



RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Title: Collection Development

Policy Number: 12.01 Reviewed Date: 07/23/2025

I. Selection

Goals of Materials Selection:

The goal of materials selection at Richmond Public Library (RPL) is to support the library's mission to "Inform – Enrich – Empower" by providing a range of materials in a variety of print and non-print formats to meet the informational, cultural, educational, and recreational needs and interests of the Richmond community.

The Library strives to create attractive, current, and balanced collections representing all fields of knowledge and all sides of issues in a neutral, unbiased manner, as budgets, availability of materials, and space permit.

Intellectual Freedom:

The representation of a particular viewpoint in the collection is an expression of the Library's policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of that particular point of view. The Library encourages free expression and free access to ideas – essential elements in a democratic society – and does not knowingly discriminate in its material selection regarding age, race, beliefs, or affiliations of the author or producer. The Library subscribes to the principles outlined in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and *Freedom to Read* documents.

Responsibility for the reading of minors rests with their parents and legal guardians. Selection of adult materials will not be limited by the possibility that books may inadvertently be used by minors.

Responsibility for Materials Selection:

Librarians in the Collection Development department have primary responsibility for selecting new materials for all library locations within Richmond Public Library; collection Development staff work closely with Branch Managers and Reference librarians to ensure that materials are selected that meet the needs of each neighborhood library. Branch Managers are responsible for the overall maintenance of their individual collections. The Library Director is ultimately responsible for the selection of all books and other library materials. The authority for book selection is delegated to him/her by the Library Board, which determines the policies of the Library.

General Criteria for Materials Selection:

- Relevance to community needs and interests
- Current and projected demand
- Relationship to existing subject coverage in the collections
- Clarity, readability, and ease of use
- Timeliness or permanence of material
- Accuracy and authenticity
- Literary merit and inclusion in standard bibliographies and indices
- Network and remote access capabilities (for online resources)
- Authority and reputation of the author, publisher, and/or producer
- Local demand/Patron requests
- Cost
- Local (Richmond-area) authorship or production
- Regional availability and accessibility
- Space and maintenance requirements
- Technical requirements (for audiovisual and digital materials)
- Current and historical significance

Selection Tools:

Librarians depend on reviews issued in established review publications. In general, the Collection Development department requires at least one satisfactory review in order to purchase an item. Selection tools also include notable lists, award lists, classroom reading lists, and bestseller lists.

Examples of Selection Tools:

Adult Books:

- *Library Journal*
- *Booklist*
- *Kirkus Reviews*
- *Publisher's Weekly*
- National Media Reviews – *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* bestseller lists
- *New York Times* Notable Books
- *Essence* bestseller list
- National Book Award
- Local Media Reviews – *Richmond Times Dispatch*, *Style Weekly*, *Virginia Public Media* book reviews

Children's and Young Adult (YA) Books:

- *School Library Journal*
- *Horn Book Magazine*
- *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- *Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)*
- *Booklist*
- *Publisher's Weekly*
- Newbery, Caldecott, and Coretta Scott King Award
- Young Adult ALA accredited award lists

Audio/Visual (AV) and Electronic Materials:

- *Library Journal*
- *School Library Journal*
- *Booklist*
- *Video Librarian*
- *Gramophone*
- American Film Institute lists
- Academy Awards
- Audie Awards
- Grammy Awards

II. Materials Budget

In collaboration with the Library Director, the Collection Development Manager establishes the materials budget for all branches. In allocating funds to each location, a general formula is used that factors in each location's circulation, door count, reference transactions, and programming and community interests.

III. Collection Development Philosophies

Main Library Collection:

While the philosophy for collection development is the same for all libraries within the Richmond Public Library, we recognize that the Main Library provides more extensive collections than those held at the branch libraries. The Main Library collection will provide more depth in subject areas, and a wider historical perspective in subject areas and the work of individual writers.

All special collections held within the Richmond Public Library will be held at the Main Library. Weeding at the Main Library will follow the same schedule as that of the branch libraries. Criteria for weeding will be adjusted based on the depth of collections that may be appropriate for the Main Library.

Adult Collection Philosophy:

- RPL serves adult interests for information and recreation through both print and non-print collections.
- The size of our library buildings limits our ability to shelve broad subject collections at each branch, or to shelve extensive titles by individual authors.
- Our budget limits our ability to purchase multiple copies of titles throughout the library system.
- While adults throughout the Richmond community have similar interests, adults served by each library will have particular interests that require a focus or deeper level of development that may not be necessary at all libraries.
- As consumers, adults will look for materials that are current, in good condition, and easily accessible. There is no one rule to apply to determine whether an item is "dated" or not. For example, a handbook from 2017 on investing in real estate will be dated in today's economy, but a book on home decorating from 2017 could still be interesting; a cookbook from 2010 may be fine, unless it is a cookbook for a diet plan that has been shown to be flawed.

