



Collection Development Policy

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Adopted by the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District Board of Trustees on November 9, 1995; revised and adopted on November 14, 2002; revised and adopted on October 10, 2002.

1. Mission Statement

The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District provides welcoming and inspiring spaces for reading, learning and achieving, and the tools and resources that families, children, teens and adults need to succeed. The Library is committed to building communities of people who can come together to pursue their individual and group aspirations.

Values and Operating Principles

The District is guided by the principles of Public Librarianship and First Amendment Rights. The District protects library materials from censorship.

We seek innovative ways to:

- Respond and reach out to serve the current and evolving information needs of our diverse community.
- Create a sense of community by providing a welcoming, inviting, secure environment for our public and staff.
- Provide excellent customer service that is both timely and confidential.
- Develop a well-trained, knowledgeable, courteous and professional staff.
- Communicate with our public and staff to ensure vital, relevant and effective library services.
- Manage our resources effectively and be accountable to our funding sources.

We celebrate our accomplishments, learn from our mistakes and take pride in serving our community.

2. Purpose

The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District's Collection Development Policy is designed to support the District's mission and service priorities. This Policy guides staff and informs the public of the principles upon which collection development and management decisions are based. Collection development refers to the ongoing process of assessing the materials available for purchase or licensing and in making the decision, first, on their inclusion, and second, on their retention. The Collection Development Policy defines the scope of the collection and provides a guideline for the continuing development of resources. The Policy outlines how collection development fulfills the District's goals through its general selection criteria.

The Policy also affirms the principles of intellectual freedom and the District's commitment to protect library materials from censorship. These principles are embodied in the Library Bill of Rights included in this policy. (Appendix I) (<http://www.ala.org/work/freedom/lbr.html>)

3. Scope

Collections are the foundation upon which the Library District builds its services. The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District strives to develop a diverse, strong, and balanced collection that serves the needs of our growing dynamic population. The Library District selects for its collection popular materials for varying levels of entertainment, education, differing social and religious customs and languages, and includes them on open shelves of the library. The collection offers a choice of format, viewpoint and subject matter at varying levels of comprehension.

“Materials” has the widest possible meaning and includes, but is not limited to, print, audiovisual and electronic formats. “Selection” refers to the decision to add items to the collection, or to provide access to those materials. “Electronic” refers to content available on the Library District web site and through licensing agreements that allow access within a library branch or for use by Library District residents through remote electronic access.

The Library District allocates resources to ensure that the collection meets the needs of the community. Priorities are established annually to purchase materials in support of the Library District’s service objectives and strategic goals. The selection criteria determine whether materials should be added to the collection.

4. Access

Ensuring access to information is a fundamental principle of American public librarianship. Librarians have a public and professional obligation to provide equal access to all library resources for all library users. The Library District does not restrict access to the reading, listening and viewing of its materials based on age. To ensure equitable access to different materials, the Library District may restrict circulation of reference materials and establish different loan periods for popular materials.

Given the diverse nature of its growing community the Library District seeks to acquire the broadest range of materials within budgetary constraints. The Library District strives to develop a collection that is as inclusive as possible in order to provide differing viewpoints reflecting the broad cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of its community. Given the diverse nature of the collection, not all materials are suitable for all patrons.

Parents or legal guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine what is appropriate for their own children. The Library District encourages parents to be involved with their child’s use of the library and to guide their child’s selection of library materials in keeping with their family values. Final responsibility for the materials a child checks out or uses is left to the parent or guardian. The library District does not assume the role of parents in the private relationship between parent and child. The Library District does not stand *in loco parentis*.

The Library District fully endorses the principles of intellectual freedom and equal access as stated in the American Library Association's Bill of Rights (Appendix 1) (<http://www.ala.org/work/freedom/lbr.html>) and Freedom to Read Statement incorporated in this policy. (Appendix II) (<http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/freeread.html>)

5. Selection of Library Materials

Using annually established priorities for the materials budget, professional librarians select materials for the collection from general and specialized review media, trade publications, publishers and booksellers catalogs and flyers, and vendor prepared lists. In addition, materials may be selected in response to patron requests, from donations or from actual evaluation of the materials. In general, the work as a whole is considered, as well as how it will relate to the collection. Materials are evaluated for comprehensiveness and depth of treatment as well as representation of diverse points of view.

