



FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
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Bayonne Public Library Material Selection & Reconsideration Policy

Purpose

The Bayonne Public Library serves as a major resource for providing information, education, and guidance as well as content & programming tailored to the cultural & entertainment interests of the Citizens of Bayonne. The Library has the responsibility to ensure that its collections of print and non-print materials are responsive to the expressed and anticipated public needs & demands and adjust to changes in order to retain and enhance its relevant role in the community, and to support the right of individuals to free inquiry and the right to form their own opinions. Expanding areas of knowledge, changing social values, technological advances, and cultural differences require flexibility, open-mindedness and responsiveness in the selection, evaluation, and re-evaluation of all Library resources.

The purpose of the policy is to provide standards for the curation of Library materials, to establish criteria for inclusion of new materials and removal of existing Library materials, and to provide protection against attempts to censor Library materials.

Definitions

The following definitions shall apply to terms used in this policy:

Censorship means to block, suppress, or remove library material based on disagreement with a viewpoint, idea, or concept, or solely because an individual finds certain content offensive, but does not include limiting or restricting access to any library material deemed developmentally inappropriate for certain age groups.

Individual with a vested interest means any resident of Bayonne who is served by the Library or who resides in Bayonne.

Library materials means any material, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books; magazines; reference books; supplementary titles; multimedia and digital material; software and instructional material, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a public library.

Responsibility and Criteria

All responsibility for a well-rounded collection rests with the Library Board of Trustees, as delegated to the Library Director and the professional staff. The Library's material selection policy and process are designed in accordance with and to meet the objectives of the [First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution](#); the New Jersey Freedom to Read Act; the [Library Bill of Rights](#), adopted by the American Library Association; the [Freedom to Read Statement](#), adopted by the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council; and the [People's Right to Libraries Statement](#), adopted by the New Jersey Library Association.

The selection of materials is targeted to meeting the needs and interests of the community. The Library's main function is to provide books and materials for all ages and reading levels and can expand its offerings by drawing on the resources of the JerseyCat New Jersey interlibrary loan system.

Librarians will use recognized professional librarian collection tools such as Library Journal, Booklist, The New York Times Book Review, School Library Journal, and VOYA for determining which new materials to purchase. Good judgment is the keystone for the ultimate addition of any new purchase.

While most materials are acquired in English, the Library also acquires materials in other languages based on demand; principal among them are Spanish and Arabic.

Materials published or released in new formats will be considered for the collection when there is evidence that a significant portion of the local population has the required equipment to make use of the format. Availability of items in the format, the cost per item, and the Library's ability to obtain and circulate the items, will also be factors considered in determining whether and when an existing or new item(s) will be acquired in a new format.

The Library supplements local curricular needs as communicated by local schools, educators and students, but does not purchase materials which are specific to those needs (i.e. textbooks) unless they fill a gap in the collection or are the best materials available on a given subject.

Selection Criteria

Materials selection is defined as the decision making process of determining which new materials shall be added and which existing materials shall be retained, in the Library's collection, in order to provide the best possible collection based on the available financial resources. All Library materials, regardless of format or intended audience, are evaluated according to these criteria (although there are additional criteria for self-published books, below). Items are judged as a complete work rather than on the merits of individual parts. The decision to purchase an item for the collection may be based on any one or more of these criteria.

The ultimate authority and responsibility for the selection of Library materials rests with the Library Director in consultation with the Board of Trustees. The process of locating and screening materials is delegated to staff members, primarily librarians, who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience.

The selection of any material for the Library's collection does not constitute an endorsement of its contents. The Library recognizes that many materials can be considered controversial, and that any given item may offend some patrons. The Library will make an effort to include in its collection materials representing differing viewpoints on public issues of controversial nature.

The amount of new materials published and available each year is vast and, therefore, it is impossible to evaluate everything first hand. In order to maintain a diverse collection of materials, the Library will select materials from a range of sources, including but not limited to evaluations by reviewers listed in professional library publications, evaluations by critics in the popular press, staff review of materials from publisher representatives & other sources, and suggestions from Library patrons. While we cannot honor every specific request made from Library patrons, we will give careful consideration to each one and will try to fulfill as many as practical, subject to how well the materials satisfy these selection materials.

