



## **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy is to guide the selection of library materials and inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. The Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, and the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements, issued by the American Library Association underpin this policy. This policy is available on the library's website.

### **OUR MISSION**

Provide free and equal access to information, ideas, books and technology to educate, engage, and enrich the Stamford community.

### **OUR VISION**

The Ferguson Library helps individuals and organizations achieve success in an effort to build a strong, vibrant and inclusive community.

### **OUR FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

- Intellectual Freedom
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Underlying the Ferguson Library's mission and vision is our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as the belief that intellectual freedom is the cornerstone of our democracy. Our values are reflected in how we serve the community and how we work together.

### **INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP**

In December 2022, the Ferguson Library became a book sanctuary library in response to the rising number of book challenges and bans. As a book sanctuary we provide opportunities to expand access to banned and challenged books as well as support and protection for the freedom to read.

In January 2023, the city of Stamford designated Stamford a book sanctuary city.

## **ABOUT THE LIBRARY AND ITS COMMUNITY**

Since it first opened its doors at the end of the 19th century, the Ferguson Library has been the heart of the Stamford community, a place of learning and education, a gathering place where people could meet and exchange ideas. As Stamford grew and changed, the library grew along with it. In 1911, the Ferguson Library became a free public library, embracing the concept that knowledge should be available to all, regardless of ability to pay.

The Main Library (DiMattia Building) is open seven days a week. It is located in the heart of downtown Stamford in a historic building. The collections in this facility are extensive and serve as the backbone of the whole system. A New Materials Room off the lobby offers a light-filled space to browse or read. Our Youth Services Department is housed on both the first floor and lower levels, with large collections and technology stations for children and teens. The Main Library's second floor is our dedicated research floor and includes the Technology Center as well as research guides and other special collections.

The Harry Bennett Branch, across from Turn of River Middle School, is our busiest branch and has a large collection of popular titles in many formats for children, teens and adults. The branch offers programming for all ages, including a popular monthly book discussion series.

The Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch, located in a renovated 19th century farmhouse, is the hub of the Springdale neighborhood, within walking distance for many residents. In addition to its collection of books and other materials for children and adults, Weed sponsors many popular programs, such as preschool storytimes and adult book discussions. Its cozy fireplace room is a popular spot on winter days.

The South End Branch is located in the Lathon Wider Community Center in Stamford's South End, a fast-growing, changing neighborhood. The branch serves a diverse community, which includes many recent immigrants, and has an eclectic, culturally diverse collection. South End offers many educational and recreational programs, including Homework Cafe, music and cultural programs and a long-running adult book discussion that focuses on African and African American authors.

The library's newest branch in the PAL Center, focuses on youth collections and brings library service to Stamford's West Side for the first time. While the Ferguson Library doesn't have branches in all of the neighborhoods, it will work with community partners to establish pop-up libraries.

The Bookmobile has regularly scheduled stops at childcare centers, senior housing, parks, and other neighborhood locations. Its collection includes both adult and children's materials.

## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION**

The Ferguson Library recognizes the importance of the public library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents. Materials are evaluated for inclusion in the collection using a variety of methods, including reviews from established journals, recommendations from professional organizations, circulation data, and staff's professional judgment. This policy acknowledges that librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides residents with access to the widest array of library and other educational materials.

The library will adhere to the following:

- a) 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**, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. This prohibits discriminatory practices in places of public accommodations.
- b) Library materials are provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents.
- c) Library materials shall represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTING LIBRARY MATERIALS**

The Library Board of Trustees delegates the oversight and management of the collection, within the guidelines of this policy, to the CEO 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 CEO.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The library is committed to maintaining a diverse collection that reflects the needs of the community. To ensure this, librarians will review library and educational materials using professionally accepted standards. These standards include evaluating:

- a. material relevance
- b. physical condition
- c. availability of duplicate copies
- d. the presence of age-appropriate or grade-level content
- e. continued community demand

The library affirms that these practices support its mission to provide free and accessible information for all residents.

## **FORMATS**

The library refrains from purchasing unusual formats designed for the home market, including write-in workbooks, multi-part or spiral binding publications with pull-out pages, and miniature gift books.

## **DIGITAL MATERIALS**

The library's digital media collections provide access through a variety of commonly used android and IOS devices, and through a variety of downloadable formats such as ePub, Kindle, PDF, and MP3 audio file or music file. The library also subscribes to movie streaming services that allow users to stream feature films, TV shows, and documentary and educational content. Materials available through these digital collections are not always curated by the library but may be curated by a third-party vendor.

## **DATABASES/DIGITAL COLLECTIONS/ELECTRONIC RESOURCES COLLECTION**

The library collects electronic resources according to the general selection criteria. In addition, criteria specific to electronic formats are applied. Methods of evaluation include comparisons to similar products, demonstrations, literature reviews, and peer consultation.

