



## Topics

Introduction

Needs of the community

Current library collection

Collection evaluation

Collection of statistics

Materials budget

Collection development policy

Topics

Collection development plan

Samples



---

### INTRODUCTION

A collection policy statement is a written document adopted by the library board which guides the overall development of the library's collection. Once this policy has been adopted, a collection development plan, including objectives, procedures and a buying plan can be developed, based on that policy.

The first step in a successful collection development process is to gather information on the library, in particular about the present collection and the community served by the library.

---

### NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

The primary goal of a collection development policy should be a satisfied clientele. Selection should be based on the wants and needs of the community, both short term and long term. A community survey can be a very useful tool to help assess these needs. *Enjoying research? A 'How to' manual on needs assessment* and *Assessing your community for library planning* are excellent guides to conducting a needs survey. Both of these publications are Ontario government publications which were distributed to libraries across Ontario.

The library needs of the community are identified through a study of the community's demographic and economic situation and trends. It provides information as to the composition of the community -- what parts of the community are growing, what activities are most popular, what other interests exist, what businesses are present, and so on. From this information, the current and longer term library needs of the community are determined and priorities for library service can be established.

Overall library priorities are translated into priorities for collection development. For example, special collections or formats such as large print, books on tape, videocassettes, microform, pamphlets, maps, multilingual material and special subject areas may be considered necessary to adequately meet the needs of the community.



A detailed examination of the current collection is essential. You will want to find out what your collection really is like and whether it meets the needs of your patrons. The present collection should be reviewed using a set of criteria established by the staff. Items to be considered are:

---

### CURRENT LIBRARY COLLECTION

**accuracy and relevance**

Do materials reflect up-to-date information and is that information important to the community?

**balance**

Does the collection represent a variety of viewpoints or is it biased toward one?

**currency**

Does the collection reflect current interest and concerns?

**suitability**

Does the collection fill the informational and recreational needs of the community?

**appearance**

Does the collection present an appealing appearance or is it full of torn and dirty covers and musty books?

There are a number of methods which can be used to perform a simple but comprehensive review of the current library collection from both a use and a suitability of the collection point of view. A consultant from the Ontario Library Service would be able to help you select the most appropriate way to evaluate your collection.

---

### COLLECTION EVALUATION

To assess the quality of the present collection, all or parts of the library's current collection can be compared against standard lists of titles recommended for library collections.



A random sample of the collection can help to evaluate the use of the present collection. Each book in the sample would be checked to see how often the item has circulated in the past five years for non-fiction and the past three years for fiction.

To determine the balance between types of material and subject areas in the current library collection, a chart can be made to see how many items are in each subject area. Weak areas, especially in non-fiction, become quite apparent in this exercise.

---

### COLLECTION OF STATISTICS

General statistics kept by the library can also be useful in evaluating the collection. Statistics can be important to the creation of a collection development policy. Circulation statistics, for example, can tell a great deal about the present use of the material in the library. Such statistics can indicate whether the circulation of children's books is increasing at a faster rate than the adult material or the number of books that have circulated in different subject areas. Reference and interlibrary loan statistics can tell a great deal about the need for information and additional materials in certain subject areas.

---

### MATERIALS BUDGET

The budget and spending patterns indicate the present priorities of a library. Information on what is spent for adult materials, children's materials and materials in other formats should be collected.

Budgetary restriction will determine such things as whether:

- o multiple copies of high demand, short lived items will be purchased in paperback
- o formats such as videotapes may be considered
- o a library may rely on periodical indexes, carefully chosen periodicals and interlibrary loan for current information services, instead of purchasing expensive reference tools.



A collection policy statement is a written document adopted by the library board which guides the overall development of the library's collection.

The policy should ensure that the collection is responsive to the needs of the community in which the library operates, and is developed according to the goals and objectives of the library. It ensures that collection development priorities which complement the library's overall priorities are set. It also:

- o sets standards for the materials which will be collected
- o minimizes personal bias on the part of the selectors
- o provides continuity when staff and/or trustees change
- o offers some protection against censorship

The collection development policy is developed by library staff and submitted to the library board for additional input and final approval.

