



Collection Development and Management Policy

The mission of the Washoe County Library System is to connect people with information, ideas, and experiences to support an enriched and engaged community, one person at a time.

I. PRINCIPLES

The Washoe County Library System Collection Development and Management Policy is based on the following principles:

- A. Materials are selected which provide for the interest, information, enlightenment, entertainment, education, development, enrichment, and/or self-improvement of all library patrons, within budgetary constraints and availability of materials.
- B. The freedom to read, along with the freedom to hear and to view, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This freedom, essential to our democracy, will be upheld, supported, and defended in the selection and accessibility of all library materials. In this regard, the library upholds the principles of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (Appendix I), Freedom to Read (Appendix II), and Diverse Collections- An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix III) as well as to the Nevada Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Policies (Appendix IV)
- C. Selection of materials does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content, viewpoint, implications, or presentation of the materials.
- D. Librarians have a public and professional obligation to provide equal access to all library resources for all library users. The Library does not restrict access to the reading, listening, and viewing of its materials based on age.
- E. The Library policy is that parents or legal guardians maintain the right and responsibility to determine what is appropriate for their own children. The Library encourages parents to be involved with their child's use of the library and to guide their child's selection of library materials. The Library does not stand in loco parentis and the final responsibility for materials a child accesses is up to the parent or guardian. The library does not remove or add evaluative labels on library materials such as MPAA ratings on motions pictures or language ratings on CDs or audio recordings.
- F. The Library's collection is not archival in nature. The Library 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.

II. POLICY

In accordance with the above principles, the following policies apply in regard to materials selection and accessibility for the general library collection.

A. Selection

As budgetary constraints limit the purchase of materials, the selections made follow the aforementioned principles while attempting to maintain diversity, quality and responsiveness to patron interest patterns. As such, selections are made on the basis of any one, several, or all of the following considerations:

1. Diversity is pursued by attempting to meet the needs of all ages, backgrounds, and educational levels, by providing as many subject fields as possible, and by providing alternative perspectives on unpopular or unorthodox as well as popular materials. The collection represents various opinions and viewpoints on all issues of general concern and should broadly reflect the various ethnic and social groups in Washoe County.
2. Quality is pursued by applying professional discretion and standards established by the library profession and through the use of appropriate selection aids, including book reviews, best seller lists, etc.
3. Professional catalogers use Dewey and Library of Congress subject headings to place materials into the proper subject areas and assign them to Adult, Juvenile, Young Adult areas of the library. Reviews by professionals in the field and the librarians' expertise contribute to the proper placement of material.
4. The Library staff responds to community interests by careful consideration of the following: patron requests for purchases, use patterns for existing materials, purchase trends of similar materials from retailers, and any other source of information indicating community interests. The Library collection serves, to the degree possible, the interests of a diverse community without exclusion. Responsiveness to the interest of one individual or group is not restricted on the basis of dislike or objection of another individual or group.
5. Undue duplication of materials is avoided, either in the library itself, or with other institutions in the community. Esoteric or very technical works, and materials available elsewhere to special interest groups, are generally excluded from the collection. Materials may also be excluded if the existing collection already covers the field.

6. Materials with formats that do not conform or lend themselves to library use are usually excluded.
7. The Library 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 or otherwise discarded.
8. Materials are withdrawn from the collection to maintain the collection's usefulness, currency, and relevance. Withdrawn materials may be sold, distributed to non-profit community agencies, recycled, or disposed.

B. Criteria

Materials selections are made on the basis of any one, several, or all of the following specific criteria:

1. Present and potential relevance to community needs
2. A positive review in at least one of the following review journals:
 - *Booklist*
 - *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
 - *Horn Book*
 - *Kirkus Reviews*
 - *Library Journal*
 - *New York Times Book Review*
 - *Publisher's Weekly*
 - *School Library Journal*
 - *VOYA Voice of Youth Advocates*
3. High standards of quality in content, expression and physical attributes (binding, printing, paper quality)
4. Contents that are timely, accurate, potentially useful, and representative of diverse religious, cultural, moral, political, and sociological points of view
5. Significant reputation of the author, editor, producer or illustrator
6. Established reputation of publisher in the mainstream of the industry. Demonstrated acceptance of small presses by listings in established reference sources
7. Local or regional historical significance
8. Reasonable cost with regard to budget restrictions
9. Regional and national sales trends
10. Availability through a library wholesaler

11. Requests by the public, provided the requests meet one of more of the above criteria

C. Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Washoe County Library 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 Materials (Appendix V). The completed form facilitates an in-depth review of the material in question and permits the Library to respond to its patrons' requests and concerns in writing. The patron initiating the request must complete this form and submit it to library staff or email it to the Collection Development Manager.

1. Requesters must have read, heard, or viewed the entire work to have their challenge considered.
2. The Collection Development Manager will respond in writing to an individual's written request in a reasonable period of time.
3. Right to appeal:
 - Within ten (10) working days, requesters may appeal the Collection Development Manager's decision by making a written request to the Library Director.
 - The requester will be notified of the final decision within ten (10) working days.
4. The decision of the Washoe County Library Director shall be final.
5. Items under consideration will remain in the collection for the duration of the reconsideration process.

CI. Responsibility

Final responsibility and authority for the collection rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Washoe County Library System. Direct responsibility for selection and weeding of materials is delegated to the Collection Development Manager and to individual professional librarians.

