

Westford Public Library Collection Development Policy

In accordance with 22 V.S.A. § 69, the Westford Public Library adopts this collection development policy which includes both a materials selection policy and procedures for the reconsideration and retention of library materials.

1. Introduction & Purpose

The Westford Public Library (the library) maintains collections of resources to help library users pursue their intellectual interests and educational objectives, including material for leisure time enjoyment and practical problem solving.

The library strives to build a collection representing multiple points of view that reflect the community's diverse people and history, including a diversity of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, religion, and political beliefs and a diversity of authors, creators, and media.

The library's collections reflect a commitment to intellectual freedom. Compliance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Vermont laws prohibiting discrimination in places of public accommodation shall underpin the practices and practical processes of maintaining the library's collections.

The library remains committed to securing professional services, including legal counsel, as necessary to ensure that its collection development activities comply with the above-identified State and federal laws.

2. Materials Selection Policy

Multiple factors determine what materials are included in the library's collections: funding, space, staffing, and ongoing maintenance needs. Staff weigh the following criteria when making collection decisions:

- Alignment with the library's mission and strategic plan
- Community interests, demand, and suggestions
- Representation by and of diverse individuals and groups (including race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, religion, and political beliefs)
- Significance and relationship to the local community and State of Vermont
- Authority and qualifications of the creator(s), publisher(s), and/or producer(s)
- High-interest materials outside of mainstream publishing and reviewing journals
- Price and availability
- Accessibility of format and content
- Anticipated viability and/or longevity of the format

Suggestions from the community for items to be considered for inclusion are encouraged, but suggested materials must meet selection criteria. Donated materials must also meet selection criteria prior to being included in the library's collection.

The library may provide access to subscription databases and shared online collections. The library may not have direct control over the inclusion or exclusion of specific titles within those shared collections.

3. Materials Retention Policy

Materials that no longer meet the needs of the community and/or no longer support the library's collection will be withdrawn from the collection. This may include materials that are damaged, that include obsolete information, or that have not been used within a reasonable length of time. Items withdrawn from the collection will be disposed of in accordance with all applicable laws and municipal policies.

4. Procedures for the Reconsideration and Retention of Materials

- An individual (Library User) with a concern about the inclusion of an item in the library's collection are encouraged to discuss their concern with the library director (the Director).
- If speaking with the Director does not resolve the concern, a Library User may initiate a formal request that an item be removed from the library collection or relocated within the library collection by completing a Request for Reconsideration form and submitting it to the director.
- The item in question will remain in circulation, it will not be relocated or removed from the library collection during the review process.
- The library will review only one request for reconsideration of materials at a time and will do so in the order in which requests are received.
- The Director will notify the Library User that their Request for Reconsideration form has been received and will inform the Library User when they anticipate processing the form (based on the number of other requests that have been filed).
- The Director or their delegate will review the Request for Reconsideration form and the material in question. They will read, listen to, or view the item and will read reviews of the item in professional journals when available. They will evaluate the usage of the item by the public (circulation) and evaluate whether the selection of the item conforms with the library's Materials Selection Policy.
- The Director will notify the Library User of the library's decision regarding the request within 15 library business days of the initiation of the review process in

writing, stating the reasons for the decision to the Library User who submitted the request.

- If the Library User is not satisfied with the library's decision, they may submit a written appeal to the Board of Trustees (the Board) of the library within 10 library business days of receipt of the decision letter.
- The Board will notify the Library User if their appeal will be heard by the Board. If the Board plans to address the appeal at a meeting, the Library User will be notified of when and where the next regular meeting of the board will be held.
- The decision of the Board is final. Once an appeal has been considered by the Board, it will not be reconsidered.

This policy was revised and approved by the Board of Trustees of the Westford Public Library in May 2025.

Approved by: Helen Sterling (chair), Marianne Bassford, Kelsi Cross,
Pat Hechmer, and Becky Roy