

Westhampton Public Library



Collection Development Policy

Adopted December 6, 2022

Mission Statement

Westhampton Public Library will be a center for community gathering and lifelong learning. We will create opportunities for learning and enjoyment for all library users.

Service Population

Westhampton is a town located in Hampshire County in the Hilltowns of Western Massachusetts. Its location is close enough to neighboring cities and the Five Colleges area that restaurants, shopping, and entertainment are within reach.

Westhampton is a small, rural community and is home to several locally run farms, sugar shacks and other small businesses. Westhampton's residents settled in the area around 1762. Originally, the town was part of Northampton known as the "Long Division." In 1778, residents petitioned to have Westhampton become its own town. Westhampton is a geographically dynamic area with hills, woods, wetlands and trails. It is home to conservation land including Greenberg Family Conservation Area managed by Kestrel Land Trust and Lynes Woods Wildlife Sanctuary managed by Mass Audubon. White Reservoir and Pine Island Lake, a summer destination, are both man-made.

According to a local census, the population of Westhampton as of 2020 was 1,645. In 2020 there were 1,312 registered voters and approximately 548 households. According to the 2020 U.S. Census the racial demographics of Westhampton were as follows: 1,516 residents identified as White, 3 residents identified as Black, 1 resident identified as American Indian & Alaska Native, 6 residents identified as Asian, 2 residents identified as Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander, 9 residents identified as Some other race, and 85 residents identified as 2 or more races. Also, according to the 2020 U.S. Census, the median age of residents was 46.3 years of age.

There were 94.4 males for every 100 females living in Westhampton. Data by age group was as follows: 21.5% under 20, 11.3% in their 20s, 9% in their 30s, 11.7% in their 40s, 19.1% in their 50s, 15.1% in their 60s, and 12.3% were over 70 years of age.

Collection Development Goals

Collection Development goals include:

- To provide our patrons with a wide variety of print and non-print materials for entertainment, inspiration, and lifelong learning
- To provide diverse materials, reflecting many points of view for patrons of all ages.
- To balance up-to-date and popular materials with a core collection of recognized classics and key works in a variety of subject areas

Responsibility for Collection Development

The Westhampton Library Board of Trustees considers and adopts a Collection Development Policy, which they authorize the Library Director to administer.

Collection Development decisions are made on the basis of staff judgment and expertise, as well as by evaluating reviews in library journals and other commonly accepted library selection tools.

Librarians use a variety of tools to aid in awareness and selection of materials. A work's overall contribution to the collection is a critical determinant for acceptance or rejection. No single criterion can be applied to all materials, and various criteria carry different weights in different circumstances. Contextual considerations – budget and space availability, interlibrary loan availability – also shape the selection process.

Selection Criteria

- Factors used to make selection decisions include:
- Local demand
- Community needs and interests
- Current interest and usefulness
- Relevance to library's mission and service roles
- Physical characteristics, quality of item and its appropriateness for patrons
- Authority and accuracy
- Availability through other sources, particularly CW MARS
- Respectful, accurate, diverse portrayals about and created by people of various backgrounds (See Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement)
- Equity, diversity and inclusion

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

At Westhampton Public Library, we value the importance of readers of all ages seeing themselves as well as people with different experiences in diverse stories to share. To borrow the wise words of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop – books should provide “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” for their readers. Books can be mirrors by reflecting the identity of the reader. Books can be windows by providing opportunities for readers to look through to other worlds. And, books can become sliding glass doors through which the reader enters into someone else’s world and in doing so enriches their own worldview.

Our library seeks to promote social justice, equity, inclusiveness and free access to respectful, accurate information about and created by people of various backgrounds and experiences. We seek to actively collect and promote materials that elevate the stories of marginalized communities and include everyone regardless of race, gender, gender identity, class, religion, sexual orientation, neurodiversity or any other aspect of their identity.

Rudine Sims Bishop. Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3).

Collection Development for Children and Young Adults

The collection is carefully chosen for children of all ages and abilities, with an emphasis on materials which entertain, stimulate the imagination, develop reading ability and enable children to learn about the world around them. The library will not attempt to furnish materials needed for formal courses of study offered by public or private schools.

