

Shrewsbury Public Library Collection Development Policy

Mission & Vision Statements

Mission Statement: We empower the community by providing a welcoming space and access to informational resources and technology that support the unique recreational and educational needs of all users.

Vision Statement: We democratize access to unlimited knowledge, introduce cutting-edge innovative technology, and provide state-of-the-art communal spaces for everyone to achieve their goals.

Community Analysis and Library Services

The Town of Shrewsbury is located in central Massachusetts, approximately 34 miles west of Boston. With a population of over 38,325, it is the second largest municipality in Worcester County, following its neighbor the City of Worcester. Shrewsbury is a suburban, residential community about 22 square miles in size.

Population & Demographics

The population of Shrewsbury, as per the 2020 Census, was 38,325.

Age:

- 23.3% of the population is under the age of 18
- 16.7% is 65 years of age or older.

Race and Ethnicity (2020 census)

- White – 72.9%
- Black or African American – 3.0%
- Asian – 19.1%
- Hispanic or Latino – 4.8%
- Two or more races – 3.5%
- Foreign born persons, 2015-2019 – 23.7%

Education:

- High school graduate or higher – 95.1%
- Bachelor's degree or higher – 58.5%

Health:

- With a disability (under 65 years) – 4.9%

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Based on the Strategic Plan for FY 2025-2029, SPL will prioritize positioning the Library as a Community Hub, Literary Hub, Information Hub, Civic Hub, and Idea Hub.

The collection includes a wide range of materials for users of all ages, all educational levels and socio-economic backgrounds.

The Library supports the Library Bill of Rights, the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association, and the Joint Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Censorship from the MBLC, MLA, MLS, and MSLA (Appendices I, II, and III).

The Shrewsbury Public Library serves a diverse community and draws visitors to the library with a variety of programs and services. Librarians in charge of programming have been sensitive to the needs of diverse community groups and have responded with innovative programs. The Library offers early literacy programs for the youngest members of the community; story times and play times for babies, preschoolers and toddlers; STEAM-based programs for young learners; crafts and other fun activities for older students; DIY activities for teens and older adults; English Conversation Circles for new residents; computer and technology-related classes; a Memory Café for people with dementia and their care partners, book clubs for various age groups; multicultural celebrations; 3D printing and design classes; and a host of other recreational, informative, and entertaining programs. A committed and active Friends group supports our programming efforts with approximately \$25,000 in annual funding. The Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation supports and enriches the capabilities and resources of the library. It is committed to long-term development and improvements for current and future generations.

The Shrewsbury Public Library's Outreach Service is a personalized program and library service for individuals who are unable to visit the library in person.

The Library has partnered with other municipal departments such as the Parks and Recreation and Council on Aging; community organizations such as the Garden Club and India Society of Worcester; schools; churches; and businesses to collaborate on program ideas and, occasionally, to offer programs off-site.

The Library follows national trends in library service and is also a trend-setter. Among the materials loaned are museum passes, Chromebooks, and Wi-Fi hotspots. The Library of Things collection includes baby gear, gardening tools, kitchen gadgets, repair tools, DIY and technology equipment. The library's makerspace is stocked with 3D printers, laser cutters, sewing machines, an embroidery machine, and podcast equipment.

The Shrewsbury Library is a member of the CW MARS (Central Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing, Inc.) network, a diverse, multi-type library consortium dedicated to resource sharing and access to information. The network includes public and academic libraries from 495 to the New York

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State line with more than 9 million physical items and eBooks available to borrow by Massachusetts residents. Through CW MARS, the Shrewsbury Public Library provides more efficient services to the community and expands access for users. The Library also cooperates with the public and private schools in town.

The Shrewsbury Public Library is a member of the CW MARS network, an automated resource sharing network of public, academic, school, and special libraries covering a wide geographic area. For patrons with needs beyond the local library and the network system, interlibrary loan allows access to materials in libraries throughout the Commonwealth and the rest of the United States through cooperative interlibrary loan agreements. The library does not have control over the content of certain electronic collections, including those administered by the network or the state, or over materials that may be available through interlibrary loan from other libraries.

