

COL-1: Collection Development Policy

Effective: 12/13/2023 Supersedes: 12/13/05; 11/13/07; 9/11/12; 10/11/17; 3/9/22

Policy Statement: To meet the educational, recreational, and informational needs of its customers, the Camden County Library System's Collection Development Policy guides staff and informs the public about the principles that guide materials selection and collection maintenance.

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1. Purpose of a Collection Development Policy

The Camden County Library's Collection Development Policy outlines the underlying philosophies behind the selection and acquisition of materials, serves as a guideline for active collection maintenance, and provides a framework for responding to changing community needs. The goal of the policy is to ensure that the Camden County Library System's collection is balanced, current, and representative of the diversity of individuals and interests in the communities it serves.

The ultimate responsibility for material selection rests with the Library Director who operates within the policies determined by the Camden County Library Commission.

2. Philosophy and Scope of Collection

The major goals of the Camden County Library System in collection development are the advancement of knowledge, the education and enlightenment of the people of the community, and the provision of educational, informational, and recreational reading, viewing, and listening. Emphasis is placed on popular materials and general information rather than on scholarly and specialized materials.

The service population of the Camden County Library comprises a range of culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse individuals from an array of socio-economic backgrounds. As such, the Library embraces the diversity of individuals and ideas and actively seeks to acquire materials representing views, authors, subjects, and life experiences that are of interest to people of differing ages, gender identities, ethnicities, lifestyles, and beliefs. Materials will be acquired in a variety of languages and non-standard formats as needed. The digital collection includes research databases and instructional programs, as well as popular downloadable and streaming eBooks, audiobooks, music, movies, and TV shows. These digital resources are available through the Library's website and app.

3. Selection Criteria

Materials purchased for the Library's collection are evaluated as complete works and not based on any one passage. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection solely because it represents a particular aspect of life, frankness of expression, or because it is controversial. Similarly, no work will be removed from the collection solely because an individual or group finds it to be objectionable when it is in harmony with this policy statement. The inclusion or non-inclusion of any work is based on the considerations described in this policy statement and does not amount to an act of endorsement by the Library of any viewpoint or position. In the case of digital subscription services, direct selection of materials is not always available to the Library.

The general selection criteria listed below apply to the selection of all materials for the Camden County Library System.

- Quality of the work as assessed by one or more reliable reviewers
- Authority and competence of the author
- Reputation and standing of the publisher
- Date of publication
- Appropriateness of the work to the collection in which it is to be placed
- Cost, availability, and impact on the materials budget
- Relationship of the work to other works in the collection
- Local significance of the author or subject
- Predicted demand and interest
- Contribution to diversity, depth, or breadth of collection
- Likelihood of enduring value

Additional criteria for digital resources:

- Ease of use

- Licensing and System Requirements (hardware, software, networking, storage).
- Assessment of content, quality, and cost as compared to other available formats.
- Long term availability and accessibility.

The Library is aware of the purposes and resources of other libraries in the State and shall not unnecessarily duplicate functions and materials.

4. Customer Recommendations

Customers can request items that the Library does not own by filling out the Library's Interlibrary Loan and Wish List Request form, available through our online catalog. The Library cooperates with other libraries in the exchange of materials. All purchase requests will be subject to the selection criteria set forth in this policy.

5. Requests for Reconsideration

Library materials are selected and retained in accordance with the criteria set forth in this policy. A method for library users to request reconsideration of library materials is outlined in Policy COL-3, Challenged Materials and Programs Policy. The completion and submission of the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form is part of this process. All requests are reviewed by the Library Director in consultation with criteria set forth in Library policy.

6. Collection Management

The ultimate responsibility for material selection and removal rests with the Library Director who operates within the policies determined by the Camden County Library Commission. Day-to-day implementation of the Collection Development Policy and management of the collection is assigned to Library staff.

7. Withdrawal of Library Materials

To ensure that the Library continues to meet the diverse and changing needs of the community, the collections must be continually evaluated to remain current and relevant.

The following criteria are considered when evaluating materials for withdrawal from the collection:

- Physical condition
- Number of copies available in the collection
- Accuracy and currency of information

- Enduring value
- Local interest or specific community relevance
- Current demand and recent usage patterns
- Availability elsewhere, including other libraries or online resources
- Space limitations

Materials will not be withdrawn from the collection because of the personal views or beliefs of the Library staff or patrons.

The Library will not accept requests to hold discarded materials.

8. Gifts and Donations

The Library may choose to accept gifts and donations as outlined in Policy MNG-4, Gifts and Donations. Monetary gifts may be used to purchase materials that supplement the Library's collections. Donated materials and materials purchased with monetary donations must be aligned with the selection criteria set forth in this policy.

9. Statement on Intellectual Freedom

The Library is committed to the principle that constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and press are enjoyed by all. To this end, the Library strives to offer a collection that represents the needs of our diverse communities. Inclusion of items in the collection does not imply endorsement of any theory or statement contained in those materials and resources.

While every customer may not agree with the viewpoints offered in some Library material, the Library has a responsibility to provide a balanced collection with access to material reflecting diverse ideas through which opposing sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored, provided that the material meets the outlined selection criteria. The balanced nature of the collection is reflected in the diversity of materials, not in an equality of numbers.

Customers are free to choose what they like from the collection and to reject what they do not like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to make the same choice.

The Library does not use labels on any material in such a way as to show approval or disapproval of the content of that material. Materials are not sequestered to show approval, disapproval, or judgment as to suitability of content for a particular audience. The Library does not remove or obliterate ratings attached to material by a publisher, industry group or distributor. Removing or altering such rating, if they are placed there by or with permission of the copyright holder, denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the material intended to express.

Decisions about what materials are suitable for children should be made by the people who know them best – their parents or guardians. Selection of materials for adults is not constrained by exposure to children or teenagers.

10. Statements endorsed by the Library

The Camden County Library System endorses the following statements:

- American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights
- American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement
- American Library Association's Freedom to View Statement
- New Jersey Library Association's Statement Against Censorship