

Collection Development Policy

September 2023

Purpose of the Policy

Cheltenham Township Library System (CTLS) provides free service to all individuals and groups in the community with carefully selected materials to meet their needs for information, education and enrichment, leisure and recreation. With this goal in mind, the purposes of this document are as follows:

- To further the mission and guiding principles of CTLS;
- To guide CTLS staff in the process of evaluating and selecting materials which anticipate and satisfy the needs of the community; and
- To inform the public of principles on which such collection development decisions are based.

Community Profile

CTLS serves residents of Cheltenham Township and surrounding areas. CTLS also shares its collections as a member of the Montgomery County Library & Information Network Consortium (MCLINC) and Access PA, a statewide network.

CTLS recognizes this diversity of the population it serves and selects materials that embrace and include a broad range of views and forms of expression, and which accommodate different age and educational levels; different racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, economic and religious groups; and a wide spectrum of political points of view.

In addition to meeting the general needs of the community, CTLS also recognizes its responsibility to provide materials for the personal interests and reference needs of children and young adults. CTLS builds collections in support of Pre-K literacy and for independent learners of all ages. Special emphasis is given to creating high quality collections for preschoolers and elementary school children who are beginning to read.

Intellectual Freedom

An open and democratic society presupposes an informed citizenry, and the public library plays an integral role in achieving that goal. CTLS selects a broad range of materials with this in mind.

CTLS seeks to meet the needs of all the residents of the township and recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may offend someone. The inclusion of an item in the library collection in no way represents an endorsement of its contents by the Board of Directors of Cheltenham Township or CTLS staff. The Board believes that the library is

responsible for making such materials available to the public in order that all points of view may be examined and evaluated independently.

Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor are materials sequestered. Only individuals can determine what is most appropriate for their needs and can define what material is consistent with their personal or family values. Library users may not restrict the freedom of others to read, view, or hear what they desire. Race, nationality, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and political/social view will not be used as criteria for exclusion of materials. CTLS will not be influenced by efforts to coerce or pressure its selection.

Parents and legal guardians have the responsibility for their children's use of library materials only. Library staff do not restrict access to collections on the basis of age. Selection of materials intended for an adult audience will not be restricted by the possibility that these materials may come into the possession of minors.

In establishing this policy CTLS shall be guided by the basic tenets adopted by the American Library Association in statements entitled "The Freedom to Read" and "The Library Bill of Rights".

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

Reconsideration of Library Materials

It is understood that in a free society there will be different opinions as to what a library should and should not have in its collection. To allow full expression of customers' opinions and to consider their viewpoints, CTLS provides customers with the opportunity to request a reconsideration of library materials selected for the collection.

Residents of Cheltenham Township wishing to question materials in the collection or those excluded from it should first have a conversation with a librarian at their local library. If the concern cannot be addressed to the customer's satisfaction, residents may file a formal request by filling out a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials & Resources Form (attached). A committee composed of the Library Director and a Head Librarian and either a Youth or Adult Services Librarian will review the request and respond in writing within 30 days. That decision may be appealed in writing within 30 days to the Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township in care of the Board President. The Board will consider the appeal at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting, to which both the customer and representatives from the review committee will be invited. The Board reserves the right to limit the length of public comments as defined in the CTLS Public Comment Policy. The decision of the Board is final. Decisions on reconsidered materials will stand for two years before new requests for reconsideration for those items will be entertained.

General Selection Criteria

Materials selectors use their knowledge, education, training, expertise, and the following criteria when making collection building decisions. A selection need not meet all criteria:

- Popular interest/projected demand
- Demonstrated potential for use as evidenced by collection statistics
- Significance and value to overall collection
- Currency of information
- Accuracy
- Reputation of author, publisher, producer, or illustrator
- Suitability for the intended audience
- Inclusion on school reading lists
- Creative, literary, or technical quality
- Listing in professionally recognized selection tools
- Critical assessments in trusted review journals
- Media attention
- Award winners
- Format and ease of use
- Cost and availability
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Space required to house the material
- Local emphasis
- Technical quality of non-print materials
- Accessibility to multiple users
- Enhancement of the print equivalent (if any)
- Availability in CTLS branches and the MCLINC system
- Affordability in relation to the total budget

Responsibility for Selection of Materials

Ultimate responsibility for the selection of library materials rests with the Executive Director within the framework of policies adopted by the Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township. Initial responsibility for the selection of library materials rests with the Head Librarian of each of the branches, who may in turn request that selection of items be undertaken by other library staff members. Residents of Cheltenham Township may request the purchase of materials by speaking with a librarian at their local library or they may file a formal request to purchase materials by filling out a Request for Purchase of Library Materials & Resources Form (attached). Requests for purchase are subject to the same selection criteria as

other purchases. Due to budget and space restrictions, not all requested materials will be purchased.