Budget

Materials purchased for the collection are predominantly paid for with funds provided through the annual operating budget from the town. Funding from federal and state grants, primarily from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and trust funds supplement the materials budget. Additional financial support may come from the Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library and other gifts and donations.

General Selection Criteria

Budget allocation by subject and format is based on public demand, usage statistics, and available resources. We acquire materials for both loans and in-house use. We monitor usage and demand in order to direct selection and purchasing.

Staff members use several of the following criteria when evaluating materials, including physical space requirements and library funding resources. Selected items need not meet all criteria for inclusion in our collection.

- Known public demand and anticipated demand
- Artistic, literary, scholarly, historic, and/or scientific merit
- Timeliness: current popularity or relevance to contemporary issues
- Importance to community needs
- Reputation, authority and qualifications of author
- Clarity and accuracy of information and/or presentation
- Price, in relation to total budget
- Attention of critics, award status, positive assessments in a variety of professional journals

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- Availability of the subject in the existing collection or elsewhere within CW MARS
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Relevance to early literacy
- Responsive to student interest and support of educational needs

Meeting Public Demand

The following criteria apply to high demand titles. In order to provide access to high demand titles in print, video, audio, eBooks and online content, the library works to maintain the following:

ADULT BOOKS

- The library maintains a collection of popular books called "Top Picks", that cannot be renewed or placed on hold
- When there are 5 local holds we will order a 2nd copy for the Top Pick Collection and when there are 10 local holds we will order an additional holdable copy for the general book collection

ADULT AUDIO

- When there are more than 10 local holds we may consider an additional copy or alternate format of the same title

ADULT MOVIES

- In consideration of current popularity and demand, we acquire regular and Top Pick titles and additional video formats as necessary.

TEEN COLLECTION

- The Teen Librarian will purchase additional copies of a title based on anticipation of demand and frequency of patron requests in combination with circulation statistics. Copies will either be purchased with funding from the library operating budget or acquired through donations.

JUVENILE COLLECTIONS

- The Children's Department will purchase additional copies of a title based on frequency of patron requests in combination with circulation statistics. Copies will either be purchased with funding from the library operating budget or acquired through donations.

E-CONTENT

For every 8-10 concurrent holds placed by Shrewsbury patrons on an available e-Book or e-Audiobook the library will purchase one additional copy.

These ratios will be maintained as long as resources allow, and assessed as often as staffing allows.

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Formats

The Library acquires materials in a variety of formats – regular print, large print, CDs, MP3s, Playaways, eBooks, periodicals, downloadable and streaming content and other online resources. Both Fiction and Non-Fiction materials are acquired in all formats.

Individual Collections

- **Adult Fiction:** The library's collection includes a wide variety of contemporary and popular works of fiction representing all genres, international works of fiction, and classics. The Library makes every effort to acquire fiction which is representative of the cultural and ethnic community that it serves, and to satisfy the diverse interests and recreational needs of its users.
- **Adult Non-Fiction:** The library acquires books in a variety of subjects and uses the Dewey Decimal Classification for organizing the collection. New or updated materials in each category are considered for purchase. We aim to acquire materials that offer a variety of viewpoints, especially on controversial subjects.
- **Audio-Visual Materials:** The library collects audio-visual materials including CDs, DVDs, video games, MP3s, and digital content. The Library endeavors to collect content in both current and emerging formats.
- **Children's Collection:** "Children" are defined as those in grade 6 and under. The standards used for developing adult collections also apply to the development of children's collections. The primary focus of acquisitions for children is to support early literacy and to provide popular materials in a variety of formats. As a secondary goal, the library acquires materials to support school curriculum needs and supplementary materials for students.
- **Young Adult Collection:** "Young adult" is defined as a student in grade 7 through 12. The young adult collection caters to the reading and viewing interests of that age group. The primary focus is on popular titles in a variety of formats and genres, including current best sellers, graphic novels, and video games. The collection also supports school and student needs. Summer reading titles for schools located in Shrewsbury are acquired to serve demand within the limitations of resources and publishing availability.
- Youth collections are developed to serve the needs of all community youth. Not all items will be appropriate for all children and teens. It is up to parents/guardians to determine the appropriateness of those materials for their own children.