## **NON-PRINT MATERIALS**

Physical non-print materials remain popular with the library's users. To fill the demand, the library continues to purchase films in DVD and Blu-ray format, audiobooks on compact disc and Playaway format, and music on compact disc. Older formats like VHS, audiocassette, reel-to-reel tape, and LP recording are not owned or collected by the library.

## **ADULT COLLECTIONS**

Titles are typically selected from professional review journals, but other criteria include the reputation of the author and publisher, book award winners, local interest, and appropriateness to the library's users. The goal is to create a comprehensive collection that mirrors the diverse interests of the Stamford community with respect to cultural background, educational level, taste, and reading ability. Books are purchased in

hardcover as well as in trade and mass market paperback. Titles in large print format are also acquired to meet the needs of lower-vision users.

## **FICTION**

The library purchases a wide variety of contemporary fiction works including bestsellers, literary fiction, mysteries, science fiction, fantasy, short story collections, and adult graphic novels. Library staff are aware of community demand for popular reading and select titles based on those criteria, acquiring multiple copies as needed. In addition, the library offers a large number of literary classics which are in demand by students as well as general adult readers.

## **NON-FICTION**

The library maintains an in-depth collection of non-fiction works, currently reflecting the subject areas expressed through the Dewey Decimal classification scheme. This form of classification is under consideration for future modification and/or alteration for increased equity, accessibility and discoverability. We select materials appropriate for a general public library audience, as opposed to scholarly or esoteric works. Some of the more popular subject areas include biography, health, childcare, cooking, business and technology, travel, history, true crime, home improvement, politics and world affairs, and test preparation. There may be some material in the collection that may be considered offensive. No library material shall be removed because of its origin, background or viewpoints express in such material or due to the background or viewpoints of the creator.

## **CHALLENGED BOOKS**

The Ferguson Library is a book sanctuary city and works to expand access to banned and challenged books. The book sanctuary designation affirms the Ferguson Library's commitment to collecting and protecting endangered books, making them accessible to the public, hosting book talks, events, and conversations about diverse characters and stories, and educating others on the history of book banning and burning. As a book sanctuary, the library maintains a collection of challenged books, which is continuously updated. The library also keeps abreast of recently challenged books, which are reviewed by staff before deciding on whether they will be added to the collection.

## **WORLD LANGUAGES**

Our World languages collection supports recent immigrants, international students, and the general public. Materials published in languages other than English are purchased by The Ferguson Library in response to local demographics, demonstrated need, and popular demand. Consideration is given to materials (books, periodicals, film, and music) in various languages that reflect the ethnic diversity of the community. The most popular languages include Spanish, Russian, Haitian Creole, French, Polish, and Chinese.

Ferguson Library staff monitor current demographic data and try to develop collections of additional languages (such as Arabic and Hindi) for newer, growing populations. In order to determine how to best meet the informational and recreational needs of the community, the library will use various assessment tools including census data, surveys, customer registration data, customer requests, and data from other community groups. The library is committed to a flexible, evolving, and ongoing assessment process. Languages may be added or dropped from the collection as community needs dictate.

The World Languages collection contains bestselling original language authors, as well as translated works by famous classic and contemporary authors. Additionally, the general public uses the wider World Language collections for lifelong learning, travel and recreation purposes, and more recently to gain a greater understanding of the cultures of our recent immigrant and refugee communities. The collections also provide materials for customers fluent in more than one language wishing to retain that fluency.

Language learning materials, dictionaries, and literary and cultural resources are collected to support the educational and informational needs of our users. Professional librarians with foreign language expertise are assigned to the management of the collections. The library relies on professional review sources for each subject area and format within the collection.

For each language collection, we have also selected ESL (English as a Second Language) materials to accommodate customer needs. Priority is generally given to American publications and material with an audio-visual component and covers a range of areas, including dictionaries and items dealing with grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing composition, and numeracy.

## **LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY**

The task of the librarian charged with this collection is to identify, acquire, and preserve research materials related to local, state, and regional history and genealogy. The Stamford Room, located on the second floor of the Main Library, houses work on Stamford and Connecticut history in addition to municipal documents, historical maps and atlases, old city directories, genealogical manuscripts, and biographies of prominent people of Stamford and Connecticut.

The library has two large collections of early Stamford photographs, donated by Charles Kurz and Carl Loboza. Mounted and labeled photographs are available for public viewing with special permission. Indexed photocopies of the photos are located at the second floor Information Desk. These photographs are now available through the Ferguson Library Digital Archive. Also available for view is the extensive collection of materials published by Stamford's Overbrook Press from 1934 to 1969.

The Library also owns a collection of microfilm with US Census records, vital, church and cemetery records, city directories (1879 to 1966), and school yearbooks for limited years.