Selections are made on the merits of the materials under consideration in relation to the existing collection and the needs of our users. The Library will base its selection and inclusion of materials in the collection on the following criteria:

- Significant needs of the Library's patrons and the Bayonne community
- Informational, educational, or recreational value of the subject matter
- Literary, artistic, or production quality of the material considered as a whole
- Relation of the materials to the needs of the existing collection and alignment with the Library's overall mission
- Evaluations in professional selection aids and popular media
- Format (popularity, durability, lifespan, ease of access, appropriateness to the subject matter, and available technical support)
- Price, availability, and extent of funds in the Library's materials budget, including availability through cooperative collection arrangements with other libraries
- Long term or timely relevance of the subject matter
- Scarcity of published information on a subject area
- Reputation of the author/artist/creator/publisher
- Literary or artistic merit
- Digital resources also are evaluated based on the accessibility, availability, and cost of library licensing.

Self-Published Books Policy

The Bayonne Public Library welcomes the growing opportunities for expression that new self-publishing methods offer local writers. The Library receives many requests from out of area and local authors to add their self-published books to its collection. Typically, these works have

not received reviews in standard published sources (Library Journal, Booklist, Kirkus, etc.) and may not meet the criteria that the Library normally sets for inclusion in its collections. Nevertheless, the Library desires to support local authors while maintaining the standards needed in the permanent collections and have subsequently set specific guidelines for inclusion of self-published materials. Authors wishing to contribute books to the library must meet the criteria listed below:

Selection Conditions for Inclusion of Self-Published Materials in the Library's Collection:

- In addition to the Selection Criteria set out above, self-published materials also will be considered based on the following additional criteria;
- Authors must be Hudson County residents, or the book must take place in Hudson County or otherwise demonstrate a strong local interest;
- Each book must be approved by the designated librarian the Director assigns, before being accepted for placement;
- Books will be accepted as donations from the author or publisher; however, at the discretion of the Director or his/her designee, a book or other material may be considered for purchase if published reviews in standard sources are available or there is strong evidence of the appropriateness or the value of it;
- Self-published family histories or other similar genealogical materials may be added to the Special Collection at the discretion of the Reference Librarian or the Director.

Requests for Purchase

Requests for purchases of current materials may be made at the Library or online. Requests will be considered using the selection criteria set out in this policy. A request for purchase does not guarantee the Library will purchase the requested materials.

Digital Collections

Electronic and digital resources are of increasing importance and popularity with Bayonne Library patrons. Electronic resources refer to those materials or services that require a computer or another electronic device for access including, but not limited to, licensed databases, periodicals & newspapers, other numerical, graphical & textual files, electronic journals, eBooks, digital media, bibliographic or full-text databases, and Internet resources (collectively, "eContent").

When eContent is selected directly by the staff, staff will apply the same collection criteria as are applicable to print materials. eContent provided by the State Library of New Jersey as well as vendors, which provide base collections of their own as resources, will have items selected by those organization's individual collection development policies. These collections are subject to the vendors' and publishers' collection development policies and licenses.

Issues concerning technology, access, maintenance, vendor support as well as licensing terms are additionally considered for eContent.

The Library will purchase eContent for the following purposes:

- To supplement the Library's collection;
- To respond to patron requests;
- To keep the Library's collection up-to-date with current opinions and news;
- To provide information not necessarily available in physical format;
- To satisfy recreational interests; and
- To provide Library staff with current material selection aids and the latest professional news & trends.

Censorship and Potentially Controversial Materials

Censorship is a matter of individual decisions. The Library prohibits censorship of library materials, which promotes free expression and free access to ideas by patrons. Every patron has the right to accept or not accept material for their own personal use, but no patron has the right to restrict access to materials for others. In the case of children, appropriate choices are solely the responsibility of the parents and guardians.

The Bayonne Public Library has the responsibility to provide its patrons with diverse sources of information and the widest possible range of ideas & viewpoints. Therefore, it attempts to provide a variety of materials to meet the varied interests of the diverse members of the community regardless of age, religion, national origin, social views, gender expression or identity, educational level, political view, or cultural background.