- RPL strives to support the lifelong learning goals of our patrons. While we will strive to provide materials on a broad range of topics, we will not purchase college or other school textbooks due to high cost and limited currency.

Therefore:

- RPL will endeavor to maintain adult collections at the Main and branch libraries that are interesting and useful within the constraints of our budget.
- RPL will evaluate materials for purchase as well as our existing collections with the basic criteria that holdings must be accurate, appealing, and generate interest among our users. Older titles, duplicates, and extensive runs by particular authors will not be kept in branch library collections unless they are regularly circulating (multiple times within a year).
- As librarians, we will evaluate new adult materials for addition to the library collections using current reviewing sources, media sources, and requests from the general public. Donations and gifts will be evaluated according to the library's established gift policy.
- We will evaluate our existing collections based on generally accepted guidelines for weeding that take age and circulation into account, on staff knowledge of current subject areas and current authors, and on surveys and other tools that gather user feedback.
- RPL will weed/replace subject areas on a regular schedule, using a schedule established and monitored by Collection Development, with Main and branch staff weeding subject areas according to the schedule.

Young Adult (YA) Collection Philosophy:

- YA's have distinctive interests and needs (e.g., particular school assignments, age-level, and development issues).
- Many subjects of interest to YA's are also of interest to all age-level users.
- Our budget limits our ability to purchase multiple copies of titles to place in different collections at each library (ex. purchase 1 for YA, 1 for adult), and our budget limitations cause concern when we purchase titles that do not circulate.

Therefore:

- RPL will continue to allocate funds toward the purchase of materials of particular interest to YA's, with a focus on high-interest, high-demand materials.
- RPL will label these materials as YA, but branches may choose to interfile them with the general adult collection if they think this will improve circulation and access.
- RPL will support YA "areas" in each branch that will include shelving space for materials of particular interest to YA's and space to provide changing displays that highlight materials of interest to YA's that are available in the general collection.

Children's Collection Philosophy:

- Children and their parents have varied needs for library materials:
 - Age and developmental stages of children will require different levels of materials.
 - Reading ability will vary and may not be related to the age of the child.
 - Information for parents should be provided to assist them in developing pre-reading and reading skills in their children, as well as information to understand the ages and stages of child development.
- Parents are responsible for helping their children choose materials at the library that meet their own family values. The Library will provide materials that reflect the diversity of lifestyles, backgrounds, and situations encountered by children in the 21st Century.
- Materials are needed both to support school assignments and to encourage reading for enjoyment.
- Materials to support school assignments must be current and accurate. Dated and inaccurate materials in subject areas must be withdrawn.
- Materials for parents will be provided through the Family Resource Collections and through the general collections. These will provide information on parenting skills, developmental stages of children, and issues encountered in families.
- Materials for children should include award-winning titles and titles reflecting the range of quality children's literature over the years, and titles of contemporary/popular interest.
- Materials for children should include both print and non-print materials.
- Due to budget constraints, we will provide a representative collection and purchase the widest range of subjects and authors for children.

Therefore:

- We will evaluate children's materials for addition to the collection from current reviewing sources, and through collaboration with early childhood specialists and school media specialists.
- RPL children's collections will be current and will be in good condition.
- Older titles of value will be transferred to the Main Library's children's collection or to the Children's Literature Special Collection but not kept at branch libraries unless circulation indicates a need.
- RPL will weed/replace subject areas on a regular schedule, using a schedule established and monitored by Collection Development, with library staff weeding areas of the collection according to the established schedule.

Reference Collection Philosophy:

Reference collections at each RPL location are developed with the purpose of providing library staff with the tools to meet patrons' particular information needs; the focus, particularly at the branch libraries, is on resources that provide current, practical information on common topics, such as homework assistance and consumer health and law resources. The Main Library's reference staff will be able to capitalize on its unique collection of retrospective materials. The Main Library, which has a dedicated Reference desk, may also collect reference materials that represent a broader scope of subject areas as well as a more in-depth treatment of topics. However, the focus for new reference purchases even at the Main Library is on building a working Reference collection of materials that are frequently consulted to meet patrons' current information needs.

Periodicals and Electronic Resources Collection Philosophy:

- RPL's mission supports basic research on a wide variety of topics of interest to the general public.
- The use of databases and other electronic resources to index and gain access to information – magazine and newspaper articles, consumer health information, encyclopedia articles, etc. – is increasing rapidly.
- However, print newspapers and magazines continue to be an important information source meeting our patrons' cultural, educational, and recreational needs.

