Allegheny County Library Association
Countywide Collection Management Statement

Overview

The Allegheny County Library Association is a consortium of 44 libraries that share the common goal of providing quality library service to the residents of Allegheny County. Through a single Integrated Library System (ILS) facilitated by eiNetwork, the libraries share resources throughout the county. Member libraries also participate in the AccessPA system with Interlibrary Loan activity coordinated by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (the District Center).

Member libraries are responsible for selecting, purchasing and maintaining their individual collections, operating under their own collection development policies which are unique to their communities. This document shall serve as the system's recommended collection management guidelines, under whose auspices the individual policies fall.

The Allegheny County Library Association strongly recommends that each library have in place a collection development policy that includes a policy for reconsideration of library materials. Ideally, the individual collection development policies will reflect the guidelines set forth in this document.

Collection Development Goals

The Allegheny County Library Association promotes the growth and continued development of individual library collections by encouraging the county libraries to:

- Build strong, accessible, decentralized collections in a variety of formats that reflect the needs and interests of the local communities.

- Provide a wide range of materials of interest to customers of all socio-economic backgrounds and of all ages and educational needs.

- Develop collections that reflect the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity of Allegheny County.

- Offer a balance of viewpoints in collections that include both current materials and those that provide historical perspective.

- Maintain and develop specialized collections that enhance the depth and quality of the overall collection.

- Offer information resources in a variety of current and emerging technologies.

In order to enhance customer access to the collection, the Allegheny County Library Association encourages:

- o Strengthening the overall collection through networking and resource sharing among libraries.

- o Ensuring efficient and timely access to materials and information to meet customers' needs.

- o Evaluating and incorporating emerging technologies that enhance and expand resources available to the staff and the public.

- o Providing support for staff to develop collection expertise.

- o Maintaining an on-going program of collection management through regular maintenance of the collection and preservation of materials.

Collection Development Vision Statement

The Allegheny County Library Association is a network of community-focused libraries with strong, well-developed, accessible, and decentralized collections of diverse materials. Staff at member libraries build and maintain collections relevant to the needs of local customers while the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - the Commonwealth designated Resource Center - provides a comprehensive subject collection. The overall county-wide collection incorporates emerging formats and innovative means of information delivery.

The member libraries, through their collections, service and staff, support lifelong learning and enhance the quality of life of the residents they serve. Library users will find broad and relevant collections reflecting their varied informational, educational, professional, recreational, and cultural needs. The collections are responsive to customer demand, providing current works as well as those with enduring value. The collections reflect the diversity of the population, social trends, and the changing needs of the communities.

The collections are brought together through a shared online public access catalog, an efficient delivery service, and knowledgeable staff. To expand the quality and depth of materials available to all customers, the overall collection is enhanced by special collections and a resource center.

A broad and relevant collection is at the core of the Allegheny County Library Association, and goes hand-in-hand with excellent customer service.

Collection Development Mission Statement

The collections of the member libraries of the Allegheny County Library Association reflect the needs of local communities and support lifelong learning of a diverse public through collaboration, cooperation and resource-sharing facilitated through the eiNetwork.

Selection Policy

The Allegheny County Library Association serves a region with cultural, linguistic and ethnically diverse individuals from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The member libraries select materials which best serve the needs of their varied and complex communities.

Broad and relevant collections for information, education and recreation are offered which include over 3.5 million books, magazines, and various audio, video and electronic formats. Every effort is made to provide materials of interest to people of differing ages, ethnic groups and lifestyles, in foreign languages and non-standard formats as needed.

Member libraries also affirm the public's right of access to a broad spectrum of reading, listening and viewing materials. In compliance with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its Freedom to Read Policy, the libraries do not limit any points of view on topics of public interest and importance.

Method

The member libraries of the Allegheny County Library Association select materials for their own collections based on recommendations from the public, reviews in the professional media, and the expertise of library staff.

Material is purchased at each library based on the staff's knowledge of the diverse needs of their residents and the existing collection. Consideration should also be given to the holdings and needs of other member libraries as all materials are shared through the ILS.

No materials are excluded or removed from the member libraries on the basis of author's race, nationality, or political, social, or religious beliefs. Materials dealing with controversial views are judged as entire works, not on isolated passages or sections.

The member libraries select materials that are pertinent, representative of divergent needs, and responsive to customer demand. The libraries provide current materials as well as standard authors, titles, and subjects.

Requests for purchase of items may be made through the consortium's 'Suggest a Purchase' form available through the public access catalog at
http://www.einetwork.net/ils/acquire_web.html

Criteria

The libraries will consider these and other factors in selecting materials:

- Accuracy and impartiality
- Appropriateness for age of intended audience
- Availability of the subject in the ILS
- Cost and value
- Currency of information
- Merit of the author, publisher or producer
- Permanent value as a standard work
- Popular interest or demand
- Quality of organization, readability and style
- Relevance
- Technological support
- Uniqueness or special features

Formats

The libraries collect many types of print and non-print materials, including but not limited to:

- Books
- Cassettes
- Compact discs
- Digital downloads
- DVDs
- e-Books
- Electronic resources
- Government documents
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Realia
- Software

- Videos

and new formats as they become available.

