

# Materials Collection Policy

## [Acquisitions: Tools & Processes.](#)

a presentation for the

## [Texas Library Association Annual Conference.](#)

Books are for use.

Every reader his book.

Every book its reader.

Save the time of the reader.

The library is a growing organism.

–S. R. Ranganathan, Library Book Selection, 1952

These words describing a philosophy of collection development resonate as loudly today as they did over 50 years ago. They describe a library service philosophy that places the customer in the heart of a vital, dynamic place of enlightenment, discovery, and entertainment.

As the Fort Worth Library moved into its second century of service, it undertook a planning process that involved citizens and staff in setting its service direction for the near future. This Long Range Services Plan ensures that the Library's customers are at the center of Library services and collections. The Plan shapes the nature, scope, and depth of the Library's Central, Regional, Branch, and Satellite Library collections.

## **Mission of the Fort Worth Library**

The Fort Worth Library welcomes and supports all people in their enjoyment of reading and recreational materials, and their pursuit of learning and information.

## **The Community We Serve**

The Fort Worth Library serves a community of over 598,000 residents. Since 1990, the city's population has increased at an annual rate of 1.8 %. Population is expected to increase at an annual rate of 1.5%. The fastest growing segment of the community is people of Hispanic origin. With a population of almost 160,000, this segment comprises 30% of the city's population—an increase of 83% from 1990. Approximately 13% of this group "speaks English less than very well." More than half of the Fort Worth libraries serve areas where over 20% of the households are below the poverty level, including the four branches serving a predominantly Hispanic clientele. The City's senior population is expected to hold steady at 9% of the total for the next few years, but then begin increasing rapidly as baby-boomers reach retirement age. Children under age 18 make up 29% of the City's population.

The City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan describes Fort Worth as "[once dependent on] agriculture, oil, and defense but now developing into a major center for industry, technology, distribution, and transportation." Fort Worthians are proud of their city's western heritage, cultural diversity, and cultural offerings. Promoting a mix of "cowboys and culture," the city is home to a variety of activities and destinations for every age and taste. Among these are the Fort Worth Herd, the Stockyard National Historical District, the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, the Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame, the National Cowboys of Color Museum and Hall of Fame, Billy Bob's Texas, the Cliburn Competition, Bass Performance Hall, Casa Mañana, the Japanese Garden, the Kimbell Art Museum, and the recently-opened Modern Art Museum.

## **Definition of "Collection"**

By “collection,” we mean any of the materials or resources provided by or accessed through the Library, including books, media, electronic databases, and Internet websites.

## **Purpose of the Collection Policy**

Since the library cannot acquire or retain all print and non-print materials, it must establish guidelines that describe what it provides and why. This policy presents the guidelines followed by the Fort Worth Library, and explains the principles and criteria staff use to add materials to or withdraw them from the collection. It establishes limits and priorities on collection parameters and assists in budgeting decisions. The policy informs citizens how they can make recommendations about the collection, educates staff and citizens about challenges to items in the collection, and provides guidelines for accepting, declining, evaluating, and acknowledging gifts.

The goal of this policy is to express the Library’s commitment to:

- Provide materials that meet the needs and interests of all the residents of Fort Worth.
- Support the principle of free and equal access to materials and information in a non-judgmental environment

## **Responsibility For Collection Management**

Ultimate responsibility for management of the collection with the Library Director, who delegates responsibility to the Collection Management Administrator and other Library staff.

## **Frequency of Review of this Policy**

This Collection Policy will be updated as needed and reviewed completely every three years.

## **Library Service Priorities**

The Public Library Association’s New Planning for Results defines various service priorities that guide the operations of most public libraries. During the Library’s planning process, a Community Planning Advisory Committee reviewed the results of user and non-user surveys, focus groups, and community meetings. It analyzed the city’s demographics and participated in SWOT and visioning exercises themselves. This community group determined that the Fort Worth Library’s service priorities should be, in order of importance:

- 1.1 Current Topics and Titles
- 1.2 Lifelong Learning
- 1.3 Information Literacy
- 1.4 Local History and Genealogy
- 1.5 Cultural Awareness
- 1.6 General Information

As a library whose primary service priorities are Current Topics and Titles, Lifelong Learning, and Information Literacy, the Fort Worth Library does not collect materials for the sake of collecting. Materials are expected to meet the needs and interests of customers as life is lived now—not as it was in the past. The collection is never an end in itself, but rather a means of enabling residents to:

- Enrich their personal lives
- Educate themselves in areas of personal interest
- Develop informed opinions about issues of the day
- Gather, use, and evaluate information successfully

- Gain an appreciation and understanding of other people, cultures, and viewpoints

Consequently, the Library provides a wide variety of materials at different levels and in various formats for people of every age, education, background, personal philosophy, religious belief, occupation, economic level, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and condition. The Library makes no judgments about what a person finds relevant, helpful, or enjoyable.

## **Library Roles**

Each Library unit addresses the Library's service priorities in different ways, based on its size and service area population. Unit roles in meeting these service priorities are described more fully in their individual unit collection plans.

### **Central Library**

1. The Central Library, acting as a downtown branch, is a destination for browsing and checking out popular, up-to-date materials in all formats for all ages. Most new materials are heavily merchandised.
2. The Central Library is a destination for special children's and adults' programming events and exhibits. Central's collections support these programs and services.
3. Central provides the broadest selection of up-to-date information resources that support lifelong learning activities. These resources support the current interests of Central's own customers, as well as providing a broader selection for customers throughout the library system. It is expected that all materials will be used regularly. The emphasis is on providing materials that can be checked out.
4. The Central Library provides Internet access to its customers. Staff provide formal and informal instruction in using the Internet and other information resources effectively.
5. As Fort Worth's "Information Central," the Central Library has primary responsibility for handling the public's general informational queries via telephone, e-mail, faxes, and virtual reference services.
6. The Central Library develops and promotes the special collections housed in the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit.
7. The role of the Library's federal documents collection will be evaluated during the next 1 to 2 years.

