

## Collections Policy

Policy Level:	Library Board
Author:	Director Collections and Program Development
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## POLICY PURPOSE

- To provide a statement of philosophy and identify key objectives that reflect the [Mission Statement](#) and [Strategic Priorities](#) of the Hamilton Public Library with regard to the collection management, and access to collections.
- To define the delegation of collections responsibilities.
- To establish procedures to address suggestions for purchase, gifts, donations and objections lodged against items in our collection by community residents or organizations.

## KEY POINTS SUMMARY

- The library's collections policy outlines the philosophy and key objectives of the library's collections development.
- The ultimate accountability for the management of Library collections lies with the Chief Librarian but in practice is delegated to the Director of Collections and Program Development.
- The collections policy outlines the key criteria for the selection and deselection of materials.
- The collections policy addresses suggestions for purchase, gifts, donations and objections lodged against items in our collection by community residents or organizations.

## DEFINITIONS

**Format** is the physical form of material and applies to all literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works; sound recordings; and recorded performances. Formats include: print, audiovisual, digital and multimedia made available to the community for lending through the integrated library system, third-party platforms or in-house use.

**Non-traditional Formats** refer to items in our collections that do not fit the above definition, yet still circulate as part of our collection. Non-traditional formats include, but are not limited to Radon Kits, CO2 Kits, and experience-based passes.

**Interlibrary loans** are transactions in which library materials are made available by one library to another; they include the provision of copies and microforms as substitutes for loans of the original materials.

## POLICY DETAILS

Strong library collections are fundamental to public library service. The Hamilton Public Library (HPL) is committed to developing and maintaining diverse, relevant and responsive collections that meet and anticipate the changing needs of our members.

The ultimate responsibility for the library's collections lies with the Chief Librarian acting in accordance with the general policies established by the Library Board. In practice, this authority is delegated to the Director of Collections and Program Development.

The Library Board, in establishing a Collections Policy, was cognizant of the [Constitution Act, 1982, Part 1, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), Section 2b, which guarantees everyone the following fundamental freedoms, freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication. The Hamilton Public Library endorses the [Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#) adopted by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations in 2016 and the Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual adopted by the Ontario Library Association in 1998.

The presence of materials in the Library collections does not constitute an endorsement of their content or viewpoints by the Library Board. The Board recognizes that this policy is carried out in compliance and with due regard for all applicable legislation.

Where appropriate, HPL participates in resource sharing initiatives and consortium purchasing to provide the greatest access to library materials.

### Selection

Items, including non-traditional formats are selected:

- To meet the recreational needs and interests of the community.
- To enrich human understanding by celebrating the diversity of our community through inclusion of various cultural, ethnic, religious and philosophical backgrounds.
- To educate and support lifelong learning.
- To recognize and accommodate a range of education levels and abilities.
- To inspire a love of reading, learning and creativity.
- To collect and preserve materials which illustrate the growth and development of the City of Hamilton, that celebrate its history and heritage or that pertain in whole or in part to activities within the geographic boundaries of the City of Hamilton.

### **Criteria for Selection of Materials:**

- Suitability of physical and/or digital form for library use, including maintenance/replacement cost of material, format or non-traditional format material
- Relation to existing collections and other materials on a subject.
- Accessibility of materials in other libraries, for free via the internet, or from other easily and freely accessible resources.
- Interests and composition of the community.
- Popular and/or anticipated demand and current trends.
- Attention of critics, reviewers, and the public.
- Quality, clarity, comprehensiveness and accuracy of the work.
- Canadian content
- Local content of a significant nature
- Reputation, skill, competence and purpose of the originator of the work.
- Special value as a contribution to social questions and problems of continuing or topical interest
- Timeliness or permanence of the work.
- Availability of funds and space.
- Balance of viewpoints in the collection including those considered extreme or minority.

An item need not meet each of the above criteria in order to be acceptable for inclusion in the collection. Items that do not meet these criteria may be purchased to meet demonstrated significant demand from the community. The [Local History and Archives](#) department will only accept material on a permanent basis, except when borrowing material for short-term loans to reproduce or to include in displays or exhibits.

### **Local Authors**

Special interest will be made to add works by local authors/artists to the collection. Works will be accepted if they are in a suitable format, fit the selection criteria and meet the eligibility requirements of Hamilton Public Library. All other authors will fall under the regular selection process. All submitted works will be treated as donations.

### **Request for Removal of Items**

The Hamilton Public Library recognizes the right of individuals to express opposition to author or artists' ideas or to their creative expression in 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 Hamilton Public Library is a resource where many points of view and

modes of expression can be examined without hindrance. No ideas or opinions have universal acceptance and the use of language or visual depiction, either descriptive or expressive, can itself stimulate controversy.

The presence of an item in the collection does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the Hamilton Public Library, but rather is an affirmation of the principle of intellectual freedom as embodied in the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries.

The Hamilton Public Library complies with any law enacted at the federal, provincial or municipal level, and therefore does not collect or maintain items which have been judged obscene or pornographic, or have been banned by the courts. The relevant sections of the [Criminal Code of Canada](#) are: sedition, hate propaganda and obscenity.

