

Somerset County Library System – Policy Manual

CHAPTER IV -- OPERATING POLICIES

M. Collection Management Policy

A. Introduction

- a. The mission of SCLSNJ is to partner with our residents to connect, to explore, to share and to discover. We provide library services and resources that help people in Somerset County expand their knowledge and talents, make informed decisions, enrich their leisure hours, and enhance their daily lives. To fulfill this mission, SCLSNJ provides materials and information to support a wide range of community and individual interests.
- b. SCLSNJ is a library system of ten branches serving fifteen communities. Library staff work to provide a strong collection of materials and information in a variety of formats that reflect diverse points of view, which are carefully selected in response to and in anticipation of the needs and expectations of users of all ages.

B. Purpose

- a. The SCLSNJ Collection Management Plan guides staff in, and informs the public of, the process upon which collection development decisions are based. The Collection Management Plan consists of this policy and various selection and collection management procedures used by the staff. The criteria of the policy and procedures are designed to help the staff develop library collections that support the roles outlined in the SCLSNJ Strategic Plan.
- b. Collection development is understood to include both acquiring new materials for SCLSNJ libraries and evaluating existing materials for continued relevance to the collections.

C. Intellectual Freedom

- a. SCLSNJ is committed to the protection of the democratic ideal of the free flow of information and ideas, and to the right of free access to information for all individuals.
- b. SCLSNJ subscribes to the principles outlined in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and "Freedom to View Statement"
 - i. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/intfreedom/librarybill/lbor.pdf>.
 - ii. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/freedomreadstatement>
 - iii. <http://www.ala.org/vrt/professionalresources/vrtresources/freedomtoview>.
- c. SCLSNJ collection management decisions are based solely on the merit of an item as to whether it meets the goals of the SCLSNJ mission and the needs and interests of a diverse community. Inclusion of an item in a library's collection is not an endorsement of its content, and the library recognizes that some materials

may be considered controversial by some individuals.

- d. Library users are each responsible for determining what materials are appropriate in light of their own personal needs and values. Parents and legal guardians have full responsibility for overseeing their children's use of library materials.

D. Copyright

- a. SCLSNJ supports and adheres to all United States Copyright laws and regulations.

E. Selection and Evaluation of Library Materials

- a. SCLSNJ acquires materials in a variety of formats: print, digital, video, and audio. The same work may be acquired in more than one format.
- b. SCLSNJ continuously reviews and revises the mix of formats it acquires in response to the development of new media and to the demonstrated and perceived needs of its users.
- c. SCLSNJ staff utilizes professional judgment and expertise in making collection development decisions, including decisions about choosing titles and formats, identifying quantities for purchase, and selecting locations for materials. Anticipated demand, community interests, strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, system-wide availability, physical space limitations, purchasing availability, and budget limitations are all factors taken into consideration.
- d. SCLSNJ does not purchase textbooks in order to supply students with textbooks for required academic courses. Textbooks may be purchased if they provide information that cannot be found in another resource and because that will meet an anticipated need.
- e. The SCLSNJ world language collection is designed to meet the needs of native speakers of a variety of languages, as well as people interested in language study. Each branch in the system will house materials in languages that reflect local language populations within its service area.
- f. SCLSNJ also collects materials created by Somerset County authors. These self-published or small press items may not meet criteria established for the main-stream and journal reviewed items typically collected by the system. However, the Strategic Plan promotes our partnership with our local authors, so we collect locally produced resources and works for future use. Somerset County authors, illustrators, musicians and filmmakers are encouraged to donate at least one copy of their work to SCLSNJ through their local branch. Materials will be reviewed by local branch staff and Collection Management staff to assess which collection (juvenile, young adult or adult) and location is the best fit for each work. Then the item will be added, made searchable in our catalog and made available for patrons to use.
- g. Standards of professional librarianship and the following criteria are employed for selection and reevaluation decisions:
 - i. Content
 1. Professional reviews;

2. Demonstrated or perceived interest, need, or demand by library users or potential users, status of existing holdings in relation to customer demand;
 3. Currency, contemporary significance, popular interest or historic importance;
 4. Relevance to the experiences and contributions of the diverse populations served in Somerset County;
 5. Representation of controversial and/or diverse points of view;
 6. Quality, including awards received, accuracy, clarity, reputation or qualification of the author or publisher, including authority and competence;
 7. Relation to existing collections;
 8. Value of resource in relation to its cost.
- ii. Format:
1. Accessibility, durability, physical suitability, and ease of use;
 2. Additional format criteria are considered when selecting digital content, including: accessibility; ease of use; and equipment; training; and technology needed;
 3. Cost in relation to use and/or potential to enhance the collection;
 4. Demand.
- h. SCLSNJ does not purchase textbooks in order to supply students with textbooks for required academic courses. Textbooks may be purchased if they provide information that cannot be found in another resource and because that will meet an anticipated need.
- i. Special Considerations
- i. The SCLSNJ world language collection is designed to meet the needs of native speakers of a variety of languages, as well as people interested in language study. Each branch in the system will house materials in languages that reflect local language populations within its service area.
 - ii. SCLSNJ also collects materials created by Somerset County authors. *While* these self-published or small press items may not meet criteria established for the mainstream and journal reviewed items typically collected by the system, we collect locally produced resources and works for future use. Somerset County authors, illustrators, musicians and filmmakers are encouraged to donate at least one copy of their work to SCLSNJ through their local branch. Materials will be reviewed by local branch staff and Collection Development staff to assess which collection (juvenile, young adult or adult) and location is the best fit for each work.

F. Collection Evaluation and Management

- a. The collections of the SCLSNJ branches are continually evaluated according to the criteria set forth in the SCLSNJ Collection Management Policy, the library system's vision, mission, and values statements, and the priorities outlined in the SCLSNJ Strategic Plan. Once in the collection, materials are regularly assessed with regard to their accuracy, relevance, physical condition, and use by the public.

Worn, damaged, unused, and obsolete materials will be withdrawn from the collection and disposed of according to SCLSNJ procedures.

- b. Through ongoing quantitative and qualitative methods, the Collection Development team and branch librarians monitor our collections to see that they are serving the needs of the individual branches, as well as of the system.

G. Gifts and Donations

- a. SCLSNJ accepts donations of materials, and donations of money designated for the purchase of materials.
- b. Donated items become the property of SCLSNJ and may be added to the collection based upon the criteria for selection and retention established in the Collection Management Plan. Items not found to be suitable for the collection will be turned over to one of the SCLSNJ Friends of the Library groups for their use, marketed for sale for the benefit of SCLSNJ, or otherwise disposed of.
- c. Because of changing needs and interests, relevancy, wear, theft, or damage of an item, SCLSNJ cannot guarantee the permanence of a gift placed in the collection.
- d. Donors of money to purchase materials may specify the library branch that shall be the recipient of the gift. Donors may also specify to which subject area their gift shall apply.
- e. While SCLSNJ will provide written acknowledgement of all donations, the Library does not appraise books and materials, and no dollar value will be assigned to any donated items.

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