Workshop Curriculum Packet

Workshop on Creating a Collection Development Policy for Local Historical Records in Public Libraries

Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board
Wisconsin Association of Public Librarians

With support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission

Introduction

The Origins of this Project
In 1997 the Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board (WHRAB) began working on the Best Practices Project. Funding for the project was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), an affiliate of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

The Best Practices Project helped three partner organizations establish best practices for care of historical records. The project grew out of the realization that many of Wisconsin's historical records are cared for by dedicated individuals who never had the opportunity to learn about archives management.

In addition to the Wisconsin Association of Public Librarians (WAPL), the project team worked with the Wisconsin Council for Local History and the Registers in Probate Association. The first step for all three partner groups was to appoint a task force from the ranks of its membership. Nine librarians from small, medium, and large libraries across the state volunteered to participate in the librarians' task force. Peter Gottlieb (WHRAB Deputy Coordinator) and Sally Jacobs (Project Archivist) met with this group three times between March and November of 1997. Through this process participants decided that the most important need for public librarians is a manual on how to write a collection development policy dealing with historical records.

The products of the Best Practices project, including the manual, were designed to become the property of the associations that helped to create it. With the presentation of the initial workshop by the Records Advisory Board representatives and WAPL task force members, the Wisconsin Association of Public Librarians will now be able to put on additional workshops with the help of this curriculum packet.

Contents of the Curriculum Packet
The contents of the curriculum packet includes:

A. Workshop Outline
B. Expanded Outline/Script
C. Overheads and Handouts

Workshop Outline

This workshop is based on the manual of best practice, "Creating a Collection Development Policy for Local Historical Records in Public Libraries."

I   Introduction (10 minutes)

            Explain questions during the introduction and then collect the   answers at the conclusion of the introduction.

II   Overview of manual (20 minutes)

            Conceptual framework.

III   Overview of manual (20 minutes)

            Collection Policy Uses.

IV   Question and Answer/General Discussion (30 minutes)

V   Group Exercise (40 minutes)

VI   Conclusion (5 minutes)

Expanded Outline/Script

I. Introduction

The introduction should include:

- Summary of the origins of the project and the development of the manual.

- Summary of the objective of the workshop which is to create an understanding of collection policy for local history collections in public libraries. This understanding should include:

    1. Definition of what a collecting policy is.

    2. Why a collecting policy is a useful tool.

    3. The components of a basic collecting policy

    4. How to create the collecting policy and use it in a public library setting.

II. Overview of Manual - Part 1: Collecting Policy Concepts
This portion of the workshop presents some basic ideas about collecting policies for historical records. SECTION NUMBERS refer to the section of the manual from which the information was taken.

PREFACE
What is a collecting policy? - overhead 1

- Definition

SECTION 2
Why do we need a collecting policy? - overhead 2

- There are more historical records than any one institution can keep.

- We must have a clear definition of what we want and don't want to keep.

- Collecting policies help us do our work with historical records better

- Collection policies help us communicate with our decision-makers, resource allocators, users, donors, and communities.

PREFACE
What is a historical record? - overhead 3

- Definition which includes two parts:

    1. Recorded information which is original and unpublished.

    2. Recorded information which is rare, significant, and valuable.

Combining the two aspects of a historical record, it could be defined as original, unpublished information which has importance because it is not common, everyday information. In practice, many library historical collections include both records by this definition as well as material which would not fit this definition: newspapers, maps, and historical publications. Collection policies can cover all kinds of historical information.

SECTION 2
Further Benefits of Collection Policies - overhead 4

- Donor Relations

- Continuity/Consistency

SECTION 3
Anatomy of a Collecting Policy - overhead 5

- Statement of Purpose

- Description of Collection Focus

- Policies for Gifts, Loans, and Purchases

- Policies for Unwanted Records

- Cooperative Agreements

1. Statement of Purpose - overhead 6

- Why your library has local history materials.

2. Description of Collection Focus - overhead 7

- Here you define what it is you do and do not want to collect. Things to consider are:

  - Geographic area

  - Formats or types of historical records

  - Subjects

  - Time period

  - Language (This can be significant given ethnic origins of early WI settlements)

3. Policies for Gifts, Loans and Purchases - overhead 8

4. Policies for Unwanted Records - overhead 9

5. Cooperative Agreements - overhead 10

- When your library acquires historical records through agreements with other institutions, the policy should make it clear how and why this happens.

Two Important Reminders for Collecting Policies - overhead 11

1. Keep them Flexible

2. Schedule regular reviews and updates

III. Overview of Manual - Part 2: Collection Policy Uses

This portion of the workshop explains how to apply your collecting policy in the key areas of:

- Appraisal

- Acquisition

- De-accessions

- Outreach

SECTION 4
Appraisal:
The term "appraisal" as used in the manual does not refer to the market value of a historical record but rather to analyzing the importance of a collection for your library and its patrons.