### **Regional Libraries**

1. Regional libraries provide a broad selection of up-to-date, popular circulating materials in all formats for all age levels. Collections are heavily merchandised to make it easier for customers to browse and locate materials.
2. Regional libraries provide a broad selection of up-to-date information resources that support the current lifelong learning interests of their own customers and that serve as back-up for branches. It is expected that all materials will be used regularly. The emphasis will be on providing materials that can be checked out.
3. Regional libraries provide Internet access to their customers. Staff provide formal and informal instruction in using the Internet and other information resources effectively.
4. Regional libraries provide a wide variety of programming and services for children and adults. Regional libraries' collections support these programs and services.

### **Branch Libraries**

1. Branch libraries provide up-to-date collections of interest to their immediate community. Collections are heavily merchandised to make it easier for customers to browse and locate materials.
2. Branches provide Internet access, and staff provide informal instruction in using the Internet and other information resources effectively.

3. Branch programs and services reflect the neighborhood’s interests. Branch collections support these programs and services.

**Satellite Libraries**

1. Satellite libraries provide up-to-date collections and programs of interest to the communities they serve.

**Collection Policy Statement 1: The Fort Worth Library provides materials that support the Library service priorities identified by the residents of Fort Worth.**

**Definitions: Collection Levels**

**Basic collection level:** Provides general, introductory, or overview treatments of a subject. Materials are written or developed for a general audience in a variety of formats. Vocabulary, concepts, detail, and required skills are appropriate for the lay person, amateur, or novice. Materials have a broad popular appeal and are designed to meet the needs of independent learners rather than students enrolled in formal classes on the subject. Basic Level collections provide a few titles that cover a broad subject area. The emphasis is on up-to-date titles, but collections may include older standard works in specific fields, so long as they are within the established weeding/age guidelines for their subject areas.

**Instructional collection level:** Include a wider selection of titles and cover more specific topics within general subject areas. Instructional Level materials enable the independent learner to pursue the area of interest beyond the general, introductory stages. They are accessible to a skilled or informed lay person or an avid hobbyist. Instructional Level collections provide a broader selection of works by important writers and recommended titles in the specific areas of interest, including reference materials and periodicals.

**Current Topics and Titles Collections:** Circulating materials for all age levels that satisfy people’s desire for information about popular culture and current events, and for satisfying recreational experiences.

**Lifelong Learning Collections:** Materials that will help people to get ahead, do better at their work, learn something new, solve a problem, complete a special project, or deal with life changes. Materials may support self-directed study for personal growth and improvement, may help users learn about topics of personal interest, or may encourage and satisfy a love of reading and learning, independent of any formal educational provider.

**Regulations:**

1.1 The Library allocates its materials budget according to service priority; the highest priority receives the highest allocation, the next service priority receives the next highest allocation, and so on.

1.2 The Library employs a variety of merchandising techniques to help make Current Topics and Titles and Lifelong Learning materials accessible, attractive, and easy to find.

1.2a The Library strategically positions new and other high-use materials so customers encounter them immediately upon entering the building.

1.2b The Library provides as much purpose-built display shelving, fixtures, and equipment as the budget allows.

1.2c Units create displays of new and other materials. They keep displays fully stocked at all times. They change displays at least once a month, and more often if customers do not seem interested in the displayed materials.

1.2d Materials in the stacks are shelved at appropriate heights for the collection’s customers, preferably no higher than 60 inches for adult collections and 30 - 50 inches for children’s collections.

1.2e Materials are displayed face-out wherever possible.

1.2f Helpful signage, “shelf-talkers,” “suggested reading” lists, and other promotional materials augment displays and

stack shelving to help customers find and select materials.

1.3 In support of its top service priority, Current Topics and Titles, the Library provides circulating materials for all age levels that satisfy people's desire for information about popular culture and current events, and for satisfying recreational experiences.

1.3a Current Topics and Titles materials include both new high demand/high-interest titles and older perennial favorites in all formats. These materials satisfy customers' desire for recreational fiction, nonfiction, and audiovisual media, and support customers' desire to be informed about people, ideas, events, and trends in today's world.

1.3b All units, regardless of size, provide Current Topics and Titles materials that are suitable for their communities.

1.3c Since popular/high-interest materials should be available to more than one person at a time, the Library provides multiple copies of these materials in each unit in order to meet user demand within a reasonable time period.

1.3d The Library attempts to maintain a 3:1 holds-to-copy ratio on popular materials.

1.3e The Library identifies and orders new titles in this category "pre-publication" so that they are available to customers on or near publication date.

1.3f Current Topics and Titles materials reflect the diverse needs, interests, and languages of community.

1.3g Current Topics and Titles materials are written at levels accessible to the general public.

1.3h Current Topics and Titles materials are provided in popular formats as described in Collection Policy Statement 4.

1.3i There is no expectation of having every recommended title, or materials on every possible subject. The Library does not add or retain Current Topics and Titles materials in order to fill a gap in the collection where there has been no demonstrated demand, or because someone may ask for them some day.

1.3j The Library removes duplicate copies from the collection when interest wanes.

1.3k The Library removes dated or inaccurate materials that cover topics of continuing interest and replaces them with updated ones.

1.3l The Library repairs or replaces worn, unattractive copies if ongoing demand warrants.

1.3m Current Topics and Titles materials are expected to meet the use guidelines outlined elsewhere in this document.

1.4 In support of its second service priority, Lifelong Learning, the Library provides informational materials that support customers' informal learning efforts.

1.4a The Library provides Lifelong Learning titles on subjects of demonstrated interest to the community.

