

Collection Development Policy

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Section 1: Selection of Materials

The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials rests ultimately with the Library Director. By the Director's delegation and supervision, the Head of Adult Services or Head of Youth Services also has responsibility for the selection of materials.

When selecting materials, several standards may be used; however, an item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be selected. The following criteria will be considered:

- Accuracy
- Attention by critics and reviewers; award-winning
- Importance of subject matter
- Present and potential relevance to community needs / requests by library patrons
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Timeliness of material

The Library will not acquire textbooks to support local curricula, condensed books, or other abridged material. The Library will attempt to have information available in a variety of formats but may choose not to select certain items if the format is not durable enough to withstand reasonable library use, or would require excessive staff time to maintain.

The library does not limit access to any item because of content or style. There are collections of material suitable for children and young adults; the responsibility of what children read, view or listen, rests with parents, not with the library.

The library aims to provide a diverse collection that reflects major viewpoints on a variety of subjects. In no case are any materials excluded solely because of the race or nationality, the political or religious views, or the social or moral views of the author, editor, contributor or artist.

Objections to items in the collection should be made in writing to the Library Director through the use of the Library Materials Reconsideration Form. This request will be reviewed with the Library Board.

Section 2: Discarding (Weeding) of Materials

The discarding of books (or weeding) and other materials is a necessary and continuing process. The Director and designated Department Heads are responsible for making the decision of what items are to be removed from the collection. All involved will exercise professional discretion when making this decision and that the following factors will be part of the evaluation process:

- Demand for that particular title
- Other copies available at the consortium level
- Other similar materials in the collection, especially more current and better materials
- Physical condition of the item
- The number of copies of an item in the collection
- Validity of information

Section 3: Gifts and Donations of Materials

The library welcomes gifts and donations of materials in support of the library collection. Due to space constraints, materials offered as gifts and donations must meet the library's criteria for collection development and anticipated need before being added to the collection.

Section 4: Library Bill of Rights (American Library Association)

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 19, 1939. Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

Section 5: Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (American Library Association)

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.¹

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.²

¹ "[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.

²*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.

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.

Section 6: Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (American Library Association)

Libraries continually develop their collections by adding and removing resources to maintain collections of current interest and usefulness to their communities. Libraries should adopt collection development and maintenance policies that include criteria for evaluating materials. Reasons for inclusion or removal of materials may include but are not limited to accuracy, currency, budgetary constraints, relevancy, content, usage, and community interest. The collection-development process is not to be used as a means to remove materials or deny access to resources on the grounds of personal bias or prejudice or because the materials may be viewed as controversial or objectionable. Doing so violates the principles of intellectual freedom and is in opposition to the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Some resources may contain views, opinions, and concepts that were popular or widely held at one time but are now considered outdated, offensive, or harmful. Content creators may also come to be considered offensive or controversial. These resources should be subject to evaluation in accordance with collection-development and collection-maintenance policies. The evaluation criteria and process may vary depending on the type of library. While weeding is essential to the collection-development process, the controversial nature of an item or its creator should not be the sole reason to remove any item from a library's collection. Rather than removing these resources, libraries should consider ways to educate users and create context for how those views, opinions, and concepts have changed over time.

Failure to select resources merely because they may be potentially controversial is censorship, as is withdrawing resources for the same reason. Library workers should consider the cataloging, classification, and display of resources to ensure that they are discoverable and readily available to the populations they are meant to serve.

The American Library Association opposes censorship from any source, including library workers, faculty, administration, trustees, and elected officials. Libraries have a profound responsibility to encourage and support intellectual freedom by making it possible for the user to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; June 2, 2008; and June 25, 2019.

Section 7: Library Materials Reconsideration Form

Mount Kisco Public Library

Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the library director.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent self? _____ Or an organization? _____

Name of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

____ Book (e-book) ____ Movie ____ Magazine ____ Audio Recording

____ Digital Resource ____ Game ____ Newspaper ____ Other

Title _____

Author/Producer

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

4. What concerns you about the resource?

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action are you requesting?

Signature of Complainant _____

