

**Ames Public Library Policy**  
**Section: Library Resources**  
**Subject: Collections**

**Board**  
**Approved: 11/05**  
**Reviewed: 10/08, 07/11**  
**Revised: 10/08, 7/11, 6/15**

## **Policy**

Ames Public Library offers collections to further the Library’s mission, “Ames Public Library – We connect you to the world of ideas.” The freedom to know is the foundation of our democracy. Ames Public Library strives to be an information center for the Ames community to preserve and encourage the free expression of ideas essential to informed citizens. The Ames Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted this Collections Policy to provide guidance for the selection and evaluation of materials to anticipate and meet the needs of the Ames community.

## **Responsibility for selection**

The Ames Public Library Board of Trustees delegates authority for the selection of materials to the Library Director and those members of staff designated by the director as selectors, who are charged with meeting the goals of the Collections Policy.

## **Materials budget**

The Ames Public Library Board of Trustees develops an annual materials budget in consultation with the director. This budget is certified by the Ames City Council. Each year the selectors develop budgets for their selection areas based on factors such as circulation statistics, cost per item, annual collection goals, and support of the strategic plan.

## **Selection guidelines and practices**

The Ames community includes people from diverse educational, cultural and economic backgrounds who display a variety of interests, needs, values and viewpoints. Selections are based on general knowledge of the subject area and its literature, familiarity with the materials in the collection, an awareness of the selection tools for the subject, and recognition of community needs as identified by demographic circulation, statistical analyses, and customer requests. . The selectors apply professional standards and work within specific selection and review procedures.

Selectors recognize the importance of informed citizens who are familiar with their heritage and with issues facing the community. Library customers will find materials to stimulate their imaginations and enhance their leisure time. Librarians support the role of a popular materials center by selecting materials to serve the full range of ages, cultures, lifestyles, education, reading, and technology skills of citizens. The materials selected reflect the complex culture shared by the community. The collection includes diverse points of view and a choice of formats, treatments, and levels of difficulty. Librarians achieve a balanced collection through the diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers, working within constraints of budgets, availability, and space.

Ames Public Library is a popular materials center and does not attempt to duplicate the research resources of Iowa State University. The library does not collect material to support local school curricula except when these materials also serve the general public. The Library does collect supplementary materials that promote lifelong learning and provide a beginning point for those seeking more advanced information or materials.

The collection is generally not archival, and items are expected to be used frequently. The selectors oversee an annual assessment to ensure that the collection meets current needs and that a substantial percentage of the materials are less than five years old.

Ames Public Library adheres to the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and its [interpretations](#), and [The Freedom to Read](#) and [Freedom to View](#) statements. Inclusion of material in the collection does not imply the library's endorsement of it or its contents. The Library recognizes that any given item may offend some patrons, but because the Library follows accepted principles of intellectual freedom, it will not remove specific titles solely because individuals or groups may find them objectionable.

### **Criteria for Selection**

All materials are evaluated using the following criteria:

- Content fits within the mission and strategic plan of Ames Public Library
- Popular demand
- Cost
- Timeliness
- Scarcity of material on the subject and availability elsewhere
- Suitability of form for library use
- Quality and sustainability of the format
- Representation of diverse points of view and broad knowledge base
- Relevance to community needs
- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Technical quality

Materials in electronic format are evaluated using the following additional criteria:

- Added value over other formats
- User-friendly search interface
- Remote and in-house accessibility
- Unlimited access, when possible
- Customer access based on library card number
- Vendor-provided usage statistics
- Maintained over a variety of computer platforms

An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable. Other considerations may be applicable in specific subject areas.

### **Formats**

Materials are purchased in the most appropriate sustainable format for library use. Ames Public Library recognizes the place of non-print formats in the collection as legitimate educational and recreational resources for the community. The Library monitors the development of new formats and may add these to the collection. The continuation of current formats and the adoption of new formats will be based on an analysis of market

acceptance of the format, its ability to provide a cost-effective alternative to existing formats, and the Library's financial ability to acquire, process, and maintain a sufficient collection.

Ames Public Library acquires materials in formats that are useful for citizens with disabilities. Selectors will develop these collections as demand indicates, and will be alert for new formats that may be appropriate.

### **Multiple copies**

Ames Public Library may respond directly to community and customer interests by purchasing multiple copies of certain items. While the Library's budgetary resources do not allow for the purchase of multiple copies of every title owned, the budget is structured to provide multiple copies of high demand items. The number of duplicate copies purchased may be determined by the number of holds placed on a given title. The Library strives to meet temporary demand and still build a collection with breadth and depth.

### **Customer requests**

Ames Public Library customers are encouraged to recommend purchase of library materials. These requests are evaluated using the selection criteria reflected elsewhere in this policy. "Customer Request Forms" are available online at Ames Public Library's website: [www.amespubliclibrary.org](http://www.amespubliclibrary.org).

### **World language materials**

The Library generally does not acquire materials in languages other than English; nor does it acquire foreign language films that do not provide an option for English subtitles. The Library may maintain a limited collection of world language materials in both the adult and youth collections for recreational reading and to support world language programs.

### **Special collections**

Ames Public Library supports the acquisition and preservation of useful and important historical, municipal, public school, and genealogical materials relating to Ames and Story County. Materials may be obtained in print and electronic formats. The development of special collections will focus on the following areas:

- **Farwell Brown Photographic Archive:** Ames Public Library will work in cooperation with Ames Historical Society to develop and maintain the print and digital archive.
- **Heritage Room:** Ames Public Library may acquire and maintain useful and important historical and municipal publications relating to Ames and Story County. Ames Public Library will work in cooperation with Ames Historical Society to determine the disposition of materials of local historical interest.
- **Genealogy Collection:** Ames Public Library will acquire and maintain relevant genealogical materials in cooperation with the Story County Chapter of the Iowa Genealogical Society. The chapter is responsible for recommending new materials for the genealogy collection.

## **Collection Assessment**

Circulating collections undergo an annual assessment to make space for current materials, to make collections more attractive, to facilitate ease of use by customers and staff, and to reduce the damage to materials caused by overcrowding, space limitations, and overuse. Assessment decisions are based on the following criteria:

- Currency
- Accuracy
- Use and vitality based on analysis of collection measures
- Wear and damage
- Durability
- Changes in format
- Duplicated holdings with low demand
- Space limitations
- Community interest
- Availability from other libraries
- Strategic plan priorities
- Sustainability of format

## **Placement of materials**

Ames Public Library Resource Services staff uses the Dewey decimal classification system and Library of Congress subject headings to place materials in the proper subject area and to assign them to shelving categories. Selectors take into account age recommendations in reviews as they choose and classify materials.

Ames Public Library shelving areas are divided in sections such as Juvenile, Reference, Fiction, and DVDs for ease of use, but customers of any age may use materials in all sections of the library. It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians, not Ames Public Library staff, to monitor library use by minors.

## **Expressions of Concern**

The Ames Public Library Director and the Board of Trustees welcome feedback from customers. Any customer concerns will be handled promptly and courteously as detailed in the Expressions of Concern Policy.

## **References**

This policy has been developed in concert with:

- Ames Public Library [Mission Statement](#), [Donations Policy](#), and [Internet Use Policy](#); and
- American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#) and its [interpretations](#), [The Freedom to Read](#) statement and [Freedom to View](#) statement.