

**Grand Rapids Public Library  
Board of Library Commissioners  
Policy Manual**



**Policy 40-3  
Collection Development**

**PURPOSE**

The Grand Rapids Public Library strives to connect people to the transforming power of knowledge. This policy is designed to support the library's mission and to articulate the scope, responsibilities, and considerations used in the selection and maintenance of all materials for each of our locations.

This policy operates in conjunction with the documents of the American Library Association approved by the Grand Rapids Public Library Board of Library Commissioners:

- The Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom To Read Statement
- Statement on Labels and Rating Systems
- Diversity in Collection Development
- Free Access to Libraries to Minors
- Expurgation of Library Materials
- Evaluating Library Collections
- Challenged Materials
- Restricted Access to Library Materials
- Freedom to View
- Access to Electronic Information, Networks, and Services

**COMMUNITY SERVED**

Vibrant, exciting, and diverse, Grand Rapids is the second largest city in Michigan, with over 1 million people in the surrounding metropolitan area. The Grand Rapids Public Library has a rich heritage of more than 135 years of service to our urban community. Today, a beautifully renovated central library joins seven regional and neighborhood branches to provide services for 198,000 citizens, 62% of which have library cards. With the addition of a highly utilized web branch, the Library serves over one million patrons annually and circulates over 1.6 million books, media, and other items both physically and virtually.

**SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**

In response to the needs of our dynamic community, the library aims to provide access to a broad range of resources. The library has a responsibility to act inclusively, rather than exclusively, and our collection represents a diversity of viewpoints, including materials that reflect differing social, cultural, political, and religious views. The collection contains resources in various formats (including print, non-print, and electronically accessible),

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languages, and comprehension levels. Understanding that technologies are always evolving, the library will continue to assess and evaluate the usage and need of all formats. While the library's collection includes popular materials, it is the goal of the Grand Rapids Public Library to provide a balanced, deep, and enduring collection of materials for the Grand Rapids community.

Our collection includes resources:

- To meet the information needs of our community
- To enrich, entertain, and inspire
- To help people learn new skills, better their education, and improve literacy
- To increase social awareness and community involvement

#### **ACCESS**

The library does not restrict access to reading, viewing, or listening to its materials based on age and provides equal access to all library resources for all library users. To ensure equitable access to different materials, the library does restrict circulation of reference materials and may establish different loan periods for select materials.

Given the diversity of the community, the library seeks to acquire the broadest range of materials within budgetary constraints. Due to the varied nature of the collection, patrons may find that not all materials will be suitable for all audiences.

Parents or legal guardians have the right and responsibility to determine what is appropriate for their own children. The library encourages parents to be involved in their child's use of the library and to guide them in choosing suitable materials. Final responsibility for what a child checks out on his or her library card is left to the parent. The library does not stand in place of parents (*in loco parentis*).

Due to limited space, security, and preservation concerns, some items may be placed in designated storage areas of the library. All items in the storage areas are available for patron access, but must be retrieved by a staff person.

#### **LABELING**

The library collection will be organized, cataloged, and marked for the primary purpose of helping people find the materials they want. The library does not label, alter, or shield materials due to the nature of the content or imagery. The library does not add or remove evaluative labels from library materials, such as MPAA ratings on some motion pictures, or language ratings on some audio materials.

For more information on labeling of library collections, see ALA Labeling Statement.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Final responsibility and authority for the collection rests with the director, who operates within the framework of policies adopted by the Grand Rapids Public Library Board of Library Commissioners. Direct responsibility for the selection, maintenance, and weeding

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of materials is delegated to professional librarians. The transfer or disposition of sizable or special collections will require board approval upon recommendation(s) from the director.

#### **SELECTION OF MATERIALS**

Under the parameters of the annually established materials budget, librarians select materials for the collection. Each type of material is considered in terms of its own value and in relation to its audience. An item will not necessarily be judged against all criteria and no one standard applies in all cases and at all times. Librarians use various tools to help guide their selection process, including review media, trade publications, publishers' catalogs, and usage statistics. Additionally, materials may be added based on patron requests and donations.

The following criteria is to be used when adding new or gift items to the collection:

- Relevance to the present and potential needs of the community
- Accuracy, timeliness, currency, and validity
- Current or historical significance of author or subject
- Suitability of the physical form for library use
- Public demand and/or local interest
- Comparison with other available titles in existing collection
- Cost
- Scarcity of materials on the subject
- Comprehension and depth of treatment
- Diversity of viewpoint
- Literary style, importance, or originality
- Cultural significance and critical acclaim
- Sustained interest

#### **COLLECTIONS WITH ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION**

##### ***Grand Rapids History and Special Collections***

The library collects, preserves, and makes accessible for research purposes numerous historical materials. The scope of the different collection areas vary, as outlined below.

##### ***Grand Rapids, Michigan History and Genealogy***

This area is composed primarily of books and periodicals with a specific focus on Grand Rapids and Western Michigan History and Genealogy, including materials that document migration to the Grand Rapids and Western Michigan region. General materials on Michigan, Great Lakes and Upper Midwest History and Genealogy are also collected to a lesser degree.