## **GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS - FEDERAL/STATE/CITY- MUNICIPAL/JUDICIAL**

### **FEDERAL DEPOSIT LIBRARY PROGRAM**

Approximately 10% of the materials we receive from the Government Printing Office are in physical formats. The other 90% are online. All federal documents, including physical materials and relevant electronic content such as e-books and websites, appear in the public catalog and can be located through a simple search. The Ferguson Library's government documents librarian is responsible for the selection of all materials through lists provided by the GPO.

### **CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY**

State documents are filed and displayed by agency/topic. They get removed once a year or replaced if there is similar information that is more up-to date. We get a Connecticut Practice Book, the Connecticut Statutes, the Connecticut State Manual and Register. These books are catalogued and filed in Ready Reference on the 2nd floor. Documents are kept for five years or until updated. Books of a greater importance are kept 10 years and filed in the Stamford Room.

### **CITY OF STAMFORD DOCUMENTS**

A collection that includes both print and digital formats. Digital documents and archives are found on the library's local resources page. Print documents can be found in various sections of the 2nd floor. Charter, real estate, agency communications, budgets are the types of documents collected.

### **LIBRARY WEBSITE**

E-resources that do not require subscriptions and licensing agreements may be added to the collection provided they support the educational and information needs of our users.

Library staff may recommend external website links, including government, non-profit and commercial websites, which feature reliable sources and provide valuable content. Non-library parties may suggest or request links, but inclusion and placement of all external links will be carefully evaluated and selected by staff on the basis of the following criteria:

Any requests from the public or other organizations for third-party or reciprocal links will be evaluated by staff using the criteria above.

Websites that advertise a service or product, promote hate speech, or a particular religious or political agenda will not be considered.

## **DIGITAL ARCHIVES**

The library scans and digitizes a variety of hardcopy documents and makes them available electronically through our webpage. These documents may include images such as photographs and drawings; maps; books and booklets; manuscripts; broadsides; letters; and printed ephemera. The documents come from the library's own collections and are selected for inclusion based on community interest. Popular topics include Stamford and Connecticut history, Stamford urban renewal and regional planning materials, and genealogy of local families. Suitability for digitization is evaluated in terms of image quality and physical condition.

Oral history interviews, recorded by library staff in the form of audio or video files, may also be included in the Digital Archives.

The library provides electronic versions of materials from its collections for personal use by the public. We do not give legal advice as to whether any particular use would infringe upon the intellectual property rights of the person or organization that created the original documents.

## **MAKERSPACE AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY**

In an effort to reduce digital inequity, the library makerspace and technology center circulates maker equipment that customers might find useful, and which can be used for trial and experimentation. The library currently lends out Raspberry Pis, Arduino kits, ukuleles, household tool kits and a sewing machine. More items will be added based on funding, trends and community need.

## **YOUTH SERVICES**

The Youth Services Department offers developmentally appropriate materials that meet the informational, recreational, and cultural needs of children and young adults ages birth through 18. The same criteria listed for selection of adult resources apply to materials for youth. The content, style, format, and appeal to children and teens are taken into consideration. Resources (which include print books, e-books, audiobooks, DVDs, and music) are selected to serve children of all reading, listening and viewing levels. It also serves parents, teachers and other adults working with and interested in children and their literature. The collection is responsive to local school assignments, providing resources which supplement the curriculum and summer reading lists. A selection of resources in languages other than English is also included. To ensure that all parts of the collection are appropriate and well-chosen, youth services librarians consult professional review sources before purchase but also take recommendations of library users into consideration.



Some materials in the Youth Services Collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children of every age. Use of library resources by children is the responsibility of their parents or guardians. Selections shall not be inhibited by the possibility that resources may come into the hands of children.

Major factors that influence the selection of materials for youth (which include print books, e-books, audiobooks, DVDs, and music) are:

- Content
- Authority
- Literacy merit, artistic quality, originality, and creativity
- Accuracy, objectivity, clarity, logic, and effectiveness of material
- Relevance to the needs of the community
- Current interest in subject matter
- Local interest in subject or author
- Popular demand
- Limits of space and funds

## **GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

The Ferguson Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials for the collection and applies the same selection criteria that governs 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 will be gifted to the Friends of the Ferguson Library for their Used Bookshop.

## **CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS**

Because our collections reflect a diverse community with many different beliefs and viewpoints, it does happen that a user will find some material controversial. In response, we direct them to the Collection Development Policy to further their understanding of how we select materials for the library. If they still have concerns, they may submit a request for reconsideration of the material they find objectionable.

## **REQUESTS FOR MATERIAL RECONSIDERATION**

Stamford residents may request the library to reconsider material by completing the [linked form](#). The Ferguson Library limits consideration of request to reconsider material to individual residents of Stamford. Staff will review the request in relation to the library's Reconsideration Policy and will present their recommendation to the Library CEO, who will review the request and reply to the user within sixty days of receipt of the request.