

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Objectives, philosophy and purpose of the Library

Libraries in general

The public library defines democracy; it is free and open to everyone in the community regardless of age, educational level, economic circumstance, ethnic background, or social and political viewpoint.

The public library plays an indispensable role in the life of a community. A society becomes more complex and the media more self-serving, libraries stand out as the disinterested source of reliable information.

The public library also holds a major responsibility in the community for promotion of the reading of literature, encouragement of cultural development, and assistance in the creative use of leisure time.

A community that has an active public library, responsive to the community's needs, will be a better place for all of its residents.

Yakima Valley Regional Library

The goals of the Yakima Valley Regional Library are:

To provide the best possible public library service, within our financial ability, to the residents of the city of Yakima, the contracting cities and towns, and the rural residents of Yakima County, Washington;

To serve the residents of the city and county of Yakima as a center of reliable information;

To select and provide easy access to materials which will help meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of all the people served by the library; and

To select materials which will achieve a balance between materials of contemporary interest while creating a collection of permanent value and to acquire materials which reflect differing points of view.

To meet these goals, the Yakima Valley Regional Library is guided by the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read and the Freedom to View statements of the American Library Association.

Purpose

The purpose of the Collection Development policy is to guide librarians in the selection of materials of contemporary significance and of permanent value and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. Its primary objective is to ensure that public monies are spent wisely so that the library can provide for the informational, recreational and educational needs of the community. This policy must be flexible and broad in scope and should be periodically reviewed.

Definitions

Collection: The total body of materials owned or leased by the library.

Materials: Any format used to disseminate information: books, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, maps, sound recordings, art prints, video cassettes, etc.

Selection: The decision that must be made either to add a given item to the collection or to retain one already in the collection.

Description of the community

The population of Yakima County in 1990 was 188,823. Yakima City's population increased 10% since 1980 to 54,827 in 1990, while the county population has increased 9.5 % from 1980 to 1990. At 4,275 square miles, the county is the second largest in the state; it is the seventh largest in population.

The population is concentrated along the Yakima River, on the floor of the Yakima Valley. The surrounding ridges, and the Yakima Indian Reservation in the southwestern section, are sparsely populated.

Yakima City serves as the retail, cultural and social service center for the Valley and central Washington. The county has a diversified economy, with the largest employers being agriculture, trade, service industries, government, and manufacturing.

Post-secondary education is available at Perry Technical Institute, Trend Business College, Yakima Valley Community College, City University and Heritage College near Toppenish.

*Statistics in this section are drawn from the 1990 Census of Population.

Demographics

The purpose of this section is to highlight significant characteristics of the Yakima City/County population that would have an impact on library services. There are some differences between city and county populations and, in some cases, both differ from the nation as a whole.

Age

The city has a large proportion of people 65 or older, 16.4% as compared to 12.9% for the county and 12.5% nationally.

Education

Of all the Yakima City residents over 24 years of age, 70.9% are high school graduates and 16.5% have four or more years of college. 66.1% of Yakima County residents over 24 years of age have graduated from high school and 13.7% have completed four or more years of college. Nationally, 63.2% of the population are high school graduates and 7.3% have four or more years of college.

14.0% of city residents over 25 years of age have less than 9 years schooling; in the county, the percentage is 17.3%. Nationally, 5.0% of the people over 25 years of age have less than 8 years of schooling.

Income and employment

The per capita income of Yakima City residents in 1989 was \$11,593. This compares with the lower figure for the county of \$10,735. Washington State's per capita income at that time was \$17,784 and the national figure was \$17,731.

The percentage of people living below the poverty level in 1989 in the city and in the county was 20.0%. Nationally, the figure was 13.0%. At the time these figures were compiled, the county's unemployment rate was 9.4%, the state's was 6.3% and the national unemployment rate was 7.5%. City data was unavailable.

Racial, ethnic and language composition

The racial composition of Yakima City is 83% White, 2% Black, 2% Native American, 1% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 12% other or no reply. Yakima County is 74% White, 1% Black, 4% Native American, 1% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 19% other or no reply.

23.9% of county residents are of Spanish origin, compared to 16.3% of city residents.

In Yakima County, 22.0% of persons aged 5 and over speak a language other than English at home; 49.5% of these do not speak

English very well. 19.6% of persons aged 5 and over speak Spanish at home; 52.2% of these do not speak English very well.

Approximately 15.8% of persons aged 5 and over in the city speak a language other than English at home; 49.9% of these do not speak English very well. 12.4% of persons aged 5 and over speak Spanish at home; 54.2% of these do not speak English very well.

*Statistics for this section were compiled from the 1990 Census of Population, 1991 Washington State Data Book and the 1991 Statistical Abstract of the United States.

