

SOUTHERN TIER LIBRARY SYSTEM
MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

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The STLS Board of Trustees subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read* and *Freedom to View Statements*, which are appended to and made a part of this policy.

Appendices: *The Library Bill of Rights*, *The Freedom to Read*, and *The Freedom to View* as appended are integral to this policy statement.

Approved by STLS Board of Trustees December 15, 2009

SOUTHERN TIER LIBRARY SYSTEM
MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

1. The Mission of the Southern Tier Library System

The Southern Tier Library System (STLS), a regional consortium of public libraries, works in partnership with its members to support and strengthen them through clearly defined, cost-effective services that make possible the coordination and sharing of resources, enabling all individuals in the five-county region to have equal access to excellent library services.

2. The Scope and Structure of the Southern Tier Library System

STLS works cooperatively with public libraries, neighborhood libraries, and reading centers in Allegany, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties. The General Libraries at the three area state correctional facilities contract annually with STLS to receive system services. STLS also receives specifically dedicated state funding to provide public library services to the five county jails. Additionally, STLS provides library services to residential facilities housing members of Coordinated Outreach populations. The STLS collection serves System staff, public library staff, and trustees who need professional materials and system-area residents who seek both popular works and in-depth subjects, in many formats, of current interest. Electronically delivered library services available through the STLS web page – www.STLS.org - are becoming more important; for some segments of the service population, electronic access may already be their primary avenue to information and recreational materials.

3. Purposes of the Southern Tier Library System Collections

The three chief purposes of the STLS collection are to provide and organize library materials to:

- A. Assist System and member library staff and trustees in developing and enhancing their library skills;
- B. Support member libraries as they assist individuals fulfilling their needs for recreational, cultural, and educational materials;
- C. Assist member libraries in providing access to library materials to members of Coordinated Outreach populations.

STLS staff select, organize, and preserve materials on an extra-ordinarily wide scope—library science, popular fiction, information technology, health sciences and topics between. While some STLS materials are of lasting importance, the majority are of temporary use, purchased to reside off-site by augmenting or supplementing member library or facility collections. Materials may originate in the print, audio, video, or electronic publishing industry, from government agencies, or from other information providers. In selecting sources for materials, System staff are mindful of using taxpayer funds wisely, cultivating relationships with library vendors which offer System-wide discounts and purchasing opportunities to member libraries as well as the STLS service center. Regardless of source, the purpose of gathering and disseminating these materials is to support member libraries in sharing and expanding access to resources through encouraging cooperative collection development and

supplementing local collections. As a rule, STLS does not collect best sellers or genre fiction owned by more than 10 member libraries, mass market paperbacks, music audios, reference materials or textbooks; the only purchased standard print non-fiction titles are in the fields of library science, information technology and topics pertaining to Coordinated Outreach populations.

4. Library Materials

The STLS collection is comprised of materials in many formats. These formats include print and audio books, DVDs, multi-media kits, equipment, Braille, and others. STLS is the area's primary source of library materials formatted for access by members of the Coordinated Outreach populations, such as talking books, descriptive video, open captioned materials, large print books, etc. English is the primary language collected, although a small collection of Spanish language print materials is in development, and subtitled DVDs in a wide variety of languages are collected. Information in electronic format, whether purchased by on-line subscription or maintained locally, forms an essential part of the STLS collection. As a rule, STLS does not purchase audio books on tape or video tapes, and currently owned titles in these formats are not replaced as they wear out or become damaged. The generic term "library materials" encompasses these many formats collected and made freely available to the public. "Talking Books" denotes book titles recorded for and designed to be played on Library of Congress Talking Book and Braille Library machines for the blind; "audio books" refers to audio book recordings designed to be played on commercially produced machines.

While print and image on paper has proven to be the most successful format over time, audio, video and electronic formats continue to evolve rapidly. From the STLS web page, patrons can initiate searches on the Internet. Internet-based resources, including the World Wide Web, are beyond the confines of the System's collection, and STLS cannot guarantee their accuracy, completeness or appropriateness for all library users.

