



Brooks Free Library

Providing access to a world of ideas in the heart of the community

Collection Management Policy

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About the library

Established in 1880, Brooks Free Library was the first free public library in Harwich. Founded by Col. Henry C. Brooks and originally known as the Broadbrooks Free Library, the Library is part of a broader legacy left to the town by the Brooks family. The Library has been owned and operated by the Town of Harwich since 1910 and is governed by a 7-member elected Board of Trustees.

Today the Brooks Free Library provides a complete range of library services, including access to popular materials and resources in print and electronic formats. Additionally, the library provides programming for both children and adults, public access to computers, 24/7 wireless Internet access and a comprehensive assistive technology instructional program for individuals with vision loss. The Library is the second busiest member library in the Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing (CLAMS) consortium.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Brooks Free Library is to promote full and equal access to information and ideas, the love of reading, the joy of learning, and engagement with the arts, sciences and humanities.

Vision Statement: Brooks Free Library provides access to a world of ideas in the heart of the community.

Address:
739 Main Street
Harwich, MA 02645

Website:
brooksfreelibrary.org

Community Demographics

The Brooks Free Library serves a year-round population of approximately 13,440 and a summer population of approximately 37,000. However, it is important to note the recent impacts Covid-19 has had on the seasonality of that population. As a result of the pandemic, community leaders have noted that many part-time, seasonal residents returned to the Cape earlier and stayed longer in 2020 and 2021. The higher than normal population in the off-season is likely a result of the many part-time residents who have elected to stay in their seasonal homes while working or attending school remotely during the pandemic. Although exact numbers of part-time residents remaining year-round have yet to be identified, anecdotal evidence suggests the increase was significant.

Based on data from the 2020 Census, the population of Harwich is relatively homogenous in terms of race and ethnicity. There is a slightly higher female population which is in line with both county and statewide data. Approximately 31.4% of the population is over the age of 65, 50.1% between the ages of 65 and 18, and 18.5% are age 18 or below¹. Some unique aspects of the Harwich community specifically, and the Barnstable County community at large, include vibrant and active Cape Verdean and Wampanoag communities which are not accurately reflected in the data.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2020). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Quick Facts Profile page for Harwich town, Barnstable County, MA
<<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/harwichtownbarnstablecountymassachusetts.barnstablecountymassachusetts/POP010220>>

Selection Process

The library provides materials and services that reflect the diverse educational, informational, and recreational needs of its users. Access to content is provided through print, electronic, and multimedia materials and is intended to serve a wide-ranging audience of all ages. Librarians use a variety of resources to select materials, including professional review journals, popular print and broadcast media, Integrated Library System (ILS) reports, vendor lists, publisher catalogs, as well as patron and staff recommendations. Librarians exercise judgment relying on experience and expertise in order to make acquisition decisions.

Evaluation of a material includes the entire work, not just individual parts of the work. The primary factor for inclusion in the library collection is a material's overall contribution to the collection as a whole. Additional criteria considered when evaluating a material for inclusion are outlined below. It is important to note that each criterion carries different weight in different circumstances and no single criterion can be used to determine the value of the contribution made by any material.

Criteria for Materials Selection

- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Mirror and window (reflecting back the interest and experiences of users as well providing insight into the interests and experiences of others)
- Level of funding for materials including factors related to price and availability from established vendors and municipal purchasing parameters
- Relevance to the library's mission and goals
- Educational, informational and recreational needs of users
- Appeal and relevance to community interests
- Authority and accuracy including high standards of quality in both content and format
- Accessibility, durability, and ease of use
- High demand titles
- Relevance to the history of Harwich or Cape Cod
- Importance as a record of the times
- Availability from another library or source (i.e. Interlibrary loan, Commonwealth Catalog)
- Space considerations

Additional Considerations

Gifts and Donations

Topics related to gifts or donations either of physical materials or financial contributions intended for material selection are covered in the Brooks Free Library Gift and Donation Policy approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 18, 2018.

Patron Requests

Patron requests for purchase are fulfilled when they meet our general guidelines for selection specifically as it relates to meeting the needs and interests of a wide variety of community members. Requests for materials that were not recently published or do not meet the library collection's goals may be fulfilled for the patron by borrowing from another CLAMS Library or by requesting an interlibrary loan using the Commonwealth Catalog.

Self-Published Materials

The Library will accept a single copy of a self-published book for inclusion in the Local Author Collection if it is written or illustrated by a local author or is about the Harwich area. The Library may also acquire self-published books if they fit the scope of the Library's collection and meet the selection criteria. As with the rest of the collection, materials are de-selected and withdrawn when circulation reports indicate very little to no patron activity or interest over time.

Collection Evaluation Process

Library staff evaluate the collection on a continual and ongoing basis in order to ensure that the collection provides materials which reflect the diverse educational, informational, and recreational needs of its community members. Access to content is provided through print, electronic, and multimedia materials and is intended to serve a wide-ranging audience of all ages. Librarians use a variety of resources to evaluate the collection including but not limited to Integrated Library System (ILS) reports, list checking, environmental scans, and diversity audits.

Methods of Evaluation

Integrated Library System (ILS) Reports

Circulation statistics are used to obtain quantitative data related to the use of materials in order to provide a snapshot of collection usage and determine areas of heavier use. Quantitative data is useful in both collection development as well as allocation of the materials budget.

List Checking

Librarians also use a method called list checking to ensure that the collection is current and keeps up with trends. Such lists include best sellers and award winners among others. This method helps to identify collection gaps as well as strengths.

Environmental Scans

Environmental scans of the library's collection and its usage within the building allow staff to obtain qualitative data. This is of particular use in regards to print newspapers and magazines which are often utilized in the library building and, therefore, do not generate circulation statistics. Additionally, environmental scans assist librarians in determining which areas of the collection are most heavily utilized, identifying areas of the collection that may need deselection to make room for newer titles, and considering the most efficient use of the collection space.

