



MENDOCINO COUNTY *Library*

Collection Development Policy

Mission, Vision, and Values

The mission of Mendocino County Library is to enrich lives through free and equitable access to materials and programs centered on education, culture, and entertainment.

Its vision is an informed, connected, inclusive, and creative community where opportunities for discovery are celebrated.

Values

- Equity
- Inclusion
- Free access to information
- Serving others
- Social justice

Role of the Public Library

Public libraries play a unique role in the preservation of democracy by providing an open, nonjudgmental institution where individuals can pursue their interests and gain an understanding of diverse opinions. Libraries must continue to play an essential role in safeguarding the intellectual liberty of the public and must recognize, understand, and support freedom of access.

Mendocino County Library Collection Development Guidelines

General Principles

It is important for all Mendocino County Library visitors to feel a sense of belonging and connection with their Library. To cultivate this sense of belonging for patrons, Mendocino County Library works diligently to build and maintain a myriad, robust, and relevant collection comprised of various materials.

Materials to be added to the collections of Mendocino County Library are selected on the merits of a particular work concerning the needs, interests, and demands of this community.

Children and teens are encouraged to read and become lifelong learners by visiting and borrowing books and other materials from their local libraries.

Responsibility for reading rests with the individual or legal guardians. Selection should not be inhibited by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of those under 18 years of age.

Based on the services the public library is expected to perform, it is the Library's responsibility to provide circulating, reference, and research materials for both the diverse community as well as students at all levels of formal and informal education.

This Policy is created in accordance with the terms of the California Freedom to Read Act.

Specific Principles For Selection

- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Accuracy
- Authority of Author
- Relation of work to existing collection
- Price, format, and ease of use
- Scarcity of information in subject area
- Availability of material elsewhere in the community
- Popular demand
- Representation of various community demographics
- Reputation and qualifications of the author, publisher, or producer, with preference generally given to titles vetted through examination of professional reviews (e.g. Library Journal, Booklist, Kirkus, etc.)
- Date of publication
- The collection meets the broad and diverse interests of the community and respects both the library's autonomy and their specific community needs
- Mendocino County Library serves as a center for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas

- Library materials should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people, and should present diverse points of view in the collection as a whole
- It is the right of the public to receive access to a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences

Online Databases and other Digital Resources

Selection of and access to electronic resources are integral to fulfilling the mission and objectives of Mendocino County Library. Digital resources, including eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming video and audio, government documents, databases, vendor curated databases, virtual tutorials, and language databases are subject to the same general selection criteria as other materials. Vendor curated databases may contain material that falls outside the regular Mendocino County Library's selection criteria.

Audio/Visual Policy

Mendocino County Library maintains a broad selection of entertainment, informational, and audiovisual collections. These collections include digital video discs (DVDs), audio compact discs (CDs), unabridged audiobooks on CD, and multimedia kits. Audiovisual materials complement the library's other collections and public programs.

Self-Published and Donated Titles

Mendocino County Library may purchase materials by local authors or accept these materials for consideration for the Library's collection in accordance with the Library's collection development policy guidelines. The Library accepts donated copies of self-published books but does not guarantee inclusion in the collection; each submission will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Items donated to the Library become the property of the Library and cannot be returned to the donating party. Donated titles and local author titles are subject to Library policies regarding deselection due to condition, lack of use, or space constraints.

Adult Non-Fiction

Chief points considered are readability of material, authenticity of factual matter presented, quality of writing, cost, and format, existing library holdings, and suitability of material to the community.

Nonfiction may be excluded because of inaccurate information, lack of integrity, sensationalism, intent to incite hatred or intolerance, and text material of too limited or specialized a nature. Titles are selected based on the content as a whole and without regard to the personal history of the author. Important books of all persuasions are carried. In the case of controversial questions, variety and balance of opinion are sought whenever available.

Adult Fiction

Selection is made with reference to one or more of these criteria:

- It contributes positively to an individual's awareness of self, community, and social heritage.
- It contributes to the value of the library's collection by representing all types and styles of literature.
- It represents authors from a myriad of cultural, socioeconomic, and racial backgrounds.
- It provides pleasant reading for recreational and creative use of leisure time.
- Serious works which present an honest aspect of life are not necessarily excluded for frankness of experience.