5. Objectives of the Southern Tier Library System

- A. To provide materials to meet the basic professional needs of STLS and member library staff and trustees;
- B. To supplement local library collections with rotating collections to provide residents with browsing access to titles of high quality, varied and up-to-date materials on diverse topics, by a wide spectrum of authors reflecting a full range of viewpoints;
- C. To encourage System-wide cooperative collection development and to support the sharing of resources by providing residents with access to titles which are important but in low demand locally, of a cost more than can be easily absorbed by local budgets, or in specialized formats;
- D. To give professional, trained and informed assistance to member library staff in collection development, readers' advisory, materials-based programming, accessing and using the collection;
- E. To support member libraries in providing Coordinated Outreach populations with access to specially formatted materials, such as large print, open-captioned, foreign language video/DVD rotating collections; access to descriptive videos/DVDs, Spanish language materials, print and video materials of particular topical interest,

and by maintaining a subblending NYS Talking Book and Braille library, among other specially formatted and targeted materials;

- F. To provide outreach populations in correctional, adult care, and other area facilities with browsing and hold access to public library materials;
- G. To publicize STLS and its member libraries as free and accessible resources for educational and recreational reading, viewing and listening needs;
- H. To incorporate the social (aging, cultural diversity) and technological changes which continue to revolutionize library services.

6. Personnel Responsibility for Materials Selection

The responsibility for the selection of library materials shall be hierarchical in nature. It is delegated from the STLS Board of Trustees, through the STLS Executive Director, to the staff responsible for specified portions of the STLS collection. This does not preclude others from making recommendations for purchase based upon their reading, viewing or listening interests and knowledge. Rotating Collection materials are purchased with general topic and format criteria input from member librarians at an annual Adult/Outreach Services meeting. Materials targeted for members of Coordinated Outreach populations are selected with input from the Coordinated Outreach Services Advisory Council. Materials for NYS correctional facilities are selected by the Directors of the facilities' General Libraries, following precepts outlined by STLS and facility representatives during the annual planning process.

7. Review Sources used for Materials Selection

STLS staff use reputable, professionally prepared review literature for regular and systematic selection and purchase of new library materials. An important supplement to these resources is the individual request from STLS, member library, or facility staff and patrons. Individual requests may be purchased if they meet the objective criteria for the selection of library materials. Reviews of proposed acquisitions will be sought in the literature of reputable professional organizations and other reviewing resources recognized for their objectivity and wide experience.

8. Objective Criteria for the Selection of Library Materials

Throughout the selection process, professional reviewers and library selectors base their judgment on the following qualities inherent to each item;

A. Appropriateness

- Does it support the STLS mission?
- Does it appear to address STLS' constituency?
- What is the most accessible location with the highest visibility for this title: STLS, the Central Library, or a member library?

B. Content

- Is the literary &/or visual quality good?
- Is the work comprehensible?
- Is the author credible, important?

- Is the work accurate?
- Does the work avoid or clearly state its bias?
- Does the work include offensive or inappropriate stereotypes?
- Are the subject matter and the target audience compatible?
- What is the publisher's reputation?

C. Format

- Is the physical format of sufficient quality to withstand public library use and transport through the delivery?
- Is the physical format – type size, illustration, sound recording, DVD film print—legible, audible, viewable?
- Is the format appropriate for the subject, or content (e.g. is audio the best format for a picture book?)?
- Is the format easily and widely accessible?

D. Currency

- Is the treatment of the subject up to date?
- Is the topic contemporary or of timely social significance?
- Is the topic likely to become quickly outdated or lose its interest?

E. Relation to the current collection

- How many STLS member libraries own this title?
- How many titles on this topic are already owned by STLS or the member libraries?
- Will this title provide an additional or alternate viewpoint to titles on the topic already owned by STLS or member libraries?

F. Price

- Is the cost warranted?

