



Collections & Resources

Library Services Policy

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Purpose

This policy explains how Burlington Public Library (BPL) develops, manages, and provides access to collections and digital resources, and identifies who may register for borrowing privileges under the authority of the Ontario Public Libraries Act, 1990.

Scope

This policy applies to all library collections and digital resources, including:

- physical materials (e.g., books, audiovisual items)
- digital resources (e.g., eBooks, databases, streaming content)
- archival and local history materials

It applies to everyone who accesses and borrows library collections and digital resources.

It also applies to any Library staff or organization involved in the selection, management, access, and withdrawal of materials.

Definitions

Collections: the holdings of the Library organized by category (e.g. fiction collection, French collection)

Format: the medium in which information is presented (e.g a book, eBook, etc.)

Statement of Policy

BPL develops and manages collections in alignment with the Library's mission, values, and legal obligations. We provide access to collections and digital resources in a way that upholds rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code, including freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, within the limits of the law.

Guiding Principles

BPL's collection and digital resource decisions are guided by the following principles:

- support intellectual freedom by providing access to a broad range of ideas, viewpoints, and formats
- reflect community needs and interests through inclusive, diverse collections
- promote equitable access, learning, creativity, and discovery
- respect individual privacy, dignity, and freedom of choice
- preserve Burlington's local history and documentary heritage while meeting legal requirements

Policy Details

Collection Development

We will build and maintain dynamic collections that:

- Provide a broad range of materials for recreation, learning and cultural enrichment
- Include multiple formats while maintaining financial sustainability
- Represent diverse perspectives, viewpoints and experiences

- Evolve over time to respond to community needs and interests, trends and available resources

Selection of an item for a library collection does not constitute endorsement by the library of either the content or viewpoint expressed in that item.

Digital Resources

BPL recognizes that digital formats are essential to library service. We will:

- Provide digital collections and resources that expand access and support digital inclusion
- Consider licensing, access requirements, and cost
- Identify where third-party vendors determine available content within subscription products.

Access and Use

A library card is required to borrow items and access most resources. Library memberships are low-barrier and free for anyone who lives, works, or attends school in Burlington.

BPL is committed to intellectual freedom and equitable access, we will:

- Provide open and equitable access to collections, subject to legal and preservation requirements
- Not restrict access based on viewpoint or content alone
- Ensure that selection does not imply endorsement of any ideas expressed
- Acknowledge that parents and guardians are responsible for material choices made by children in their care
- Control the use of library material to protect items deemed susceptible to theft or damage to ensure the widest possible use of materials

We do not mark selected materials to indicate approval or disapproval of an item's contents or attempt to redact information contained in selected items.

BPL will actively participate in resource sharing for the benefit of library customers and may enter partnerships with other libraries and organizations to assist in providing increased access to collections. Details of any partnerships will be outlined through operational procedures and Borrowing Terms & Conditions.

Reciprocal Membership with other public libraries

Members of Oakville, Milton, Halton Hills and Hamilton public libraries who present a valid library card from their home library and accept BPL's rules and regulations may register, at no charge, as reciprocal members with full borrowing privileges excluding digital resources. Burlington Public Library cardholders will be extended similar privileges at the reciprocal libraries.

Non-Resident Borrowers

BPL also accepts registrations from people who are not eligible for a free library card upon payment of an annual fee equivalent to the City of Burlington's per capita grant. This fee provides non-resident borrowers with full borrowing privileges.

Community Input and Reconsideration

BPL supports community engagement in collections. BPL cardholders may place formal suggestions for the purchase or reconsideration of library materials by completing a form provided by the Library.

BPL is committed to collections that reflect community needs and interests, we will:

- accept and review customer suggestions for new materials
- provide a clear process for requesting reconsideration of materials
- review challenged items using established criteria and communicate decisions transparently
- report annually to the Library Board on challenges to library materials

The CEO makes final decisions regarding reconsideration requests.

Local History and Community Heritage

BPL aims to collect, preserve, and provide access to materials in various formats that document, describe, and/or illustrate the growing change of Burlington, its people, culture, history, and development.

BPL acknowledges that the City of Burlington resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. The library will work in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and seek to collaborate with Indigenous partners around local history collections and artifacts.

BPL is committed to preserving and sharing Burlington's history, we will:

- collect, preserve, and provide access to materials that document the history, culture, and development of Burlington and surrounding areas
- prioritize materials of local historical and cultural value
- support digitization to enhance access and preserve fragile or unique resources
- make digital content for the library's Local History and Archival Collections as openly available as possible
- work in alignment with Indigenous partners and reconciliation commitments in relation to local history collections

Local history materials may have different access conditions (e.g., in-library use only) due to their rarity or fragility.

Burlington Digital Archive

The Burlington Digital Archive is the platform that houses digitized material designed to explore local history. It is curated and maintained by Burlington Public Library, and includes the archival collections of the library and its partners.

Copyright Restrictions

BPL is not the copyright holder for all material housed in the Burlington History Room and/or contained in the Burlington Digital Archive. BPL's digital archival collections are provided to support fair dealing, including research and private study, in compliance with Canada's Copyright Act. Providing copies or access to material does not include or imply permission to use the material in a publication, exhibition, website, broadcast, or performance. Responsibility for determining the copyright status and any use rests exclusively with the user.

Local History Gifts and Donations

The Library accepts donated local history materials. The Library does not accept donations to the library's lending collections.

All donations:

- are evaluated using the same criteria as selected materials
- become Library property upon acceptance
- may be retained, redistributed, or withdrawn at the Library's discretion

Collection Maintenance

To ensure collections remain relevant and usable, we will:

- regularly evaluate materials for condition, usage, and relevance
- withdraw or replace materials as needed to maintain collection size and scope
- maintain appropriate records for specialized collections, including local history materials

Artificial Intelligence

We recognize that artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly used in the creation, publishing, discovery, and distribution of information resources.

The library's collections may include works that have been created, edited, illustrated, narrated, or otherwise supported by AI tools.

All materials, regardless of how they are created, are evaluated according to the library's collection development policy, including but not limited to relevance, quality, accuracy, accessibility, diversity of viewpoints, community interest, and overall contribution to the collection.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Library Board establishes overall direction for the library's collection

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is accountable for implementing the policy and delegates selection, management, and maintenance activities to qualified staff.

Every person who lives, works or goes to school in the City of Burlington is entitled to their own library card. Library card holders are responsible for items borrowed on their card.

Every person is entitled to choose library materials for their own use. Except where limited by law, children are entitled to the same open and ready access to collections and digital resources provided by BPL. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for monitoring and limiting the use of Library materials by their children.

Conflict of Interest

No actions related to developing, managing, providing access to, or disposing of, collections and digital resources may benefit, or appear to benefit, staff or associates beyond the needs of the Library or the community it serves.

Document Information	Details
Approved by	Burlington Public Library Board
Date	Motion #26-46, September 24, 2026
Amended Dates	
Associated Documents	Related Policies: • Finance Policy • Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Access Policy • Local History Collection Policy Related Legislation: • Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms • Criminal Code of Canada • Film Content Information Act • Ontario Human Rights Code • Ontario Public Libraries Act Related Documents • Borrowing Terms & Conditions • Selection Guideline • Local History Guideline