1.4b All units support the Lifelong Learning service priority at the Basic Collection Level. Satellites and smaller branches provide materials to support most lifelong learning interests at the Basic Level. Materials in selected areas may move to the Instructional Level if community interest warrants and resources permit. Many of the Lifelong Learning collections at larger branches, regional libraries, and Central will also be at the Basic Level. Larger branches, regional libraries, and Central may also support Lifelong Learning with Instructional Level collections in specific identified topics or subject areas of high interest.

1.4c The Library attempts to provide "standards titles" in various Lifelong Learning fields as warranted in individual units.

1.4d The Library does not attempt to build collections in all subject areas in all units. Rather, it analyzes collection use and filled and unfilled subject/title requests in order to focus resources in those areas of interest to specific communities.

1.4e There is no expectation of having every recommended title, or materials on every possible subject. Materials are not added or retained to fill a gap in the collection where there has been no demonstrated demand, or because someone may ask for them some day.

- 1.4f Lifelong Learning materials reflect the diverse needs, interests, and languages of community.
- 1.4g The Library provides Lifelong Learning materials in popular formats as described in Collection Policy Statement 4.
- 1.4h The Library acquires multiple copies of Lifelong Learning titles for the system. Placement and quantities in the various units are guided by demand and unit size.
- 1.4i As the Library's collection is intended for general audiences, the Library provides special professional-level materials only inasmuch as they would be appropriate for use by the general public.
- 1.4j Lifelong Learning collections are continually evaluated, and changed as community interests change.
- 1.4k Although specific high-interest areas may be expanded, there is usually minimal collection growth in most areas. The Library replaces dated materials with new ones if interest in the subject continues over time.
- 1.4l The Library does not add Lifelong Learning titles/copies unless it anticipates that they will meet the annual use standards for that part of the collection.
- 1.4m The Library removes duplicate copies from the collection when interest wanes.
- 1.4n The Library removes dated or inaccurate materials that cover topics of continuing interest and replaces them with updated titles. The Library usually removes superseded editions.
- 1.4o The Library repairs worn and unattractive copies if that is cost effective, or removes them and replaces them with new copies.
- 1.4p Lifelong Learning materials are expected to meet the use guidelines outlined elsewhere in this document.
- 1.5 The Library provides limited materials that supplement curriculum studies through grade 12.

**Discussion:** Although Formal Education Support is not one of the Library's service priorities, it recognizes that school children use its resources to complete reading and other homework assignments. Consequently, one of the Library's service goals is to provide the information children and young adults need to supplement and enrich their formal education.

- 1.5a The Library provides general-interest materials that will help public, private, and home-schooled children complete their assignments, including those classic titles that are perennial assignments.
- 1.5b The Library does not purchase such materials in quantities that would meet the demands of all students enrolled in public, private, or home schools.
- 1.5c The Library does not attempt to purchase all titles on school reading lists, or curriculum guides, textbooks, or other materials that support the formal education efforts of public, private, and home schools.
- 1.5d The Library does not purchase materials specifically to meet the needs of college students.
- 1.6 In support of its third service priority, Information Literacy, the Library provides services and materials that help people find, evaluate, and use information effectively.
- 1.6a The Library provides in-house and remote access to selected online resources
- 1.6b The Library provides links to recommended external web sites from the Library's home page.
- 1.7 In support of the Library's fourth service priority, Local History and Genealogy, the Library provides materials and information about Fort Worth and Texas history, as well as materials that support genealogical research.

**Discussion:** Regional, branch, and satellite libraries provide local history and genealogy materials that are suitable for in-house use and check-out by the general public.

The Central Library's Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit collects and preserves materials pertaining to the

history of Fort Worth and to American family research. The unit makes every attempt to obtain materials that reflect Fort Worth's diverse community. Materials in this collection do not circulate.

The Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit's collection is preserved as long as possible using whatever means are reasonable and available—minor in-house repairs, encapsulation and boxing, rebinding, microfilming, and digitization.

## Local History

1.7a The Library's Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit purchases or solicits from the author/publisher at least one copy of any title pertaining to the history of Fort Worth, its organizations, and citizens that will be useful for research.

1.7b The Unit does not attempt to acquire every title of every local author, although the Library does preserve some donated autographed first editions.

1.7c The Unit also seeks to acquire, retrospectively, out-of-print older items of local interest such as school yearbooks, dissertations, corporate histories, and other similar publications of limited distribution.

1.7d The Unit obtains and preserves copies of significant City of Fort Worth publications such as annual reports, budgets, planning documents, and similar items that provide local information that is not obtainable elsewhere. To a lesser extent, it acquires similar publications from Tarrant County and lesser governing bodies in the vicinity of Fort Worth.

1.7e The Unit develops and maintains a primary research collection for individuals interested in the history of Fort Worth.

- It serves as the depository for historically significant City of Fort Worth records in accordance with the City Code Section 2-280.
- It seeks donations from local organizations and individuals of records, photographs, maps, manuscripts, and personal papers that provide information of lasting historical value to researchers.

1.7f The Unit does not preserve artifacts or other materials that are more appropriate to a museum environment, archival collections that are not pertinent to the local community, or duplicates of materials that are preserved in another archival facility.

1.7g Branches and regional libraries provide books, flyers, and other information specifically related to the neighborhoods they serve. These materials may be restricted to in-house use only.

## Genealogy

1.7h The Library's Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit attempts to develop a genealogy collection suitable for in-depth research. It purchases or licenses books, serials, microfilm/fiche and online databases that contain vital records, census information, cemetery inscriptions, family pedigrees, local and county histories, and other information pertinent to tracing family lines.

1.7i The collection's geographic emphasis is Texas, the South, the Mid-West, and the original thirteen states. The Library also collects some materials on other parts of the United States and also, to a limited extent, on foreign nations.