Selection of materials

Responsibility for materials selection

The Library Director has the ultimate responsibility for the selection of library materials, within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board. The initial selection is done by a group of qualified librarians, who are designated by their job description to select materials.

Material selection principles and process

Principles

The purpose of the materials selection principles is to provide guidelines for achieving the objectives of the Yakima Valley Regional Library. Materials are acquired in a variety of formats according to their relevance and usefulness in the community. Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own worth and the audience for which it is intended. Because of the limitations of a materials budget and the amount of physical space in the library, and the enormous volume of materials published and produced, the librarians in charge of selection consider the following factors when selecting materials:

Quality. It is clear that the library cannot afford to buy everything that is published or produced. The first step in selection, then, must be to determine which titles are worth considering for purchase.

The following aspects of quality should be taken into account when selection for nonfiction for the library: Authority of writer and reputation of publisher; accuracy of information; impartiality of opinion or clearly stated bias; currency of data; adequate breadth and depth of coverage; appropriateness and relevancy of subject to the library's users; good quality illustrations; special features such as bibliography and index; durable material; and cost as related to all of the above. Cost is an important factor when considering the purchase of media materials.

In the case of fiction, only some of the above aspects will be relevant: The reputation of the author and publisher; appropriateness to the library's users; the physical qualities of the material; and the cost. In addition, the material's aesthetic qualities must be evaluated, including the interest and originality of the plot, the interest and development of the characters, and the style of the writing.

In selecting materials for the library, then, our first responsibility is to select materials of good quality.

Demand. The public library must be responsive to the needs and desires of its users. For this reason, popular materials, such as light fiction and best sellers, may be bought, even though their quality may not meet the standards discussed above. The selection of fiction and media materials is more influenced by demand than the selection of nonfiction. However, the subject of nonfiction material is also often selected upon demand of the community. The librarian's professional judgment of the quality of the material is also very important. Demand is difficult to anticipate and is subject to media influences. It is a responsibility of the librarian to be aware of and responsive to the needs of the community. The librarian must also keep abreast of current issues, expanding areas of knowledge, changing social values, technological advances, and cultural differences, so as to anticipate interest in these subject areas.

Balance. The concept of balance refers to the subject matter of the library materials, the subject areas of the library collection, and the demands of members of the community. Materials are often written/produced on controversial subjects about which there is strong disagreement. It is the responsibility of the library to attempt to present materials on both sides of a controversial issue.

Balance among subject areas in the collection is desirable, in that all areas of knowledge should be represented. At the same time, it is recognized that the community will have more interest in some subject areas than in others, so it follows that equal treatment of all areas is not necessary.

Balance as it refers to demands by members of the community means that the interests, views, and desires of all elements of the community should, whenever possible, be represented.

In selection, the librarian also considers the collections of other libraries in the area and the possible availability of the material through interlibrary loan.

Process. Reviews in standard professional journals and magazines will be used as an aid in the selection process. Regardless of their reviews, some materials are selected to satisfy collection or patron needs. Other sources used in the selection decision are the media, such as newspapers, radio and television, publishers' catalogs, advertisement received in the mail, and bookstores. Suggestions are also welcome from the library staff, identifying areas of the collection which need strengthening and recommending specific materials for purchase. Involvement by the community in selecting materials for purchase is encouraged. Reserve cards are available for the public to request material not currently available. If the material is already in the collection, the library may consider adding duplicate copies to satisfy the expressed demand. Material not in the collection will be considered for purchase using the criteria of quality, demand, and balance, as discussed above. If the material is not purchased, the patron has the option to request it through interlibrary loan. Orders for materials reserved by the public will be handled as expeditiously as possible.

Library patrons are encouraged to suggest titles they would like to see the library purchase, even if they do not wish to have the material placed on reserve for their use. They may also suggest areas of the collection which they would like to see expanded.

From time to time, the library may distribute questionnaires to users or conduct a survey to the community to discover the interests of its members. In this way, the library may identify new groups or spot areas of the community not well served, and then translate this information into material selection practice.

Collection Development

It is the responsibility of the librarians to be aware of the materials collection in its entirety and to suggest subject areas where the collection needs to be strengthened. This is important in order to maintain a balance in the overall collection. The collection of the Yakima Valley Regional Library is aimed at the general lay reader and provides current materials on various subjects. It is not intended to be a historical collection except in the area of materials on the Pacific Northwest. The Headquarters Library is designated as the resource center for the regional library system, providing the depth for the rest of the libraries' collections. The one branch and the community libraries provide more popular collections. The more specialized needs of the community libraries are met through the reserve system and through interlibrary loan. The format of the materials selected depends on its availability, its durability, its cost, and its usefulness for the community. Materials are selected for various age groups and of different levels of complexity.

