# RESOURCES SELECTION POLICY

**APPLICABILITY:** The Resources Selection Policy applies to all Durham County Library Collections.

**PURPOSE:** The Resources Selection Policy defines the criteria used by Library collection development staff in choosing Library resources and materials.

**POLICY:** Durham County Library offers the community print and non-print resources and materials consistent with the Library's mission to encourage discovery, connect the community, and lead in literacy.

**Intellectual Freedom:**

Recognizing that ours is a free society, the Durham County Library provides access to a collection of materials that is balanced and diverse. Selections are not made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval by specific segments of the community but on the merits of the material and the selection criteria described below. The Library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights set forth by the American Library Association. In addition, the Library endorses the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View Statement also developed by the ALA and adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on January 28, 1985. These documents are appended to the Resources Selection Policy.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for the selection and use of Library materials and resources by their children. The Library supports the right of individuals to reject, for themselves or their children, resources and materials they find unsuitable or objectionable; however, the freedom of others to read or inquire will not be restricted.

**Selection of Resources:**

All resources and materials considered for addition to the collection will be evaluated on the following criteria, considering the work as a whole. Not all criteria must be met and no one criterion will be decisive.

1. Authority and reputation of the author/producer
2. Responsible and timely treatment of the subject
3. Clarity, organization, and readability of both design and content
4. Significance and/or usefulness in relation to the existing collection
5. Usefulness for a public library collection with a general audience
6. Evaluation of critical and/or professional reviews
7. Literary or artistic merit
8. Production quality (visual aspects or sound elements)
9. Cost relative to work's value to the collection
10. Durability of format
11. Appropriateness of treatment for intended audience

12. Appropriateness of medium to subject portrayed
13. Relevance to the interests and needs of the community
14. Popular demand

Electronic resources and digital content will be subject to these additional criteria:

1. Print versus electronic cost considerations
2. Compatibility with Library platforms
3. Technical quality of the reproduction
4. Currency and frequency of maintenance
5. Ease of use
6. Demonstrated widespread and enduring adoption of a given technology
7. Content output options
8. Training requirements for staff and the public
9. Remote access capability
10. Legal and licensing terms
11. Technical support capability
12. Privacy practices of the provider

Recommended websites will be subject to these additional criteria:

1. Availability of contact information for responsible parties
2. Quality of access through fast loading files, clearly defined elements, ease of use, and graphics that complement rather than distract
3. Stable Uniform Resource Locator
4. Complete access without requirements for credit card or personal information
5. Does not present known security risks (spyware, virus, etc.)

**Non-curated Collections:**

In order to expand the range of digital content available to library card holders, the Library provides access to non-curated collections of digital content. These collections are ones for which the content is determined by the content provider. Because it is impossible to review every individual item in the Library's non-curated collections, Durham County Library staff assess the value of each collection as a whole based on the above selection criteria. As with Durham County Library curated collections, parents and legal guardians are responsible for the selection and use of Library materials and resources by their children. The Library supports the right of individuals to reject, for themselves or their children, resources and materials they find unsuitable or objectionable; however, the freedom of others to read, view, listen or inquire will not be restricted.

**Patron suggestions:**

The Library welcomes suggestions for resources from the public and will consider such suggestions following the criteria outlined in Selection of Resources. To make a suggestion, patrons may complete the "Suggest a purchase" form on the Library website.

**Curricular materials:**
The Library selects educational resources useful to the general reader but does not provide curricular materials for programs of formal instruction.

**Resource Sharing:**
Realizing that no one library collection can be comprehensive, the Library may provide for the needs of its patrons by using the resources of other libraries in compliance with the National Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States. To request resources from another library, patrons may complete the Interlibrary Loan request form on the Library website.

**Collection Maintenance:**
The Library engages in an ongoing evaluation to keep its collections current, in good condition, responsive, diverse, and useful to the needs of the community. Based on this evaluation, materials may be retained, replaced by new copies, preserved to ensure long-term retention, or permanently withdrawn from the collection and discarded according to accepted professional practices. The same judgment exercised in the selection of the collection shall be used in the weeding process. Materials will be evaluated according to professionally recommended criteria such as:

1. frequency of circulation
2. format or physical condition
3. currency of information
4. role in the overall collection

**Requests for reconsideration:**
The Library recognizes that a diverse collection may result in some requests for reconsideration. In order to ensure that they are handled in a consistent manner, requests for reconsideration of items from the collection should be made using the following procedure:

1. Resident borrowers wishing to register a formal Request for Reconsideration about the inclusion of any particular title will receive a copy of the Resources Selection Policy and a “Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources” form from the location manager or manager on duty at that location or from the Library website.
2. Borrowers must return a completed “Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources” form to a location manager or manager on duty. Requests from non-Durham County residents will not be considered. Requests regarding items that have been reconsidered within the previous three years will also not be considered.
3. Requests for Reconsideration will then be reviewed by a committee composed of the Deputy Director, the manager of the facility where the Request for Reconsideration was received, the Resources and Finance Officer, the Collection Development Administrative Librarian, and the selector for that subject area. Requests for reconsideration of an individual item in the library’s non-curated collections [see Non-curated Collections above] are subject to limitations imposed by the vendor.

4. The recommendation of this committee will be communicated to the Library Director.
5. The Library Director will make a decision and communicate it by letter to the borrower.
6. To appeal the decision, the borrower may request a hearing by the Library Board of Trustees. Such a request should be made in writing to the Library Director at least one week prior to a board meeting. The Library Board of Trustees advises the Library Director, who is authorized by the County Manager to make a final decision.

**GIFTS**

Gifts of materials will be evaluated by the Library's Collection Development staff, according to the criteria in the Library's Resources Selection Policy and the Library's Gift policy. Collection Development staff are responsible for determining if gifts can be used within the system. Items that are not accepted into the Library's collection may be returned or disposed of at the Library's discretion.

**PROCEDURE**

Responsibility for developing and implementing effective procedures to support this policy lies with the Library collection development staff. The Resources Selection Policy is reviewed annually by the Collection Development Administrative Librarian and collection development staff and is updated periodically as needed.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

The ultimate responsibility for implementing the Resources Selection Policy lies with the Library Director.

**APPENDICES**

1. American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights
2. American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement
3. American Library Association's Freedom to View Statementhttps://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement
4. Durham County Library's Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources Form (PDF)

## APPENDIX 1: AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S 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.

## APPENDIX 2: AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S 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

## APPENDIX 3: AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S 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 guarantees 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.