Children's Materials

The first objective in selecting children's materials is to share the joy of reading and being read to, and as such books are selected which offer diverse perspectives and lived experiences so that as many children as possible see themselves represented in the material. Special attention may also be given to acquiring works of value to guardians, teachers, and other adults working with children.

The children's collection provides materials suitable for children 0-12, and it is the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian to ensure that material is appropriate for the child

A public library does not provide basic textbooks or materials needed in quantity for schoolwork; it accepts as its responsibility the provision of supplemental materials of varied kinds to enrich the resources available to the individual student and teacher.

Teen Collection

The Teen or Young Adult (YA) collection is designed to meet the needs of teenagers (ages 12-18) during this time of rapid changes in their physical, intellectual, psychological, and social development. Emphasis is on materials that widen the teens' boundaries of thinking, enrich their lives, and help fulfill their diverse range of recreational, educational, or emotional needs.

The Teen collection follows the specific principles of selection laid out under general principles. It aligns with the Adult Non-Fiction and Fiction selection criteria, while focusing more on popular culture and other teen interests, along with youth health.

The Teen collection provides materials including fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels, manga, audiobooks, DVDs, video games, and magazines.

Due to the wide age range of adolescents and their different maturity levels, some materials in the teen collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all teens. While some books are too mature for one teen, other teens may be ready for

them. Only an individual teen and their caregivers can decide what material is suitable for that specific teen to read. Library staff are not responsible for determining which materials may be appropriate for a specific teen. A teen's choice of Library materials is ultimately the responsibility of their caregiver or legal guardian.

Video Games

Mendocino County Library provides access to video games for various consoles at the discretion of the library card holder. These video games are selected for purchase based primarily on community appeal and popularity, with particular attention paid to games for which there have been many requests.

The Library does not purchase video games based on ESRB ratings, nor is it the responsibility of Library staff to restrict access to video games based on ESRB ratings. If library card holders under the age of 18 wish to borrow video games, it is the responsibility of the legal guardian or caregiver to ensure that appropriate items are selected.

Patron Recommendations and Requests

Patrons may request items that the Library does not presently own. Each request is reviewed for inclusion in the collection and will follow the collection maintenance guidelines and selection criteria listed in this policy. Requests can be made in person, over the phone, or online.

Collection Management Overview

The Library's collection is a living, changing entity. As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes are withdrawn from the collection. Great care is taken to retain or replace items that have enduring value to the community. Decisions are influenced by patterns of use, the capacity of each location and the holdings of other libraries that may specialize in each subject matter. Staff review the collection regularly to maintain its vitality and usefulness to the community.

Responsibility for Collection Management

The final authority for the Library collection rests with the Library Department Head. Implementation of collection development policy and management of the collection is assigned to Library staff. The Mendocino County Library disposes of materials that have been withdrawn according to the criteria for weeding and maintenance.

Postconsumer Recycled Content

Mendocino County Library purchases books, microfiche, microfilm, and periodicals (including magazines and newspapers) that are publications procured at a significantly high volume. Information regarding the recycled content for these products is not available due to the high purchasing volume of these products. In addition, many of

these items can only be purchased by one vendor. Purchases of other paper products, including printing and writing paper, are included separately in the implementation record. The goal is to continually seek out postconsumer recycled-content products when available.

Criteria Applicable to All Library Materials.

In accordance with the California Freedom to Read Act (AB 1825), Library materials in public libraries shall not be excluded, and access to library materials shall not be limited, solely on the bases of any of the following:

- (i) The race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, political affiliation, or any other characteristic listed in subdivision (a) of Section 12940 of the Government Code, or the socioeconomic status of a subject of the library materials, an author of the library materials, the source of the library materials, or the perceived or intended audience for the library materials.
- (ii) The library materials contain inclusive and diverse perspectives.
- (iii) The library materials may include sexual content unless that content qualifies as obscene under United States Supreme Court precedent.