However, the Library recognizes that some materials acquired may be controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons and/or organizations because of perceived profanity, social, economic and political ideas, religious viewpoints, the background of the author, the kinds of information provided, or other reasons. Library materials shall not be removed from the collection based on the origin, background, or views of the Library materials or those contributing to their creation.

Inclusion of any material within the Library's collection does not imply approval or endorsement of the contents, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion or values of the Library, the individual selector, or of the Library Board of Trustees. Materials are normally not excluded because of language, explicit text, or illustrations if they meet previously stated selection criteria. Library materials will not be marked in any way to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no materials will be sequestered based on content or subject matter.

Responsibility for the reading materials of juveniles rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of adult materials will not be limited by the possibility that personally unacceptable books may come into the possession of young people.

As expressed in the Freedom to Read statement, the Library supports the belief that “Ideas can be dangerous; but, that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.”

Gifts Policy

The Library welcomes financial gifts, bequests, and memorial & commemorative donations towards the purchase of books & other materials for the Library.

Monetary gifts may be applied to the selection of materials by the Director in consultation with Library staff and the donor as appropriate. The Library reserves the unconditional right to determine the use and disposition of all gifted funds, but will respect any limitations imposed on restricted donations and bequests to the extent consistent with the terms of this policy.

The Library occasionally will accept donations of books or other materials if the items are in line with the selection criteria listed above. Books and other materials not used by the Library will either be donated or will be put out for the public to purchase. The Library will not appraise gifts or assume the cost of appraisal for any donated item(s). Please see the [Bayonne Public Library Donation Policy & Form](#) for more information regarding donations.

Collection Maintenance

A strong collection requires ongoing evaluation & maintenance determining what should be retained and for how long & what should be discarded. Materials will regularly be weeded, which refers to the systematic removal of materials from the Library's collection, and is an integral part of the collection maintenance process because selecting materials to be discarded, allows the Library to meet the following objectives:

- Making efficient use of physical shelf and other display and storage space;
- Placing quality before quantity in building a viable collection;
- Providing current, accurate information by discarding outdated materials;
- Promoting a regular program of replacement buying; and
- Replacing infrequently used or borrowed materials with more popular materials.

Weeding and discard decisions will be based on materials meeting any of the following selection criteria:

- Content: outdated, obsolete or inaccurate materials, and availability of newer, updated versions of materials;
- Physical Condition: worn out or damaged, or incomplete sets;
- Usage: materials that have materials with minimal or no circulation demand;
- Format: Outdated, unpopular, or unsupported media formats;
- Quantity: How many physical copies are in the Library or readily available to patrons in digital format or through available resources.

Weeded materials are not automatically replaced. The decision to replace withdrawn or lost items depends on several factors. These include, but are not limited to:

- Availability and ease of item replacement;
- Whether a different format or a similar item might better serve the same purpose;
- Whether the item is easily available digitally or through interlibrary loan;
- The extent of existing coverage of the subject matter; and
- The popularity of the item

Discarded materials may be sold, donated, or recycled as the Library determines.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

Individuals with a vested interest (as defined above) seeking the removal of any library materials must fill out a Reconsideration Request Form and submit the form to the Director. The Director will forward the form to a Review Committee, which will issue a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will make the final determination on all Request forms received and properly completed.

In addition to having the right to make recommendations for additions to the Library's collection, Bayonne Public Library cardholders also may request materials be reconsidered for withdrawal from, or reclassification within, the collection, or request reconsideration of a Library program or service. Such requests are not to be taken lightly and will be handled in an objective, professional, and courteous manner.

The reconsideration process is always used in conjunction with the Library's policy on access to materials, which is set out above, and is consistent with the New Jersey Freedom to Read Act, the ALA's *Library Bill of Rights*, the ALA's *Freedom to Read Statement*, and the Library's Mission Statement.

Guidelines applicable to requests for reconsideration include:

- The Library only will consider requests for materials to be reconsidered or withdrawn from the collection, which are submitted in writing by individuals with a vested interest using the appropriate form.
- All written requests must be submitted using the Library's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form (Appendix A to this policy).
- Requestors must complete all sections of the form, including full name and address and signature.
- Requests must state the specific sections of the library material to which the individual objects, an explanation of the reasons for the objection, and cite specific examples to support the request.

