13.0 Collection Development

A. Purpose: New Hanover County Public Library is responsible for providing a broad choice of materials to meet the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the community including free timely access to print, electronic, audio-visual and archival materials. The library recognizes it has an obligation to provide materials for an informed public, and in keeping with this, selects a sampling of materials representing all sides of significant issues and literary styles. Recreational reading material includes current and popular material representing all genres, styles and varieties of literary technique. New Hanover County Public Library supports the Freedom to Read Statement and Library Bill of Rights established by the American Library Association.

B. Scope: As responsible stewards of New Hanover County resources, the Library strives to meet the informational and recreational reading and viewing needs of the community as budget permits.

C. Responsibility for Selection: The Library Director is ultimately responsible for the Library’s collections. However, the management of collection development activities has been assigned to primary selectors designated from among the Library’s professional staff. Secondary selection responsibilities are then assigned to additional staff members.

D. Criteria for Selection: The following are general criteria for selection of materials, regardless of collection location or format. Materials acquired through gift rather than purchase may also be added to the collection, provided they meet the Criteria for Selection guidelines for that type of material (see also Section 9.0 Gifts, Fundraising and Sponsorship). See individual collections (Sections 13.1 – 13.7) for additional specific criteria, as applicable.

1) Currency of the topic.
2) The observed strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection.
3) Reviews or citations in professional journals, basic collection guides, recommended reading lists or other annotated bibliographies.
4) Reputation or significance of the author, illustrator, publisher, editor or other contributor to the content.
5) Available formats and compatibility of format with the Library’s existing collection and digital platforms.
6) Cost.

E. Selection Tools:

1) Journals, websites, publisher catalogs and other critical review sources, with special emphasis given to sources specializing in material for public libraries.
2) Award winners and annual lists of recommended titles.
3) Trials of electronic resources.
4) Community reading lists and curriculum topics.
5) Community suggestions for purchase, with emphasis given to titles whose credentials can be confirmed by reviews or to frequently requested popular titles or series.
6) Subject specialists.
F. Formats: New Hanover County Public Library supplements the library’s print collection by offering quality reading, entertainment and nonfiction resources for listening and viewing in other manifestations as demand dictates, including but not limited to, DVDs, CDs, digital downloads and streaming content.

G. Consortia: Recognizing that cooperation among libraries delivers more information from a wider variety of sources than a single library can provide, permits better resource allocation, and leads to more intensive use of collections, New Hanover County Public Library joins various consortia collections with other public and academic libraries.
   1) These purchases adhere to the larger organization’s collection development policies, but are generally in keeping with the Library’s own criteria.
   2) Selection for each independent Library reflects purchases for the needs of their community.

H. InterLibrary Loan: New Hanover County Public Library supplements the resources of its own collection through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and follows the Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States established by the American Library Association (see Section 3.3 Interlibrary Loan).

I. Deselection: In order to maintain an actively used collection, New Hanover County Public Library regularly withdraws outdated or seldom used materials.
   1) Items may be removed from the collection if it is determined that:
      i. The information is dated and newer information is available to replace it.
      ii. Physical condition makes continued use impossible.
      iii. A poor circulating history warrants removal to make room for newer material.
      iv. The format requires technology or devices which are no longer available or widely used.
   2) The deselection process is conducted under the supervision of a designated subject or collection specialist.
   3) The last copy of a fully cataloged item will not be removed from the collection without further review by professional staff.
   4) Items identified as significant or otherwise notable for their contribution to the field of knowledge or literature will not be discarded.
   5) Every effort is made to retain fiction to the extent that a continued readership and shelving space considerations may dictate.
   6) No item will be discarded at the request of an individual for purposes of purchase or sale.
   7) Individuals requesting the deselection of an item must do so in accordance with the process for reconsideration (see Section 13.8 Reconsideration).
   8) Discarded materials may be transferred to the Friends of the Library used book sale or to a designated reselling agent.