1.7j The Unit identifies and purchases titles that are appropriate for this collection from small publishers, genealogical/historical societies, and, to some extent, individuals.

1.7k The Unit does not generally purchase individual family histories because it endeavors to expend funds on items that are useful to the largest possible number of researchers. Instead, the Library solicits and accepts donations for this type of publication.

1.8 In support of its fifth service priority, Cultural Awareness, the Library provides materials that meet the language needs and ethnic interests of Fort Worth residents.

**Discussion:** The Library recognizes its responsibility to provide materials that support the city's diverse population, as well as its role in helping Fort Worth citizens develop an understanding and appreciation for the diverse cultures that contribute to our city.

1.8a The Library monitors demographic trends and provides materials that support the language needs and ethnic interests in each neighborhood.

1.8b The Library promotes an appreciation of cultural diversity by placing such materials throughout the entire system.

1.9 In support of its sixth service priority, General Information, the Library provides answers to questions posed by the public.

**Discussion:** More and more, people are turning to the Internet for answers to their questions. Because traditional reference collections are underused in proportion to the amount of money and space devoted to them, they will be de-emphasized in both branches and regional libraries. Central will assume primary responsibility for providing the system's reference services. Branches and regional libraries will maintain only those reference materials that are used regularly, and will supplement these materials by using the Library's subscription databases, the Internet, and the Central library's virtual and telephone reference support.

## **Collection Policy Statement 2: The Library selects and retains a wide variety of up-to-date materials of interest to Fort Worth's diverse community.**

### **Definitions:**

- **Selection:** The process whereby works are chosen for the collection on the basis of their ability to meet some demonstrated or anticipated customer desire for facts, ideas, or creative expression.
- **Firm Order:** One-time order placed by the Library for a specific book or audiovisual item.
- **Standing Order:** Open-ended order placed by the Library with its materials vendors for specific titles that are published annually or more frequently. The vendor ships these titles as they are published. Standing orders are usually renewed every year.

### **Regulations:**

2.1 General Material Selection and Retention Criteria: Library staff may consider any number of criteria when deciding which materials to add to the collection. They use these same criteria when deciding which materials to retain in the collection. Selection and retention decisions about circulating and reference books, media, electronic databases, Internet sites, and emerging formats such as e-books are usually based on one or more of the following General Material Selection and Retention Criteria:

2.1a The material supports the Library's service priorities.

2.1b Circulation or sales demonstrate the popularity of the genre, subject, title, author, or performer.

2.1c Customers request these materials.

2.1d Current events, publicity, or media coverage generate demand for a specific work or for a topic.

2.1e Controversy surrounding the material creates public demand or curiosity.

2.1f The author's, publisher's, producer's, or material's authority or reputation is well known.

2.1g The material presents alternative or minority viewpoints, ideas, issues, and lifestyles, special insight into human and social conditions, or the experience and contributions of diverse populations.

2.1h The material is written or produced at a level, or in a language, that is accessible and appropriate to the community

or the intended audience.

2.1i The material supplements or complements other materials in the collection.

2.1j The material provides a viewpoint not represented adequately in the collection.

2.1k There is a scarcity of materials in a high-interest subject area.

2.1l The material has significant literary or artistic merit. It has won awards, or is included in reputable bibliographies or mediagraphies.

2.1m The cost of the material is warranted by the use it would receive. While there is no established “cap” on the price of materials that are placed in the various units, the Library weighs the cost of expensive materials against their anticipated use. Since the Library’s top service priority is to provide circulating materials, it does not automatically restrict expensive materials to in-house use only.

2.1n The space required for the material is warranted by the use it would receive.

2.1o The material is in a format that is suitable for public library use. There are no elements, pieces, or movable/removable parts that may become separated, destroyed, or unappealing after multiple uses.

2.1p The material is readable, visually appealing, adequately indexed, and/or otherwise easy to use.

2.1q The material is available in an electronic format that allows multi-user licensing, networking, and/or remote access.

2.1r The material is available in a commonly-used format.

2.1s Binding, typesetting, editing, and audio/video quality are professionally done. The Library generally does not provide poorly produced or edited materials unless there is a demonstrated need or demand and nothing else is available.

2.1t The material has the potential for promoting reading.

2.2 The Library identifies titles to purchase through reviews in professional journals and popular magazines, publishers’ announcements, media coverage, advertisements, customer requests, vendor notification services, bibliographies and mediagraphies, trade shows, etc. All Library staff are responsible for helping identify titles that may be useful to the Library’s customers.

2.3 Positive reviews are not required for selection in most areas.

**Discussion:** While a review is helpful in making a selection decision, limiting purchases only to well-reviewed titles would severely limit the Library’s ability to provide materials of interest to the community. Only a small percentage of the titles published each year is reviewed. Works by popular authors often receive poor reviews. Well-reviewed titles on a subject may not support the Library’s service priorities or be appropriate for a general public audience. Buying pre-publication means that reviews are often not available before selection decisions must be made. Given the number of titles published each year, staff are rarely able to read or examine materials prior to making selection decisions.

2.3a Generally, the Library does prefer to have a positive review from any of the standard professional review media or popular press when selecting materials for any age level in the areas of medicine/health, finance, and law.

2.3b A positive review is preferred for expensive reference materials.

2.3c At least one positive review or in-hand examination is preferred for picture books and juvenile fiction by new or little-known writers, as well as for children’s books about science experiments.

2.3d Otherwise, selectors may depend on their knowledge of publishers, authors, performers, media coverage, interest in a subject, and the other Material Selection and Retention Criteria listed above when making selection decisions.

2.4 The Library’s “core collection” consists of those materials that satisfy the most requests most of the time. Because “core” titles will vary from branch to branch, the Library does not establish one list of titles that every agency must have.