Specific Collection Goals and Principles

Children's Collection

CTLS recognizes that it has a responsibility to meet the needs of the children of our community with diversified tastes, backgrounds, and interests from preschool to adolescence. Believing that good books and other materials will help to develop the child as a good citizen, as an imaginative and creative individual, and as a lifelong reader, CTLS maintains a specialized collection for children designed to inspire and cultivate a love of books and reading; to make available those books that are common literary heritage; to provide imaginative literature and fine art illustration that contribute to the development of imagination, creativity and appreciation of beauty; and to offer a wide range of material that will satisfy the demand for educational and recreational material. Special emphasis is given to creating high quality collections for preschoolers and elementary school children who are beginning to read.

Digital Resources

In addition to the digital resources provided through the state's POWER Library program, CTLS offers a selection of other digital resources. These resources are intended to supplement the print resources that are currently offered, especially those materials that are frequently updated and would, therefore, be difficult and costly to keep up to date. In addition, this collection is intended to provide the community with 24/7 remote access to these resources.

Digital resources are selected based on the following criteria:

- General selection criteria as described above.
- Quality and ease of access
- Accuracy and timeliness of the material
- Availability of reviews
- Reputation of publisher
- Importance of the subject matter to the community
- Usage statistics
- Availability of information from other sources, mainly print

Some of the databases that CTLS subscribes to are part of a shared collection with the MCLINC consortium or the Montgomery County District Library.

Shared Collections

As a member of the MCLINC consortium, CTLS can provide customers with access to collections that are shared by the consortium. As a result of the shared nature of these collections, CTLS may not be able to control the selection or de-selection of materials in these collections. Shared collections include some digital audio books and eBooks through the vendor Overdrive as well as some commercial databases.

Materials Not Emphasized

Due to space and budget limitations, CTLS does not actively collect the following materials:

- Rare, Out of Print, or Abridged Books
- Textbooks
- Dissertations/Theses
- Government Documents
- Non-English Language materials
- Print on Demand

Formats

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate form for library use. Because formats are constantly changing, CTLS strives to continually assess new digital resources and evaluate the capabilities and enhancements that they offer over existing formats. New formats are considered for the collection when industry reports, national survey results, and local requests indicate that a significant portion of the community has the necessary technology to make use of the new format.

Before switching to or adding a new format, CTLS will also consider:

- Availability of items in the new format
- Cost per item
- CTLS' ability to acquire, process, and circulate items in the new format
- Sustainability

CTLS may no longer acquire items in obsolete formats. However, previously purchased items in that format will remain in circulation until they are damaged, worn beyond repair or become irrelevant to a majority in the community.

Multiple Copies

CTLS will purchase multiple copies of materials in response to user demand as evidenced by the number of reserves (with the goal of one book purchased for every six CTLS requests), anticipated popularity, repeated requests and monitoring of the collection.

Gifts

Donated Items

Donated materials, including self-published works and works by local authors are subject to the same thoughtful review as purchased materials. The general selection criteria will be followed. CTLS reserves the right to decide which items are added to the collection and to dispose of donated items as it deems appropriate (see attached Disposal of Library Property Policy). Upon request, a receipt for tax purposes will be provided at the time of donation. However, CTLS is unable to assign value to the donated material.

Memorial Donations

CTLS also accepts monetary donations meant to honor or memorialize. Suggestions of specific titles or subjects are welcomed but the final decision rests with CTLS. Honorary bookplates will be added to the front of all memorial books and a letter of acknowledgement will be sent in response to all significant monetary donations.

Interlibrary Loan

Because of limited budget and space, CTLS cannot provide all materials that are requested. An interlibrary loan may be used to obtain from other libraries whose materials are beyond the scope of CTLS's selection criteria.

Maintenance of the Collection

Weeding is an integral part of effective collection development. An active and continuous weeding program is essential in maintaining a viable and useful collection. CTLS withdraws items from its collection on a regular basis through a systematic deselection process.

Deselection of materials is based on the following criteria:

- Timeliness and accuracy of information
- Lack of use

- Replacement by more current material
- Physical condition/damage
- Space
- Availability of similar materials from other sources
- Availability of similar materials in the collection
- In-print status
- Cost of replacement and/or maintenance
- All items in the digital collection are subject to the terms of the licensing agreements put forth by the owning organization

Lost, damaged or worn materials are replaced by the same criteria as used in the selection of new materials; however, these items are not automatically replaced.

Review

CTLS will review this policy at least every three years and make revisions as necessary.

Next review, September 2026.

Approved by the Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township (BOLDOCT) on September 28, 2023.