

Cambridge Public Library
Collection Development Policy

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THE CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Cambridge Public Library serves as a doorway to opportunity, self-development and recreation for all its residents, and as a forum where they may share ideas, cultures and resources among themselves and with people around the globe. The free availability of information, the lively interaction of people, and the open exchange of ideas animate and extend the democratic mission of the library.

The library is a dynamic, community-oriented system providing excellent services, collections and programs to all members of the community. We are dedicated to affording the people of Cambridge resources for recreational reading, independent learning, and introducing children to the world of literacy and learning.

The Cambridge Public Library is designed to work as a unified system with a strong Main Library and six active branch libraries each tailored to the unique constituencies and needs of its immediate neighborhood. As of 2020, library materials number more than 350,000 items across all library locations. Additional collections exist in digital and streaming formats.

To serve its patrons most effectively, the Cambridge Public Library bases its collection development on the diverse needs of the population. The Library utilizes the [Cambridge Community Development Department](#) as the primary source by which demographic information is obtained. It is the aim of the library to provide materials and services that consider the unique demographics and broad diversity reflected in the City's profile. The Library collection aims to meet the needs of the current population, while finding ways to anticipate growth and changes within the community.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Mission

Welcoming all, inspiring minds, empowering community

Vision

A Cambridge where everyone has equitable opportunities to learn, people live their best lives, and democracy thrives

Values

Access

We advocate for free and equitable access for all.

Community

We engage our community and partner with others to achieve collective impact.

Diversity

We embrace diversity of people, opinion, and thought.

Intellectual Freedom

We champion free and confidential exploration and expression of information and ideas.

Learning

We celebrate the power of literacy, inquiry, and discovery throughout one's lifespan.

People

We provide excellent and responsive patron-focused service. We invest in our staff to best serve our community.

Social Justice

We acknowledge the systemic inequities that have shaped our society and take intentional action to create more equitable outcomes.

Sustainability

We seek practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable.

Strategic Priorities

Welcome and Inclusion

We are your free public library—a place where everyone belongs.

- Deliver an exceptional and engaging patron experience
- Reduce barriers to access
- Offer flexible and inviting civic spaces
- Provide a wide range of collections, services, and experiences to satisfy your needs and interests
- Reflect the diversity of the community in our staff and services

Arts and Ideas

We celebrate the cultural and intellectual vitality of our community.

- Champion books, reading, and the life of the mind
- Offer joyful and inspiring experiences around literature, arts, and sciences
- Preserve and make accessible our diverse historical and cultural heritage

Learning and Literacy

We foster your self-development and discovery of the universe of ideas.

- Nurture the growth, learning, and school readiness of our youth
- Promote a wide range of literacies—reading, STEAM, and more—from birth through adulthood
- Support your lifelong pursuit of educational and recreational interests
- Leverage partnerships to connect you with our community’s rich educational assets

Community and Democracy

We connect our community and promote our shared democratic traditions.

- Protect your privacy and intellectual freedom
- Facilitate community discourse and informed civic involvement
- Create opportunities for you to engage with your neighbors
- Celebrate our neighborhoods and branches

This [strategic framework](#) was approved by the Cambridge Public Library Board of Trustees on September 10, 2019.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

This document includes the goals and objectives of collection development at the Cambridge Public Library. It contains criteria used to review both materials and resources under consideration for acquisition and deselection. These goals, objectives, and criteria should inspire and direct the library staff responsible for the collection. They should also define the collection's current scope and its future direction.

