

## WESTBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

### **Introduction**

The Westbrook Public Library is a department of the Town of Westbrook and is a taxpayer-supported institution. As a result, the Library Board is responsible for establishing policies and rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of all library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds.

### **Library Mission Statement**

"The Westbrook Public Library is dedicated to supporting our community's intellectual, cultural and social needs. We offer a balanced collection of materials, information services and programs for lifelong learners." (Westbrook Public Library, 2019.)

### **Collection Development Policy Purpose**

The Collection Development Policy is to be updated by the Library Director and approved by the Westbrook Public Library Board of Trustees as needed. The aim of this policy is to provide procedural, scope, selection, and removal guidelines that are in line with the library's mission and approach to patron services. It will also be able to serve as a mediation tool for items under reconsideration.

### **Westbrook Community**

The Westbrook, Connecticut community is a small shoreline town of about 7,000 residents. This community values its history and education. Westbrook Public Library was established in 1895 to serve the Westbrook community.

### **Collection Philosophy**

The Westbrook Public Library collects materials, in a variety of formats, which support its function as an information source for the needs of an active community. The collection works in conjunction with the mission to provide a balanced collection for the intellectual, cultural, and social needs of all residents. To the best of the library's abilities, there is a view of equality for the patrons and the materials that meet their needs. The Westbrook Public Library works to maintain best practices for public libraries in collection development including but not limited to the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement (American Library Association, n.d.).

### **General Collection Scope**

The scope of the general collection contains fiction and non-fiction works that are in current and lasting demand. Including popular works and classic literature. It consists of materials from a variety of formats including AV materials, books on all subjects, periodicals, newspapers, reference materials, and government communications. These formats are selected to meet the changing needs of adults, teens, children, parents, students, and businesspeople.

### **Online/Digital Collections**

The online collection represents a variety of views for everyone in the Westbrook community and in some cases the LION consortium. The online collection consists of content on-demand services for downloadable eBooks, audiobooks, music, movies, magazines, and TV. The online collection also consists of research databases and continuing education tools.

### **Special Collections**

The Westbrook Public Library has a dedicated collection of reference materials preserving the histories of the town of Westbrook, its key figures, and the community in general. The range of items in this collection includes original works, archives, historical town documents, genealogical records, and other local histories. These materials are accessible and researchable, but do not circulate. Other special collections are defined by genre, format, or donor related identifiers. They are usually purchased with designated materials funds or donated.

### **Government Publications**

The Westbrook Public Library provides access to local and federal government documents as they are made available to the library or requested by patrons. Government documents are made available in the general reference collection.

### **Donations and Gifts**

The Westbrook Public Library accepts donations of books and other materials. The Library retains the authority to accept or reject donated items. Library staff make all decisions as to the use, storage, and final disposition of donated items. The Library does not evaluate or appraise gift materials for tax purposes.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Library Board delegates the oversight and management of the collection, within the guidelines of this policy, to the Library Director and staff that are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials. Responsibility for the selection, maintenance, replacement, and weeding of materials rests with the designated professional staff under the overall direction of the Director.

Consortium-level collections may be governed by an additional set of collection criteria.

### **Selection Criteria**

Library staff responsible for collection development use their professional training, knowledge, and expertise in order to provides access to the widest array of library and educational materials possible. They may use the following general criteria to select materials for the collection:

- Meets the interests and needs of the local community
- Level of demand and/or notoriety
- Patron requests
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject
- Authority of the author and/or publisher
- Regularly employ key selection/deselection tools such as review journals, reader reviews, and the CREW Manual
- Format relevance, languages, and quality of condition
- Relevance to library patrons
- Budget allocations for specified materials
- Review of gifts and local author submissions
- Monitor circulation performance for duplicates and replacements
- Analyze collection characteristics and collection data to better serve patrons
- Online resources are also evaluated based on accessibility and availability
- Review new electronic resources
- Collaborate, as needed, with other subject specialists

All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

### **Selection Process and Management**

Westbrook Public Library Collection Development Policy – Adopted December 2021 – Rev. November 2025

As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes withdrawn from the collection. Decisions are made and/or influenced by the selection criteria listed above. The Library Director and, if needed, the Westbrook Public Library Board of Trustees, has final say over library collection decisions. Collection management in accordance with this policy is the responsibility of designated library staff members, including but not limited to the Library Director, the Public Service/Assistant Librarian, and the Children's Librarian, all of whom are professionally trained to curate and develop collections that provide access to the widest array of library and educational materials.

Other library staff members may be invited to participate in "book selection meetings" where designated staff meet as needed to review potential selection and deselection needs.

The library will dispose of materials that have been withdrawn according to the criteria for disposition of materials described in this policy. The library has the discretion to give away, recycle, or dispose of donated materials that have not been added to the library's collection. Discarded library books will not be resold but may be recycled through sustainability programs or donated to other causes. The Library Director will advise librarians responsible for collection development of their budgeted resources and any special funds that may become available. The Library Director and/or their designee has final say over financial decisions related to collection development.

### **Patron Requests**

Library Patrons may request items that the library does not own or have access to via Interlibrary Loan or LION consortia sharing for the library to add to the collection. Patron requests will be given priority consideration based on availability, price, format, collection relevance, the above selection criteria, and/or the librarian's discretion.

### **Budget and Resource Allocations**

Budget and resource allocations are set by the Library Director. Allocations may be amended based on availability of additional funding. Resources include Town of Westbrook funding, Library Gift Funds, grants, and donations.

### **Disposition of Materials**

Materials will be removed from the collection based on the following criteria: items are damaged or in poor condition, items have lost their relevance for use, items have not been circulated or used for a prolonged period of time, the contents of an item become inaccurate, there is greater circulation and availability at other libraries in the LION consortia, spatial limitations deem removal of items necessary, there are an excessive number of copies in

relation to demand, approval of a reconsideration request, and/or unknown factors that require the removal of an item. Library materials shall only be excluded for legitimate, professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in this policy.

### **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.

### **Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

In accordance with the mission of the Westbrook Public Library, providing access to materials for all members of the community is essential. Library patrons of the Westbrook Public Library have the right to use the entirety of the collection according to library loan rules and will not be restricted access based on any reason other than fiduciary obligations (i.e. excessive overdue fines, pending replacement charges, or LION Consortia best practices) or matters of compliance with library policies.

Westbrook Public Library supports the patrons' right to voluntary inquiry, honors the free dissemination of information and ideas, and promotes freedom of expression. The Library also supports free access to ideas by its patrons.

Additionally, Westbrook Public Library respects the freedom of information for its patrons. The

Library follows the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement when acquiring and managing collections and strives to provide a diverse collection that seeks to represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints. Acquisition or use of any item does not imply approval or endorsement of the contents.

As such, no library material shall be removed because of origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material. The removal, exclusion or censoring of any library material on the sole basis that an individual finds that library material offensive is prohibited.

Library patrons of the Westbrook Public Library should consult the Material Review and Reconsideration Policy, as well as the Request for Reconsideration of Materials Form. Requests to reconsider library material may only be completed by individual residents of Westbrook.