The Library District accepts unrestricted, irrevocable gifts of books and other library materials. Gifts added to the collection must meet the same selection criteria as materials purchased for the collection. Gifts not added to the collection will be sold for the benefit of the District or disposed of.

Staff provide potential donors with a copy of the Library District's Gift Policy when accepting gifts.

Selection of a work by the Library District does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the work's content or the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the author/producer by the Library District, staff or Board of Trustees.

Selection Criteria:

- a. Materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following criteria:
 - Present and potential relevance to community needs
 - Currency
 - Sustained interest
 - Suitability of subject, style and format for the intended audience
 - Cost and levels of materials funding
 - Importance as a document of the times, and representation of important movements, genres, social and historical trends
 - Local, state or regional historical significance
 - Relation to the existing collection and to other material on the subject
 - Representation of diverse points of view
 - Literary merit and/or reviews
 - Authority, accuracy and accessibility of presentation
 - Inclusion of work in bibliographies and indexes
 - Reputation, skill and purpose of the author, producer, publisher, or creator

- Shelf space
- Physical quality of material
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Availability
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content
- Suitability of physical format for library use

Textbooks are purchased when they are the best or only source of information on the subject and not solely because a textbook is assigned as school curriculum.

The Library District's collection is not archival in nature. The Library District participates in interlibrary loan networks for the purpose of borrowing materials it may not retain in its collection. All patron requests will be considered for purchase and staff will determine if the request should be referred to interlibrary loan.

- b. Special considerations for electronic information sources: Electronic resources, proprietary as well as free resources, are provided to increase the depth of the collection. The Library District acquires licensed electronic databases for use by patrons from within the library, or available remotely.

Web resources, including free web resources, must meet selection criteria as noted above. Because of the ephemeral and fluid nature of the Internet and the World Wide Web, online resources are continually evaluated to ensure they meet the Library District's selection criteria. Additionally, they are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards:

- Ease of use of the product
- Equipment needed and compatibility to provide access to the information
- Technical support and training
- Availability in full text
- Availability of the information to multiple simultaneous users, both remote and in-house
- Availability of the physical space needed to house and store the information or equipment

- c. Statement on Special Collections:

The Library District may maintain special collections. A special collection is defined as a collection of materials that focuses on one topic and may strive to provide more in-depth coverage of a certain subject than may otherwise be found in the general collection. In general, special collections will be limited to topics that meet a specific service need of the community. Priority will be given to maintaining those special collections that the Library District has a contractual or special commitment to

maintain. Individual libraries may collect materials in subject areas of interest to their local communities and will be supported to the extent that space and budget allow.

d. Statement on Youth Collections:

The Library District is committed to supporting the reading, recreational, listening and viewing options of young people. The selection of materials for the collection is intended to nurture a desire for lifelong learning. The Library District complements the school libraries by providing materials in support of homework assignments. The youth collections are designed for infancy through 8th grade but can include materials for parents, caregivers and other professions that work with youth. Particular attention is paid to the inclusion of a wide variety of materials which appeal to different cognitive abilities and learning styles, and various age-related interests.

6. Labeling

The Library District does not remove or add evaluative labels on library materials such as MPAA ratings on some motion pictures, or language ratings on some CDs or audio recordings. In keeping with the American Library Association's Statement on Labeling (Appendix III), (<http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/labeling.html>), incorporated in the Policy, library materials are not marked or identified to show Library District approval or disapproval of the contents, and no item will be sequestered except to protect it from injury or theft.

