

## MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

**Philosophy:** Historically, the public library was developed in the United States as an arm of free public education. The school system and the public library grew in parallel directions, the school system being the avenue of formal education, the public library an informal avenue.

The public library provides materials for all ages, from earliest childhood through maturity, on as nearly all subjects of human interest as possible, taking into consideration budget limitations.

The public library, while not intended as a scholarly institution, recognizes the need of the citizen whose work or interest may demand information of a highly specialized nature. For this reason, the collection contains many classics in fields of endeavors which are a part of world civilization.

It is the responsibility of a library to provide materials which will enable the citizen to form his/her own opinions. Therefore, the library will provide materials, possibly argumentative, representing several points of view. History has demonstrated that a cause which may have been popular ten, twenty, or fifty years ago may well be out of favor today. The holdings of the public library must reflect mature judgment and an awareness that the library itself will endure for the use of the citizen of tomorrow who might wish to know something of the origin and development of ideas.

The public library is a living, growing resource for educational activity, and its development is the responsibility of the Regional Board of Trustees (the "Regional Board") on one hand and the Regional Director (the "Director") and Certificated Librarians on the other. Both the nature of the library's function and the content of the collection are strictly professional responsibilities.

No one public library stands alone in its philosophy, its content, or its functions; only application and emphasis differ. The best thinking of the profession is applied by the individual library.

It is the public library's function to preserve and make easily and fully available the printed word and other non-print materials that will assist all people to:

- Educate themselves continuously.
- Keep pace with progress in all fields of knowledge.
- Become better citizens.
- Be more capable in their daily occupations.
- Develop their creative and spiritual capacities.
- Appreciate and enjoy works of art and literature.
- Make such use of leisure time as will promote their personal and social well-being.
- Contribute to the growth of knowledge.

**Authority:** The final authority for the determination of policy to guide the selection and acquisition of library materials is vested in the Regional Board.

**Responsibility:** The final responsibility for all materials selected, as for all library activities, rests with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Regional Board. The Director delegates responsibility for the selection of books and other materials to the Certificated Librarians. Such delegation does not relieve any individual of responsibility but rather places the initial selection at the level where work with the public and the book stock is accomplished. All staff members, as well as the general public, may recommend materials to be considered for purchase. All recommendations are channeled through regular processes and considered in light of selection policies.

**Carrying out Library Objectives:** Materials selection policies necessarily begin with a study of the community, existing collections of the Member Libraries within the system, and services which the library is expected to perform. Materials selection is intended to implement the general objectives of AZRLS. The purpose of the selection process is to obtain expertly written books and other materials to further the Member Library's program of providing information, reference, guidance, and other assistance to those engaged in educational pursuits, as well as to provide reading materials that are informational and recreational.

**Criteria:** It is AZRLS' policy is to purchase, or accept as gifts, the best materials which can be located to meet the needs of the Member Library's community. Criteria to meet these needs include the following:

- Importance of the subject matter to the collection.
- Scarcity of materials on the subject.
- Timeliness or permanence of the work.
- Appearance of the title in special bibliographies or indexes.
- Credibility: Is the book authentic (based on fact)? Is it documented?
- Literary value.
- Author's significance and reputation as a writer:
- Legitimate purpose of the author.
- Local authors' works are considered with more leniency than other authors.
- Public demand (materials such as romances, westerns, mysteries, bestsellers, audiobooks and video recordings are purchased to meet the public's demand).
- Reputation and standing of the publisher.
- Price.
- Availability of materials elsewhere within PINES.
- Format.

**Aids:** Ideally, every book added to AZRLS should be reviewed before purchase by a Certified Librarian with trained judgment, a knowledge of the library's present resources, and acquaintance with the requirements of the readers. Generally, circumstances make such reviewing impossible or unnecessary, so the certificated librarians make skilled use

of selection aids, publishers' basic general lists, and bestseller lists, as well as requests from the general reading public. While book reviews are a major source of information about new books, they are not followed blindly. No one publication is relied upon exclusively.