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- **Reference Collection:** The majority of reference materials are now purchased in online format, thus providing 24/7 access inside and outside of the library. In addition to those databases acquired by the library, library patrons also have access to databases purchased by the state, and by the CW MARS consortium.
- The Library also maintains a limited collection of print reference materials, with greatest consideration given to materials not readily available online. The collection provides access to factual and authoritative information.
- **Electronic Resources:** The Library offers our patrons e-content in the form of e-books, e-audio and e-video on various platforms. The Library is committed to exploring alternative platforms and modes of acquisition of e-content. Additional criteria for electronic resources include:
 - Ease of use and remote access potential
 - Hardware, software, networking, and storage requirements
 - Licensing requirements and limitations
 - Comparison of content and cost with other available formats
 - Long-term availability and perpetual access rights
- **Local History and Genealogy Collection:** The core historical collection comes from the Artemas Ward family library, dating back to the early 19th century. This includes a significant collection of histories of many Massachusetts municipalities, gathered by Andrew H. Ward (grandson of General Artemas Ward, and one of the initial members of the New England Historic and Genealogical Society). The Library now collects copies of any significant books and other materials relating to the Town of Shrewsbury, including works by authors who now reside (or have resided) within the town.
- **World Language Collection:** SPL primarily focuses on English language collections for adult reading materials and will depend on ILL resources to meet demand for other languages. SPL's children's collection includes books in different languages and bilingual books. SPL is committed to serving adult residents who speak a language other than English at home. In FY 2025, the library will focus on starting a collection of books in languages other than English.
- **Circulating Technology Collection** The library recognizes the need for patrons to access technology. In addition to public computers with internet access and word processing capabilities, the Library has laptops and, Wi-Fi hotspots, among other pieces of technology, for patrons to use in the library and at home for information, learning, and enjoyment. The library is committed to providing new ways for patrons to access information and entertainment through technology.

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- The Library also offers patrons tools, technology, and other items through the Library of Things. The focus of the collection is on items that support patrons in their daily lives and hobbies, but may be too costly or used too infrequently to necessitate patrons purchasing them on their own. Library of Things items help patrons to fulfill their equipment needs, expand their technological knowledge, and enrich their artistic endeavors.

Gifts and donated materials

The library only accepts donations that supplement and enhance our collections. Gifts are evaluated according to the same criteria applied to purchased materials. Donated materials that do not fit our collection or cannot be given to the Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library for sale will not be accepted. The Library will suggest other places where donations can be made. Monetary gifts to the collection are welcome and may be used as memorials.

Replacement of Materials

The library does not automatically replace items that are withdrawn from circulation due to loss, damage, or wear. Decisions will be made based on the following criteria:

- Demand for the specific material
- Number of copies held at the library and in the consortium
- Availability of more up-to-date materials on the subject
- Funding

Digitizing the Collection

The library recognizes the importance of digital collections, and intends to digitize items from its collection within the scope of the Library's resources. To this end, the Library sustains membership in the Digital Commonwealth of the Boston Public Library. The following criteria are considered when selecting materials for digitization:

- Subject areas in demand, or anticipated to be in demand, by the public
- Materials that support Library exhibitions, projects, or programs
- Unique, rare, or special collections not widely available elsewhere
- Complement or expand existing digital collections
- Rights and restrictions associated with the material

Deselection and Collection Maintenance

Deselection of materials from the library's collections is a vital part of successful collection maintenance. Continuous evaluation is necessary, and materials are regularly removed to maintain a current, accurate, appealing and easy-to-use collection. The following criteria guide deselection decisions, but other factors may apply:

