



Collections Policy

1. Purpose of Library Collections

The Geneva Public Library (“the Library”) develops collections to promote literacy, support education, encourage lifelong learning, and to meet the diverse cultural, informational, and recreational interests of the community.

The Library purchases both popular items and materials that meet specific community needs, such as materials in Spanish and large print, adult education, workforce training, and local history. The Library develops collections for all members of the community, including children, teens, and adults. Most materials for all age groups may be checked out but some collections, such as local history, are only available for use in the Library.

Careful consideration is given by Library staff when selecting each new item. Factors considered include: expected frequency of use; popularity of the author; professional and reader reviews; currency of information; price; and an item’s availability at other libraries in the Pioneer Library System. Special consideration is given to those books which deal with topics about which very little else is available.

A wide variety of materials and formats is considered for the collection, such as hardcover and paperback editions of books, periodicals, audio and video recordings, toys and games, and online and electronic media devices.

2. Collections for Children

The Library’s children’s collections include materials designed to serve the needs, educational benefits, and interests of all children, as well as parents and caregivers. Quality, accuracy, relevance, appropriateness for the intended audience, good design and format, and illustration are important criteria in the evaluation of children’s materials.

3. Collections for Teens

Collections for teens and young adults seek to provide a wide range of materials to meet and stimulate the interest of teenagers in reading and in the world around them. Collections for teens are separately identified to provide a transition between the collections for children and adults.

4. Local Author & Local History Collection

The Library recognizes an obligation to make accessible Local History and Authors collections, which contain works from authors from Geneva, or documentation of the history and culture of Geneva and the Finger Lakes region. The collections will primarily consist of books and other published items, the papers and manuscripts of regionally significant writers, and local genealogical resources. Books and other items that are very rare, expensive, unique, or in delicate condition will be considered for transfer to the Geneva Historical Society or housed at the Library in a more secure setting with more limited access.

To the extent possible based on condition, rarity, and value, items in the collections will be available for circulation and/or viewing in publicly accessible areas of the Library.

4.1 Additions to the Local History/Author Collections

The Library reserves sole discretion in making all decisions about what materials will be accepted and housed in its Local History and Author collections. Selection criteria will include, but may not be limited to, how the material fits into the existing collection, what kind of information the record offers, relevance to non-duplication of materials, cost to preserve and store, security requirements, and available copies at the Geneva Historical Society and other archives.

All materials donated to the Library for the purpose of adding to the Local Author or Local History Collection should be accompanied by the Library's [Deed of Gift form](#), becoming subject to the Library's selection and [retention](#) policies. Items without Deed of Gift documentation waive the rights of previous ownership and are subject to the Library's policies.

5. Suggestions for Additions to the Collection

To assure the acquisition of resources desired by Library users, patron suggestions are always considered for their addition to the collection. Patrons can request that specific items be purchased by filling out the [Suggested Purchase Form](#) online or with the aid of a Library staff member.

6. Collection Maintenance, Replacement, and Weeding

Library staff regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet patrons' needs. Materials that are worn, obsolete, unused, old editions, or unnecessarily duplicated are removed. It is the responsibility of staff to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed, or lost. Items are not automatically replaced. Decisions are based on need, demand, and budget.

6.1 Deaccessioning Local History and Author Collections

The Library reserves the right to periodically reevaluate materials in the Local History and Author collections and to deaccession certain items from the collections in a manner consistent with professionally accepted standards and in conjunction with advice from the Geneva Historical Society and other trusted agencies.

The Library may decide to deaccession an item if any of the following conditions are present:

- The item is not relevant to the Library's mission and purpose.
- The item would be more appropriately housed in a different archival repository.
- The item has deteriorated beyond its usefulness.
- The item is void of inherent exhibition, research, or educational value.
- The item is a duplicate of objects or records already in collections.
- The item is made of hazardous materials or is actively decomposing in a manner that directly affects the condition of other items and/or the health and safety of the staff and/or visitors.
- The Library is unable to continue to provide care and storage for the object in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
- The item is subject to legal and ethical standards requiring its removal.

Deaccessioned items will first be offered to the original donor or his/her agent if so requested at the time of donation. If the donor wishes not to reclaim the material or cannot be located, the Library reserves the right to transfer the material to another more appropriate organization. Where appropriate, preference will be given to the Geneva Historical Society or other local institutions.

7. Freedom to Read, See, and Hear

The Library believes it is essential in a free society that all citizens have access to Library materials and that no restrictions are placed on what anyone may read, see, or hear in a public library's collections, including those that are digital.

The Library agrees with the principles articulated in the American Library Association's [Freedom to View](#); [Library Bill of Rights](#); [Free Access to Library Materials for Minors](#); [Freedom to Read](#); and [Statement on Labeling](#).

Well-intentioned persons or groups occasionally question the appropriateness of specific items in library collections, or the effects some materials may have on impressionable persons. Suggestions are sometimes made regarding the restriction, removal, or labeling of certain library materials. The Library understands and appreciates these suggestions and concerns but believes the risk of not providing free access to information and ideas is greater than the risk of providing it. The Library, therefore, enunciates the following principles:

7.1 Controversial Materials

In an effort to provide our patrons with diverse sources of information and the widest possible range of ideas and viewpoints, we acquire materials that may be controversial because of profanity, social, economic, or political ideas, religious viewpoints, the background of the author, the kinds of information provided, or other reasons. Acquisition or use of any item does not imply approval or endorsement of the contents.

7.2 Ages

The age of a patron will not be the sole determining factor in the circulation of Library materials. If parents wish to limit their children's access to certain materials, that is their responsibility and not the Library's.

7.3 Labeling

It is sometimes suggested that a label be affixed to library materials indicating a political or social point of view or indicating that such an item is questionable or controversial. Such labeling suggests that people are incapable of making up their own minds about controversial subjects. The Library does not subscribe to this practice.

7.4 Review of Library Selections

The Library is willing to review its selection of items in its collections on a case by case basis. Individuals who question the appropriateness of specific items may initiate such a review by submitting their concerns to the Director in writing using the [Materials Complaint form](#), available at any service desk. The review process includes a full reading, hearing, or listening of the item by the Director and by the individual requesting the review. The Director will meet with the individual and report his or her findings to the Library Board of Trustees. No item is to be removed or restricted because of a complaint until after the Board has examined the individual's request and the findings of the Director.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: December 20, 2007

Amended by the Board of Trustees: 5/3/2008, 8/26/2009, 9/28/2011, 3/27/2013, 3/30/2016, 3/29/2017, 3/28/2018, 5/30/2018, 3/27/2019, 11/18/2020