Goals and Objectives

- To acquire materials representing a full range of social, political, economic and public policy views to equip citizens in making informed decisions in a changing world
- To provide materials and resources that support an individual's lifelong pursuit of educational, vocational and recreational interests
- To make accessible materials reflecting a broad range of topics, ideas, viewpoints and tastes
- To offer library materials in various formats that reflect the diverse access needs of the populace, incorporating new formats as they develop and removing formats as they become obsolete
- To provide the materials necessary to foster a wide range of literacies from birth through adulthood
- To maintain a collection of World Languages that responds to community interest, usage, and demand
- To uphold the [Library Bill of Rights statement of Diverse Collections](#) in purchasing decisions (see Appendix E)
- To strive for a collection that is balanced, right-sized, thorough and inclusive
- To provide primary and secondary sources through a dedicated archives and special collections, the Cambridge Room, to document the history of Cambridge
- To continually evaluate the collection on its usage, appearance and age to ensure appropriate allocation of the materials budget
- To ensure our collection meets our cooperation agreement with the Minuteman Library Network

Library collections are continually evaluated to meet these goals and objectives.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The Cambridge Public Library defends and protects the First Amendment rights of each of its users by providing access to the widest possible range of materials, which in some cases may include extreme or unpopular points of view. While individuals are free to personally reject materials of which they do not approve, individuals or groups may not restrict or exercise censorship over anyone else's freedom to read or inquire. The Library will also challenge attempts to add to the collection material that does not meet its criteria for inclusion.

The Cambridge Public Library adheres to the principles of the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights," along with ALA's "Freedom to Read" and "Freedom to View" statements and their interpretations. (See Appendices A-E). Freedom to read/view requires all materials be equally accessible to all library users regardless of age, race, sex, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or ideology. Therefore, it is the Library's policy neither to segregate circulating material in closed collections, nor to mark it with cautionary labels. Parents or guardians have the primary responsibility to guide and direct the reading and viewing of their own minor children. The library does not stand *in loco parentis*.

The primary purpose of the Library's collection is to serve its patrons, therefore our collection development welcomes user requests. Borrowers may request that we purchase materials by filling out a "Suggest a Purchase" [online form](#). The Library makes every effort to accommodate these requests when the materials meet the criteria for inclusion in the collection.

Concerns about materials currently in the collection may be expressed by filling out a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form (Appendix G). These forms will be reviewed by Library Administration who will respond in writing to the borrower initiating the request. The borrower may choose to appeal the administrator's decision, first to the Library Director, and then to the Board of Trustees. All forms must be signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

SELECTION OF MATERIALS

Selection is the process by which the library staff decides what material to add to the collection. Selection decisions are made by professional librarians and are overseen by the Collection Services Manager and Youth Services Manager, respectively, with final support from Library Administration.

The Library has a set of criteria to provide guidelines for the staff in the general selection process. Items purchased for special collections may follow unique guidelines.

Cambridge Community Relevance and Demand

- The material meets the informational, educational, and/or recreational needs of the community
- The community has expressed an interest in the specific work or its creator
- The community has expressed a desire for materials on the subject matter
- The item concerns Cambridge history or is connected to local Cambridge interests

Authority and Reputation

- The work is produced professionally by a reputable publisher who has produced respected works on this topic or in this genre
 - Self-published books may be acquired when they include unique local content or meet the selection criteria for collection development.
- The creator of the work is recognized as an expert on the material's subject matter
- The creator of the work is recognized as a skilled artist in the genre of the work
- The work is receiving critical attention from professional library review sources or national media (Appendix F)
- The work or its creator have been recognized with awards, prizes, or commendations by recognized professional organizations

Format and Media

- The format is practical and suitable for library use or circulation
- Digital work is available in a format compatible with the digital platforms the library offers

Timeliness

- The work concerns topics of current interest to the community
- The item is currently available and well stocked with one of our contracted vendors
- The item may be obtained through city purchasing and procurement guidelines
- The information within the material is timely and up to date

Cost

- The quality and relevance of the work to the Cambridge community is sufficient to warrant its cost
- The anticipated longevity and accessibility of the work is reflected in its price

Collection Balance

- The material supports the existing collection's strengths or fills an identified gap
- The work provides information which is not already well covered by the current collection
- The work expresses a viewpoint not already well represented by the collection
- The material helps balance the current variety of formats, languages, and reading levels in the collection
- The scope of the work is appropriate to the mission of public libraries

Multiple Copies

- The quantity of the item purchased matches the current and anticipated future demand
- Copies of the work are purchased for different library locations or departments as appropriate based on anticipated demand and relevance
- Additional copies of items may be purchased if the item has a specific or lasting significance to the Cambridge community

