

# **CAMDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

---

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Camden Public Library is committed to serving the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of its community. Materials that are selected for the collection will be based on the Library's mission statement as follows:

The Camden Public Library is an anchor for the community.

We bring people together to Read, Connect, and Discover.

### **COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURPOSE**

The Collection Development Policy exists to provide a framework for the acquisition and withdrawal decisions, allocation of resources, and strategic planning that shape the Library's collection. By following the parameters of the policy, professional library staff seek to establish a curated, well-maintained collection of enduring value that responds to the needs and interests of the community and receives optimal use.

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF SELECTION**

Ultimate responsibility for the selection of library materials lies with the Executive Director, who oversees professional library staff members in the process of acquiring materials for the collection. The selection of materials is undertaken by staff using published reviews in print and online professional and trade publications, subject bibliographies, publishers' catalogs, and suggestions by members of the community.

### **SELECTION PHILOSOPHY AND CRITERIA**

Materials are selected to meet the information, educational, cultural, and recreational needs and interests of the community with an eye toward crafting a collection that remains sustainable and relevant over time. The goal is to maintain a collection that receives maximum use by the greatest number of people. Materials are acquired in multiple formats when appropriate, including print, audiovisual, and digital. Multiple copies of any given material may be purchased by the Library when demand is sufficiently high.

Through consortia lending and participation in other statewide and countrywide arrangements, the Library provides access to a far wider range of resources to patrons than it can provide on its own. Consideration of the availability of materials in various formats within these library systems may guide selection decisions.

The Library collects materials for all ages with the understanding that while librarians provide guidance for readers, the responsibility for use of material by children and young adults rests with their parents or legal guardians. The library cannot stand *in loco parentis*. Therefore, selection for the collection is not restricted by the possibility that children or young adults may obtain or see certain materials.

In addition to prioritizing materials with broad appeal, the collection is intended to represent a variety of viewpoints on current and historical issues and include authors of diverse backgrounds and identities. No material will be excluded on the basis of moral, racial, religious, political, or other prejudice.

Principles that guide material selection include:

- anticipated and popular demand
- relevance to community needs and interests
- accuracy and currency of information
- literary and/or artistic merit
- price and availability
- format durability and ease of use
- support of library programs and initiatives
- the strengths and weaknesses of the existing collection
- historical, local, or national significance
- perceived enduring value

An item does not need to meet all these criteria to be selected.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR MATERIALS**

The Library welcomes suggestions from individuals for materials to add to the collection, particularly resources that are not otherwise available for patron request in the shared library system. Materials that are suggested for purchase are subject to final decision by library staff using the same criteria for selection as other newly purchased materials. Interested individuals are invited to fill out a New Materials Suggestion Form, which will be reviewed by the Executive Director.

## **COLLECTION MAINTENANCE AND WEEDING**

In order to uphold a collection that is sustainable for the Library and continues to meet the needs and interests of the community, library staff undertake regular evaluation and maintenance of the collection. This ongoing process includes weeding materials from the Library's collection utilizing industry standard resources. Materials are subject to de-selection if they:

- contain inaccurate or misleading information
- are in poor physical condition
- are outdated or superseded by a newer edition
- receive infrequent use
- are no longer relevant in a contemporary context

Deselected materials may be sold, donated, recycled, or discarded as the Library determines. Books that are damaged or in otherwise poor condition will be evaluated for replacement by professional library staff through consideration of demand for the work, availability of newer materials on the subject, the importance of the work in its subject area, and its cost. Weeding allows library staff to further evaluate the collection by identifying areas where additional titles are needed or older editions need to be updated, as well as in highlighting authors, titles, and subjects that are no longer of interest to the community.

## **GIFTS/DONATIONS**

The Library welcomes donations at designated times but accepts them with the understanding that it has the right to handle them in its best interests. Donated materials are subject to the same criteria as purchased materials and may be added to the collection at the discretion of library staff. The donor may receive a written acknowledgement of the gift upon request. Although the Library acknowledges gifts for tax purposes, it cannot be responsible for assessing the monetary value of gifts.