##### ***Archival Collections***

The archival collections are composed of original materials of a documentary nature centered on the Greater Grand Rapids area. This may include the following, but is not restricted to; individual and organizational records, diaries, church records, maps, visual images of various formats, oral histories, scrapbooks, and Grand Rapids and surrounding area newspapers.

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The library generally does not collect materials that are considered realia, or three dimensional objects. Realia or objects are passed on to other institutions with the expertise to collect and house such materials. The archives also does not collect the official records of the City of Grand Rapids. Such records are kept with the City Archives and Records Center.

#### ***Furniture Design***

This collection is composed primarily of books, periodicals, and folios with a specific concentration on furniture history, design, and related decorative arts.

#### ***Rare Books***

This collection is composed of a variety of different titles identified as materials of considerable value. The value is determined either by the monetary value or the content of each individual title. The particular strengths of this collection include Americana, American History, Angle Fishing, and Fine Arts.

#### ***Materials for Children, Teens, and their Caregivers***

The library collects materials for children and teens from birth through high school. The collection, especially at the Main Library, is heavily used by area schools, and materials are purchased to meet the needs of students and teachers, in keeping with the role of a public library. Items are purchased in a variety of formats, with an eye toward currency, age level suitability, and a general balance of the subject collection. The library collects juvenile materials in a variety of international languages. Branch juvenile and teen collections are primarily recreational reading and entertainment, with limited curriculum support materials due to space constraints.

#### ***Government Documents***

The library is a selective depository for United States government (federal) publications and also makes state and local documents available to citizens. The library has been a depository since 1876 and it offers many valuable historical documents. Government documents are available in paper, CD-ROM, microform, and electronically.

#### ***International Languages***

The library collects materials in numerous languages for all ages. The library is committed to developing and maintaining international language collections which meet the needs of a changing Grand Rapids population, as well as materials in support of those patrons learning an additional language. City demographics and U.S. census information are factors in determining which languages are collected.

#### ***Textbooks***

The library does not generally collect textbooks. A textbook may be added to the collection if it is the best information on a particular subject. Textbooks will not be purchased based on the need of a particular educational course.

***Periodicals***

The library subscribes to hundreds of current periodicals and newspapers available on paper, microfilm, and microfiche. The library also retains many older titles which are no longer received or which have ceased publication.

**COLLECTION MAINTENANCE AND WEEDING**

The circulating collection of the library is not intended to be archival. In order to ensure that the collection remains relevant, in good physical condition, and continues to meet the needs of our diverse community, items will be evaluated on an ongoing basis for potential withdrawal. Due to space constraints, some items may be moved to storage areas of the library, relocated to another branch location, or given to the Friends of the Library. Under certain circumstances, some items or collections may be relocated to other institutions.

Materials are subject to removal if:

- Items are worn, stained, or damaged beyond repair
- Items are out of date, contain inaccurate data, or are not historically significant
- Newer, more current, or more comprehensive resources are available
- A more desirable format of the content is available
- The usage of the item is low
- Duplicates of the item exist within the collection
- The collection is limited in space
- Items removed from the collection are given to the Friends of the Library and may be sold in support of the library.

**PATRON SUGGESTIONS**

Suggestions are welcome and often provide valuable information about community interests and unmet collection needs of patrons. All suggestions are assessed with the same selection criteria as other items added to the collection.

The library provides a Suggest a Title Form.

**DONATIONS / GIFTS**

The library welcomes donations of materials or money to be used toward the purchase of materials. Donated items are accepted with the understanding that the same selection criteria used in the purchase of new items, will also be applied to donated items. Donated items are not automatically added to the library's collection. Items not added to the collection may be given to the Friends of the Library and may be sold in support of the library. The library can not appraise gift materials for tax purposes.

Monetary donations in the form of memorials or honoraria are also accepted and when so designated are managed through the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation.

Please see Donation/Gift Form.

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Please see our donation guidelines for current information about donating specific items to the library.

#### **RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS**

The library believes that each patron has the right to read, listen, or view any item of their choosing. The collection includes resources that range widely in subject and treatment, including complex and controversial issues that may be unpopular or unorthodox in opinion. Evaluation of items included in the collection pertain to the entire work, not just individual parts of the work. Language, situations, or subjects, which may be offensive to some community members, do not disqualify materials, which, in their entirety, are judged to be of value.

If a Grand Rapids Public Library patron is concerned by or questions the inclusion of a particular item in the library's collection, he or she may fill out a Statement of Concern Form at any library branch. All completed forms will be directed to the library director, initiating a review process. The patron will receive a written response regarding the concern.

The board authorizes and directs the library director to develop and implement guidelines consistent with this policy.

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Suggest a Title Form  
Donation / Gift Form  
Statement of Concern Form

#### **ALA DOCUMENTS SUPPORTED BY THE GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY:**

- The Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom To Read Statement
- Statement on Labels and Rating Systems
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- Expurgation of Library Materials
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*Cross Reference: Rescinded Policy 95-4*  
*Adopted: November 20, 2012*  
*Amended: June 25, 2013*