Diversity Audit

To ensure that the library collection acts as both a "mirror and a window" (reflecting back the interest and experiences of users as well providing insight into the interests and experiences of others), diversity audits are also employed. Diversity audits seek to ensure that the library's collection is representative of the full spectrum of human experience and interest.

Deselection Process

To maintain a collection that is current, reliable, in good condition, well used, and which relates to the needs and interests of library users, materials are evaluated on an ongoing basis utilizing a systematic approach.

The library staff relies heavily on item usage statistics (circulation statistics) when evaluating materials in the collection. Additionally, staff utilize the MUSTIE method of evaluation. These six criteria are found in CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries, maintained by the Texas State Library & Archives Commission <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ld/pubs/crew/index.html>. The guidelines in the CREW manual represent a common universal practice among libraries. The library withdraws materials which no longer meet the selection criteria outlined in the sections above or when they meet any of the MUSTIE criteria for deselection.

MUSTIE criteria:

- Misleading or factually inaccurate material
- Ugly or unusable material that is beyond mending or rebinding
- Superseded--the material has been superseded by a new or updated item
- Trivial--the item does not have merit in context of the library's collection
- Irrelevant to the needs and interests of the library's community
- Elsewhere--the material can easily be obtained from another library

With the permission of the Library's elected Board of Trustees, the library may transfer withdrawn items to the Friends of Brooks Free Library who sell withdrawn materials at their book sale. Revenue from the sale of withdrawn materials supports future collection development as well as library programs. Staff also store withdrawn juvenile and young adult materials to be used as prizes in the annual summer reading program. De-selected materials may be offered to other town departments, libraries, schools, colleges or non-profit institutions. Outdated or unusable materials with no remaining value are discarded, donated to charity, and/or recycled when possible.

Reconsideration Process

In the interests of protecting the individual's right to have access to materials, in adopting this policy the Library's elected Board of Trustees has voted to support the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights², the Freedom to Read Statement³ and Freedom to View Statement⁴. Brooks Free Library does not promote particular beliefs or views. Rather, the library provides a resource for a diversity of opinions, traditions, viewpoints, and beliefs. Many materials included in the collection address topics which are important, complex, and, at times, controversial. Therefore, the collection may include materials which could be viewed by some as including unpopular and unorthodox ideas.

Language or subjects that may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify material which, in its entirety, is judged to be of value to the collection. Furthermore, the library does not label controversial material or restrict its use in any way. The library recognizes parents and legal guardians as the parties responsible for the reading and viewing habits of children. Therefore, the selection of material for the collection is not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain or view materials their guardians consider inappropriate.

From time to time, patrons may take issue with materials that do not support their personal tastes or views. Concerns about materials in the library's collections may be directed to any staff member. A concerned patron who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions with staff will be offered a packet containing the Collection Management Plan, which includes the Request for Reconsideration form, the Library Bill of Rights and the American Library Association's Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements. This Collection Management Plan and the Reconsideration Form are available on the library's website or from any of the library's public service desks.

In accordance with the requirements for state library certification residents of any certified Massachusetts municipality are welcome to borrow/utilize Brooks Free Library materials and resources on the same basis as residents of the Town. Requests for Reconsideration, however, will only be accepted from individuals who are residents of the Town of Harwich. The concerned patron must certify that they have read, viewed, seen or heard the material in its entirety, have reviewed the Brooks Free Library Collection Management Policy, the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements of the American Library Association, and must fully complete and sign the Brooks Free Library Request for Reconsideration Form. The Library will not respond to anonymous complaints made by phone, email or other means of communication or an unsigned Request for Reconsideration form. Concerned patrons filing a Request for Reconsideration should be aware that contents of the form and identity of the patron submitting the request for reconsideration are not considered confidential. An item will

² <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/>

³ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

⁴ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>

only be considered for removal once every two years. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.

Once submitted the Request for Reconsideration form will be reviewed by the Reconsideration Committee, which consists of the Library Director and all material selectors. The Committee will review the information submitted on the reconsideration form and the material in question to consider whether its inclusion in the collection followed the selection criteria in the Collection Management Plan . The Committee will follow the operational guidelines for Reconsideration Committees⁵ as outlined by the American Library Association. The Library Director will send a written response to the concerned patron within 15 business days, informing the patron of the Committee's decision and the reasons for the decision.

If the concerned patron is not satisfied with the decision, a written appeal may be submitted within 10 business days to the Board of Trustees. The Library Board will consider the appeal at their next regularly scheduled meeting. (Note: If the appeal is received after the posting deadline the Board will consider it at their next regularly scheduled meeting.) The concerned patron will be notified when and where the meeting will be held.

In considering the Request for Reconsideration appeal the Board of Trustees will review the selection criteria in the Collection Management Plan and consider other appropriate information, including guidance from the American Library Association, professional reviews and recommendations, comments from Library staff, and comments from the concerned patron. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments. The decision of the Board of Trustees will be final.

⁵ <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/committees>

Appendix A: Reconsideration Form

**Brooks Free Library
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

The Brooks Free Library Trustees have provided this form for you to voice concerns about specific library materials. Please return the completed document to the Library Director. You can expect a written response within 15 business days.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____

Phone #: _____

Type of material you would like to be reconsidered (circle one):

Book
Movie
Audio

Digital Resource
Newspaper
Magazine

Other: _____

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____

Have you read the selection criteria in the Collection Management Plan? _____

What brought this material to your attention?

Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

What are your concerns about this material? (use reverse side if necessary)

What action are you requesting be taken?

Patron Signature

Date