COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY
Applicability: Employees

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with the necessary guidelines to assist them in the development of collections that meet library goals, and to inform the public about the principles by which materials are selected for inclusion in library collections.

Statement

OPL is committed to developing a collection that provides the foundation for literacy, and for cultivating the joys of reading, learning, discovering and creating. Client service excellence and professional accountability apply to all facets of selection, acquisition, discovery, and access.

The policy is supported by OPL's mission, vision, and values, as well as the OPL Board's Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom. Moreover, the Collection Development Policy is guided by the Board-approved Services Delivery Framework; specifically, the Collections Strategy.

Scope of Collections

The Collection Development Policy applies to all materials in all formats that form part of the Library's collections and are made available to the community. Emerging formats and technologies may be added, and declining ones retired, where appropriate and given available resources. OPL collections support the interests and needs of clients in the following ways:

- OPL is committed to providing collections in English and French, to reflect Ottawa's community and the OPL Board's commitment to the delivery of library services in both official languages.

- OPL is committed to engaging the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation and other local Indigenous organizations, service providers, and communities in developing collections to support reconciliation and Indigenous language revitalization. Specific attention is paid to the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation on whose unceded land the Library is located, as well as the diverse urban Indigenous community of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people who call Ottawa home.

- OPL may provide materials and resources in languages other than English and French to meet the needs of Ottawa's diverse population. New languages are

considered if they represent a substantial number of new immigrants to Ottawa, who speak the language at home, and if the language is sustainable as a collection with quality material, demand and usage.

- OPL has an interest in works by local authors, illustrators, and artists. OPL cannot collect all materials about the Ottawa area or all materials produced by local authors, illustrators, or artists.

- OPL only collects college and university textbooks or other curriculum related materials when they are useful to the general public as an introduction to a subject or because their content is considered essential to a public library collection. Materials whose subject treatment goes beyond the university undergraduate level will, in most cases, not be considered appropriate to the goals of the Library's collection unless they are the only materials available to meet community needs.

- OPL will include collections in multiple formats, including digital formats and accessible formats. Note that OPL's collection will not include every item in every available format.

- OPL is committed to collections for all ages, starting with early literacy, and including children, teens, and adults. Pursuant to the Ontario Library Association's position statements on Children's Rights in the Public Library and Teens' Rights in the Public Library, children and teens are entitled to open and ready access to materials provided by OPL except where restricted by law. Responsibility for the use of the collection by children rests with their parents or legal guardian. Collection decisions are not made on the basis of whether something might be accessed by a child; age-based organization of collections is provided for client convenience and not as a means of limiting access to content.

Selection

Items identified for inclusion in the collection are selected by professional staff using OPL's Materials Selection Criteria. Selection is supported by attention to review media, bibliographies and reviewing tools, consultation with the publishing industry, authoritative discussions of genres or subject areas, and recommendations from Library clients. Activities are responsibly exercised within the context of available funds. Collection items need not meet all selection criteria to be selected.

Items recommended for purchase by clients via the Suggestion to Purchase form will be considered in accordance with the Materials Selection Criteria. Moreover, any items donated become the property of OPL and are subject to the Materials Selection Criteria as well as other policies and procedures.

Materials Selection Criteria	
Demand	• Anticipated and/or actual client interest and usage.
Quality	• Attention of critics and reviewers, award winners, inclusion in authoritative sources; • Literary merit and contribution to the field of knowledge; • Reputation or authority of the author, creator, or publisher; • Quality of writing, production, and illustration.
Subject matter	• Significance, timeliness, or permanence of subject matter; • Presence of the subject matter in public discourse; • Representation of diverse points of view; • Relationship to the existing collection; • Importance of subject matter in relation to community needs; • Canadian content.
Audience	• Relevance to early literacy; • Responsive to school age and teen interest; • Scholastic support and enrichment; • Suitability of subject and style for a public library audience with all ages considered.
Availability and access	• Availability of content in other libraries, for free through the internet, or from other easily and/or freely accessible resources (i.e. SmartLibrary, ILL);
Suitability of format for library use	• Ease of use and remote access potential; • Copyright issues and the availability of public performance rights; • Licensing requirements; • Long term availability and perpetual access rights.
Cost	• Purchase price considered in conjunction with anticipated usage and budgetary considerations; • Comparison of content and cost with other available formats.

Collection Maintenance

As new items are added to the collection, employees must also consider the existing collection as a whole to ensure it continues to meet community needs. The Library maintains an ongoing practice of removing outdated materials, materials no longer of interest or in demand, duplicates, and worn or damaged copies. Items are considered for retention or replacement by trained employees who asses the frequency of circulation, enduring importance, community or regional interest, availability of newer and more up-to-date materials, and access to materials through reciprocal agreements or Interlibrary Loan services.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Library is a resource where many points of view and modes of expression can be examined without hindrance. OPL recognizes the right of individuals to express opposition to items accessible through the library. While people have the right to reject for themselves items of which they do not approve, they do not have the right to restrict the freedom of others' access. As such, the OPL Board has approved a position statement on Intellectual Freedom.

Individuals who object to materials in the collection may express their concern with OPL public service employees and/or by filling out a 'Request for Reconsideration of Library Material' form available in branches or online. The Request for Reconsideration policy is available on the OPL website.

Some of the Library's digital content is provided using third-party vendors. The Library subscribes to services in which the third-party vendor, and not Library staff, determines the specific titles or materials made available through the service. In these circumstances, the Library is unable to reconsider specific materials that library clients object to but may inform the third-party vendor of client concerns and/or take these concerns into consideration in determining whether to continue working with the vendor.

Related Policies and Procedures

Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom
Service Delivery Framework
Collections Strategy
Request for Reconsideration Policy
Local Author Application
Suggestion for Purchase Form

Legislative Authority

Ontario's Public Libraries Act
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Ontario Human Rights Code

Document Owner: Program Manager, Content Services

Approved by: Division Manager, Client Services	
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Revision History

Revision	Description of Changes	Revised by
June 2025	New policy (based on the previous OPLB Content Services Framework)	C. Simmons