Process for Requesting Reconsideration:

Any individuals with a vested interest, who objects to an item in the Library's collection or a program or service the Library offers, may complete the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form.

Process for Evaluating Request for Reconsideration:

1. The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Review Committee to evaluate all Requests for Reconsideration received. The review committee shall include:
 - a. At least one member of the Board of Trustees;
 - b. The Library Director or another professionally licensed librarian employed by the Library;
 - c. A non-librarian staff member familiar with the Library materials;
 - d. A representative selected by the Board;
 - e. A Bayonne Library cardholder, who is over age 18, and is not the individual who submitted the Request form;
 - f. Any additional members the Board may deem necessary.
2. Upon receipt of the Request form, the Library Director will review the form carefully to determine the issue and to ensure the form is fully completed. Requests will be denied without further review if not submitted using the proper form, or if the form submitted is not fully completed and signed.
3. The Director will then forward the Request form to the members of the Review Committee for consideration, along with a copy of or access to the challenged material. The challenged material shall remain in circulation until the Board of Trustees has issued its decision on the Request.
4. The Review Committee shall review the Request form and the challenged material and prepare a written report of recommendations to the Board of Trustees on whether to remove the library material and submit it to the Board within thirty (30) business days from the date when the Request form was received. The individual submitting the Request form also shall receive a copy of the Review Committee's report.
5. The Board of Trustees shall review the Committee's report and make a final determination on whether the material is to be removed from the Library or limited in use or the Request be denied. The Board shall provide a written statement of reasons for:
 - a. Removal, limitation, or non-removal of a library material; and
 - b. Any final determination that is contrary to the recommendations of the review committee; and
 - c. Provide that the library material that was reviewed may not be subject to a subsequent challenge for at least one year.
6. The Library Director shall send a copy of the Board's decision to the individual who submitted the Request form and shall implement the Board's decision.
7. The decision of the Board of Trustees shall be the final and binding determination on the Request for a period of five years, as set out in the Freedom to Read Act.
8. The Committee and the Board need not review anything other than the Request form and the challenged library material in reaching their decisions, however, some examples

of the types of information the Review Committee and/or the Board of Trustees may consider as part of their review include:

- a. Journal reviews of the item and whether it has won or been nominated for any awards;
 - b. Item circulation and holds statistics for the item in question;
 - c. Reviews and communications regarding the program or service;
 - d. Any record indicating when the Library first added the item to its collection, why it was originally chosen for inclusion in the collection, and what, if anything, changed since that time;
 - e. Any records indicating the first time the program was presented, how many persons attended, how many times the Library offered the program, and summaries or recordings of the content of the program;
 - f. Any records indicating when the Library began offering the service, how often the service is used and by how many people, how many libraries in the area offer the same or a similar service, and any analysis of the benefits & limitations of the service;
 - g. Information on whether the item has been recommended or approved by any independent entity, i.e., any state or federal agency, such as part of a specific curriculum or for a specified purpose.
 - h. Any additional information the Committee or the Board deems relevant.
9. Following a final decision by the Board of Trustees, the Director will complete an American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom Challenge Database form.

Adopted by the Bayonne Public Library Board of Trustees on 4/14/26.



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Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form

The Board of Trustees of the Bayonne Public Library has authorized the use of this form as part of its *Reconsideration of Library Materials* process. Return completed form to:

Library Director, Bayonne Public Library, 697 Avenue C, Bayonne, NJ 07002

The form must be completely filled out with all items answered. The Library only will consider submissions from any person who is resident of Bayonne who is served by the Library or who resides in Bayonne. Submitters will be notified in writing regarding the recommendation of the Review Committee and of the final decision of the Board of Trustees.

Print Full Name: _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

For whom are you submitting this request?

Myself _____

Organization (please specify): _____

Other (please specify): _____

Title of Item, Program, or Service: _____

Author/Presenter: _____

Format (e.g., book, CD, DVD, program, service): _____

If a program or service, what date did it occur? _____

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work, or attend the program?

Yes _____ No _____

State as to what specific section(s) of these materials you are objecting and provide an explanation of the reasons for your objection or request for reconsideration, and what action do you think the Library should take with regard to these materials? (Please be specific. Attach additional pages if necessary)

Signature: _____

Date: _____