**Adult Books:** Points considered in adult book selections are literary, educational, informational, or recreational value; credibility; effectiveness of presentation; qualities conducive to critical thought and understanding; and available funds. Contemporary and popular authors are included. Titles are selected on the basis of the content of the book without regard to the personal history of the author.

**Young Adult Books:** The ultimate aim of library work with young adults is to contribute to the development of well-rounded citizen's alert to the problems of the community, the country, and the world. To this end, readable young adult titles are selected that are keyed to the young adult's needs and interests, as well as books that will tend to open up new interests to the young person.

**Children's Books:** The basic policy of book selection for children is to buy the best new books and to replace and duplicate older titles which have proven their value. Selection covers all fields: books for recreational reading; inspirational books of lasting value; informational books covering a wide range of knowledge which will satisfy the child's natural curiosity and widen his/her interests.

**Audiovisual Materials:** The format of "audio-visual" materials has changed dramatically. Records have changed in speed and material and are used today primarily by collectors only. The policy of AZRLS is to collect what its budget will permit, keeping in consideration its timeliness and its probable value to the collection as a whole. The Member Library should place preference in obtaining those audiovisual items least likely to be purchased by the private citizen for personal use.

**Computer Software:** Computer software shall be purchased for in-library use only. Software beneficial to the public in general may be acquired to support the state-wide effort to provide internet access to all citizens.

**Textbooks:** AZRLS does not purchase textbooks per se. Textbooks are purchased only if the book is of value because of its content, its need in the book collection, and the permanent demand by the general public. AZRLS is not responsible for buying a volume purely because it is a textbook of a class offered in the community.

**Schools:** The public library's books are selected to provide educational and informational services to the total community, adults and children. The public library cannot accept the responsibility of duplication of the same book in sufficient quantity to serve a total class. It is not the purpose of the public library collection to serve as an elementary, secondary, or college supplementary library, although many of its materials may so be used. It is the responsibility of the public school system to supply these curriculum materials. The public library's largest and most important field of emphasis is

the adult field of informational and educational materials because no other public institution exists which can perform this function adequately.

**Denominational Books:** It is the policy of AZRLS not to buy denominational literature. Such denominational books are accepted as gifts from the various denominations who wish to give them to the library. Various denominations and beliefs described in one book are purchased as needed.

**Sex Education:** AZRLS purchases books about sex for such users as social workers, clergy, physicians, teachers, parents, people contemplating marriage, newly married couples, and adolescents. An effort is made to obtain only material that is authoritative and up to date. However, extremely scientific and technical works are usually not added to the collection.

In the field of factual books (such as those on anatomy, physiology, marriage, etc.), any title which deals seriously with sex, in part or in whole, will be considered for purchase on the same basis of consideration as other materials.

In the field of creative composition (especially novels) where references to sex are included, the material is to be considered in its entirety for integrity of purpose and literary merit. A book may thus be acceptable for purchase even though it contains passages which deal frankly with sex so long as the author makes genuine use of such passages as necessary to the larger picture he or she is trying to convey. It is assumed that adult books selected for the libraries' collections are to be chosen in light of the needs and interests of mature, normal, and responsible adults and not of abnormal or immature persons.

## **AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL CIRCULATION POLICY**

AZRLS encourages unrestricted public use of all library materials regardless of an individual's age. However, minors may encounter some library material that would be deemed inappropriate by their parents or guardians and, therefore, AZRLS will follow the Motion Picture Association of America's rating system for audio-visual collections, especially with respect to the circulation of (R) or (NC-17) rated films. Similar industry standards, developed by the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board, governing the rating of home television programming will be referred to when considering the circulation of materials originally created for television broadcast. Library personnel will make some effort to monitor the circulation of such material to minors, but will play only an ancillary role to that of the parent or guardian in supervising the material selection of minors.

Visit the Motion Picture Association of America for movie ratings descriptions, title rating search at [www.mpa.org](http://www.mpa.org) and the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board at <http://www.tvguidelines.org>.