-Ray    \_\_\_\_\_e-Book  
                  Audio  
\_\_\_\_\_Other

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Publication \_\_\_\_\_

Series \_\_\_\_\_

For questions, call 563-589-4225 and extension 2224 for Adult materials or 2228 for Youth Services materials.