2.5 The Library identifies key titles that meet ongoing demand in subject areas and genres, and attempts to keep multiple copies stocked in all units where there is interest. The Library accomplishes this through standing orders or with firm orders as needed for specified titles.

2.6 The Library provides materials in response to customer demand, in anticipation of customer interest, and in a variety of viewpoints on a subject. The Library does not add or retain materials “just in case” someone may find them of interest. It does not attempt to fill every subject gap.

2.7 The Library provides titles that are generally recognized to be “standards,” or the best in the various fields of knowledge, if they are relevant to the community. However:

2.7a Inclusion in standard bibliographies such as Public Library Catalog is not sufficient reason to add a title if it is dated, arcane, written at a level not appropriate for the community, or if it does not meet a demonstrated need or interest in the community.

2.7b Inclusion in standard bibliographies is not sufficient reason to retain a title if its information is dated, or if there is not evidence of steady use over the years.

2.8 Materials whose primary purpose is to relay factual information must be accurate. While the Library always attempts to respond to customer demand, it generally will not purchase materials that, while popular, relay inaccurate information.

2.9 Adult works whose primary purpose is to express the author’s opinion, reflection, analysis, interpretation, or advice are not generally subject to the same accuracy standards to which the Library holds materials whose primary purpose is to relay factual information.

**Discussion:** Authors’ biases usually color their presentation and interpretation of any facts they use to support their positions. The Library believes that adult readers themselves should be able to explore these works and accept or reject the author’s point of view. The Library expects that adults will critically evaluate the wisdom and value of fad diets, revisionist histories, and other theories or advice that are generally considered to be unsound.

2.10 The Library takes special care to ensure that children’s materials are accurate, as children have not yet developed the critical thinking skills necessary to recognize and evaluate an author’s biases.

2.11 The Library retains older materials that remain accurate, and replaces worn copies with fresh ones according to customer demand.

2.12 The Library does not generally retain or add outdated materials or superseded editions. The Library removes dated and superseded materials even if funds are not immediately available to replace them with updated materials. Age-retention guidelines are included in FWPL’s Weeding Guidelines.

2.13 The Library removes irreparably damaged and worn materials from the collection, even if funds are not available to replace them or if the material is out of print.

2.14 The Library strives to meet or exceed the Texas Public Library Standard for Comprehensive Collections’ annual overall collection turnover standard of 2.5. All units contribute to meeting this annual turnover objective through judicious selection, merchandising, and weeding.

2.15 The Library establishes annual use guidelines, included in its Weeding Guidelines, to ensure that the collection remains vital and relevant to the communities it serves. These guidelines also help the Library attain its annual turnover objectives.

2.15a These guidelines apply to both circulating and reference materials.

2.15b The Library establishes annual use guidelines for adult and juvenile items in fiction, Dewey sections, and media. Items in high interest/high demand subjects, genres, and formats have higher annual use standards.

2.15c It is not necessary that every item in an area meet the annual use standard, but the area taken as a whole should meet the standard.

2.15d Individual items that are not used at the recommended frequency should be carefully evaluated for retention.

2.15e While “use” is usually measured by circulation, in-house use is the appropriate measure for reference materials. In-house use is also an important consideration when evaluating circulating materials.

2.15f Materials held in the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit are not subject to minimum use standards.

2.16 Library staff do not select materials for their units merely to satisfy their own interests.

2.17 The Library continually evaluates the collection in order to ensure that it meets customers’ needs and interests.

**Discussion:** The Library employs a number of methods to evaluate the collection. It uses customer surveys, customer and staff recommendations, and standard bibliographic tools to ensure that the Library is providing recommended and requested materials. The Library employs statistical tools such as circulation reports, collection turnover rates, collection age, shelf space allocation, and demographic changes in the community, and adjusts selections accordingly.

2.18 The Library provides a selection of print and non-print materials especially designed for young adults ages 15 - 17.

**Discussion:** People this age often continue to use the children’s collection; many also begin using adult fiction and nonfiction materials. However, there is a large body of fiction and nonfiction, written especially for young adults, that addresses the challenges faced by that age group. The General Material Selection and Retention criteria delineated above also apply to these young adult materials.

2.19 The Library provides children with materials that will help them develop a lifelong love of reading and learning.

**Discussion:** Childhood is a voyage of discovery--not only discovery of the world around us and beyond, but also discovery of self, as children develop their own tastes, opinions, values, and interests. The Library gives children, with their parents’ guidance, the opportunity to discover their world safely. The Library provides children with materials that not only help them learn about their world and satisfy their personal interests, but also stretch their abilities and challenge them to become better readers. The materials help satisfy children’s insatiable curiosity, stimulate their imagination, widen their interests, foster their intellectual growth, help them understand the diversity of our world, and let them return to the comfortable territory of the familiar.

2.19a The Children’s Collection provides materials appropriate for children ages 0 through 14.

2.19b The Library maintains a wide selection of well-written, illustrated, and produced children’s materials. Staff may consult titles such as Kathleen Horning’s *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children’s Books*, HarperCollins, 1997, for guidance on the characteristics of high-quality picture books, easy readers, and children’s nonfiction.

2.19c The Library also supplies multiple copies of those perennially popular children’s titles that continue to delight each new crop of young readers.

**Discussion:** Every year brings a new crop of formulaic children’s titles or series that children love to read. The Library embraces children’s love of *Waldo*, *Pokemon*, *Goosebumps*, *Captain Underpants*, etc., and attempts to provide these in quantities to meet the demand.

2.19d The principles of freedom to read/view, accuracy, currency, freedom of access, etc. apply to children as well as to adults.

**Discussion:** Since children’s materials cover ages pre-school through 14, not all items in the children’s section are appropriate for all children. The Library provides a wide variety of fiction genres and topical nonfiction coverage appropriate for various reading and developmental levels. Library staff can assist children and parents in finding the

materials that are best suited to the individual child.