7. Weeding

To ensure that the collection continues to meet the diverse and changing needs of the community, the Library District engages in continual evaluation to maintain a current and relevant collection. The Library District has established a set of criteria to determine when an item should be transferred or removed from the collection. The following criteria applies to all materials including those that are gifts:

- Material is damaged and cannot be repaired to withstand public use
- Resource is out-of-date or offers inaccurate data, or the item is not historically or culturally significant
- Newer, more complete or authoritative resources are available
- Multiple copies of a work are no longer needed to meet demand
- Use of materials indicates that the item no longer needs to be housed locally and access may be obtained through regional or national sources
- A more desirable format for the content has been added to the collection

8. Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District welcomes interest in its collection. Patrons are given the opportunity to discuss selection decisions with Collection Development staff and to make specific comments in writing using the form, Request for Reconsideration of Library Material (Appendix IV). The completed

form facilitates an in-depth review of the material in question and permits the District to respond to its patrons' requests and concerns in writing.

The review process will determine whether the material in question meets the selection criteria as outlined in this Policy.

If a patron expresses concern about an item or an electronic resource in the Library District's collection, the Branch Manager or delegate will listen to the patron's concerns. Staff will inform the patron that he/she may call Collection Development staff for a further explanation of selection criteria. Staff will also offer the patron a Request for Reconsideration form. If the patron wishes to have the material formally reconsidered, the patron will complete the Request for Reconsideration form. The library staff member will follow established Library District procedures to initiate the review process. All written requests will be forwarded to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will initiate a review to determine if the item has been selected in accordance with the Board-adopted Collection Development Policy. A written response will be provided to the patron within 15 working days of receiving the written request.

If the patron does not feel satisfied with the determination made by the Executive Director, the patron may request in writing to the Executive Director that a hearing be scheduled with the Board of Trustees. This hearing will be scheduled according to Board of Trustees posting requirements. The Board of Trustees will decide if the material was selected according to the criteria outlined in this Policy.

9. Responsibility

Final responsibility and authority for the collection rests with the Executive Director who operates within the framework of the policies adopted by the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District Board of Trustees. Direct responsibility for selection and weeding of materials is delegated to the Collection Development Department and to individual professional librarians.

Appendix I: Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by
the ALA Council.

Appendix II: ALA Freedom to Read Statement

THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression. These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association and Association of American Publishers

Subsequently Endorsed by:

- American Association of University Professors
- American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
- American Society of Journalists and Authors
- American Society of Newspaper Editors
- Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
- Association of American University Presses
- Center for Democracy & Technology
- The Children's Book Council
- The Electronic Frontier Foundation
- Feminists for Free Expression
- Freedom to Read Foundation
- International Reading Association
- The Media Institute
- National Coalition Against Censorship
- National PTA
- Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
- People for the American Way
- Student Press Law Center
- The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Appendix III: ALA Statement on Labeling

An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

Labeling is the practice of describing or designating materials by affixing a prejudicial label and/or segregating them by a prejudicial system. The American Library Association opposes these means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials for the following reasons:

1. Labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes and as such, it is a censor's tool.
2. Some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as objectionable. However, injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association opposes the establishment of such criteria.
3. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library.

A variety of private organizations promulgate rating systems and/or review materials as a means of advertising either their members or the general public concerning their opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, or other materials. For the library to adopt or enforce any of these private systems, to attach such ratings to library materials, to include them in bibliographic records, library catalogs, or other finding aids, or otherwise to endorse them would violate the *Library Bill of Rights*.

While some attempts have been made to adopt these systems into law, the constitutionality of such measures is extremely questionable. If such legislation is passed which applies within a library's jurisdiction, the library should seek competent legal advice concerning its applicability to library operations.

Publishers, industry groups, and distributors sometimes add ratings to material or include them as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse such practices. However, removing or obliterating such ratings—if placed there by or with permission of the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation, which is also unacceptable.

The American Library Association opposes efforts which aim at closing any path to knowledge. This statement, however, does not exclude the adoption of organizational schemes designed as directional aids or to facilitate access to materials.

Adopted July 13, 1951. Amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990, by the ALA Council.