A sample public library collection policy has been included as Sample 4 in this *Sourcebook*. The sample policy is called the *Trillium Public Library Board collection policy*.

In a collection development policy, a number of topics must be addressed. In the section which follows, direct reference is made from the topic to the actual policy number of the sample policy.

Much of the collection development policy deals with selection of material. From the community needs survey and the evaluation of the library's collection, you will have a good idea about the current collection and the needs and interests of the community to be served. This information will guide the development of the sections on selection.



### **Purpose of the collection**

The policy begins by stating that the library serves the community as a whole and develops its plans based on the current and projected needs of the community, and an overall direction or purpose is indicated for the collection.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-1)

### **Goals of the collection**

Based on the results of the community needs assessment, the library board sets goals. These goals affect all policies, programmes and services of the library. This section of the collection policy is a statement of how the collection of the library will realize the goals of the library.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-2)

### **Responsibility for collection**

It is the responsibility of the library board to establish all policies for the operation and management of the library including collection development policies. In this section of the policy, it should be clear that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for selecting library materials, and for ensuring that the collection is properly maintained and organized, subject to the provisions the collection policy. Under his/her direction, any member of the library staff may be assigned these duties. Staff members recommend materials based on their training and experience in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the collection development policy.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-4)



### **Types of materials (Format)**

Consideration should be given to the suitability and depth of commitment to both print and non-print formats. Specify which formats are collected in the library, or if there are specific formats which are not collected. Often policies deal with each format that is collected in a separate paragraph including specific criteria for choosing that format. For example, a selection policy for videos might include the need to balance popular demand with quality.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-6)

### **Optimum size of collection**

In this section, reference may be made to minimum quantitative standards and replacement rates (refer to Sample 3 : Collection Development Plan). It should state that adequate space must be maintained for the public and staff and that overcrowding of book shelves is a liability to the library.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-8)

### **Canadiana**

The policy states the board's commitment to purchase material by Canadians and about Canada.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-9)

### **Selection criteria**

Many elements must be considered in the selection of materials. The criteria for selection should be listed in the policy and must make reference to the suitability of the material for the library's collection; demand for the material; purchase price and the reputation and accuracy of the author.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-11)



### Sources of materials

The policy indicates that sources will be considered on the basis of whether they provide cataloguing and processing, offer good discounts, provide fast, efficient and cost-effective service and are Canadian.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-12)

### Collection maintenance

Weeding is a procedure included in a collection development policy statement. It is important that the patrons understand what is kept and what is discarded from the library's collection and why. It is too easy for patrons to get the wrong idea and think that important material is being withdrawn from the collection. The policy provides guidelines for what types of materials should be removed from the collection, who has responsibility for weeding, and what should be done with weeded materials.

Details about weeding can be found in the *Sourcebook* section called *Selection, acquisitions and weeding*.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-14)

### Gifts

The policy should state that gifts are accepted subject to the signing of a release form. The form indicates that the donor relinquishes all control over the materials which pass to the sole control of the library. Materials are assessed according to the selection statement of the library and may be kept, sold or discarded as appropriate. You may wish to print the gift policy on a separate sheet of paper to give to each patron who donates to the library.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-15 and Sample 2 : Statement of gifts policy and release form)



### **Suggestions from the public**

Requests from patrons to purchase specific items for the library are welcome and a useful indicator of community interest but should be considered with the same selection criteria as all other materials; this should be clearly stated in the policy.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-16)

### **Composition of collection**

In many collection policies each subject area and format type is discussed. A brief description, highlighting where to place the emphasis should be included in the policy.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-17)

### **Special collections**

Subjects of particular interest to the community (e.g. mining, First Nations) may be emphasized in the policy. Local history may be collected by the library.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-17)

### **Intellectual freedom**

A statement on intellectual freedom, such as that of the Canadian Library Association, should be included in the collection policy and adopted by the board. It establishes the principle that the collection is to be developed in such a way as to represent, as far as possible, all points of view and that attempts to undermine this principle will be resisted.

