



## STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

### Principles of Selection in Public Library Collections

**Date:** May 25, 2026

**To:** Toronto Public Library Board

**From:** City Librarian

#### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report and accompanied presentation is to provide the Board with an overview of the principles, processes, and professional practices that guide collection development at Toronto Public Library (TPL), as outlined in the [Materials Selection Policy](#).

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There is no financial impact associated with this report.

The Director, Finance & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

At the March 23, 2026 meeting, the Board requested that TPL provide an overview of the process of selecting materials for TPL's collection.

## COMMENTS

TPL's [Materials Selection Policy](#) provides the framework that guides the development of TPL's collections across all formats and subject areas. The policy supports TPL's commitment to intellectual freedom, equitable access, and diversity of viewpoints.

Collection development is guided by professional library practices and informed by community interest, demographic trends, publishing availability, circulation data, and budget considerations. Materials are selected by trained library staff using established selection criteria to ensure collections offer a wide breadth of information covering a diversity of viewpoints, that are relevant, current, and reflective of the diverse needs and interests of Toronto residents.

This report and presentation have been prepared to provide the Board with an overview of the principles, processes, and professional practices that guide collection development at TPL.

## CONTACT

Lisa Radha Vohra; Director, Collections and Membership Services;  
Tel: 416-395-5506; Email: [lvohra@tpl.ca](mailto:lvohra@tpl.ca)

## SIGNATURE

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Moe Hosseini-Ara  
City Librarian

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Principles of Selection in Public Library Collections  
Presentation

# principles of selection in public library collections

**Lisa Radha Vohra**  
**Director Collections and Membership Services**

Toronto Public Library Board Meeting  
May 25, 2026



- support the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs
- enable residents to adapt, connect and thrive
- build a broad, inclusive collection across subjects, perspectives and voices
- advances TPL's role as a trusted civic institution

# guided by policies, mission and values

Board-approved framework

- Intellectual Freedom & Equity Statements
- Vision, Mission, Values
- Materials Selection Policy
- Service Delivery Model
- Reconsideration Process

All decisions are guided by policy



# materials selection policy

## scope

- Provides a transparent, consistent framework for decisions
- Applies to all formats, including print, digital, audiovisual
- Covers selection, access, withdrawal and donations

# foundational principles

- Intellectual freedom & human rights
- Equity, diversity, inclusion, reconciliation
- Access to a wide range of ideas, including unpopular ones
- Privacy and individual choice
- Intentionally impartial collections

# selection criteria

- Relevance to community needs
- Quality, authority, and accuracy
- Diversity of viewpoints
- Suitability for audience and use
- Demand and anticipated use
- Format, accessibility, and cost

## Quality informed by

- publisher reputation
- professional reviews and sources

# what the library selects

Collections are intentionally built to include diverse and sometimes conflicting viewpoints

TPL selects materials that:

- reflect current issues, trends, and debates
- provide knowledge of the past
- support learning and civic participation
- encourage creativity and understanding
- reflect Toronto's diverse communities
- provide recreational and cultural value

## how libraries avoid bias

- Consistent application of board-approved policies and processes
- Use of professional criteria and tools
- Team-based selection processes
- Intentional inclusion of multiple viewpoints
- Ongoing review and updates

# Intellectual Freedom

- Supports open exchange of ideas and opinions
- Ensures no individual or group restricts access for others
- Requires broad representation of perspectives
- Includes materials that may be controversial or offensive to some

# key governance safeguards

- Consistent criteria applied to all materials selected
- Formal reconsideration process used to address concerns and disagreements
- Selection does not equal endorsement
- Access expanded through interlibrary loan

## access to collections

- Library does not label or restrict viewpoints
- Materials are age appropriate and shelved by intended audience
- Individuals determine their own use
- Parents/caregivers guide children's choices

- Board approves policy and strategic direction to validate the process of materials selection
- City Librarian accountable for implementation
- Individual title selection is the responsibility of professional staff

- Decisions are policy-driven and professional
- Collections reflect many perspectives
- Inclusion does not equal endorsement
- Strong policy ensures transparency, impartiality, consistency and trust



**thank you**  
questions?

**tpl:**