The following will not cause an item to be automatically included or excluded from the collection:

- Race, religion, nationality or political views of an author.
- Frankness or coarseness of language.
- Controversial content.
- Endorsement or disapproval of an individual or group.
- Language in which the work is written or spoken.

If a member feels that an item in our collection falls outside the criteria outlined in this policy, they are invited to complete a [Request for Reconsideration Form](#).

### **EResources and Content Hosted by Library Vendors**

The Library subscribes to a variety of third-party vendors that provide content for users of the Hamilton Public Library. The materials that are made available by these platforms is determined by the vendor, and not the library itself. In these circumstances, the library may be unable to assess the items for continued inclusion using our Request for Reconsideration guidelines.

### **Deselection and Collection Maintenance**

The library strives to maintain strong physical collections while growing or providing access to content that reflects the increasing demand for information, books, music and videos in digital formats.

The Library continually identifies items from its collections for discard based upon the following criteria:

- Item's subject is outdated.

- Item is no longer of interest or in demand.
- Overabundance of an item or subject due to waning interest.
- Worn or damaged copies.

Once an item has been identified for possible deselection based on the criteria above, the process of determining if an item still deserves a place in the library's collection begins. Retention is based on the following criteria:

- Is it of local, regional, or national significance, including works of local or Canadian authors, artists, recording artists or film makers and works pertaining to local history?
- Is it a work by a famous author, artist, recording artist, film maker or universally accepted as a classic work?
- Is it unique to the collection in that there is little or no information available on that topic elsewhere and is the information still relevant and useful?
- Can the damaged item be easily replaced? Is the item out of print?

Items withdrawn from the collection may be redirected back to the community through Community Collections in congress with HPL's Working with Us policy.

## **Local History & Archives Collection**

Material added to the Local History & Archives collection shall be held until such time as it is deemed no longer relevant and is de-accessioned. All information pertaining to the deaccessioning and disposition of material will be retained in the Archives' records.

## **Access to Collections**

Physical access to items will not be restricted except for the express purpose of protecting an item from damage or theft. Library members of all ages shall have open access to all the Library's collections with the following exceptions:

- Films rated "R" or "18A" by the Ontario Film Review Board until 2019 and then by Consumer Protection BC and Games rated "M" by the Entertainment Software Rating Board are limited to members 18 years of age or older. If a rating is not available for an item, yet fulfils the Library's Collections Selection Criteria, the item will be included in the collection without a rating.
- Access to collections housed in the Local History and Archives Department is limited to members 14 years of age and older. Users under 14 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- In keeping with the Library's [The Rights of Youth in the Public Library Policy](#), there is no restriction on the material that may be borrowed by children. Parents and/or those responsible for the child are responsible for the selection, usage and safe return of materials borrowed by their children.

## Interlibrary Loan

The Hamilton Public Library Board recognizes the important value of the [interlibrary loan service](#) to complement HPL's collections. HPL actively participates in resource sharing for the benefit of library members across Ontario and Canada and to provide Hamilton Public Library members with efficient access to information and materials not held in the HPL. Interlibrary loans are limited to those items that the library might not be expected to own. HPL does not depend upon another library to supply the normal needs of our members. Members have the option of requesting a "No Charge loan". However, when the lending institution has charges to apply, members must agree to pay up to \$25 in charges when they place the request. If the charge will exceed \$25 the member will be contacted. If an HPL member loses an item borrowed from another library on their behalf they are responsible for all replacement charges from the lending institution.

## Suggestion For Purchase, Donations or Gifts

- **Suggestions:** We encourage member participation in the shaping of our collections. Suggestions are referred and considered according to the Library's selection criteria.
- **Material Donations:** Defined as items purchased commercially that are no longer needed by members and organizations. Offers to donate items to the Hamilton Public Library are appreciated. However, we do not accept them, because they place a financial toll on the system that supersedes any monetary gain from sale or enhancement to our collection.
- **Monetary Donations:** Defined as a donation of funds intended to be spent on materials for circulation. The library cannot accept imposed conditions relating to any monetary donation for the collection (specific titles, specific collection, how purchasing is carried out, etc.). The allocation of these funds will be at the discretion of the library.
- **Gift Copies from Local Authors:** In an effort to support local authors, recording artists and film makers, we accept gift copies of their work as long as they are submitted in a format we currently support. The library cannot accept imposed conditions relating to any item after its acceptance (e.g. consignment, return). Items that are not added to the collection are not returned, but rather discarded or sold. Items are considered for inclusion according to the Library's selection criteria. We encourage authors to ensure that their materials are commercially available, as this is the preferred method to acquire materials for circulation, and to ensure that the author/artist is adequately compensated for their work.
- **Gifts to Local History & Archives:** Gifts in this case are defined as original works or works of significant historical value being offered to the Library at no charge. We have a mandate to collect and preserve valuable items that pertain to Hamilton's past and its culture. The Archives will accept historical material of any medium, including: textual records; photographs and other visual records; maps, plans and architectural records; and sound recordings and oral history recordings. Valuable items on Hamilton's past are evaluated by staff in our Local History & Archives Department before being accepted.

## APPROVAL HISTORY

March 2014; November 2019, May 2023