Non-traditional Library Materials

- The item(s) purchased support one of the libraries established initiatives, like the Cambridge STEAM initiative
- Items purchased for circulating technology seek to support the objective of extending technology beyond the library walls
- Non-traditional library materials will be vetted for library standards, safety, circulating procedures, cost, and their relation to the Cambridge Public Library mission and values

YOUTH MATERIALS

The youth services department of the Cambridge Public Library maintains collections for children (ages 0-13) and for teens (ages 12-18) in Cambridge. There is some deliberate overlap in collection scope for ages 12-13, to provide greater flexibility and support for the transition from childhood into adolescence.

These collections include print, video and audio in both physical and digital formats. The department attempts to purchase materials in formats that are compatible with heavy use and that employ equipment that is widely available. This practice necessitates the continual replacement of standard titles.

A non-circulating juvenile reference collection is maintained in the Main Library Children's Room. This collection includes a separate professional reference collection for the use of parents, teachers, librarians and students of children's literature.

Recognizing the extremely broad developmental range of children and teens served, the youth services staff makes a special effort to include in the collection materials for children of every reading ability and comprehension level. The department also maintains collections of materials for parents and teachers that focus on parenting, child development and education. To facilitate cooperation with school library media specialists, the youth services staff maintains a collection that provides supplementary material for school assignments. However, textbooks and multiple copies of assigned reading are generally not purchased.

Both the main and branch libraries maintain distinct teen collections, designed to meet the recreational and informational needs of adolescents ages 12-18. Since adolescents use both the adult and children's collections, the teen collections focus on books and periodicals of particular immediacy and unique interest to adolescents.

The criteria used in the selection process for materials in the youth services department are fundamentally identical to those used for adult materials. Youth selectors intentionally develop collections that provide youth with materials that mirror the aspects of their own identities as well as materials that expand their understanding of others. Final selection is based on favorable reviews in professional journals, inclusion in professional bibliographies, and examination by youth service's librarians.

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility to guide their own minor children's use of the library's collection. The Cambridge Public Library does not stand *in loco parentis* (that is, in place of a parent, or charged with a parent's rights, duties, and responsibilities). Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library materials should so advise their own children.

ADULT MATERIALS

The Cambridge Public Library is committed to the entertainment, reference, and research needs of the community. From best-sellers to debut authors to audiovisual items to e-content, the Library strives to provide a broad range of materials in a variety of formats for the public to enjoy. Every effort is made to anticipate demand, provide materials on the day of release, and review wait lists and purchase additional copies.

Reference Print Collection

The Library maintains a non-circulating print reference collection that covers a wide range of subject areas. This collection is intended to support both brief factual questions and more detailed research. Selection of reference titles is curated by the Adult Services Staff Librarian and every effort is made to keep this collection updated with the most recent editions. Examples of the print reference collection materials include dictionaries, directories, handbooks, atlases, as well as specialized materials of local interest that directly support the information needs of patrons. Branch libraries do not maintain a print reference collection.

Online Resources

The Library curates a selection of online resources, including research databases, to assist with research and recreational pursuits. Databases are vetted yearly by staff librarians and are continually evaluated based on their usage, cost, relevancy to the mission of public libraries and demand.

The Library recognizes the continued and growing interest in e-resources such as e-books, e-audiobooks, streaming music, movies and television shows. The Library remains committed to leveraging available budgets to maximize access to these services, be it through decreasing wait times, increasing available content within a platform, and/or the addition of new products.

In addition to those databases curated by the Cambridge Public Library, additional database support is provided via the Minuteman Library Network (MLN), the Massachusetts Library Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS).

Periodicals

An extensive and wide-ranging periodicals collection serves as a major resource for providing up-to-date information for our patrons. In addition to print newspapers and magazines, several periodicals are available in digital formats for enhanced patron access. Several magazine subscriptions are available in languages other than English. Magazines and newspapers are reviewed annually at which time decisions are made to renew or discontinue. In some cases, magazines may become defunct and unavailable during the duration of the Library's subscription.

