

# 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 October 10, 2002; revised and adopted on November 14, 2002; revised and adopted on July 8, 2021.

## 1. **Mission Statement**

We enable the people of our community to pursue lifelong learning through our responsive collections, digital resources and innovative services. Our inviting public libraries are the cornerstone of our diverse communities where children and adults can experience personal enrichment and connect with one another. The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District seeks to offer materials in the collection to entertain, educate, and empower our community.

### **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).

### **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 and online. 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.

### **4. Access**

Ensuring access to information is a fundamental principle of American public librarianship. The Las Vegas-Clark County Library District endorses the principles documented in the American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix II). 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.

The Library District seeks to acquire the broadest range of materials for its growing community within responsible 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. The Library District does not stand in loco parentis and the final responsibility for materials a child uses is up to the parent or guardian. The Library District does not remove or add evaluative labels on library materials such as MPAA ratings on motion pictures or language

ratings on some CDs or audio recordings. To ensure equitable access to different materials, the Library District may restrict circulation of reference materials and establish different loan periods for popular materials.

## **5. Selection of Library Materials**

The Library District allocates resources to ensure that the collection meets the needs of the community and is in compliance with the Nevada Revised Statutes and federal laws. Priorities are established annually to purchase materials in support of the Library District's service objectives and strategic goals. Professional librarians select materials for inclusion based on specific selection criteria developed by the Library District. The whole of the work is considered as well as how it will relate to the entire collection. Materials are evaluated for comprehensiveness and depth of treatment as well as representation of diverse points of view.

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 strives to adhere to the principles outlined in the American Libraries Association Statement on Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix III).

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 Library District or otherwise dispersed.

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:

Materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following criteria:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Currency
- 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
  - Physical quality of material
  - Availability and format
  - 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.

- 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.

- 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 that appeal to different cognitive abilities and learning styles, and various age-related interests.

## Deselection of Materials

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 practices deselection as an effective and necessary tool to ensure our libraries have the most useful content available at all times. Collection materials are regularly reviewed based on age, condition, performance, currency, and relevancy.

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
- Newer, more complete or authoritative resources are available
- A more desirable format for the content has been added to the collection
- Multiple copies of a work are no longer needed to meet demand

## **6. 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, permits the District to respond to its patrons' requests, and concerns in writing. Given the diverse nature and depth of the collection, not all materials are suitable for all patrons. 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.

## **7. 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

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

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 that 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

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

### 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: Diverse Collections- An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/diversecollections>

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the Library Bill of Rights: "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." A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library's selection Policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all of the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title "Services to Persons with Disabilities"; amended June 26, 2018.

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection's diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.<sup>2</sup>

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 under previous name "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 24, 2019.

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<sup>2</sup> *ALA Code of Ethics*, Article VII, adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.