2.19e In addition to the General Material Selection Criteria mentioned above, any of these criteria may also be considered when selecting children's materials:

2.19e.1 Clarity of writing

2.19e.2 Quality of illustration

2.19e.3 Relationship of text to pictures

2.19e.4 Age appropriateness. Subject matter is suitable for the intended audience. Treatment of the subject matter, vocabulary, and illustrations are presented in a format and language accessible to the intended audience.

2.19e.5 Unbiased treatment of controversial issues. Children do not have the knowledge, life experience, or critical skills necessary to recognize biased writings.

2.19e.6 Sensitivity to cultural diversity

2.19e.7 Treatment of safety concerns

2.19e.8 Utility for story times and other children's programming

2.20 The Library relies on the Internet and other electronic resources to complement its physical collection, and to provide the best and most up-to-date information available on certain subjects.

2.20a The Library establishes links to free websites that staff determine to be reliable and of interest to its customers. These sites must meet the general collection policies outlined elsewhere in this document, in addition to the special criteria listed below.

2.20b Staff check Internet resources pages monthly for connectivity and evaluate them at least quarterly.

2.20c In addition to the General Material Selection Criteria mentioned above, the following additional selection criteria may be applied to electronic resources:

2.20c.1 The resource will not have a detrimental impact on the Library's PCs or network, including storage requirements, download times, and response times.

2.20c.2 The resource can be distributed over the Library's network. Software that can be distributed over the network is preferred to that which must be loaded on individual PCs.

2.20c.3 Databases and other electronic resources that can be licensed for unlimited remote access are generally preferred to those requiring site-specific or in-house use.

2.20c.4 Availability and quality of technical support meet the Library's requirements.

2.20c.5 Preference is given to sites that have won a recognized Internet award (Top 5%, Best of the Web, etc), have been reviewed positively in a professional/trade journal or have been recommended by subject experts in the field.

2.20c.6 The site is updated periodically and displays the date of last revision. Depending on the nature of the information, updates may be required daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly.

2.20c.7 Authors or sponsors are clearly identifiable.

2.20c.8 Links to an individual's site, identifiable by a ~ in the URL, are limited to established authors or authorities.

2.20c.9 The site offers a mail-to link or e-mail address to contact authors or sponsors.

2.20c.10 Text is easy to understand and has correct spelling and grammar.

2.20c.11 Any political or ideological biases toward subject matter are balanced by sites with alternative political or

ideological views.

2.20c.12 The site is arranged in a logical manner that facilitates locating information. Page layout is consistent, pages are attractive, easy to read, and it is easy to navigate between pages.

2.20c.13 The site connects quickly and graphics load quickly.

2.20c.14 The site does not require special software or passwords to view.

2.20c.15 The site's URL is stable.

2.20c.16 The site may require registration but may not charge connection or viewing fees.

2.20c.17 Sites may be .coms if they offer substantial amounts of free information.

### **Collection Policy Statement 3: The Library provides a balanced selection of materials so that Fort Worth residents can learn about themselves and others, and develop informed opinions about issues of the day.**

**Discussion:** A balanced collection provides information and opinions about a wide variety of political, social, and economic ideologies and religious beliefs without giving undue weight or prominence to any one of them.

In practical terms, providing materials that reflect the community demographics and respond to known interests will usually result in a preponderance of materials that reflect a certain viewpoint. This does not mean that the Library supports this view over others; it simply means that a wider selection of materials is needed to satisfy community interest.

While the Library provides materials that reinforce established opinions and familiar ideas, it does not allow predominant community values to suppress the minority voice. Just as it is important to provide materials that are in high demand because they support common community interests, it is equally important that the Library provide materials that reflect alternative values and beliefs, that challenge popular opinion, and that help people explore new ideas, gain understanding or support for different cultures or lifestyles, and broaden their worldview. Since these materials will, by their very nature, not be as heavily used as those in the mainstream, annual use standards may be relaxed in order to keep minority voices in the collection.

Generally, the precepts of "collection balance" apply more to materials dealing with ideas, styles, beliefs, and opinions than they do to materials that cover practical and recreational matters. In regards to recreational and practical "how-to" materials, the collection's content can be guided by the community's interests. It is impractical and unnecessary to devote equal budget and shelf-space to all fields of endeavor at all units. Especially with the Internet, it is possible for even the smallest branch to provide helpful information on almost any practical matter.

### **Regulations:**

3.1 The Library strives to provide materials on all sides of controversial issues.

3.2 The Library does not intentionally promote a specific viewpoint or ideology, or promote one over another through its collection, programming, or services

3.3 Since those who are interested in alternative ideas or activities are often reluctant to express that in public settings such as libraries, the Library does not automatically assume that there is no interest in an alternative idea or activity in any particular community simply because no one has ever asked for it. The Library places alternative materials in agencies from time to time to "test the waters," even if there is no overtly expressed interest. These materials then become subject to the same use criteria as any others, and may be weeded as scheduled if there is no evidence of use.

3.4 Library staff do not allow their personal tastes, values, or interests to influence the proportion of materials in specific

subjects or genres.

**Collection Policy Statement 4: Because people employ a variety of print, media, and electronic resources in their pursuit of informational and recreational activities, the Library provides materials in a wide variety of popular formats and does not hold any one format to be more intrinsically valid or valuable than another.**

**Regulations:**

4.1 The Library provides media in currently popular formats, and phases out media that is no longer popular, easily purchased, or easily accessible.

4.2 The Library may purchase fiction and nonfiction books in only one format, or duplicate them in numerous formats including hardback, trade paper, mass-market paperback, large print, and abridged and unabridged audiocassette or CD editions.

4.3 The Library provides other popular print formats including, but not limited to, board books, big books, comics, fotonovellas, and graphic novels.