Scope

In keeping with the scope of public library collections, the Cambridge Public Library does not collect textbooks, archival materials or items considered more appropriate for educational or academic

institutions. Additionally, limited retrospective purchasing is conducted, with purchasing focused on forthcoming items or items published within the past twelve months. The Library is happy to assist in meeting the information needs of our patrons seeking out more specific items outside the Library's scope by using the resources of other libraries and agencies. (See "Cooperation with Other Libraries and Agencies.")

Cambridge Room

The Cambridge Room, which houses the Cambridge Public Library's Archives and Special Collections, is charged with evaluating, collecting, organizing, describing, and preserving records that document the history of Cambridge. Given the scope and mission of the archival collection, the Cambridge Room retains a separate policy which includes collection development parameters unique to this collection. Please refer to this policy for further information.

Special Collections

In addition to special collections that are housed in the Cambridge Room, the Cambridge Public Library maintains several collections that are specialized, not readily available elsewhere, and/or of interest to our community. An example of such collections is the Manuel Rogers, Sr. Center for Portuguese Culture and Studies at the Valente Branch Library.

Special collections are established and maintained by Library Administration based on space, funding, local interest, and other criteria. Items from special collections may be deselected at the discretion of library staff. The Library reserves the right to deaccession a special collection in its entirety as deemed appropriate. The Cambridge Public Library does not house private collections.

World language collections exist at the Main Library and several branch libraries. Collections include both youth and adult items and aim to satisfy the diverse needs of our community. Each language included in the collection requires annual dedicated resources including funding, maintenance, cataloging and selection. Additions of new languages should consider community interest, usage, demand, and other factors from the collection development criteria.

Literacy collections exist at the Main Library and several branch locations to help serve patrons to whom English is a second or other language (ESOL). Materials include instruction in English, test preparation, audio-visual items and digital resources. The largest collection of literacy materials is maintained at the Central Square Branch in the Literacy Center.

Large Print collections exist at the Main Library and several branch locations to assist patrons with low vision. Additional large print items are available through network lending.

STEAM Kits and circulating technology are available at all library locations.

Every available effort will be made to assist patrons with disabilities in obtaining the library resources they seek.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

The Library has the responsibility of maintaining the collection by means of replacing and withdrawing items. The library staff periodically reviews the existing collection to assure its quality and continuing usefulness to library patrons. Titles are regularly checked for condition. A few factors go into replacement consideration, including availability of other copies, availability of new editions, and popularity/performance of the title. Information on replacement and withdrawal criteria is detailed below.

Damaged or lost items which still meet selection criteria are replaced. Items may be replaced by a newer edition or by a more recent title on the same subject as appropriate. In general, little repair is done to library materials as it is more cost-effective to obtain replacements. Every effort is made to ensure that audio-visual items are kept in working order, including disc cleaning and case replacements. Replacement parts and pieces may be available for some items to ensure set completion.

Security measures are taken to prevent item theft. The Library assumes no liability for any damage caused by the use or misuse of any library materials.

Deselecting Library Items

The library collection is kept viable by the regular removal of outdated, unused, and low circulating items, as well as items in poor condition. The deselection process presents the library staff with an opportunity to evaluate the quality of the section being removed. Staff identify strengths and determine how to correct weaknesses. The Library often utilizes the [CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries](#) for guidance on deselection practices.

On a regular basis, staff withdraw unnecessary duplicates and review circulation data to identify popular subject areas and subject areas that are underutilized. The staff also inspect materials for replacement or withdrawal. Multiple copies of popular items are purchased when the title is initially released. After a period of time, as popularity wanes, copies are withdrawn from the collection to maintain shelf space. Generally, Express copies are targeted first for removal.

The knowledge gained through this process helps library staff make more informed selections and uses the library's finite resources in the most effective way.

Criteria for withdrawal will vary at each library location. Branch libraries are largely responsible for providing a popular material collection for their patronage and therefore their collections will experience more turnover. The Main Library purchases and maintains the broadest and most in-depth collection in the system, providing support for branch collections.

