WEBSTER GROVES
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Fine Arts Gifts or Loans

I. Statement of Principles

1. The principles and procedures of the Webster Groves Public Library policy shall be followed to the best of the ability of the Library Board and Director. These guidelines may be revised from time to time as necessary.
2. The Webster Groves Public Library Board and the Director shall constitute the committee to determine when, under what circumstances, and what items of fine arts or paintings should be accepted as gifts, loans or for view or display. Only objects of significant quality should be accepted and the object's condition, age and type are to be considered in accepting such loans or gifts.
3. The Board and Director shall strive to maintain the breadth and diversity of any items accepted as gifts or loans. Personal friendship, the stature of the donor of lender, the influence of dealers or other persons should play no part in the decision regarding the acquisition or de-accession of such items of fine art.
4. The fiduciary responsibility for the acquisition or loan of any item of fine art rests solely with the Library Board. In the discharge of its responsibilities, the Board entrusts the collection, its preservation, growth, improvement and disposition to its Committee on Building and Grounds and the Director. Recommendations from the Committee and the Director shall be brought to the full Board.
5. Ethics and Liability: The Webster Groves Public Library Board will act in accordance with the following principles:
   (a) The Board should not knowingly recommend the acquisition of objects, either through gift or purchase, which are known or suspected to be stolen or illegally imported, exported, or possessed. Should the Board unknowingly acquire a work of art which has been shown to be illegally exported from a foreign country, the Board will cooperate with the foreign country to expedite the return of such an object. The Board will expect to be reimbursed the purchase price and any expenses involved in the return by the source from which the object was purchased. In cooperation with the foreign government, these procedures may be amended so long as the representatives of the government and the Board agree that the arrangements are consistent with the best interest of both parties.
   (b) Clear title to a work of art is a condition precedent to its acquisition.

(c) Contemporary objects made from currently endangered species should not be considered for the Library's collections.
(d) Objects which are suspected to be falsely or tentatively attributed must not be for acquisition as secure attributions. However, this does not forbid their acquisition on other bases.
(e) No staff member, Board member or Director shall compete in acquiring an object. Toward that end, staff members of the Library shall inform the President of the Board if they intend to make a significant acquisition and report this as provided in the code of ethics. The Board may withhold or grant permission, and in the latter case, should indicate for the record that the object is not of interest to the Library.

II. Acquisition Procedures

A. GIFTS

1. The Library Board may accept unrestricted donations of fine arts or paintings, however it retains discretion which includes eventual disposal of gifts in order to expand or improve the collections.
2. The Library Board considers donations as gestures of philanthropy and holds its donors in the highest regard. In all cases of gifts, the Board is ethically bound to inform the donor or their direct descendant of any change in status with respect to the donor's wishes concerning the future of the object offered.
3. Gifts are also contributions which also bring tax benefits to the donor. In this regard, the Board's obligation to its donors is limited to maintain its status as a qualified charity. In no case of donation shall the Board become involved in valuation of substantiation of valuation on behalf of the donor. Donors must be referred to an outside appraiser, and advised to follow the IRS code.
4. Certain kinds of objects and collections donated may have implicit needs for exhibition space, conservation, special storage, or other types of maintenance. Dollar support for such gifts should be calculated and actively sought. Adequate support of donations is a factor in the Board's consideration of offered gifts.
5. When a prospective donation would, in the opinion of the Board, carry with it substantial cost to the Library for space, conservation, storage or other sorts of maintenance requirements; or when a donation is subject to burdensome restraints or conditions, the Board should take counsel with a professional before serious discussion with the donor proceeds.
6. The Board may accept donations of two types: either for accession into the permanent collections or as an unaccessioned gift. Before proceeding with acquisition of an offered gift, the Board or Director must inform the donor of the gift category recommended for the donation.
7. Prior to presenting the donation to the Library, the Board shall be in receipt of the donor's gift form. All gifts should be recommended to the Board in one of the following categories and approved by a majority of the voting quorum.

B. BEQUESTS

Bequests shall be accepted according to the guidelines and procedures for accessioned and unaccessioned gifts. In all cases of bequests, the Board must have obtained a copy of the will clause prior to formal accession.

III. Loans

1. In all cases of proposed loans to the Library, both solicited and unsolicited, the Board shall review the merit of the loan. All loans represent an expense to the Library and the value of such loans should be apparent. The Board should consider the adequacy of the space, staff, storage and exhibition facilities, as well as other forms of maintenance required for a proposed loan. The Board must be informed of the circumstances of all collections loans.
2. Loans from outside parties to the Library are considered as a temporary acquisition and are, therefore, covered herein.
3. **Solicited Loans:** If the Board solicits a loan for study of exhibition the Board may assume packing, shipping and insurance costs related to the loan.
4. **Offered Loans:** The Library may accept an unsolicited loan if it will be used in the short term for study or exhibition or if there is the probability of future donation to the collection.

    Loans which are actually requests for safe storage should be avoided. In order to avoid short-term storage requests, the Board should encourage long-term loans; moreover, formal resolution of long-term loans should be actively sought.
5. The Board may choose to defer rejection of unsolicited loan requests to the Library, however, undesired loans should be discouraged from the outset if at all possible.

IV. Deaccessions

All deaccessions must proceed with the utmost deliberation, caution and careful judgment. Both ethical and legal considerations are involved in deaccessioning; neither expediency nor taste shall influence deaccession considerations. Opinions from outside scholars or experts should be sought for each object proposed for deaccession.

In order to assure a responsible process, the following procedures shall govern deaccessions:

1. Recommendations for the deaccession of a work of art may be made by the Board. The Director's recommendation must be submitted to the Board. In the case of a work of art acquired by donation, the donor or their direct descendant must be informed of the proposal, if practicable. Any binding legal restrictions attached to the donation must be respected.
2. If the Board approves the proposed deaccession, an explanatory notice must be prepared and sent to the donor or lender.
3. The Board must approve the proposed deaccession.

4. If the estimated value of a deaccessioned work of art is $3,000 or more, the Board will attempt to secure bids or offers from more than one reputable and disinterested source before proceeding with disposition to the highest offer. Works of lesser value may be offered in groups.
5. Once the Board has established the estimated value of an object, it should seek the most advantageous method of sale. Although auction may offer the easiest opportunity for sale of objects, should the Board be able to document higher returns from alternate sources, it should not be discouraged from pursuing those other avenues. The donor should have the opportunity to purchase the work of art at a current fair market price established with the assistance of an outside appraiser.
6. The proceeds of any sale or a work of art may be used for purchase of works of art, of like kind to the extent practicable. The Board must retain careful documentation of these transactions.
7. Donor acknowledgement of any work disposed through sale or trade will be retained on all works acquired from sale proceeds as a gift by exchange.

Revised by the Board of Trustees October, 15 2025