Therefore:

- RPL will continue to maintain print subscriptions to a variety of periodicals, including local and significant national newspapers as well as popular magazines. Emphasis will be on creating a current, browsing collection at each library, though back issues of titles with research value may be kept in the Main Library's Periodicals area. Periodicals will not be bound into physical form for preservation or archival purposes.
- RPL will ensure access to historical information from local newspapers by purchasing microfilm editions of *The Richmond Times Dispatch* and *Style Weekly*.
- RPL will facilitate Richmond citizens' access to the electronic databases provided to all Virginia libraries through the Library of Virginia's Find It Virginia package and will promote the use of these resources.
- RPL will also seek to provide additional electronic databases and resources that meet perceived patron needs.

Audio Visual (AV) Collection Philosophy:

- RPL recognizes that there is a high demand for audiovisual materials (audiobooks, films, and music) from patrons of all ages who use its collections.
- In addition to popular materials, a wide variety of educational and instructional material is available in AV formats.
- Our budget limits our ability to keep up with demand for popular music CD's and DVD's of popular movies; it also limits our ability to purchase multiple copies of titles for each branch.

Therefore:

- RPL will strive to maintain AV collections at all RPL locations that are interesting and useful within the constraints of our budget.
- RPL will collect AV materials in CD and DVD formats. Audiocassettes and videocassettes will no longer be purchased. RPL will also attempt to replace materials that are still needed, but currently only owned in audiocassette or videocassette format with a CD or DVD version.
- RPL will strive to create balanced AV collections that include educational, instructional, and popular materials.
 - Popular materials will be purchased after they appear on "best of" lists or similar, indicating more lasting interest. RPL will usually not attempt to purchase popular materials as released.
- RPL will evaluate new AV materials for addition to the collections using current reviewing sources, media sources, and requests from the general public. Priority will be given to materials that receive favorable reviews in established review sources, that are nominated for awards, or that appear on established selection lists.

- Examples of awards and selection lists that will be used to identify AV materials for purchase: American Film Institute lists, Academy Awards, Audie Awards, Grammy Awards, and Gramophone Recommended Recordings.
- Donations and gifts of AV materials will be evaluated according to the library's established gift policy.
- RPL will weed and replace AV material on a regular basis, using a schedule established and monitored by Collection Development, with library staff weeding assigned subject areas according to the schedule.
- Titles that are dated will be weeded and withdrawn as they are found, even if they are still circulating.

Electronic Resources Collection Philosophy:

- RPL recognizes that there is a high demand for downloadable and streaming content from patrons of all ages who use its collections.
- Our budget limitations and accessibility limitations/restrictions cause concern for selection and access of this distribution format.

Therefore:

- RPL will strive to maintain a digital collection that is interesting and useful within the constraints of our budget.
- RPL will strive to provide digital materials in a variety of current formats and that will be compatible with the greatest number of electronic devices.
- RPL will evaluate digital materials for addition to the collections using current reviewing sources, media sources, and requests from the general public. Priority will be given to popular materials, materials that receive favorable reviews in established review sources, or that appear on established selection lists.

Family Resource Collections Philosophy:

- RPL is an accessible resource for parents and caregivers of children. Access to information that will contribute to healthy children and stable families will provide a foundation for successful families in our City.
- RPL will work in partnership with various schools, organizations and institutions to promote early literacy development, knowledge of the stages of development for children, and positive parenting.

Therefore:

- RPL will provide information at each library for parents and childcare providers, building knowledge of stages of child development, appropriate activities for children at various stages of development, information on health and growth, and information on behaviors and parenting skills.
- Staff at each library will promote the use of this information by highlighting this information in the library's programs and in the library's physical layout, drawing attention to the resources to promote their usage.
- RPL will support childcare providers and build their skills/knowledge through these collections, by providing training opportunities and information programs specifically for childcare providers.

- The Main Library will provide the largest Family Resource collection in a separate “Family Resource Center.”
- The branch libraries may interfile these Family Resource materials in the regular collection at the branch or may maintain these materials in separate “Family Resource Center (FRC)” location within the branch library. These materials will be identified with a FRC sticker, whether interfiled or shelved separately.
- RPL will weed/replace materials in the Family Resource Collections on a regular basis as budget and interest allows.

Public Law Library:

Richmond Public Law Library is free and open to the public. The Public Law Library, formerly housed in the John Marshall Courts Building, is located on the first floor of the Main Library at 101 E. Franklin Street. The Public Law Library function is funded and operated in accordance with Virginia State Code Section 42.1-70.

The library materials are all reference books that cannot be checked out. Photocopies can be made at a cost of .15 cents per page. The materials are available any time that the Main Library is open.

