

**Salem Public Library  
Collection Development Policy**

The Salem Public Library endorses the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement. These documents affirm free and equal access to ideas and information and are of vital importance to the experience of every citizen in SPL's community.

Selections are made to provide depth and diversity of viewpoints to the existing collection. The Salem Public Library provides materials to support each individual's journey, and does not place a value on one customer's needs or preferences over another's. The library upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. The Salem Public Library provides a collection that presents various and diverse points of view. It makes no attempt to promote specific beliefs or viewpoints through its collection. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for the selection and use of library materials by their children.

**Objective:**

This document outlines the principles and responsibilities for the selection of books, AV materials, and other items that make up the Salem Public Library's Collection.

**Criteria for Selection**

The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

- Relevance to interests and needs of the community
- Extent of publicity, critical review, and current or anticipated demand
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject
- Local significance of author or subject
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Suitability of format to library circulation and use
- Date of publication
- Price, availability, and library materials budget

Among the selection tools used by librarians are professional library journals, trade journals, subject bibliographies, publisher's promotional materials, and reviews from reputable sources. Librarians also consult national newspapers and magazines, local publications, the broadcast media, and reputable online sources.

**Collection Responsibility**

Ultimate responsibility for the library's collection rests with the Library Director, who in turn delegates authority for selection to the various department managers and to those members of the staff who are qualified by reason of education, experience, and daily contact with the users of the library.

**Recommended to Order**

The Salem Public Library will purchase materials requested by patrons if the materials are acceptable according to the Collection Development policy. The materials generally must have the current or previous year's copyright date; otherwise, the material will be requested for that patron's use through interlibrary loan from another library outside the Roanoke valley when possible.

### **Donations and Gifted Materials**

Donated or gifted books are accepted with the understanding that they may be used or not used in the library collection in accordance with the selection policy. New titles acquired as donations/gifts are subject to the same selection criteria as purchased materials. Donated materials that are not selected for the library collection become property of the Friends of Salem Library.

### **Withdrawn Materials**

The Salem Public Library discards books on a regular basis to maintain the usefulness of the collection. Materials may be withdrawn due to low or no circulation, they are in poor condition, duplicate titles, or contain dated information. Withdrawn items are put in the library's ongoing book sale if they are in good enough condition. If they do not sell after a period of time, they are donated to a charitable organization, such as the Goodwill, or recycled.

### **Reconsideration of Materials**

If a patron questions the suitability of an item in the library's collection, a reconsideration form is available at the front desk, as well as the collection development policy and the ALA Library Bill of Rights. The form will only be considered if the patron has fully read or viewed the item being challenged, and only if the patron has read the ALA Library Bill of Rights. Once the completed form is submitted, it will be referred to a committee of librarians for review. Once the review is complete, reconsideration forms for the same title will not be accepted within a period of three years.

### **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.

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.

### **Freedom to Read Statement**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. We, as citizens 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.

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 need the help of censors to assist them in this task.

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:

- 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 or unpopular with the majority.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any expression the pre-judgment of a label characterizing it or its author as subversive or dangerous.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

Rev. 3/2022

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council  
and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.