Every effort is made to ensure that a wide range of subject areas are covered by the Library collection. Except for The Cambridge Room, the Library is not a repository for historic or local collections.

Additionally, shelving capacity must be maintained to ensure that collections remain accessible, attractive, and easy to browse. Withdrawing items on a regular basis ensures that library shelves are not overcrowded, difficult to navigate or unsafe.

Schedule for Deselection

The Cambridge Public Library withdraws items on a constant and continual basis in order to maintain collections.

Every effort is made to review the entirety of the library collection at least once a year.

Deselection Criteria

- Age/relevancy of the item
- Accuracy of the item
- Use/circulation of the item
- Availability of the additional copies
- Condition
- Community interest
- Availability of new editions

Withdrawn Items

The City of Cambridge contracts with [More Than Words](#) for the removal of library items from all library locations.

DONATIONS

Cambridge Public Library Donation Policy

Cambridge Public Library accepts very limited donations for the library collection. Hardcover books in excellent condition that are currently on the *Boston Globe* or *New York Times* bestseller lists, and that currently have holds for Cambridge patrons. There is a cost associated in processing all additions to the collection, so we must limit what we accept. We cannot provide receipts, nor can we return any donated item. Unsolicited donations are not accepted.

Donations by Cambridge Authors

The Cambridge Public Library is committed to providing an outstanding collection of materials that reflects the needs and interests of our community. We are fortunate to have so many noted and emerging authors living in our city. Local interest and connections are always taken into consideration when selecting titles for the collection. Cambridge authors wishing to donate a copy of their work to the Library for consideration are welcome to do so. (Please note that the Cambridge Public Library does not accept donations of self-published materials.)

Each book will be evaluated by professional librarians specializing in collection development. If the title is determined to meet the criteria by which potential selections are evaluated, we will be happy to add the title to the collection. If the Library cannot accept your kind offer, we will mail the book back to you with our sincere appreciation.

Procedure: Where possible, the author should be referred to Administration. When this is not possible, staff will provide the author with the [donation form](#) and deliver both the book and form to Administration. The author can expect to receive a response within two weeks.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER LIBRARIES AND AGENCIES

In recognition of the fact that no one library can physically or economically house all materials requested by its patrons, the Library seeks to augment its collection through cooperative lending services with other libraries. These include the following:

Boston Public Library: Boston Public Library provides a wealth of materials and services to the residents of Massachusetts. [Massachusetts residents](#) are eligible to obtain a library card with Boston and utilize their collections. In addition to their physical locations, residents are eligible for [BPL's eCard Signup](#) which provides access to the rich array of digital resources BPL provides.

Additionally, BPL provides an article request service to libraries across the Commonwealth. Cambridge patrons may request three active article requests at any one time. These can be requested through the Cambridge Public Library website or by calling or visiting your local Cambridge library.

Minuteman Library Network: The [Minuteman Library Network](#) (MLN) provides a library consortium that spans geographically across MetroWest. Cambridge Public Library is a member of the Minuteman Library Network. With membership, Cambridge patrons have access to the resources of 41 library collections (over six million items) via in person visits or via the holds/reserve system, which provides delivery of library items to any MLN location. Items borrowed from any MLN location can be returned to any MLN location.

Additionally, MLN provides access to certain digital content, such as the [Overdrive](#) Collection, via consortium level funding.

Commonwealth Catalog: The [Commonwealth Catalog](#) (ComCat) is a joint initiative funded by the [Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners](#) (MBLC) and [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS). "With access to millions of titles, the Commonwealth Catalog extends your library's reach to all participating libraries throughout Massachusetts, with convenient pick-up at your local library." Patrons may have ten active Commonwealth Catalog requests at any one time. Items must be returned to the library from which the item was obtained. Please note that items will only be obtained via ComCat if they are not available via the Minuteman Library Network.

Massachusetts Library System: The [Massachusetts Library System](#) (MLS) provides access to several databases funded at the state library for resident use.