4.4 The Library provides in-house and remote access to electronic databases, and links to external web sites from its home page.

4.5 The Library's selection of media includes videos, DVDs, musical CDs and audiocassettes, books on CD and audiocassette, and educational and "edutainment" CD-ROMs.

4.5a 16mm and 8mm films, filmstrips, slides: The Library no longer purchases these formats and has phased out those collections.

4.5b Long-play records (LPs) and musical audiocassettes: The Library no longer purchases these formats and is phasing out these collections. 4.5c DVDs: The Library gives preference to the letterbox format and to discs with Spanish tracks. Collectors' and critical editions are not usually purchased for branches, but may be purchased for Central and regional libraries.

4.5d Videos: The Library will continue to provide VHS video as long as customer demand warrants.

4.5e MPAA ratings: The Library places only DVDs or VHS videos with an MPAA rating of "G" or "PG" in the children's collection. PG-13 and R rated DVDs and VHS videos are placed in the adult collection. The Library purchases DVD and VHS video NR films that were produced before the rating system was developed, as well as NR programs that were produced originally for television. The Library provides films released theatrically with the NR or NC-17 rating as demand and reviews warrant. The Library also provides unrated DVD "director's cuts" of films that were previously released theatrically with an MPAA rating if demand and reviews warrant. The Library does not provide X-rated VHS videos or DVDs.

4.5f Music CDs: The Library does not purchase edited versions of music CDs.

4.5g Books on tape and Books on CD. The library provides both abridged and unabridged versions of audiobooks.

4.5h CD-ROMs must be compatible with the Library's hardware and capable of being networked.

4.5i There are certain formats the Library does not provide because they do not lend themselves to repeated public use. These include cloth books, books with fur or scratch-and-sniff components, books that cannot be used without accompanying toys or realia, books requiring batteries, and pop-up books. A limited number of copies may be purchased for programming purposes.

4.5j Some units may provide games, puzzles, and toys for in-house use, but the Library does not provide these materials

for circulation. Any objects such as toys, ink, etc. that accompany books for circulation are removed and discarded during processing.

4.5k The Library monitors the technological progress and customer demand for e-formats such as e-books, downloadable audio books and music files, etc. The Library currently offers netLibrary e-books that are available through TexShare. The Library will offer additional e-formats as customer interest warrants and funding permits.

4.5l The Library does not provide video games at this time.

4.6 In order to save space and funds, the Library generally cancels print serial subscriptions when titles become available online. Decisions to retain one or more hardcopy subscriptions are based on service priorities, demand, the cost of maintaining both formats, and other selection criteria outlined elsewhere in this document.

4.7 Units may circulate back issues of print serials, depending on in-house demand for back issues and availability of back issues online.

**Collection Policy Statement 5: In order to make the best use of limited resources, the materials held in Fort Worth Library's various branches and central library are considered to be one collection.**

**Discussion:** The Library is committed to providing users with any material or information they request. However, it cannot guarantee immediate access to each and every item that may be requested. The Library makes effective use of limited resources by placing materials in branches where demand is expected to be highest, holding less frequently used materials at the regional libraries and Central, and sending materials throughout the system as customers request them.

**Regulations:**

5.1 Materials belong to the Fort Worth Library system, not to individual units. The Library purchases materials considering the system's needs as a whole, and places copies in units where community interest is expected to be highest.

5.2 Circulating items anywhere in the system may be sent to any other unit when customers request them. On-shelf items are usually delivered within 3 days to 1 week.

5.3 If the requested circulating item is on the shelf, the owning unit will honor the request and send the material.

5.3a Items will be sent regardless of their popularity or format.

5.3b Units may decline requests if the materials are needed there for special programming, class assignments, etc.

5.4 While reference and other non-circulating items are not usually sent to other units, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

**Collection Policy Statement 6: The Library provides materials that are suitable for use by the general reader or lay public. Certain types of materials fall outside the service scope of a public library.**

**Regulations:**

6.1 The Fort Worth Library does not actively collect rare or unusual materials that require special handling. It is the public library's function to make materials accessible and available to all users. Access to rare and fragile materials must be limited to people who require access to original editions or source materials for research purposes.

6.1a Exceptions are made for materials relating directly to Fort Worth or Texas history.

6.1b Exceptions may also be made on a case-by-case basis for items already in the collection, as well as for future special gifts.

- 6.2 The Library does not make any special attempt to purchase textbooks currently used in area public, private, home schools, or colleges. Providing textbooks and curriculum materials is the responsibility of the schools, and is supported by the various Independent School Districts' taxing authority. See also Regulation 1.5 of this policy regarding homework support materials.
- 6.2a The Library adds textbooks to the collection only when they supply information in areas in which they may be the best, or the only, source of information on the subject for the general public.
- 6.2b If the Library does purchase a textbook, it gives preference to titles that are not being used in local schools so the book will not be checked out and retained for a semester or school year.
- 6.2c The Library does purchase some titles that appear on school reading lists, and provides materials that assist students in completing school assignments. However, it does not attempt to purchase enough copies to meet the assignment demands for entire classes.
- 6.2d The Library may from time to time temporarily place high-demand materials relating to specific assignments on reserve so as to provide access for the greatest number of customers.
- 6.2e The Library makes no attempt to provide academic and scholarly materials to support the curricula of local colleges and universities. That is the responsibility of those institutions' libraries. College students are welcome to utilize whatever parts of the Library's collection and interlibrary loan services meet their needs.
- 6.3 The Library does not generally provide clinical texts or other materials designed for medical professionals.
- 6.3a The Library provides up-to-date, reliable medical/health information written or produced for the layperson.
- 6.3b Some professional titles may be provided for reference use.
- 6.3c The Library relies on the Internet as an alternative source of lay information if up-to-date print materials are not available.
- 6.4 The Library does not generally provide texts or other materials designed for legal professionals. The Library provides legal materials designed for the layperson.
- 6.4a The Library provides current, reliable general legal reference tools, histories of law, and materials on general and specific legal problems written for the lay person.
- 6.4b The Library provides Vernon's Texas Statutes and other materials relating to Texas statutes and regulations. City of Fort Worth Code and Texas Statutes are available on the City's and State's websites.
- 6.4c The Library does not provide the statutes of other states and specialized legal materials. The Tarrant County Law Library provides these.
- 6.4d As a depository for United States government documents, the Library receives federal statutes and regulations, but does not purchase annotations of these materials.
- 6.5 The Library does not add materials whose primary purpose is promotion or advertisement of particular goods or services.
- 6.5a The Library may provide business directories or histories, business and management theories published by captains of industry, or materials that accompany training workshops.
- 6.5b The Library may provide links to commercial web sites that provide accurate, useful information that can be used independent of the business itself.
- 6.6 The Library does not provide or distribute partisan political campaign literature.
- 6.6a As a government agency, the Library cannot support, or appear to support, specific political candidates or issues over

