

Mission Statement of the Mansfield Public Library

The mission of the Mansfield Public Library is to serve the informational, educational, recreational and cultural needs of Mansfield by:

- maintaining and expanding its collection of popular materials
- maintaining a well balanced and broad collection of materials for information, reference and research
- encouraging and facilitating life-long reading including serving as a gateway to learning for all ages
- supporting formal education with complementary materials and programs addressing the diverse interests and needs for all age groups
- maintaining reference services and a comprehensive collection of current and historical materials pertaining to local government
- promoting the free flow of all information, without censorship or bias, through adherence to the [American Library Association's \(ALA\) Bill of Rights](#); and
- cooperating with other libraries and resource centers

About The Library and Its Community

The Mansfield Public Library was established in 1884. It is supported by tax dollars from the Town of Mansfield, donations from the Friends of the Library and some state aid. It is governed by a five member board of Trustees appointed by the Board of Selectmen and a member of Southeastern Automated Integrated Library Services, Inc, (SAILS), a cooperative system of public and school libraries in 60 communities. The population of the library's service area (over 23,000) includes a full range of socioeconomic strata and a variety of living environments from urban to rural. A multitude of different ethnic groups are represented in the area. The residents have a wide range of interests and information needs.

Responsibility for Materials Selection

It is the responsibility of the Board of Library Trustees to establish policies for the selection of library materials consistent with state and federal law. The actual selection of materials is delegated to the library's professional staff and based on the criteria cited above. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection under the direction of the library Director. The responsibility for selection ultimately rests with the library Director within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees of the Mansfield Public Library.

Criteria For Selection

General criteria for selecting library materials are listed below. An item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be acceptable.

- community demand, interest or need;
- contemporary significance, or permanent value;
- authority and accuracy;
- scarcity of information in the subject area;
- literary merit as indicated by professional review sources;
- timeliness of material;
- relation to existing collections;
- price, format, and ease of use;
- accessibility for multiple electronic formats;
- availability of material elsewhere in this community and through other sources such as SAILS, Commonwealth Catalog or Interlibrary Loan;
- completion, continuity or enhancement of a series or collection of works;
- subject matter and the scope of the material;
- reputation and authority of the author and publisher;
- balance of viewpoints;

Public libraries strive to offer materials that represent all points of view. The Mansfield Public Library does not practice censorship, and selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the principles stated in this policy.

Scope of the Collection

The Library provides a general collection of material on a wide range of topics of interest to the community. The Library's collection is intended to meet the educational, cultural, informational and recreational needs of all ages and to reflect the diversity of the population it serves. The Library recognizes that patrons have different learning styles and preferences for how they receive information. Materials are purchased in a range of formats to meet the various accessibility needs of the community:

- Print – Hardcover, Paperback, and Large Print books, Magazines, Newspapers, and Graphic Novels.
- Non-Print – Audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and Video Games.
- Digital Resources – Online databases, eBooks, and eAudiobooks.
- Recreational Materials – Library of Things for all ages
- Reference Materials – A small collection of ready reference books consisting of non-circulating titles on a variety of topics is maintained.
- Certuse Room Collection – This collection consists of reference materials related to the history of the Town of Mansfield and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Library does not purchase textbooks unless they provide the best or only source of information on a subject, or to complement an existing area with another perspective.

The Library provides access to research databases provided by the SAILS network, through the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), and through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). In addition, the library will subscribe directly to databases that support our mission and comply with our selection criteria. Due to the large expense associated with providing electronic resources, renewal will be assessed on an annual basis.

Material beyond the scope of the Library's collection may be available through the SAILS Consortium, statewide Commonwealth Catalog, and Interlibrary Loan.

Collection Maintenance

Professional library staff regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet community needs. Materials that are worn, obsolete, unused, and prior editions are removed. It is the responsibility of professional staff to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed or lost. Items are not automatically replaced. Decisions are based on need, demand, and budget. While the same criteria used for selection are considered in removing materials from the collection, lack of use by the public, and outdated information, are prime considerations. Selection and retention criteria may vary for specific areas of the collection and for various types of materials.

Intellectual Freedom

The Mansfield Public Library supports the ALA Library Bill of Rights, the [ALA Freedom to Read Statement](#) and [ALA Free Access to Libraries for Minors](#). The library collection contains materials representing various viewpoints on public issues of a controversial nature. Diversity and balance of opinion are sought, to give patrons the opportunity to exercise privilege of choice in their reading. No materials will be excluded from the collection because of the race, nationality, sexual orientation, sex, political views or religion of the author. No one will be permitted to use their personal prejudices, tastes, or moral standards to interfere with free and convenient access to materials. The library staff and the Board of Library Trustees oppose coercion on the part of an individual or group seeking to have materials added to or removed from the collection which are contrary to the collection development policy. The library welcomes recommendations for materials by its patrons.

Access To the Collection

The Mansfield Public Library does not restrict access to materials on the basis of race, religion, sex, or age. Materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, to restrict their use by age and no materials are sequestered except to protect them from damage or theft.

Responsibility for choosing what an individual will read rests with the individual. Responsibility for the use of Library material by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians. At no time will Library staff act in place of the parent or guardian. Selection of Library material will not be inhibited by the possibility that it may come into the possession of children.

Self-Published Material

Self-published books or other materials created by local authors or producers who wish to donate a copy will undergo the same evaluation process as all other library materials.

Gifts

The Mansfield Public Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials. The staff will evaluate all such materials for inclusion in the collection using the selection criteria policy applied to purchased titles. Gifts of materials become the property of the library and are subject to the same maintenance policy as any other item in the collection. The library does not accept gifts of textbooks. The Library does not accept memorabilia, minutes, records or photos from local clubs and organizations due to limited space. The Library cannot place a value on donated materials for tax purposes. A receipt for a specific number of titles or boxes of items will be furnished upon request.

Request For Reconsideration of Materials

Any resident of Mansfield with an active SAILS library card who wishes to request that a specific item be reconsidered for inclusion in the collection is asked to complete and sign the Request for Reconsideration Form, available at the Circulation Desk. The form will be forwarded to the Director who, in consultation with the other professional staff, will reexamine the item according to the "Criteria for Selection" listed above. The questioned item will be reviewed, in its entirety, and once a decision has been made regarding the matter, a letter will be sent explaining the decision. If the person indicates dissatisfaction with the resolution, they may appeal to the Library Board of Trustees. The Board will reconsider the decision based on whether or not the particular item conforms to the Board-approved Collection Development Policy, as outlined in the "Criteria for Selection" above.

Request For Reconsideration of Programs

Requests to cancel a program will be considered within the context of the Library Bill of Rights. Any resident of Mansfield with an active SAILS library card who wishes to request that a specific program be reconsidered is asked to complete and sign the Request for Reconsideration Form, available at the Circulation Desk. The form will be forwarded to the Library Director. The Director will consider the request in consultation with the chair of the Board of Trustees. The questioned program will be reviewed, in its entirety, and once a decision has been made regarding the retention or cancellation of the program, a letter will be sent to the person, explaining the decision. If the person indicates dissatisfaction with the resolution, he/she may appeal to the Library Board of Trustees. The Board will reconsider the decision based on whether or not the particular item conforms to the Board-approved Library Bill of Rights.

Adopted by the Mansfield Public Library Board of Trustees, Approved June 6, 1998 Updated and Approved, 11/09/2022