## **STATEMENT ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM**

The Camden Public Library believes that reading, listening, and viewing are individual, private matters. While anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves or for their own minor-aged children, the freedom of others to read, listen, and view should not be restricted. The Board of Trustees adopts and supports the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement adopted by the American Library Association, as well as the Children's Rights to Read adopted by the International Literacy Association, all of which are available in the appendices and can be provided upon request.

## **RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS**

The Camden Public Library is dedicated to open ideas and information and applies no restrictions on the right to read, listen, or view. The Library seeks to reflect within its collection differing points of view on controversial and debatable subjects without promulgating particular views or beliefs, and selection of a particular material does not imply library endorsement of the author's viewpoint. While no materials will be removed unless they are shown to be in violation of the Collection Development Policy's principles, the Library recognizes the right of patrons to question materials in the collection.

Patrons who request the reconsideration of library materials will be asked to put their request in writing (see attached form). Requests for reconsideration of material will be considered by the Challenge Review Committee, which comprises the Executive Director, the Collection Development Librarian, the Children's Librarian (when relevant), two community members, and members of the Board of Trustees. Challenged materials will not be removed from the collection until the Board of Trustees reaches a final decision. In the event a member of the community objects to any materials included or excluded from the collection, the following procedures apply:

1. The complainant, a member of the library in good standing, must submit a Request for Reconsideration of Materials form (see appendix).
2. The Executive Director will review the request and may interview the complainant.
3. The Executive Director may contact the Maine Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee, the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, and/or the American Civil Liberties Union to apprise them of the situation.
4. The complaint will be referred to the Challenge Review Committee, who will review the Request for Reconsideration and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.
5. The chair of the Challenge Review Committee will convey the Committee's recommendations to the Board of Trustees.
6. The decision by the Board of Trustees to keep, move, or withdraw the item under consideration will be final.
7. The Executive Director will inform the complainant of the Trustees' decision.

## **APPENDICES**

*New Materials Request form*

*Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form*

[ALA Library Bill of Rights](#)

[ALA Freedom to Read Statement](#)

[ALA Freedom to View Statement](#)

ILA Children's Rights to Read**ADOPTION**

This Collection Development Policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees of Camden Public Library on September 18, 2025.

Last updated 09/2025 - NC, KK

## **CAMDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY NEW MATERIALS SUGGESTION FORM**

---

Title of material: \_\_\_\_\_

Material type: \_\_\_\_\_

Author(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed/heard about: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a copy of any reviews that might assist in the selection of library materials. Your suggestions are greatly appreciated.

Name of patron/staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Patron barcode : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff initials \_\_\_\_\_

## **CAMDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

### **REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS FORM**

---

Request initiated by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code:

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

An organization?: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of work for reconsideration:

---

Format:

---

Author/Producer:

---

Publisher, if known:

---

1. What brought this work to your attention?
2. What do you find objectionable about the work? Please be specific and cite pages.
3. Have you examined the entire work? If not, which sections did you read/view/listen to?
4. Do you object to this work for a particular age group or for a general audience?
5. What do you believe is the theme of this work?
6. What do you feel might be the result of having access to or preventing others from having access to this work?
7. Are there any merits to the work?

8. Are you aware of any reviews for this work? How have literary critics responded to this work?

9. Are there resource(s) of equal or greater quality you would suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

10. Have you read the Camden Public Library's Collection Development Policy and its appendices?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you believe that other people should be able to determine what you and/or your children are allowed to read?

12. What action do you believe the library should take regarding this work?

13. Signature of complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date received: \_\_\_\_\_



## THE 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.

*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](#).

## 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.*

## 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*

## **INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION**

### **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO READ**

1. Children have the basic human right to read.
2. Children have the right to access texts in print and digital formats.
3. Children have the right to choose what they read.
4. Children have the right to read texts that mirror their experiences and languages, provide windows into the lives of others, and open doors into our diverse world.
5. Children have the right to read for pleasure.
6. Children have the right to supportive reading environments with knowledgeable literacy partners.
7. Children have the right to extended time set aside for reading.
8. Children have the right to share what they learn through reading by collaborating with others locally and globally.
9. Children have the right to read as a springboard for other forms of communication, such as writing, speaking, and visually representing.
10. Children have the right to benefit from the financial and material resources of governments, agencies, and organizations that support reading and reading instruction.