

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Objective

The Pickens County Library System (PCLS) belongs to all the people it serves and wishes to encourage their interest in its work. It seeks to maintain a broad and well balanced collection with up-to-date information in varied formats to enlighten, inform, entertain, and empower the diverse community of Pickens County. The Library believes that collections are part of the broader content of what a library provides to its community, which includes experiences, spaces, materials, and collaborations. The Library seeks to respond to our community's needs and interests through this content. This policy ensures that the Library collection will reflect the diverse experiences of the community, and provide an opportunity to explore cultures, traditions, and ideas which may not be represented by the local community.

Selection Principles

The responsibility for selection of library materials is delegated to the Library Director. Direct selection of materials is performed by staff members qualified for this duty by professional education, training and job classification. The Board, therefore, establishes the following principles to guide the Library in the selection process.

- Develop a well-rounded collection of current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats to meet the needs of our patrons.
- Curate a collection that represents diverse points of view, subjects, opinions, and modes of expression, and which reflects the diversity of the community and the world we inhabit, and the variety of reader tastes and interests.
- Collection materials should include materials in digital/electronic formats.
- Library material will not be excluded or included solely because of the race, nationality, sex, sexual preference or identity, or the political, social, or religious views of its author or its intended audience.
- Provide materials to meet the recreation and information needs and interests of patrons and organize those materials in age-relevant collections. Materials are selected and organized considering complexity, vocabulary, and topic.
- Encourage lifelong learning by making current, accurate, and useful information available to independent adult learners.
- Encourage minors to develop an interest in reading and learning by providing a collection of materials which are current and appeals to their interests.
- Provide an appropriate number of copies for each title purchased so that patrons have access within a reasonable length of time.
- Balance individual and community needs in determining the best allocation of collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information.

Philosophy

The Library affirms the public's right to access a broad spectrum of reading, listening, and viewing materials, and upholds the right of any individual to secure information, even if the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. The Library believes that full, confidential, and unrestricted access to information is essential for patrons to exercise their constitutional rights. Patrons are free to select or reject

materials for themselves or their own minor children. The freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted, as everyone has the equal right to choose library materials. As with all library resources, the Library affirms the right and responsibility of parents and guardians, not library staff, to determine and monitor the use of library materials by minors and others under legal guardianship.

The presence of an item in the collections does not represent endorsement or promotion of its content by the Library. The Library subscribes to the philosophies outlined in the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Labels and Rating Systems.

Any request for reconsideration of an item in the collection must follow the procedure outlined in the "Review of Materials Policy."

Selection Criteria

A single standard does not exist that can be applied to the materials included in library collections, universally. Material will be evaluated according to one or more of the criteria below, in addition to the judgment exercised by professional library staff. An item need not meet all criteria to be selected. Criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Patron request for an item.
- Circulation use of existing, similar materials.
- Interest indicated by members of the community for an item.
- Information that is accurate and current.
- Contemporary significance, permanent value, or popular interest.
- Authority and reputation of the author or publisher.
- Artistic and literary merit.
- Adaptability to use.
- Illustrations (especially important for children's books, which use illustrations to teach reading and comprehension.)
- Format and price.
- Evaluation in professional review sources such as: *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*.
- The relation of new materials to existing collections.
- Contribution to diversity enriching the breadth and depth of collections.

All materials will be evaluated as a whole rather than on isolated parts or passages. Works will not be excluded because of frankness, expression, or they are controversial in nature. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.

Donated items will be subject to the same selection policies and procedures applied to all materials added to the collection. Materials not added to library collections will be given to the Friends of the Library or discarded if they are significantly damaged.

Materials suggested for purchase by patrons will be considered for purchase if funds are available, provided they meet the requirements set forth in this policy.

Collection Maintenance

Periodic and continuous evaluation of materials in the collection is a priority of collection development and is considered of equal importance to the acquisition of new materials. Systematic and ongoing weeding of library materials is essential to assure an active and useful collection and the best use of available space. Materials are

evaluated on condition, whether their content is accurate and current, and patron demand. Locally significant materials may be retained even if some of these factors do not apply. In addition to weeding of print materials, the discontinuation of purchasing and/or housing of older media formats will be considered when demand and availability indicate they are no longer appropriate for the collection.

Materials that are weeded may be given to the Friends of the Library. Some items may be discarded if they are significantly damaged.

Collection Scope

Adult Fiction

The adult fiction collection includes a wide variety of contemporary works of fiction representing all genres, international works, classics as well as important novels of the past. The library makes every effort to acquire fiction which is representative of the cultural and ethnic communities that it serves and to satisfy the diversity of interests and recreational needs of its users.

Adult Nonfiction

The Library aims to acquire materials which provide a core of basic knowledge. In addition, PCLS selects, makes accessible, and promotes the use of materials which:

- address contemporary issues
- provide self-help information
- facilitate continuing education
- enhance job-related knowledge and skills
- increase knowledge of affairs of the community, the country, and the world
- support business, cultural, recreational, and civic interests in the community
- nourish intellectual, aesthetic, creative and spiritual growth
- present different viewpoints on issues

Children's & Juvenile Collection

To encourage life-long reading habits, the Children's and Juvenile collection provides material in a variety of formats to satisfy and stimulate the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the children of Pickens County from infancy through grade eight/age 12. Material is selected with regard to the stages of emotional and intellectual maturity of children. Children's materials are generally understood as those materials for ages 0-6, Juvenile materials encompass items in the range of 7-12.

Young Adult Collection

Young adult collection material is intended for library patrons from the age of 13-17. It is a transitional collection for the reader moving from the children's collection to the adult collection. The young adult collection consists of fiction and nonfiction books of popular and contemporary interest. Publishers' reading recommendations that include this age range, or the designation "Young Adult" will factor in the placement of books in this collection. However, the placement of materials in the Young Adult collection will be decided by professional library staff through their normal evaluation process or the Library's Request for Reconsideration process and may result in materials being located in the Adult Fiction or Adult Nonfiction area regardless of publishers' recommendations.

Reference Collection

The library maintains a physical reference collection to serve the informational needs of library users. Reference sources are characterized by their ability to provide information and to summarize, condense, or give a comprehensive overview of a topic. They remain in the library to be readily available to all residents.

Selection criteria of particular importance for reference sources are accuracy, arrangement, ease-of-use, uniqueness of information, authority, documentation, and indexing. Reference sources are consulted for specific items of information and are not meant to be read consecutively. They include bibliographies, indexes, directories, dictionaries, catalogs, statistical compendia, atlases, and almanacs.

Library of Things

The Library of Things is a collection of non-traditional library items that patrons may wish to try or test before purchasing and/or are infrequently used by patrons. These include items used for outdoor activities and games, health and fitness, tools, electronics, crafts and hobbies, and musical instruments. This collection includes wi-fi hotspots and Adventure Passes used for free admission to local and regional museums and attractions. This collection is not intended to be comprehensive, and the library is limited by a finite amount of storage space and funds for these items.

The Director has full authority to create or remove collections based on changing media, community needs, and/or ease of access provided they meet the philosophies and criteria contained within this policy.

Original approval May 15, 1997

Full policy manual approved August 21, 1997

Full corrected policy manual approved June 15, 2000

Reapproved with no changes October 17, 2002

Revised policy approved February 19, 2004

Amended policy approved September 22, 2023

Updated policy approved March 20, 2025