



## **Anatomy of a Collection Development Policy**

*Please feel free to use this template or any portion or modification of it as a guideline for creating your library’s Collection Development Policy. The Michigan Cooperative Directors Association strongly advises all library policies to be vetted by your library’s attorney before adoption.*

### **I. Introduction**

Library collection development should work to support all of the communities served and to create policies and programming that will celebrate identities and not just support the ideas of free speech and the press. The library should support creating equitable and inclusive collections even when these practices challenge long-standing ideals of neutrality in library services. Inclusion means to promote positive affirmations of identities and the library will purposely shy away from collecting materials that disparage marginalized groups. It is inaccurate to characterize libraries as neutral as we have always made choices in what we collect and whom we serve. While uplifting all communities served, it is also our responsibility to select materials that are accurate and truthful to sustain intellectual freedom.

Libraries have broad freedom to select materials to add to their collections but are legally limited in their ability to remove materials from their collections due to challenges based on the content of those materials. Recently a Texas judge ruled “Although libraries are afforded great discretion for their selection and acquisition decisions,” the judge wrote, “the First Amendment prohibits the removal of books from libraries based on either viewpoint or content discrimination.” At the time of the crafting of the document, the ruling is being appealed.

[Michigan Library Book Bans: Lessons from a Federal Texas Case](#)

### **II. Purpose/Policy Statement:**

Policy creation is a partnership between the Library Director and the Board where the Director drafts the policy, and the Board discusses the policy before approval. Why do you have this collection development policy? Think about your library’s vision and mission. Be sure to consult the entire demographic of your area. Some helpful websites include [Kids Count](#), [Demographics Now](#), your area Intermediate School District (ISD), and the County Health Department. Libraries follow state laws of MI including [OMA](#) and the [Library Privacy Act](#).

Examples:

- The library and its board of trustees uphold the democratic ideal of the freedom to read and the ability to access information.
- Privacy and confidentiality are key components of freedom to read and access information. While patrons are free to reject titles for themselves and their children, they cannot restrict others' freedom to choose what to read, hear, or view.
- The library endorses the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#).
- The library is committed to resource sharing which provides access to materials beyond the scope of local collections for patrons.
- Responsibility for any limitation on materials read by children and adolescents rests with the youth's parents or legal guardians. The Library does not stand [in loco parentis](#). Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors.

### **III. Definitions**

Are there any terms you feel need to be defined?

Examples:

- **Collection:** The term "collection" means books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, library programs, or other synonyms and applies to all library materials in the collection, including adult, young adult, and juvenile; however, the term "Library Materials" does not apply to Internet sites available through the Library's computers or Internet collection. The Library has no control over the content of the Internet.
- **Digital materials:** This includes but is not limited to e-books, audiobooks, e-magazines, and databases.

### **IV. Scope**

What types of items are collected? Why?

Examples:

- The library has the responsibility to provide materials representing a wide range of ideas and opinions to meet the various ages, interests, educational and reading levels, and cultural backgrounds of all its citizens including minority populations.
- The library provides materials in an array of formats including print and electronic.
- Items added to the collection are available so citizens may educate themselves as well as meet general and job-related needs. Items also help stimulate thought, encourage freedom of expression, enrich lives, and celebrate leisure time with the enjoyment of reading.
- All public library collections contain materials that some patrons may find objectionable, and in turn, public libraries may omit from the collection materials that some patrons consider important, both for purposes of balancing the collection and in instances when

materials do not meet the selection criteria. This applies to materials for any age or audience.

## V. Responsibility

Who is responsible for the selection of materials which are added to the library's collection?

Examples:

- The Library Board delegates administration and responsibility for selection of the collection to the Library Director who works within the framework of policies approved by the Library Board. The Library Director selects materials and/or delegates selection to staff members qualified for this duty by education, training, interest, and job classification.

## VI. Selection of Materials

What items are selected? Do you have special collections? What criteria are used when selecting or not selecting items for the collection? Cost? Availability? Discounts? Consider listing the factors used to select items. Librarian resources for reviews include [Library Journal](#), [BookPage](#), [Booklist](#), [Kirkus](#), as well as [additional review publications provided by the American Library Association](#).

Examples:

- The library's collection aims to meet the diverse cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the local community.
- Information is available in a variety of formats representing a wide range of views, expressions, opinions, and interests.
- A balanced collection attempts to represent all sides of issues as far as the availability of materials, space, and budget allows.
- Priority is given to materials with the broadest appeal and multiple criteria may be used to evaluate items for the collection, however, selected items are not required to meet all criteria.
- The inclusion of a title in the collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas presented in the material, nor does the absence of a title from the collection imply disapproval.
- Criteria selectors may use to evaluate regardless of format (there could be many more):
  - Authenticity of information**-Collecting materials that showcase accurate and truthful information is of the utmost importance. Items that are known to perpetuate false information and inaccuracies will not be purchased.
  - Authority of the author**-The competence and reputation of an author
  - Content of the work**-objective, accurate, timely, literary quality
  - Diversity**-subjects, ideas, opinions, viewpoints.
  - Local Interest**

**Physical features and format**

**Price and availability**

**Public Interest/Demand**

**Relevance**-suitability of the subject format and style for the intended audience

## **VII. Collection Maintenance**

What factors to consider when deselecting materials?

Examples:

- All collections need to be weeded on a continuing and scheduled basis to keep the collection in good condition with current materials.
- Circulation is especially important when deciding to retain an item.
- Space may dictate deselecting items as well as the cost of replacement, the appearance of the item, and its timeliness.

## **VIII. Donations**

Do you accept donations? If so, what types of items? Do they also need to meet the criteria as an item that was selected for the collection? Do you accept monetary donations?

Examples:

- The library accepts gifts of hardcover books, magazines, historical materials, and audiovisual materials if there is demand.
- Donated items become the sole property of the library.
- The library does not accept textbooks or encyclopedias.
- Donations can be made for the purchase of materials in memory or honor of someone.

## **IX. Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Is the form easily available for patrons to access? Should it be? Should the patron have to meet with the Library Director and only then if the situation can't be resolved, then the Library Director can give the Reconsideration form to the patron?

Examples:

- Patron concerns about materials included in library collections should discuss the reasons with the Director for an explanation of the library's criteria for selection, acquisition, or access.
- Patrons may also submit a "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" to the Director.
- Patrons not satisfied with the Director's decision may request, in writing, a review by the Board of Trustees.

## **X. Statement of Concern Regarding Library Resources**

This form is pretty standard in our industry. Refer to Examples below for more information.

## **Examples**

[ALA Selection Policy Toolkit](#)

[ALA Sample Reconsideration Form](#)

[Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Policies](#)

[Downers Grove Public Library Policy Manual](#)(Collection Management pages 68-73)

[MI Right to Read Resources and Toolkit](#) (More policies in the Toolkit)

[Otsego Library Reconsideration Form](#)

[Rochester Hills Materials Selection Collection Development Policy](#)

[Rochester Hills Reconsideration of Library Materials Policy](#)

[Seattle Public Library Selection and Withdrawal of Materials Policy](#)

## **Other documents for reference**

[Citizen's Guide US Federal Obscenity Law](#)

[First Amendment and Censorship](#)

[Freedom to Read](#)

[Freedom to View](#)

[Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q & A](#)

[Library Bill of Rights](#)

[MI Library Privacy Act 455 of 1982](#)

[MI Open Meetings Act](#)

[MI Public Act 343 of 1984](#) (MI Obscene Material Act, including Obscenity Test)