Guidelines for Appraisal - overhead 12

1. Uniqueness

2. Completeness

3. Size

4. Physical Condition

5. Restricted Information

SECTION 5
Acquisition:

Deed of Gift Form - overhead 12a

Any time your library accepts a donation of historical materials, a Deed of Gift form should be completed. This form transfers legal title to the collection from the donor to your library.

Elements to Include in a gift Agreement Form - overhead 13

1. Basic information

2. Description of the materials being donated

3. Signed statement that the material legally belongs to the donor

4. Signed statement acknowledging that the library will become the sole owner.

Optional Clauses for a Gift Agreement - overhead 14

1. Clause stating that unwanted items must be returned to the donor

2. Clause explaining restrictions on use

SECTION 6
De-accessions:

It will sometimes be necessary to remove from your library collections which were accepted at an earlier time but are no longer appropriate for your local history collection. This may be the case if the focus of your collecting policy has changed and another repository provides a better home for some of your collections. Or perhaps your library accepted a donation of scant value hoping the "good stuff" would be forthcoming but it never materialized. In both cases you may decide to de-accession some of your collections.

De-accessions - overhead 15

1. De-accession only within the framework of your collecting policy

2. Create a written record for each deaccessioned collection

3. If required, make sure the written record includes evidence of approvals from your library director or board

SECTION 7
Outreach:

A collecting policy can have many uses beyond guiding the growth and improvement of your library's historical records collection.

Outreach - overhead 16

1. Communication: The collecting policy communicates to the groups interested in your library just what you want to collect and how your library makes decisions regarding its local history collections.

2. Public Programming: Developing a collecting policy also helps you plan public programming at your library by focusing work on those subjects, themes, and time periods where your collection has the most to offer.

3. Active Collecting: A collecting policy can help you identify potential donors as well as demonstrating your library's commitment to keeping local history collections.

IV. Question and Answer/General Discussion

There may be different approaches to this part of the workshop. One possibility is to have the workshop leaders have prepared questions that address aspects of the manual which would lead participants deeper into these topics.

Another option would be to have an open exchange of questions and answers among all participants and workshop leaders that allows everyone to think more about the definitions and explanations included in the overview. If your audience is known prior to the workshop, you may distribute some questions to the participants to get them thinking about the issues beforehand. Some suggestions are: overhead - survey

1. What types of historical records do patrons at your library want?

2. What types of historical records does your collection include?

3. What types of historical records have you been asked to keep?

4. What have you decided to do with the historical records which you have been asked to keep? Why?

This information could then be brought out during this portion of the workshop.

V. Group Exercise

The purpose of the group exercise is to give participants an opportunity for more intensive discussion of collection policy issues and to encourage them to bridge the gap between best practices (manual) and the real conditions they know from their libraries.

Before breaking into small groups, be sure to lay the groundwork for good discussion among the participants. Ideally, there will be enough presenters to assign one to each small group as the discussion leader. If not, a discussion leader should be assigned to each group. The responsibilities of the discussion leader includes: overhead - leader

1. Before the Discussion:

    o   Brief introductions of group members if necessary.

    o   Review the time period.

    o   Ask for a volunteer to take notes and one to report the group's decision.

2. Lead the Discussion:

    o   Ask for opinions

    o   Encourage participation.

    o   Paraphrase a comment or summarize several comments.

    o   Ask for clarification or examples

    o   Ask questions about the assumptions the group is making.

3. Keep the Discussion on Track:

    o   Is there even participation?

    o   Is the group staying focused?

    o   Did I give the group a 10-minute warning?

After the ground rules have been laid, the group discussion can take place. There are several possibilities for the exercise:

A. Draft a collection development policy.

- Participants could be given a hypothetical community and public library with a set of criteria for drafting a collecting policy. Each group would then create a policy and present an overview of it to the workshop.

B. Selection of historical records based on a collection policy.

- Distribute a mock collection policy and a list of historical records and ask each group to decide, on the basis of the policy, whether or not the historical records belong in the public library. Each group would then report to the workshop on their decision and the rationale behind it.

C. Outreach.

- Distribute a mock collection policy and ask each group to determine ways to use the policy to promote the library to its constituencies. Each group would then report its proposal for an outreach program to the workshop.

VI. Conclusion

Summarize the major issues brought up during the workshop, particularly during the group exercise. Thank the other presenters and participants and have them fill out an evaluation form.

Mechanics of the Workshop

- Make sure your overhead is working properly.

- Make sure that the speaker's overheads are in the proper order

- Place all the materials which you will be distributing to the participants at their seats prior to beginning the workshop.

- If possible, have someone assist the speaker in the placement and removal of the overheads.

- Prepare for the group exercise prior to the break so that when the participants return to the room they can move directly into their group.