

## COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

*The Leonia Public Library is a unique gateway to knowledge and information for the entire community. It is a crucial educational, recreational, cultural, and archival center. It furnishes access to the world of books, periodicals, audio-visual materials and electronic resources through its own collections and through cooperative regional enterprises and use of emerging technologies. The ongoing mission of the Library is to maintain, develop, and enhance these services to the community.*

- *Leonía Public Library Mission Statement*

The Leonia Public Library's collection development policy aims to support our mission of servicing our community. In this pursuit, the Library will acquire, make available, and encourage the use of resources within our diverse community. Our collections will assist individuals in pursuing educational and recreational objectives, stimulate intellectual and emotional growth, and embrace the ever-changing needs of our patrons.

The library will acquire:

- Source materials and thoughtful interpretations that document and illuminate the past.
- Contemporary materials representing varying points of view, of current interest, and possible future significance, including materials that reflect trends, issues, and controversies.
- Materials designed to increase an individual's ability to function effectively as a productive member of society.
- Materials that stimulate the imagination and increase the individual's potential for creativity.
- Materials that extend an individual's capacity to understand the world in which they live.
- Materials that entertain and enhance an individual's enjoyment of life.

Free and convenient access to ideas, information, and the creative experience is of vital importance to all. The Leonia Public Library, therefore, incorporates as part of this policy the *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read Statement* of the American Library Association (ALA).

The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials is delegated to the Library Director by the Board of Trustees and, under their direction, the staff qualified for this activity by education, training, and experience.

### **Criteria for Selection:**

Materials considered for inclusion in the Leonia Public Library's collections are evaluated as a whole. Material will not be excluded from the library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression or partisan viewpoint.

While a single standard cannot be applied to each potential item for selection, materials are judged by appropriate criteria. These criteria generally include the needs and interests of the community. This policy's selection criteria apply to purchased and donated materials.

The selection and de-selection of all materials shall be made to develop and maintain a well-rounded collection that meets the needs and interests of the Leonia community.

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The ready availability of the more than seventy member library collections within the Bergen County Cooperative Library System will also be considered.

New materials will be selected in a variety of formats. At times authoritative reviews will be consulted, such as *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *VOYA*, and *The New York Times Book Review*. Staff will evaluate and replace retrospective materials of current use as needed by consulting professional collection development tools provided by BCCLS, NJLA, and ALA.. Patron requests shall be given due consideration for purchase. No attempt shall be made to provide textbooks, but those that can be used for general informational purposes and materials supporting school curricula may be acquired, providing that they meet the standards of this selection policy.

In support of Resolution 2021-04-01, the Leonia Public Library recognizes regardless of differences in race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, place of origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, marital status, family status, age, physical abilities, mental abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies; we are all members of the same community. The Library asserts justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are core values of the Leonia Public Library and the community it serves. The Library asserts its responsibility to continue supporting the creation of a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive society; it affirms the most powerful antidote to ignorance, intolerance, and non-acceptance is education. In light of this, the Leonia Public Library commits to maintaining a diversified collection of materials representing marginalized viewpoints and authors. As of 2022,  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{3}$  of materials purchased will reflect these ideals.

### **Funding and Allocations:**

Staff will select materials that make the best use of available financial resources. The primary source of revenue for the purchase of library materials is provided by the city tax revenue of the Borough of Leonia. The collection will sometimes be supplemented by donations or State Aid funds.

Each year the budget for Collection Development is thoroughly reviewed by the Director and the Library Board of Trustees. The increased or decreased interest in certain collections (i.e., digital content) is taken into consideration, supported by circulation statistics and patron feedback. Allocations of funds for each collection are determined accordingly.

### **Gifts and Donations:**

The Library collection has been greatly enriched by financial donations to purchase selected books and other materials. When requested, a bookplate will be placed in the materials to recognize the sponsor.

Donations of used books, DVD, and compact discs will be accepted only if materials are in excellent condition and meet the library's standards for selecting new materials. A librarian shall determine their suitability to the collection. Materials that are not added to the collection may be placed in the ongoing book sale or may be discarded.

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### Collection Assessment and Evaluation:

Weeding is a term describing the removal of library materials that contain outdated/incorrect information, are no longer of interest (i.e. have not circulated for a period of time), or are in very poor condition. Weeding is a regular, ongoing process to keep all collections current, useful, and within the confines of the library's physical space. Withdrawn materials in good condition are added to the Library's book sale offerings. Books in poor condition that are withdrawn will be recycled or discarded as appropriate.

Responsibility for collection maintenance and for the disposition of withdrawn materials rests with the Library Director and staff. Collections will be weeded on an annual basis at minimum, on a schedule to be determined by the staff presiding over the collection in question.

### Reconsideration of Library Materials:

A complaint concerning the content of library materials by Leonia residents may be given formal recognition using a Leonia Public Library Comment on Library Materials form (see below), filled out and signed by the complainant. The Library Director and at least one additional staff member shall then be asked to review the material in question and discuss it from the standpoint of the criticism made. When the material has been reviewed, the Library Director will respond to the complainant in writing with the reasons behind the action being taken.

The complainant may request a further review by the Library Board of Trustees. Upon receiving the request in writing, the Board may choose to handle the matter as a body or refer the concern to a sub-committee for a recommendation. Once the Board has decided, the complainant will be informed in writing.

### Access to Materials:

Libraries are major sources of information for society and serve as guardians of the public's access to information. It is an ALA core value that: *"All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users."*

In accordance with this, the Leonia Public Library will provide access to materials, without prejudice, to every member of our community. At our disposal are physical and electronic materials and access to the collections of the 76+ other libraries in our BCCLS Consortium. Leonia Public Library staff will assist any who enters our building to access recorded knowledge and information, upholding the core value of equity of access as it goes hand in hand with democracy and freedom.

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*Leonia Public Library - Comment on Library Materials*

Requests for reconsideration may be made only by Leonia Residents. Please return the completed form to the Library Director, 227 Fort Lee Road, Leonia, New Jersey 07605.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Resource on which you are commenting:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author/Producer: \_\_\_\_\_

Book     DVD     Magazine/Newspaper     Audio Recording     Display  
 Library Program     Electronic information (please specify)     Other \_\_\_\_\_

What brought this resource to your attention?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you examined the entire resource?  Yes     No

What concerns you about the resource? (Use other side or additional pages if necessary)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### *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.

Adopted June 19, 1939.

Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980;  
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

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### *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

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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.***

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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



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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