

**Cloquet Public Library
Collection Development
Policy**

Reference: Adopted by the Library
Board (Original date unknown)

Revised and adopted by the Library Board, June 22, 2010

Reviewed and updated June 29, 2021

Mission Statement

The Cloquet Public Library helps to build a democratic and engaged community by providing a welcoming space, resources and programs that support children’s literacy and the fulfillment of lifelong learning, interests and goals.

Library Goals and Objectives– See the current Strategic Plan

Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to guide the library’s professional staff in the selection, retention, and withdrawal of materials, and to inform the public about the principles upon which the decisions are made. This policy has been adopted by the Cloquet Public Library Board, which assumes full responsibility for any and all legal actions which may result from the implementation of any of the practices stated herein. The Library Board supports the staff responsible for the selection and withdrawal of library materials, and delegates to such staff the authority to purchase those books and materials considered essential, useful, and within the scope of this collection development policy.

For background and guidance, the Library staff and board follow the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association (and the interpretations of parts of that Bill of Rights), referenced at the end of this policy.

Materials Selection

Responsibility for selection: Responsibility for the collection rests with the Library Director, under authority from the Library Board.

According to the ALA Bill of Rights:

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."

Criteria for selection: Certain factors influence the selection of library materials, including:

1. The importance of the subject matter to the collection.
2. The author's reputation and significance as a writer.
3. Availability of material in the System, in other libraries, or in print.
4. Timeliness or permanence of the materials.
5. Authoritativeness of the material.
6. Inclusion of the material in standard bibliographies or indexes.
7. Price.
8. Format, including type and legibility, as well as the possibility of rebinding.
9. Suggestions from library users.

Scope of the collection: The library recognizes its obligations to provide reference and research materials for the direct answering of specific questions and for continuing research. However, it will not needlessly duplicate the functions or materials of other libraries in the area.

This library acquires textbooks and other curriculum-related materials when such materials serve the general public.

The library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history and will, therefore, seek to acquire state and municipal documents. It also will take a broad view of works by and about Minnesota authors, as well as general works relating to the State of Minnesota, whether or not such materials meet the standards of selection in other respects.

However, the library is under no obligation to add to its collection everything about Minnesota, or produced by authors, printers, or publishers with Minnesota connections, if it does not seem to be in the public interest to do so.

Children's Material: Every effort will be made to select the best material available. The decision as to what library materials a minor may read, listen to or view is the responsibility of the minor's parent or guardian. At the same time, selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of minors.

Non-Print Material: Videos, films, audios, art prints, and other non-print material shall be selected according to the basic principles outlined in this policy.

Gifts: The library director may, on behalf of the Library Board, accept unconditional gifts, donations, and contributions to the library. However, gifts or donations made conditionally require the approval of the library director, and may require the approval of the Library Board.

Generally, collections of books with restrictions which necessitate special housing or which prevent integration of the gift into the general library collection will not be accepted. The same standards of selection that govern purchases by the library will govern the acceptance of gifts. If material is useful but not needed by the library, it may be disposed of at the discretion of the librarian.

Labeling: No book or other library material will be labeled for the purpose of rating the suitability of its contents, or for making some form of prejudgment of an item for the prospective user.

Censorship: The selection of library books and other materials is predicated on the library patrons' right to read, listen to, and view what they wish, as well as their freedom from censorship by others. Many materials are controversial, and any given item may offend some persons. This library will make selections based solely on the merits of the material in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the library's users, and not on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval. This library holds censorship to be a purely individual matter. While all patrons are free to reject materials of which they do not approve, they cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

Maintaining the Collection

Withdrawal of materials: An important part of maintaining a library's collection is to systematically remove materials that are no longer useful or are out of date, in order to maintain relevant resources. The same criteria used in selecting and acquiring materials will be used in weeding materials from the collection. The decision to withdraw materials shall be based:

- the physical condition of the material
- use of the material, as determined by the last date of loan, or by the number of loans in the last five years
- age of the material as a misinformation factor, especially in the area of sciences

Library staff members are to be thoroughly instructed in the necessity, frequency, and manner of withdrawing library books and materials.

Freedom to Read: This Library respects the right of persons to express their opinion, and provides the concerned citizen the right to challenge the inclusion of specific library materials in the collection.

No library materials will be removed from the collection until the challenge is acted upon and a decision is reached.

(For background, see the “Challenged Materials” Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, referenced at the end of this policy.)

Procedure for challenge of library materials:

1. The library user will request the form “Statement of Concern About Library Resources” from a library staff member. (See Appendix A)
2. The library user must fill out the form completely, and return it along with the library material in question to the library director.
3. The library director will review the materials and notify the library user in writing, within 30 days, of a decision.
4. If the library user questions the decision of the library director they may meet with the library director to discuss the matter. If the library user wishes to further discuss the matter with the Library Board, the matter will be included on the agenda of the next regularly- scheduled Board meeting. Action taken by the Board will be final.

American Library Association Library Bill of Rights
(latest version)

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.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

**Challenged Materials: An Interpretation of
the Library Bill of Rights Libraries:**

An American Value states, "We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services." The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm

principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged materials. Selection of online resources, including Web sites, should also be governed by this collection development policy and be subject to the same procedures for review of challenged materials. This policy reflects the Library Bill of Rights and is approved by the appropriate governing authority. Challenged materials should remain in the collection during the review process. The Library Bill of Rights states in Article I that “Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation,” and in Article II, that “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.” Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Supreme Court has held that the Constitution requires a procedure designed to examine critically all challenged expression before it can be suppressed.¹ A hearing is a part of this procedure. Materials that meet the criteria for selection and inclusion within the collection should not be removed. Therefore, any attempt, be it legal or extra-legal,* to regulate or suppress materials in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

Adopted June 25, 1971; amended July 1, 1981; amended January 10, 1990; January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council. *

“Extra-legal” refers to actions that are not regulated or sanctioned by law. These can include attempts to remove or suppress materials by library staff and library board members that circumvent the library’s collection development policy, or actions taken by elected officials or library board members outside the established legal process for making legislative or board decisions. “Legal process” includes challenges to library materials initiated and conducted pursuant to the library’s collection development policy, actions taken by legislative bodies or library boards during official sessions or meetings, or litigation undertaken in courts of law with jurisdiction over the library and the library’s governing body.

Expurgation of Library Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Expurgating library resources is a violation of the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights*. Expurgation as defined by this Interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part of a library resource by administrators, employees, governing authorities, parent institutions (if any), or third party vendors when done for the purposes of censorship. Such action stands in violation of Articles I, II, and III of the *Library Bill of Rights*, which state that “Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation,” “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval,” and “Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.”

The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Expurgation without permission from the rights holder may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

The decision of rights holders to alter or expurgate future versions of a work does not impose a duty on librarians to alter or expurgate earlier versions of a work. Librarians should resist such requests in the interest of historical preservation and opposition to censorship. Furthermore, librarians oppose expurgation of resources available through licensed collections. Expurgation of any library resource imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; and July 1, 2014.

Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

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