APPROVED: December 15, 2004

REVISED: May 19, 2010

REVISED: February 19, 2025

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 counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals 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

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Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. 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 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 or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

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.
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.
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.
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, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

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.¹

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.

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

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.

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.

Appendix IV - INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM IN LIBRARIES

A Statement of Policy-Nevada Library Association

<https://nevadalibraries.org/Handbook-Intellectual-Freedom>

The Nevada Library Association is directly concerned with the freedom and right to privacy of all members of a democratic society to use what materials they will in the course of making the social, educational, and political judgments on which that society is based. We are further agreed that the right to privacy of library patrons is of utmost importance. Without such freedom, the very fabric of democracy is in danger. It is a professional obligation of librarians to give highest priority to the freedom of inquiry and to observe the charges in the Library Bill of Rights and the American Library Association Freedom to Read statement with the utmost integrity.

The Association, as a matter of principle, opposes any legislation at the state, local, and school district levels which might place library collections in jeopardy, restrict, prejudice, or interfere with free and unbiased selection and acquisition of library materials, or which might otherwise restrict the basic concept of the freedom of use or inquiry.

The Association, as a matter of principle and policy, opposes any proposed or actual restrictions imposed on whatever parties or individuals upon the selection, acquisition, maintenance, administration and dissemination of library materials, and with similar restrictions on cultural activities or educational programs in libraries and other institutions.

The Association is concerned with affecting liaison between itself and other organizations which support the Freedom to Read.

The Association is concerned with school librarians and the general public to the philosophy inherent in the Library Bill of Rights and the American Library Association Freedom to Read statement.

The Association supports the concept of the library user's right to privacy, and maintains, as a vital principle, that official or unofficial surveillance, without due process, of library circulation records represents a violation of intellectual freedom and the traditional right of free inquiry.

Adopted 1976

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Nevada Library Association

The freedom to communicate is a necessary function of a democracy and no institution makes this freedom more meaningful than the library. The library has the responsibility for providing the widest possible range of views and expressions and must, therefore, resist any attempts to restrict this responsibility.

To fulfill this responsibility, libraries must institute policies to implement it, and thus the Nevada Library Association recommends to members and all library bodies that they:

- I. Adopt the ALA Bill of Rights, the School Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read statements as official basic policies for insuring freedom of access to information and libraries.
- II. Formulate and use explicit, written criteria for selecting library materials.
- III. Establish a clearly defined procedure for handling complaints, specifying what authority will make the final decision, i.e., Librarian, Library Board or a duly constituted committee appointed by the governing body.
- IV. Authorize the Intellectual Freedom Committee to examine and make recommendations on existing and proposed legislation at all political levels, so such legislators will recognize the responsibilities of the library as a media of communication.
- V. Obtain all complaints in writing and forward copies to the Chairman of the Intellectual Freedom Committee and keep the committee apprised of all developments relating to any complaints.
- VI. Inform the Intellectual Freedom Committee of any attempts, successful or not, by individuals or groups, or administrative authority to restrict the selection or acquisition of materials in libraries or administrative practices of librarians.

Adopted 1976

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM POLICY RESOLUTION

Nevada Library Association

Whereas, the Freedom to communicate is a necessary function of a democracy, and no institution makes this freedom more meaningful than the library, and

Whereas, the Library has the responsibility for providing the widest possible and must, therefore, resist any attempts to restrict this responsibility,

Therefore: be it resolved that the Nevada Library Association reaffirms, as a matter of principle, its adoption of the American Library Association Bill of Rights, the School Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read statements as official policies for assuring freedom of access to information for and in libraries.

Adopted 1976

RESOLUTION ON ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS AND SERVICES

Nevada Library Association

WHEREAS, Libraries have the important mission of protecting the right of free speech by making the widest diversity of views and modes of expression available to everyone.

WHEREAS, Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues, and should not proscribe or remove materials because of personal, partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

WHEREAS, Libraries should provide the best information and materials on various subjects and literature in response to what is in demand, and to make them freely available so that people may make their own choices.

WHEREAS, Libraries enable citizens to make intelligent decisions based on information on all sides of a question - including minority, as well as popular points of view.

WHEREAS, Libraries serve the entire community, with all its social, political, economic, religious and cultural diversities and alternative lifestyles.

WHEREAS, Libraries provide books and other materials, programs, and services for the interest and enlightenment of people of all ages.

WHEREAS, Libraries should not restrict access to library resources to avoid objections from parents or pressure groups.

WHEREAS, Parents, and only parents, have the right and the responsibility to restrict access of their children, and no others, to library resources.

RESOLVED, That the Nevada Library Association defends citizens' rights to free access to library collections and services and opposes all attempts by pressure groups or individuals to limit access to the full range of library materials, programs or services.

RESOLVED, That the Nevada Library Association defends intellectual freedom and opposes censorship or discrimination against any group or segment of society.

Adopted 1994

Appendix V: Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Your Name _____

Library Card Barcode Number _____

Home Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____ Phone number _____

Description of Item Concerned:

Title _____

Author/Artist _____

Book DVD Music CD Other _____

Have you read, viewed or heard the entire work? (Requesters must read, hear or view the entire work to have their challenge considered.) Yes No

What do you believe is the theme and/or major intent of this work?

Have you read professional reviews of this work? Yes No

If yes, please list the publication here: _____

What is your objection to the work? Please be specific.

What would you like the library to do about this item?

In its place, what work of equal literary quality would you recommend the library purchase that would cover the same subject or content?

Your signature _____ Date _____

Received by Staff Member _____ Date _____