The “Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom” is reproduced in the Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-18.



### **Controversial materials**

Some materials may offend some patrons. Selection is not made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the evaluation of the material according to the collection development policy. A policy which includes the “Statement of Intellectual Freedom” ensures that all points of view will be represented.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-19)

### **Exclusions from collection**

The policy should also specify items that are not collected (e.g. school text books, materials banned under Canadian law). The list may include formats which are not collected such as slides or 16mm films.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-20)

### **Children’s reading**

It is important that the policy state that the material children read is the responsibility of their parents or guardians.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-21)

### **Complaints about the collection**

Included within the collection development policy should be a procedure for staff to follow if a patron lodges a complaint about a particular item or items. The formal selection policy with its rationale clearly presented often serves as a sufficient explanation. If the patron wishes to pursue the complaint, then the policy should specify that the patron must complete the required form. The printed form could then be reviewed by the CEO and a further explanation presented to the patron. If a final step is needed, some procedures call for a ruling from the board which is reported to the complainant.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-22 and Sample 1: Request for reconsideration of library materials)



### Collection organization

Information may be given about classification and cataloguing systems used in the library. More details about collection organization appears in two *Sourcebook* sections called *The catalogue* and *Organizing the book collection*.

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-23)

### Adoption and review of policy

The collection policy is approved by a Board motion. An example appears below.

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ , seconded by \_\_\_\_\_  
that the Trillium Public Library Board collection policy  
be accepted.

Carried

All policies should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised on a regular basis (e.g. every two years).

(Sample 4 : Trillium Public Library Board collection policy : COL-24)



---

### COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Once the collection development policy has been adopted, a collection development plan, including objectives, procedures and a buying plan can be developed, based on the policy.

How the plan develops would depend on the priorities identified by the board in the collection development policy. While priorities in allocation are being decided, new books should still be added to the basic collection.

#### **Long-term objectives**

Objectives describe the means for attaining the goals of the library and of the collection. A long-term objective may indicate the response to a trend or need identified in the community needs assessment. The assessment may pinpoint areas of community growth. The library's collection would need to be strengthened appropriately in response to this growth. For example, a trend towards a growing number of families with preschoolers would suggest a need to enhance the picture book collection. If senior citizens are an important target group, then the collection development plan includes provision for the acquisition of large print books and talking books.

A typical long-term objective for collection development will indicate the specific trend identified and the type and quantity of materials needed to respond to the trend.

#### **Short-term objectives**

Long-term objectives may take several years to complete. It becomes necessary to break them down into manageable shorter term tasks or objectives. Short-term objectives specify priorities for the year, taking into consideration progress made toward the long-term objectives in the previous years. They also reflect the library's budget for the year and any other special circumstances.



## **Buying plan**

The buying plan for the collection is based on the current objectives for the library collection and on the current budget for the library. It is prepared annually to ensure that each year's short-term objectives are met. Buying plans allocate the materials budget in terms of percentages which will be spent on various parts of the collection. Priorities established by the short-term objectives will then receive adequate attention.

As budgets are limited, it is not possible to correct every weakness or develop special areas in the collection all at one time. This usually must be done in phases. For example in Year 1, the fiction collection could be improved and a large print collection started. In Year 2, the emphasis could be on updating the science and technology sections and a video cassette collection could be started in Year 3. The picture book collection could be improved in Year 4 and in Year 5, microfilmed newspapers could be purchased.

Sample 3 illustrates a simple approach to preparing a five-year plan. The plan should begin with a statement explaining why improvements are needed and describing what is to be done within five years. Note that the minimum number of books specified in this sample reflect generally accepted standards.

Sample 3 : Collection development plan



## Samples

1. Request for reconsideration of library materials
2. Statement of gifts policy and release form
3. Collection development plan
4. Trillium Public Library Board collection policy