A selected work need not satisfy all criteria listed above to be included in the collection. A wide range of materials is selected to meet the varied demands of the System.

9. Controversial Materials

The collection should and does contain opposing views on controversial topics that will generate intense interest, vehement debate, and strongly held and conflicting opinions by many individuals in the community. Controversies exist within many fields, in fiction and non-fiction, and in print or non-print formats. Prominent social and political thinkers of divergent opinions and religious leaders of various faiths will generate controversies. It is an essential role of the public library to make these and other controversial materials freely available to individuals. STLS supports its member libraries in this role, by collecting materials representing minority or controversial viewpoints not owned by member libraries and supplementing titles on lightly represented topics.

10. Neutrality of System in Materials Selection

As an institution, it is the role of STLS to collect and disseminate information and ideas. It is *not* the System's role to advocate for or endorse any particular idea, opinion, or point of view. STLS selects information that supports a wide range of competing and often conflicting ideas and opinions for consideration by library patrons. STLS will not usurp the responsibility of parents, caregivers, and guardians who are more properly responsible for supervising the reading, viewing and listening habits of children.

11. Gifts and Memorials

Gifts of new or used materials are accepted if they are in good physical condition and, if, in the opinion of the System staff responsible for selection they meet the objective criteria for the selection of library materials listed in this policy. Reviews may be consulted to assist in decision making. Gifts become the property of STLS, and STLS maintains the right to dispose of gift materials in the manner it deems suitable: to be added to rotating collections, or state prison, member library or reading center collections, or to be donated to member library book sales. Cash gifts in memory or in honor of individuals are accepted and will be used to purchase new materials for the collections. Memorials or honor materials will be acknowledged with a bookplate, label or stamp, as appropriate.

12. Reconsideration Process

STLS, like all libraries, cannot be expected to hold only materials that entirely please all patrons. The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of providing a process whereby opinions from the public regarding materials selected can be voiced. To comply with this policy, a request for reconsideration must be made in writing on forms provided by STLS. These forms are available at the STLS Service Center in Coopers Plains. Upon completion of the request for reconsideration, members of the public may mail the forms to the Executive Director. Upon receipt of the signed form, the STLS Selection Reconsideration Committee consisting of the Executive Director and two (2) staff members with experience in materials selection will be convened to consider the patron's request for reconsideration.

The committee shall:

- A. Examine the material in question, the issues raised, and the circumstances involved.
- B. Make a decision to remove or retain the material in question.
- C. The Executive Director will respond in writing to the request within two (2) weeks.

Should the patron believe the decision of the Selection Reconsideration Committee is not supported by the library materials selection policy, the patron may appeal the decision to a hearing by the Board of Trustees, by notifying the Executive Director, who will make the necessary arrangements. Following the hearing, the decision of the Board of Trustees will be final. Above all, the Board of Trustees has as its concern the fairness of such a hearing so as to protect the rights of all persons involved.

13. Form for the Reconsideration of Library Materials

Patrons wishing to have the System reconsider library materials should use the form on the following pages of this policy. It must be filled out completely and signed before being mailed to the Executive Director.

Request For Reconsideration of Library Materials

Completely fill out the following form and mail to Director, Southern Tier Library System, 9424 Scott Road, Painted Post, NY 14870.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Do you represent self? _____ Organization? _____

Resource on which you are commenting:

___ Book ___ Video/DVD ___ Audio Book ___ Multi-Media Kit ___ Other (please specify)

___ Electronic information/network (please specify)

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

Library Owning the title _____

What brought this title to your attention? _____

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? If no, what parts? _____

What do you believe is the theme of the title? _____

What specifically concerns you about this title? Please cite pages, scenes, items, etc. _____

Are there, in your judgement, any positive elements in this title? Please describe. _____

Will you share any reviews of the title which support your point of view? _____

Is there any age group for which this material might be appropriate? If so, please specify. _____

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

Reconsideration Action:

Date request received _____

Findings of Reconsideration Committee _____

Date response sent to patron: _____