The Law Library collection includes:

- State codes and the Richmond City Code
- The United States Code Annotated (USCA)
- Federal and state administrative regulations
- All state and federal reported opinions
- American Law Reports (ALR), Corpus Juris Secundum (CJS), American Jurisprudence (Am Jur), Restatements, many subject-specific federal treatises and loose-leaf services, several sets of form books, and legal newspapers
- Virginia practice materials, including a large selection of Continuing Law Education (CLE's), Michie's Jurisprudence, Virginia Forms, Model Jury Instructions, and Virginia Practice

IV. Materials Maintenance

Reevaluation of Material:

The Richmond Public Library (RPL) strives to acquire material that best reflects the community's needs and interests. In most instances, reviews are conducted prior to purchasing material.

Patrons may request that an item on the shelf be removed for content by completing the “Materials Reconsideration Request Form” and sending the form to the Collection Development Manager. The request must include patron address and telephone number.

Withdrawal and Replacement of Materials:

To ensure that Richmond Public Library collections provide timely service to the public, outdated and inaccurate materials, materials no longer in demand, and materials in poor physical condition will be removed from the circulating collections. A weeding and replacement schedule will be established for all libraries under the direction of the Collection Development Manager; as outdated materials are weeded; libraries will select new items to replace them. Librarians will use standard tools such as the Public Library Core Collection and the Children's Core Collection to guide decisions about titles that should or should not be weeded. RPL will use *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* (Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2012) as its primary source for weeding guidelines, in conjunction with other standard professional resources as appropriate.

Withdrawn materials become surplus property and may be sold by the Friends of the Richmond Public Library for fundraising purposes or discarded in another manner at the Library's discretion, in accordance with City of Richmond policies and procedures.

Factors to be considered in removing materials from the collections:

- Age of item (in accordance with standard library practice, acceptable age depends on item's subject matter and classification)
- Authority (author, publisher)
- Accuracy
- Physical condition (ripped covers, damaged spines, yellowed pages, water damage)
- Circulation and in-house use
- Duplication (multiple copies of titles that are no longer in demand)
- Listing in standard bibliographic sources (*Public Library Core Collection, Children's Core Collection, etc.*)
- Relationship to other materials in a subject area (e.g., older editions of a non-fiction title that are superseded by a newer edition, the presence, or lack, of better material in a subject area)
- Missing components
- Damaged media

Materials that will not be weeded from the collections:

- Last copies of materials listed in standard bibliographic sources that are still relevant for Richmond's collection
- Last copies of titles of local interest (local author, local subject, local setting)
- Materials appropriate for RPL's Children's or Richmond Authors Special Collections

Replacement of Lost and Missing Items:

Materials that have been lost or missing for at least 6 months will be replaced on a continuing basis, dependent upon budgetary constraints and subject needs.

The Library does not automatically replace items withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear.

V. Gifts and Donations

Donated materials will only be added to the collection if they meet the same standards outlined in the materials selection policy:

- Books must meet the library's selection criteria for books and have a current year publication date or be by an author, part of a series, or on a subject of high interest to the library's community. Books that are duplicates of titles RPL already owns (and that circulate well) may also be added to the collection.
- AV materials (DVD's, audiobooks in CD format, and music CD's) must meet the library's selection criteria for AV materials and be in their original, unopened packaging.

Donated materials that do not meet these criteria will be placed in the branch libraries or Main library's book sale or recycled. Patrons inquiring about donating material should be given a copy of "Questions You Might Ask Before Giving a Donation to the Library."

Donating a Gift Book in 'Memory' or 'Honor Of' an Individual:

For those interested in donating a book to the Library in honor of or in memory of an individual, the Richmond Public Library accepts contributions for the purchase of new materials through the Richmond Public Library Foundation's Buy-A-Book fund. A bookplate recognizing the gift will be placed in a book purchased through this program.

Interested donors may contact the Foundation office about donating to this fund. Foundation staff will ask for donor information, as well as the name and address of the honoree. Once a donation is received, Foundation staff will send a letter of acknowledgement of the gift to the honoree or their family.

Contributions may be restricted to a certain branch, and donors may indicate whether they wish their gift to be used to purchase adult or children's books/materials. Decisions about which subjects and titles are selected is solely at the discretion of the Library's Collection Development manager based on current collection needs. However, donors may note specific areas of interest to the honoree, and Library staff will take this into consideration when selecting works.

VI. Special Collections

RPL maintains Special Collections that focus on Richmond Authors and Children's Literature. More information about these collections and policies is available in the following sections:

- 12.5 Special Collection Policy & Scope Statement
- 12.6 Special Collection – Richmond Authors
- 12.7 Special Collection – Children Scope Statement

Adopted: June 15, 2005
Revised: September 2006
Revised: July 07, 2009
Reviewed: January 2012
Revised: July 25, 2018
Revised: March 23, 2022
Reviewed: July 23, 2025