Additionally, MLS provides mediated [Interlibrary Loan Services](#) (ILL) for library patrons. Library items can be sought from public and academic libraries across the country based on the library's ILL lending practices. Cambridge patrons may have one active interlibrary loan request at a time. Every effort is made to obtain interlibrary loan items, but loans cannot be guaranteed. Requests can be made via the Cambridge Public Library website or via the Adult Services Department. Please note that items will only be obtained via interlibrary loan if they are not available via the Minuteman Library Network or the Commonwealth Catalog.

Public Libraries: Massachusetts residents may be eligible for borrowing privileges at public libraries across the Commonwealth. Each library maintains its own eligibility requirements for library card sign up. Please check the individual library’s website for their requirements.

Cambridge Historical Commission: The [Cambridge Historical Commission](#) provides a wealth of historic information regarding the City of Cambridge. They maintain an [online catalog](#) of research materials and aids.

Middlesex County Law Library: The [Law Library](#) is “open to everyone” and offers a chat and text feature to speak with a Law Librarian. The library provides help with legal research, lending of books and materials, and offers access to online databases such as Westlaw and Lexis.

Approved by the Cambridge Public Library Board of Trustees on March 2, 2021

APPENDIX A: 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, age, 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.

APPENDIX B: 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.*
2. 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.
3. *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.*
4. 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.
5. *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.*
6. 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.
7. *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.*
8. 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.
9. *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.*

10. 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.
11. *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.*
12. 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.
13. *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.*
14. 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 C: 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.

APPENDIX D: ACCESS TO LIBRARY RESOURCES & SERVICES FOR MINORS

The American Library Association supports equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users is in violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This includes minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library card application or permission slip. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness should be able to obtain a library card regardless of library policies related to chronological age.

School and public libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and resources to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and should be determined on an individual basis. Equitable access to all library resources and services should not be abridged based on chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, legal status, or through restrictive scheduling and use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. A library's failure to acquire materials on the grounds that minors may be able to access those materials diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats.¹ Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.² Libraries and their library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." This includes students and minors, who have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use.³

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services."⁴ Libraries and their governing

bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor's access to materials.⁵

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

¹ *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant's Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011).

² *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): "Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors." See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

³ "[Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted June 19, 2002, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 2014; and June 24, 2019.

⁴ "[Libraries: An American Value](#)," adopted on February 3, 1999, by ALA Council.

⁵ "[Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name* "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

APPENDIX E: DIVERSE COLLECTIONS

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “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.” A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library’s selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all of the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.¹

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection’s diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user’s right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator’s viewpoint

or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.²

¹ [“Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*,”](#) adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title "Services to Persons with Disabilities"; amended June 26, 2018.

²*ALA Code of Ethics*, Article VII, adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name* "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 25, 2019.

APPENDIX F

Included is a list of oft consulted professional review sources. This list is not exhaustive or comprehensive.

<i>Library Journal</i>	<i>School Library Journal</i>	<i>Publishers Weekly</i>	<i>Kirkus</i>
<i>Video Librarian</i>	<i>New York Times Book Review</i>	<i>The Horn Book Magazine</i>	<i>Booklist</i>
<i>EBSCO Core Collection</i>	<i>The Bulletin of the Center For Children's Books</i>	<i>VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)</i>	



CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY **Materials Reconsideration Request Form**

Cambridge residents may request the review of an item in the library's collection. Please provide your contact information below for a timely response. We do not accept anonymous forms. The Cambridge Public Library Collection Development Policy is available on our website.

Completed forms should be sent to Library Administration, Main Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138. Items will remain in the collection during the reconsideration process.

Date:

Your Name:

Cambridge Resident Library Card Number:

Address:

Phone/Email (preferred contact method):

Organization You Represent (optional):

Material for Reconsideration

Title:

Author:

Format of the item (print, audio-visual, ebook, etc):

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work or a portion of the work?

Please describe your concerns regarding this material:

What specific pages/sections/scenes illustrate your concern:

What brought this resource to your attention?

What specific actions are you suggesting the library take?