

Thomas Crane Public Library

Collection Development Policy

Policy Statement

The Thomas Crane Public Library provides a collection of materials and resources in keeping with its mission and values. The collection will be selected and maintained to enable each individual to choose materials and information according to her or his own free choice.

The collection as a whole will be a diverse source of information representing as many viewpoints as possible, including content which may be controversial or offensive to some. The Library neither encourages nor discourages any particular viewpoint. Selection of materials does not mean endorsement of the contents or the views expressed in those materials.

Collection development is an ongoing process requiring professional judgment and experience to meet the needs and demands of the public while optimizing the allocation of space, staff and fiscal resources. Resource sharing with other libraries, and electronic and other methods of information delivery, are used by the Library to meet patron needs and extend its limited resources.

Definition

Materials may include books, periodicals, newspapers, maps, audio and video recordings and other objects.

Regulations

Access

1. The Library considers reading, listening, and viewing to be individual, private matters and supports the right of unrestricted and confidential access to information. Parents and legal guardians are free to select or reject materials for themselves and their own minor children, but the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted.
2. The Library does not stand in place of the parent (in loco parentis). Parents and legal guardians have the right and responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening and viewing choices of their own minor children.
3. The collection will be organized and maintained to help people find the materials they want. Materials will not be restricted, sequestered, altered or labeled to show approval or disapproval of the contents, or because of controversy about the author or the subject matter.
4. The Library considers materials selected under this policy to be constitutionally protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. If a person claims that a particular item is not constitutionally protected, the burden of proof rests with that person.
5. If a court having jurisdiction over the Library decides that any material in the collection is not protected by these constitutions, such material will be removed immediately. Material under court consideration will remain available until a court ruling is made.

Collection Objectives

6. The Library collects materials in accordance with its strategic service priorities and goals, and to meet and anticipate the needs of its diverse communities.
7. Customer use is the most powerful influence on the Library's collection; level of use, customer requests, and holds queues are closely monitored, triggering the purchase of new items and additional copies of high demand items.
8. Specialized and advanced level research cannot be supported unless the information is available through the Internet or the Library's cooperative resource sharing partnerships. Specialists and advanced students may be referred to the extensive library collections available in the greater Boston area and via the Library's interlibrary loan services.
9. Materials selected for children and teenagers are intended to encourage and facilitate reading skills, support recreational reading, stimulate and widen their interests, and supplement their educational needs. The Library does not prioritize materials to support school curricula.
10. The Main Library contains the core fiction and non-fiction collections for the Library system and includes material of an enduring nature as well as current interest materials. The Library strives to provide the fundamental, significant, and standard works in most subject areas to meet general community needs, including a judicious selection of current titles and selected retrospective titles, a broad selection of important writers, a limited selection of the most significant works of secondary writers, a selection of popular periodicals, and current editions of the most important reference tools.
11. The Branch Libraries serve the needs of the neighborhoods in which they are located, with the emphasis on popular, high-interest materials and materials that provide a general overview. Branch collections include popular titles, significant works or classics, some major reference tools, and a few high-interest periodicals. Collections are evaluated regularly to ensure relevance and titles are discarded when usage declines. Certain branch collections are shaped, in part, by customer use through the floating collection system, in which items move freely among library locations rather than being owned by a specific location.
12. Digital collections include ebooks and emagazines, downloadable and streaming audio and video, citation and full-text databases, and instructional programs. The Library strives to provide the broadest possible collection of both popular and research materials for all ages via purchase, licensing, and pay-per-use acquisitions.

Selection of Materials

13. Selection of materials is vested in the Director of Libraries, who may authorize qualified staff to assist and has full authority to use her or his judgment in interpreting this Policy. Materials selected will be deemed to have been selected by the Board of Trustees.

Criteria to be considered in adding specific materials, including gifts, to the collection include, but are not limited to:

- Relevance to current interests and needs of the community
- Extent of publicity, critical review, and current or anticipated demand
- Current or historical significance of the subject or author
- Local significance of the subject or author
- Relative importance in comparison with other works on the subject
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses

- Reputation & qualifications of the author, publisher or producer
 - Accuracy and timeliness
 - Literary quality and/or effective expression
 - Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
 - Suitability of format for Library circulation and use
 - Price and availability
 - Availability of similar materials in the collection, elsewhere in the region or online
14. Electronic resources, including subscription services and links to websites, are provided to increase the depth and breadth of the collection. Some resources may be available only within the Library building or only to Quincy residents. Criteria to select website links include:
- Current, accurate & consistently maintained information
 - Credibility of authors/producers
 - Organization & ease of use
 - Relevance to the physical collection
15. Items selected must meet one or more of these criteria but not every item that meets one or more of them will be selected. The Library strongly encourages patrons to suggest items, topics or authors they would like to see included in the collection. Requests may be met through resource sharing with other libraries, electronic delivery or other means.
16. Materials are judged on the basis of the content as a whole rather than on isolated passages or incidents. Hence, language, situations, subjects and storylines which may be offensive to some do not disqualify an item which has value as a whole or which is useful to the public generally.
17. Individual items, which in and of themselves may be controversial or offensive to some patrons or staff, may be selected if their inclusion will contribute to the range of viewpoints in the collection as a whole and if they meet one or more of the criteria listed.

If not added to the collection, donated items may be given to the Friends of the Library for sale, given to other libraries, recycled, or discarded at the Library's discretion.

Discarding

20. Discarding materials is an important part of maintaining a collection that is fresh and free of outdated, worn and damaged materials. Discarding of materials is vested in the Director of Libraries, who may authorize qualified staff to assist. Materials discarded will be deemed to have been discarded by the Board of Trustees.
21. When discarding materials, the Library will consider the same criteria as for selecting materials, as well as physical condition. Materials will not be removed because of controversy. Replacement of materials will be based on collection objectives.
22. The Library is not a library of historical record. To ensure a vital collection of continuing value to the communities we serve, except in the area of local history, materials that are not well used may be withdrawn.
23. Discarded materials may be sold for the benefit of the Library, given to other libraries, government offices or community agencies, recycled or destroyed.

Collection Review

24. The Library recognizes the right of individuals to question the inclusion of materials in the collection, and will seriously consider opinions submitted in writing on the [Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials](#) form. The form will be sent to the Executive Director, who will refer it to a staff review committee. Material under consideration will remain available to patrons until a decision is made.
25. The review committee will give the Director of Libraries a recommendation based on the judgment of the members of the committee as to whether the material was appropriately selected and made accessible under this Policy. Because of the need to meet individual as well as group preferences, the number of forms received will not be a factor in reaching a recommendation. The Director of Libraries will make a final decision regarding the material and reply to the individual in writing as soon as practical.
26. Individuals still wishing to express concerns to the Board of Trustees about materials in the collection will be heard during a regular meeting under the agenda item “Citizen Concerns” or at another time designated by the Board. The Board, after receiving testimony from the public and from the Director of Libraries, will decide whether the actions taken were appropriate under this Policy.
27. The Library reports all formal challenges to materials to the Massachusetts Library Association’s Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse collects reports about challenges against all types of library materials in all types of Massachusetts libraries in an attempt to document the level of censorship attempts in Massachusetts. Data collected may also be submitted to the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom.

Adopted by Vote of the Library Board of Trustees, October 9, 2025

Related Policies

Library Bill of Rights

Freedom to Read Statement

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