

Silas Bronson Library Collection Development Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to guide librarians and inform the public of the selection and maintenance practices for the Silas Bronson Library's ("Library") collections. This policy applies to both the digital and print materials in the Library's collection.

The Library makes every effort to provide library materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. Library materials should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole. The Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

2. Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials

All Library materials are selected based on the judgement of the librarians who are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials. All such qualified Library staff may participate in selecting materials, however, the ultimate responsibility for selecting material rests with the Library Director. Suggestions from patrons are welcome and given due consideration. Patron suggestions must be submitted using the appropriate form on the Library's website.

3. Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

Specific acquisitions may include items that may be unorthodox, unpopular or controversial in nature. The Library's acquisition of such items does not constitute endorsement of their content but rather allows for their free expression. The Library adheres to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements. No library material, display or program shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program or because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance

with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The Library will provide materials and services that reflect the diverse needs of its patrons through a variety of formats including print, non-print, downloadable content, digital collections such as ebooks and e-audiobooks, and online databases.

The Library will not exclude materials solely based on the race, nationality, political, gender, sexuality, or social views of the author.

The Library will endeavor to collect, organize, and make available a diverse selection of materials which offer a variety of points of view and levels of difficulty to accommodate all ages, interests, and abilities.

4. Selection Criteria

The Library contains several collections for various age groups. Library materials will be assigned to a collection by qualified Library staff based on the age appropriateness of the content. The Library reserves the right to relocate its materials at any time. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for the reading, listening, and viewing habits of their children. The Library's selection of adult materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that the items may be viewed by children.

In order to build and maintain its high quality collection based on professionally accepted standards of material relevance, physical condition, availability of duplicates, availability of age appropriate or grade-level material, continued demand of material, the Library applies the following general criteria when considering materials for acquisition:

A. General Criteria

- i. Suitability of subject for anticipated audience;
- ii. Present and potential relevance to community needs and interests;
- iii. Importance as a document of the times;

- iv. Relation to existing collection pertaining to the subject;
- v. Reputation and/or importance of author;
- vi. Skill, competence, and purpose of creator;
- vii. Attention of reviewers in standard professional review sources;
- viii. Suitability of physical condition, subject, and format for Library use;
- ix. Potential patron appeal;
- x. Cost and availability.

B. Local History and Genealogy Collection

The Local History and Genealogy Collection provides an expansive assortment of materials for research and reference use. The Library is committed to preserving the collection for future use and providing access to these resources to patrons. As such, these materials do not circulate in order to maintain the integrity of the items.

Community scrapbooks, valuable manuscripts, and other items of relatively high intrinsic value and/or rarity may be considered for addition to the collection based on local significance. However, the specific management of these items may not be consistent with the public nature of the Local History and Genealogy collection. Should the Library decline any donated local history items, suggestions will be provided for placement in other Waterbury area historic collections.

C. Digital Collections and Databases

Electronic materials play an important role in the Library's collection. These materials include databases, eBooks, eAudiobooks, and downloadable and streaming media.

Criteria used in selecting digital resources include material relevance, continued demand of material, ease of use, uniqueness of content, technology requirements, vendor reputation and customer service, availability for remote access, and cost.

Born digital items are those materials created in a digital format. They are distinct from analog items that are subsequently digitized, such as paper manuscripts or photographs. In order to accept born digital items, the Library addresses copyright and licensing,

redaction of personally identifiable information, any restrictions on use or circulation, maintenance and evolution of accepted formats.

In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. Certain digital collections the Library makes accessible to users are governed by the vendor's specific terms of service, including patron residency and minimum age requirements. Some material available in a broader digital collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. Only each child and their parent or caregiver can decide what material is suitable for that child to read or view. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to ensure appropriate access to broader digital collections. The fact that children possibly may access materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate does not impact the selection of databases and digital platforms.

5. Gifts and Donations

The Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials for the collection and applies to them the same standards of selection that govern purchases. Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that those that meet the Library's selection criteria may be retained and those that do not may be redistributed to the Friends of the Silas Bronson Library.

6. Collection Maintenance and Management

The Library will maintain an active, useful collection by repairing and/or replacing essential material and removing on a continuous basis those publications which are either obsolete, of little historical significance, overage, no longer in demand, or unsuitable for use.

Determinations of items for withdrawal shall be made by qualified Library staff. Items for withdrawal from the collection must be approved by the Head of Purchasing of the City of Waterbury. Withdrawn items will be given to the Friends of the Silas Bronson Library.

The Local History and Genealogy Collection materials are rarely removed due to the unique nature of the items and their content.

7. Controversial Materials

The Library recognizes that some materials may not be considered appropriate by all patrons. Selections will not be made based upon anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the overall library patron community.

Responsibility for the reading, listening and viewing habits of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. The Library maintains several age-appropriate collections for children and teens. Materials may be reassigned among these sub-collections based on the age appropriateness of the content. Selection of adult material will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. The removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive is prohibited.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be removed from the open shelves except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage or theft.

The decision by an author, publisher, or other content creator to withdraw their work from the market and stop selling or publishing it will not be considered sufficient reason alone for the Library to withdraw it from the collection.

8. Reconsideration of Materials

The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays, or programs to individual residents of Waterbury. Please see our Review and Reconsideration Policy and Request for Reconsideration Form for further information on this process.

Approved by Board of Agents 2026-01-07
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