Reserves and interlibrary loans play an important part in collection development. Patrons may request materials which are not part of the Yakima Valley Regional Library collection. These materials are considered for possible purchase, using the same criteria that are used for new acquisitions.

Materials not purchased by the Yakima Valley Regional Library may be borrowed through interlibrary loan. The library uses the

interlibrary loan system to supply our patrons with technical or specialized materials which are beyond the scope of our collection, or materials not available for purchase. This resource sharing is not a replacement for purchasing material but allows Yakima Valley Regional Library to supplement our collection with materials not otherwise available for our patrons.

Some categories of material are singled out for selection because of their format or subject matter:

Reference collection

The reference collection houses materials that provide specific information on various topics. Books are selected to provide a core collection of basic information sources and to provide information on current topics and subjects of local interest. The reference collection also houses works of local history which are often irreplaceable. Reference books remain in the library so that the information that they contain is available to the residents of the community anytime that the library is open.

Because of the nature of the reference collection it is most important that the books in that collection be accurate and as up-to-date as possible. Also, the information that the books contain should be easily accessible, therefore indexes are of primary importance.

Reviews in recognized library journals are the main source of information on the accuracy and special features of the books. These journals, as well as publishers' advertisements, are used to alert the reference coordinator to new editions of publications that are available. A large part of the reference budget is used to buy these new editions and thereby keep the information current.

The reference collection at the Headquarters library is the central information source for the community libraries. The reference collections in the community libraries reflect the needs of the individual libraries. The collections are composed of several standard reference works and other sources which are chosen in response to questions that the library receives. The standard reviewing sources are used in selecting these books.

Children's Services and Young Adult Collections

The Children's Services and Young Adult Departments serve people from early childhood through high school age. Within their budgetary limits, these departments seek to build and maintain broad, well-balanced, and lively collections. Materials are selected to meet both the informational and recreational needs of children and young adults who have a wide range of interests, backgrounds and abilities.

Materials will be selected for the children's ("J") section when their subject matter, style and complexity make them generally most appropriate for children up through approximately 12-13 years; materials whose subject matter, style and complexity make them generally most appropriate for persons 13-18 years will be selected for the young adult ("Y") section. However, Yakima Valley Regional Library has an open access policy which entitles any registered patron to borrow any circulating book, periodical, pamphlet, record or audio cassette, regardless of classification.

The library recognizes the right of parents to provide their own children with guidance in choosing library materials. However, as subscribers to the Library Bill of Rights, we endorse children's and young adults' right to read, view and hear all points of view. We therefore do not support persons attempting to limit the choices of children other than their own.

Selection is done under the leadership of the Children's Services and Young Adult Coordinators, who are responsible to the Library Director for final decisions on materials selected.

"J" and "Y" materials are evaluated by the same criteria and standards as adult materials. These include: accuracy, currency, readability, organization, and authority in informational books; theme, plot, style, and characterization in picture books and fiction; composition, graphic interest, and integration of story and illustration in picture books.

Patron requests and interests will be factors in selection for all areas, and certain fiction titles which do not meet the usual selection criteria

may be included in the collection to meet popular demand. However, the library will generally not purchase “toy books” or those whose main purpose is promotion of licensed characters. School assignments are considered in purchase decisions, but collection emphasis is on scope and individual interests rather than curricular needs.

Because young adults make heavy use of the adult circulating and reference collections for their general informational needs and recreational reading, the young adult collection focuses on special teen interests, such as careers, current topics and issues, and young adult novels.

Large print books

Books printed in 14-point type or larger are appreciated by those persons in the community with poor vision, as well as others who enjoy the ease with which these books can be read. The library attempts to provide a continuous supply of a good variety of titles in this format, particularly in fiction.

Northwest and local history

Books on the Pacific Northwest, specifically Yakima and the Central Washington areas, are of special interest to the people of Yakima County. These include nonfiction books in many subject areas—history, travel, economics, natural history, etc.,--and fiction. They are distinguished by an “NW” on their spines.

Spanish language

Since 23.9% of the residents of Yakima County are of Spanish origin, a collection of Spanish language materials, both adult and juvenile, is provided and regularly expanded.

Media collection

The Media Department provides patrons with a wide variety of services. Items such as records, audio cassettes, slides, slide

projectors, video cassettes (VHS), long-playing cassette players and cassettes, and art prints are all included in this department.

The supervisor of the Media Department coordinates the selection of media material with final approval of the Library Director, using the criteria of quality, demand and balance. Materials are provided for all age levels, with popular materials given top priority. However, because of limited funding, it is not always possible to meet everyone's needs.

