Bethlehem Public Library

Gift & Donation Policy

Purpose

Bethlehem Public Library welcomes gifts and donations that strengthen its collections, services, and programs. This policy ensures that all contributions support the Library's mission and are managed responsibly, transparently, and consistently.

Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all donated materials, monetary gifts, equipment, and other contributions offered to Bethlehem Public Library, whether solicited or unsolicited.

General Acceptance Principles

- All gifts are accepted or declined at the Library's discretion.
- Donated materials are evaluated using the same criteria applied to purchased materials, relevance, condition, accuracy, demand, and suitability of format.
- Once accepted, all gifts become the property of Bethlehem Public Library and **cannot be returned**.
- The Library does not guarantee that donated items will be added to the collection, displayed, or retained permanently.
- The Library may sell, recycle, repurpose, or discard donated materials as needed.

What the Library Accepts

- Books, media, and other materials in **good physical condition**
- **Monetary donations**, whether unrestricted or designated (subject to approval)
- **Equipment or technology** that meets current operational needs
- **Commemorative or memorial gifts**, following Library guidelines

What the Library Does Not Accept

- Items in poor condition (mold, stains, damage, odor)
- Textbooks, encyclopedias, or obsolete formats
- Materials that do not meet the Library's selection criteria or fall outside its mission
- Items with restrictions on use, display, or disposal
- Large quantities of unsolicited materials without prior arrangement
- Self-published or promotional materials unless they meet collection standards

Unsolicited Gifts

- Items left at the Library without prior approval or donor information may be discarded or handled at staff discretion.
- If donor information is available, staff may notify the donor of acceptance or decline.
- Unsolicited offers of materials follow the same evaluation criteria as all other gifts.

Donor Communication & Acknowledgement

- Donors may request a receipt acknowledging the **number** of items donated; staff cannot assign monetary value.
- Formal acknowledgement letters are provided for monetary gifts or significant contributions.
- Donors are informed that acceptance does not guarantee inclusion in the collection.

Use, Return, or Decline of Gifts

- The Library may decline gifts that require special storage, staffing, or ongoing maintenance.
- Gifts may only be returned under conditions outlined in formal agreements (e.g., named endowments).
- Materials not added to the collection may be used for programs, transferred to local organizations, or given to the Friends of the Library for sale.

Disposition of Materials

- Items not selected for the collection may be forwarded to the Friends of the Library for resale.
- Proceeds from Friends' sales benefit Bethlehem Public Library in accordance with Library policies.
- Unsold items may be donated to other organizations or discarded.

Recordkeeping

Significant gifts—monetary, archival, or commemorative—are documented according to Library record-retention standards.

Authority & Review

- The Library Director (or designee) has final authority over gift acceptance.
- This policy is reviewed and updated as needed.