A collection of materials is specifically selected for young adults. Materials are selected as a bridge to the adult collection. Novels and nonfiction materials are selected based on all of the criteria listed above in addition to their appeal to this age group. Children and young adults are not limited to the special collections selected for them. They are encouraged to make full use of the entire collection to the extent that their interests and capabilities allow.

Use of Materials by Juveniles

Responsibility for the use of materials by children and young adults rests with their parents or guardians. The selection of material for the entire collection and access to it is not restricted by the fact that children may obtain materials their parents consider objectionable.

Donation of Materials

Donation of materials are subject to the same selection criteria as materials purchased by the library. Donated materials may be added to the collection or discarded, at the sole discretion of the Library Director. The library does not provide evaluation of gifts for tax deduction purposes.

Collection Maintenance

In order to maintain a collection that is current, reliable in good condition, well used, representative of diverse perspectives and which relates to the needs and interests of the Westhampton community materials are withdrawn on a systematic and continuous basis. CREW: A WEEDING MANUAL FOR MODERN LIBRARIES and Core Collection Reference Guides will be used as guidance to cull materials that are dated, inaccurate, seldom used, in poor condition, or otherwise no longer appropriate. Materials withdrawn from the library will be donated whenever possible in a manner consistent with the quality and condition.

*MGL. Ch. 30B S. 15 (g):

“Notwithstanding any other requirement of this section, a government body may by majority vote, unless otherwise prohibited by law, dispose of tangible supply no longer useful to the governmental body but having reuse or salvage value, at less than the fair market value to a charitable organization which has received a tax exemption from the United States by reason of its charitable nature.

Objection to Library Material

The Westhampton Public Library collects a variety of materials for all age groups, diverse tastes, and varying viewpoints. The Library subscribes to the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read Statement* (both are appended). In accordance with these principles, the Westhampton Public Library is committed to “provide for the interest, information and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves”.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the right of individuals to question materials in the library collection. Whenever a patron has a concern about the presence of absence of any library material, the patron will be given hearing and consideration as follows:

- All concerns will be referred to the Library Director, who will discuss the matter with the patron and clarify the Collection Development Policy.

- If not satisfied with the Library Director’s explanation or actions, the patron may submit a “Statement Of Concern About Library Resources” Form. The completed form will be shared with the Board of Trustees. The evaluation of any library materials of concern will consider the work as a whole, not just individual parts of a work. A decision will be made regarding whether or not to add or withdraw a material within a reasonable amount of time, with written reasons for the decision conveyed to the patron.
- Materials subject to reconsideration shall not be removed from use and circulation pending final action.
- A copy of the request form, without identifying patron information, will be mailed to the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee

Library employees are protected by Chapter 78, Section 33, of the General Laws of Massachusetts: Policy for Selection and Use of Library Materials and Facilities, which states that no employee shall be dismissed for the selection of Library materials when the selection is made in good faith and in accordance with the standards of the American Library Association.

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas,

and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded

because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and

historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal

disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of

free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations

of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; amended June 28, 1967;

amended January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996.

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference. Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections. We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they*

can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; 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.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)

[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)

[The Association of American University Presses](#)

[The Children's Book Council](#)

[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)

[National Association of College Stores](#)

[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)

[National Council of Teachers of English](#)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Statement of Concern About Library Resources

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

email _____

Do you represent:

___ Yourself

___ An organization (name) _____

___ Other group: (name) _____

1. Resource you are concerned with:

Title: _____

Author: _____

2. How was this material brought to your attention?

3. Did you read/view the entire work?

4. Why do you object?

5. What, specifically, do you object to? Cite pages or scenes.

6. Have you read any professional reviews of the work? If so, what?

7. What action would you like the library to take about this work?

8. What work would you recommend that conveys a similar perspective to the subject treated in this work?

Additional comments:

Patron's Signature

Date

Library Director's Signature

Date Received