Electronic Resources

As part of the members' commitment to incorporate emerging technologies and formats, two standing committees exist to evaluate, select and purchase e-resources on a county-wide basis. The Electronic Resources Committee (EREC) and the Downloadable Committee use special considerations for electronic information selection including, but not limited to:

- Ease of use of the product

- Availability of the information to multiple, concurrent users, and/or remote users

- Technical requirements to provide access to the information

- Technical support and training

Content, including purchase of local author publications, will be evaluated and selected based on the same method set forth in this statement for other materials.

The Allegheny County Library Association recognizes that e-resource technologies continue to evolve. It will regularly monitor and evaluate new formats and measure their practical use for the public it serves.

Reserve Pool – (This program is suspended until further notice)

The reserve pool is a countywide shared collection of items in high demand. Selection of materials in various formats is based on both proactive ordering of items expected to be in high demand and reactive ordering based on reports produced by the eiNetwork.

These items are distributed to all participating member libraries and can be reserved through the Integrated Library System.

Professional Collection

A professional collection is provided through the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's District Services Office for use by library staff and boards. The purpose of this collection is to provide education and information on all aspects of library service, management and professional development.

The Allegheny County Library Association also makes available materials used on behalf of the federated system in the areas of marketing, non-profit management, emerging technologies, collection development and life-long learning.

Member libraries are encouraged to provide additional materials to their staff and/or the larger library community for the purpose of professional development.

These materials are available for loan through the Integrated Library System.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Under the provisions of the Pennsylvania Library Code of 1961, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) was designated a District Library Center and a Regional Resource Library. As a District Center, CLP provides advisory services, reference help, in-service training and interlibrary loan service to all public libraries in Allegheny County. In 2000, the designation was changed to Statewide Library Resource Center with an emphasis on overall collections and virtual reference.

CLP's Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Department coordinates the borrowing and lending of materials between libraries to supplement local collections. The service may be used to borrow materials that are not available within the collections of the member libraries.

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) is a network library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), a department of the Library of Congress. LBPH offers reader advisory services, answers reference questions about disabilities and related topics, and maintains a collection of print and video materials on blindness, visual impairment, and physical disabilities.

eiNetwork

The eiNetwork, a collaboration of the Allegheny County Library Association and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, exists to help member libraries expand and increase their impact, outreach, and service to their residents through the use of information technology.

The eiNetwork maintains the Integrated Library System that provides access to more than 3.5 million books, journals, CDs, and other materials available through participating member libraries. The ILS is accessible via the Internet in the libraries and remotely. The eiNetwork is responsible for coordinating the integration of the member libraries' catalog records into the AccessPA database.

The eiNetwork also hosts the online reference center for member libraries, accessible via the Internet in the libraries and remotely. The online reference center incorporates Access PA POWER Library (databases provided by the Commonwealth Libraries for Pennsylvania library cardholders) and databases recommended by the Electronic Resources Evaluation Committee based on informational value, ease of use and cost effectiveness. Libraries may choose to purchase additional databases for use only within their site. These additional purchases are also hosted by eiNetwork.

The eiNetwork provides standard collection development and management reports which will facilitate individual libraries in analyzing and maintaining local collections. Customized reports can be requested as needed through the eiNetwork.

Collection Analysis & Maintenance

Weeding

The goal of weeding is to maintain a balance between standard classics and the currently popular while eliminating incorrect information and worn or infrequently used materials. It is important to note that weeding is always based on professional judgment. In weeding certain areas, such as religion or social sciences, a balance of viewpoints must be maintained.

There are some areas where inaccurate, outdated information may be harmful. In areas of rapid change such as some areas of science and technology, medicine, and law, no information is better than inaccurate information. It is strongly recommended that out-of-date titles not be retained simply because nothing else is available on the topic.

The purpose of weeding is to:

- Utilize available space in the best and most efficient way
- Maintain up-to-date collections and the library's reputation for reliability
- Increase speed of access and improve accuracy of retrieval
- Remove materials least likely to be used in the future
- Increase circulation
- Locate materials that may need to be repaired, rebound or replaced
- Save the expense of housing materials unnecessarily
- Review the collection for content and identify areas where additional titles are needed
- Become aware of changes in the way the community uses the collection.

To assist in the weeding process, standard and customized inventory reports are available upon request from the eiNetwork.

Review

This document shall be reviewed regularly, particularly whenever the Allegheny County Library Association undergoes a new strategic planning process.

Revised and approved by the Librarians Advisory Council
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