Labeling of Materials

To permit free and convenient access to materials, the Library endorses an open shelf policy. Therefore, no materials shall be either removed from open shelves or kept in a restricted area because of their controversial nature or because they are more suitable for one age group than another because of their subject matter, viewpoint, or the possibility that they might be opposed to by certain individuals or groups. Library materials are not marked or identified in such a way as to indicate approval or disapproval, and materials are not sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting such materials from damage or theft.

Maintenance and Weeding of Collection

Collections are maintained and weeded to increase the relevance of Library materials and facilitate its display and circulation. Materials are withdrawn regularly, using guidelines such as the CREW method (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding).

Most Library materials are processed in such a way as to ensure their maximum use under normal circumstances. Damaged but still usable materials are mended according to an established set of procedures. Materials may be withdrawn because they are worn, obsolete, or seldom used; superseded by a newer edition or better work on the subject; or physically damaged or in poor condition.

Responsibility

The County Librarian is responsible for the deselection of library materials, delegating tasks to staff members as needed. Patron and staff suggestions are considered in maintaining broad and relevant collections of interest to all. Questions that arise in the weeding process are referred to Branch Managers who may consult with the County Librarian as needed.

Weeding Process

Mendocino County Library follows guidelines of The American Library Association, which recommends that annual withdrawals average 5% of the total collection. Removals allow room for new purchases, keep the collection current, and make shelves easier to browse. Lack of demand, obsolete or erroneous information, and poor condition are the main reasons for deselection.

The Library offers breadth and depth in its collections including standard titles whose condition may deteriorate with frequent use. The Library may replace these items with newer copies or editions if funds and space permit.

Damaged or stolen materials will be replaced if the items continue to meet selection criteria. Subject areas may be refreshed with the latest materials rather than specific older items.

Gift materials will be subject to the same standards for inclusion and weeding as purchased materials.

Local and Archival Materials

The Library retains local material of community interest and attempts to preserve it over time. Local collections may sometimes need weeding for poor condition or dated information.

Archival material (e.g., the County Annual Report) shall be kept for two years. Historical documents are also available at the Mendocino County Historical Society or by contacting the County of Mendocino Executive Office.

Removal from Collection

The County Librarian and deputized staff are responsible for the disposition of weeded material. This may include, but is not limited to, the sale of valuable items, donations to Friends or community groups and recycling and discarding material.

Collection Audits

The Library routinely performs an audit of the collection to identify gaps in subjects and equitable representation of voices.

The results of the collection audit are used by library staff to purchase titles to fill in gaps of the collection. The budget for these purchases is the standard annual collection budget unless a grant or other one-time funds are used.

Statement of Concern

If a patron has a concern about the inclusion, classification, or location of library material, a statement of concern of materials form is available at a library branch or by requesting by mail. For a statement of concern to be considered, the form must be completed in full. The patron submitting the statement must have a Mendocino County Library (MCL) card and reside within Mendocino County, California.

Community members can also share their concerns regarding library materials and request that library materials be reconsidered for inclusion in the library's collection.

A committee that includes at least one professional librarian from outside Mendocino County will review the details of the statement. MCL will respond, in writing, within 30 days of receiving the statement. The response will indicate the action to be taken and the reasons for or against the statement of concern. The library director will consider any statement to appeal the committee's decision. An item will be evaluated for reconsideration only once in a 12-month period.

MCL incorporates, as part of this policy, the principles contained in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, the California Freedom to Read Act Assembly Bill 1825, American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements.

Collection development selection criteria include, but are not limited to the following

- representation of an important movement, genre, trend, or national culture
- artistic presentation and experimentation
- entertainment value
- representation of challenging points of view
- accuracy

Appendix of the Collection Development Policy

- American Library Association “Freedom to Read Statement”
- American Library Association “Freedom to View”
- American Library Association “Library Bill of Rights”

American Library Association- The Freedom to Read Statement

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.

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, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

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.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

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.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the

diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression 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 others. 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; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information. 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. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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 Americans 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

Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses

The Children's Book Council

Freedom to Read Foundation

National Association of College Stores

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Council of Teachers of English

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

American Library Association - Freedom to View Statement

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989. Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

American Library Association - Library Bill of Rights

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.

Approved by the Board of Supervisors on July 29, 2025