

Content Services Framework

The Content Services Framework (“the Framework”) ensures Ottawa Public Library (OPL)’s collection balances the challenges and opportunities of a fluctuating content environment with customer expectations. The Framework is supported by OPL’s mission **to inspire learning, spark curiosity, and connect people**, and OPL values of **community, inclusion, integrity, intellectual freedom, and literacy**.

The Library collection provides the foundation for literacy, cultivating the joys of reading, learning, discovering and creating. Customer service excellence and professional accountability apply across all facets of content selection, acquisition, discovery and access for a Library collection that builds community and transforms lives.

The following guiding principles also inform the Framework:

- 1. Responsive Collections**
- 2. Balanced Selection**
- 3. Responsible Investment**
- 4. Continuous Improvement**

The Framework is reviewed once per OPL Board four-year term.

1. Responsive Collections → Community Driven

OPL collections support the interests and needs of all customers, through:

- Collections for all ages, starting with early literacy, and including children, teens, and adults. Pursuant to the Ontario Library Association (OLA)’s position on Children’s Rights in the Public Library, children are entitled to open and ready access to materials provided by the OPL. Responsibility for the use of the collection by children rests with their parents or legal guardian;
- Collections in English and French, to reflect OPL’s position as the largest bilingual (English and French) public library system in North America and the Board’s commitment to the public delivery of services in both official languages (020-OPLB Official Languages).
- Collections in multiple formats, to provide equitable access to individuals with disabilities;

- **Indigenous collections:** To encourage understanding and appreciation of Indigenous Peoples' languages, experiences and cultures, OPL develops rich and varied Indigenous collections for all ages in multiple formats. Specific attention is paid to the Algonquin Anishinaabe First Nations 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.
- **World language collections:** OPL collects materials in different world languages to meet the needs of Ottawa's diverse population. Languages are selected if they represent a critical mass of new immigrants to Ottawa, reaching more than 2,000 people (as per the current Canadian Census), who speak the language at home, and if the language is sustainable as a collection with quality material, demand and usage.

Tools: Resources are selected by professional staff using judgement based on OPL's material selection criteria.

Table 1: Materials Selection Criteria

Criterion	Definition
Demand	Customer demand and anticipated demand
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; 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 freely accessible resources; 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.
Price	Purchase price and other budgetary considerations; Comparison of content and cost with other available formats.

Note: Collection items need not meet all selection criteria to be selected.

Collection Maintenance: The Library maintains an ongoing practice of removing outdated materials, materials no longer of interest or in demand, duplicates, and worn or damaged copies. Frequency of circulation, classic works, community or regional interest, availability of newer and more up-to-date materials, and access to materials through reciprocal agreements or Interlibrary Loan services are of prime consideration for retention or replacement.

Donations: OPL encourages donations be directed to the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association (FOPLA) to benefit OPL through re-sale.

- OPL appreciates offers of donated material; significant resources, however, are required to process donations, including evaluating, cataloguing, and providing access. Therefore only current popular titles with request lists, and some author-submitted gifts are accepted.
- Donations become the property of the OPL and are subject to the Materials Selection criteria and other policies and procedures. They are treated as the Library determines appropriate.

2. **Balanced Selection → Customer Driven**

This guiding principle intends a balance of physical and digital library content to support and cultivate diverse and engaged library customers.

Tools: Use of annual budget objectives to monitor these areas of the collection:

- Digital material and its percentage growth relative to persistent demand for physical library material.

- Youth (Children and Teen) material to reflect OPL's commitment to young people and families as the Library's foundation to sustained growth.
- French language material to reflect OPL's position as the largest bilingual (English and French) public library system in North America and the Board's commitment to the public delivery of services in both official languages (020-OPLB Official Languages). The designated amount of budget for materials in French is based on the highest percentage of the following four Statistics Canada data sets: mother tongue, home language, first official language spoken and the inclusive definition of a Francophone;
- World Language materials to meet the needs of a diverse population.

3. Responsible Investment → Evidence Driven

This guiding principle emphasizes OPL's fiduciary responsibility for investing public funds.

Tools: The annual materials budget review incorporates evidence-based analysis and evaluation tools such as:

- Content Services' performance indicators for collection analysis including rates for circulation, turnover and percentage checked out.
- Content Services' cost-benefit analysis and evaluation templates to document whether content providers meet OPL standards and expectations.
- Demographic data from Environics Analytics to monitor pressures/trends and to project corresponding budget objectives.

4. Continuous Improvement → Relationship Driven

This guiding principle aims to enhance and extend internal and external relationships.

Tools: Model a collaborative and proactive approach to connect, communicate, and create options for customers and branch employees:

- Reflect OPL's community development philosophy through relationship building, collection promotion and reciprocal agreements such as SmartLibrary.

- Welcome feedback from staff and public for improvements to meet customer needs.
- Enhance discoverability of the collection by optimizing access points in the catalogue, best practices in material description, and marketing via multiple channels.
- Facilitate regular branch collection maintenance for currency, relevance and condition.
- Offer training opportunities to OPL employees to enhance their knowledge of trends in publishing, collection development and collection access.
- **Suggestions to Purchase:** OPL customers are encouraged to place requests for the purchase of library material that have been missed by completing a form provided on the OPL website. Suggestions for purchase of books or other formats will be considered in accordance with the Materials Selection criteria.
- **Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Service:** ILL is integral to the OPL customer experience; through OPL customers may borrow items from libraries who participate in the interlibrary loan service. In keeping with OPL's selection and collection maintenance practices, a resource sharing network of libraries across Ontario and Canada expands our collection range and improves access for OPL customers.
- **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 selected for 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.

The OPL values and adheres to both the Canadian Federation of Library Association's (CFLA) and Ontario Library Association's (OLA) position statements on Intellectual Freedom, with respect to materials selection, as further confirmed in the Board's position statement on Intellectual Freedom (BRD-003 POSOPLB Intellectual Freedom). The presence of material in the Library does not indicate an endorsement of its content; it is an affirmation of the principle of intellectual freedom.

OPL does not acquire material that the Canadian courts have found to be contrary to the Criminal Code and all applicable laws, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If items in OPL's collections are found to be contrary to the above laws OPL will obtain legal advice regarding the question of whether to remove this material from the collection.

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. Customers must acknowledge having read the Framework and Intellectual Freedom statements prior to completing the form.

OPL Content Services' professional staff research and review each formal request, and a written response is sent to the person making the request by the Manager of Content Services. Individuals can appeal this decision in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Appeals will be reviewed by Senior Management, with a final decision by the CEO

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Guiding Principles at a Glance