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- Lost materials or physically damaged materials
- Duplicate copies of lower demand titles
- Outdated or obsolete editions or information
- Circulation statistics
- Interlibrary loan statistics and frequency of requests
- Materials in formats with declining use
- Consideration of series comprehensiveness
- No longer included in professional collection guides

Intellectual Freedom and Challenged Materials

The Library respects freedom of information for its users and adheres to the principles expressed in the Library Bill of Rights and the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association (Appendices I and II). The Library's goal is to offer a diversity of ideas and opinions, including those which may be unorthodox or controversial. While the Library does not endorse any particular beliefs or views, it opposes any attempts by individuals or groups to censor items in its collection. Responsibility for the choices of materials checked out by minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of adult materials will not be restricted by the possibility that such items may come into the hands of children, nor does the Library use any system of coding, rating, or labeling to identify or segregate materials for the purpose of censorship. Challenges to Library materials are handled in accordance with the Library's *Statement of Concern* policy (Appendix III).

Appendix I

Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual

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freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
4. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.
9. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; January 22, 2008; and June 29, 2021.

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Appendix II

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

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Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

APPENDIX III

JOINT STATEMENT ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND CENSORSHIP

Book challenges in Massachusetts' school and public libraries have quadrupled in just one year, mirroring the surge the [American Library Association has reported](#) nationwide. Challenges here reflect a national agenda that targets specific members of our communities including LGBTQ+ individuals and people of color. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), The Massachusetts Library Association (MLA), The Massachusetts Library System (MLS), and The Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA) support library staff's efforts to ensure free, equal, and open access to information, guaranteed to everyone regardless of age or citizenship status, under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. We oppose censorship and intolerance, uphold the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#), and affirm:

- Massachusetts public library staff are acting in accordance with [state law chapter 78, section 33](#) when they develop collections that reflect the breadth of the human experience, which is both diverse and interconnected. The law states, "The board of trustees of a free public library in any city or town... shall establish a written policy for the selection of library materials and the use of materials and facilities in accordance with standards adopted by the American Library Association."
- Massachusetts public library staff cannot be dismissed for providing diverse library collections. State law [Chapter 78, section 33](#) states, "No employee shall be dismissed for the selection of library materials when the selection is made in good faith and in accordance with the approved policy adopted pursuant to the provisions of this section."
- Massachusetts librarians are professionals and educators, many of whom have master's degrees in library and information science. They are parents, former students, neighbors, teachers, and contributing members of our communities. They include people who identify as LGBTQ+ and as people of color working for inclusion to ensure all people feel seen and heard.
- Licensed school library teachers match students with age-appropriate materials to foster the love of reading and instill curiosity for academic learning which is important considering reading ability is linked to [high school graduation rates](#).
- Attacks on members of our communities, targeted at marginalized peoples, are more than book challenges. They are acts of intolerance and exclusion

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intended to silence diverse voices and views, while holding fast to homogenous viewpoints by historically dominant voices. These acts jeopardize everyone's access [to learn from different perspectives](#) and limit the opportunities available for those isolated in their experience to realize they are not alone.

In Massachusetts we have a history of uniting behind what we know is right. Massachusetts was [first in the nation](#) to offer free library services to all. Today our libraries fulfill a vision spelled out in our [state constitution](#), "Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people."

APPENDIX IV

Statement of Concern about Library Resources

The Trustees of Shrewsbury Public Library have established a Collection Development Policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of an item, please return the completed form to the library director. This request will be reviewed at a regularly scheduled Board of Library Trustees meeting and a response will be provided in writing. The item will remain in the current collection until a determination is made.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent yourself? Or an organization?

Name of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Book E-Book Movie Magazine Audio Recording E-Audio

Digital Resource Game Newspaper Other

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Title

Author/Producer

Call Number/Shelving Location _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you read or viewed the resource in its entirety? Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as the specific matter which concerns you. (Use other side if necessary)

4. What most concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action(s) are you requesting the committee consider?