The following specific items are selected for the media collection:

Records and cassettes. Material in this area is purchased as a result of suggestions and popularity. Also, musical classics are purchased in their respective areas. Reviews are used to determine the quality of the recordings. Information available from purchasing agents is also considered.

Video cassette materials. The library purchases video cassettes to make them accessible to all members of the community. Video cassettes are selected based on their popularity and demand and their appeal to all age levels. The library provides instructional as well as recreational videos. The motion picture code of rating is used in evaluating the material for purchase. Copyright laws do not allow group showings of video cassettes unless designated as "group performance" videos.

Art prints. The library has framed prints available for use in home or office, including landscapes, western arts abstracts, and local art. The art prints are selected from art print catalogs to appeal to a variety of tastes.

Patron suggestions are considered to all media materials.

Periodicals collection

The periodicals collection supplements the book collection by providing timely information on a variety of subjects. Periodicals are selected using the criteria established for books: quality, demand and balance.

The periodicals collection serves two functions. It is a source of current information for general reading and a resource of specific information on various subjects. Because of the specific information function, priority in selection is given to magazines that are indexed in standard indexing services available in the library.

The periodicals collection consists of general interest magazines on a variety of subjects. Specialized journals are not included. However, magazines published about Washington State, the Pacific Northwest, and locally produced periodicals are included in the collection.

Specific Selection Situations

Types of material excluded

It is not the purpose of the collection to take the place of the elementary, high school, or college library. It is the responsibility of the public or private school system to supply curriculum materials. Consequently, the library does not purchase text books to satisfy curricular needs.

Although the library encourages the reading of literature and supports informal education, it is not the library's responsibility to provide multiple copies of special materials for group use.

Materials which present an honest aspect of life or of some human problem are selected for their positive values are not necessarily excluded on a basis of course language or frankness.

Replacement of lost/damaged materials

The library applies the same criteria to the replacement of materials as it does in original selection, with added emphasis on the following:

Demand for a specific title;

Availability of additional copies in the system;

Availability of newer and better materials on the subject;

Availability of the title in another format;

Existence of adequate subject coverage in the collection; and

Historical value of a title.

Gifts and memorials

The library will accept gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they become the property of the library and will be evaluated against the same criteria as purchased materials. The item's physical condition and the number of other copies already in the collection are also considered. The library will make the final decision on the use or other disposition of all donations and will decide the conditions of display, housing and access to the materials. If gifts of marginal value are offered, processing and handling costs and use of shelf space will be prime considerations. The librarians are happy to provide suggestions of appropriate titles to groups or individuals who wish to donate new titles to the collection.

Monetary gifts for the purchase of materials will be accepted. The library encourages donors to place as few restrictions as possible on the funds in order to permit the most flexible use of the donation.

Funds for the purchase of memorial books or materials are gladly accepted. Suggestions from the donor for a particular material or subject are encouraged and every attempt is made to fill that request within the given price range.

Weeding materials in the collection

Weeding is the systematic evaluation of the library's collection with an eye to the withdrawal of damaged or obsolete materials from the

collection. This process is an integral part of collection development and maintenance.

In general, the same criteria apply to weeding as are used in the selection of new materials. Materials that fall into the following categories should be withdrawn:

Materials which contain outdated or inaccurate information;

Superseded editions;

Worn or badly marked items;

Duplicate copies of seldom used titles; and

Unused items.

Some books, especially fiction, may be retained in the collection even though they may not circulate often, but they have a recognized quality that appeals to particular readers.

Intellectual freedom

As an institution committed to providing free access to the widest diversity of views and modes of expression, the Yakima Valley Regional Library will challenge individuals or groups who attempt to remove materials from the library because they contain unorthodox or unpopular ideas. Also, it is contrary to the public interest for the library to determine the acceptance or rejection of material solely on the basis of the personal history or political affiliation of the author or artist.

The Yakima Valley Regional Library does not advocate the ideas found in its collection. The presence of certain material in the library does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the library.

The Yakima Valley Regional Library understands that not all materials in the collection are suitable for all age groups. The library

attempts to guide patrons toward materials directed at specific age groups or reading levels by dividing the collection into children's, young adult, and adult sections. However, the library will not usurp the responsibility of the parent in guiding their children's use of the library.

As a publicly supported institution, the Yakima Valley Regional Library welcomes the advice of its patrons on how to better serve the community. Just as the library takes into account patron reserves when selecting new materials, it also takes into account any patron's request for reconsideration of material already in the collection. Any request for reconsideration will be reviewed by the Library Director and the Book Selection Committee and the patron will be informed on the reasons behind any action taken.

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