others. The Library does not have sufficient facilities to enable all candidates or groups supporting specific candidates or issues to distribute their campaign literature.

6.6b Publications by nonpartisan groups such as the League of Women Voters may be distributed at Fort Worth libraries.

6.7 The Library does not add vanity press or self-published materials to the collection. Exceptions to this general policy may be made if the work covers an area where there is a demonstrated need or interest, no other materials on the subject or genre are available, there is an expectation of high use of that particular work, and if staff's evaluation of the work determines that it is accurate, relevant, and well-written and produced.

**Discussion:** In the absence of reviews, the Library depends on the reputation of the author, the vetting process through which reputable publishers put the works they publish, media coverage, and customer demand for the subject or genre when making selection decisions. Vanity press and self-published titles are rarely reviewed in the standard review media. Works that are self-published or produced by vanity presses have not been through a reliable vetting process, and are rarely in high demand.

6.8 Except for large print, the Library does not provide specially formatted materials that are produced specifically for those who are unable to read or manipulate print materials. These are available from the Texas State Library. The Library may retain a few examples of Braille for representative purposes.

6.9 The Library does not generally collect or pursue primary source materials or out-of-print titles.

6.9a The Library's collection is intended to provide useful, current information rather than historical coverage that documents the development of a field of knowledge.

6.9b Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis if staff determine that an out-of-print title continues to be in demand and/or provides the best coverage of a subject. However, given the cost of acquiring out-of-print titles, and the difficulty in acquiring enough copies to satisfy the multiple-copy requirements of Current Topics and Titles and Lifelong Learning service priorities, these exceptions will be rare.

6.9c Since it is usually preferable to provide hardback fiction in new branches, the Library may seek out-of-print hardbacks when developing opening day collections.

6.9d This regulation does not apply to materials for the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit, which does collect both primary source and out-of-print materials appropriate for its subject areas.

6.10 The Library does not provide those specific items which have been determined by local courts, according to due process, to be obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors.

6.10a These designations are not open to staff's interpretations. Only local courts can determine, in accordance with due process, which specific materials fall into the categories of obscenity, child pornography, or materials that may be harmful to minors.

6.10b The Library evaluates items as a whole, not on the basis of a particular section or sections. Items are not excluded because of frank or graphic language or descriptions of sexual activity or violence.

**Collection Policy Statement 7: The Fort Worth Library is committed to the free and open exchange of ideas, information, and points of view, and ensures free and open access to its holdings to all users. Consequently, the Fort Worth Public Library supports the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement.**

### **The Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

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.

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.

Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

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 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980, by the ALA Council.

### **The American Library Association 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

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:

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

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.

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.

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.

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.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it 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 the citizen. 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.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is 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.

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

### **American Library Association 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:

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.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

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.

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.

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.

**Discussion:** The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States protects freedom of speech. Citizens in a democratic society must be free to explore any and all ideas, even controversial, divergent, or unusual ones, and make informed decisions themselves. Public libraries facilitate informed participation in the democratic process by providing access to a wide range of ideas and information without prejudice.

Courts have held that public libraries are "limited public forums." As such, the Library may not discriminate with respect to the content of communication. The Library may not exclude materials simply because they deal with controversial subjects, nor may it promote one viewpoint or idea over another, or provide materials that support only one side of an issue. All these would be discrimination with respect to content.

It is a given that the Library will have materials that some citizens find unorthodox, unpalatable, unacceptable, or objectionable. Anyone is free to reject for oneself materials of which one does not approve. However, one is not free to reject those materials for others. Individual or group objection to a particular item or type of material in the collection may not preclude its use by others.

## Regulations:

7.1 The Library attempts to provide materials that cover a wide range of ideas, issues, and lifestyles, materials that examine all sides of controversial issues, and materials that reflect, respect, and appeal to the diverse values and interests of Fort Worth's residents.

7.2 As a government-funded agency, the Library neither knowingly restricts nor promotes one idea over another. The Library does not sanction or promote any particular viewpoint or belief, nor does inclusion of such materials express or imply the City's or the Library's endorsement of the author's viewpoint.

7.3 The Library does not knowingly discriminate in its materials selection regarding the age, race, beliefs, sexual orientation, or affiliations of the author or producer.

7.4 The Library does not remove, restrict access to, or reject materials simply because some in the community find or may find them offensive.

7.5 Library staff do not reject materials or resources because of their personal objection to the author's viewpoint, sex, sexual orientation, religion, political philosophy, personal history, personal persuasion, affiliation, national origin, or use of language.

7.6 Library staff do not reject materials or resources because of a personal dislike of or distaste for the subject matter. Library staff must be aware of their personal convictions and prejudices to ensure that these do not detract from their commitment to providing a broad-based collection.

7.7 Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that the materials may be seen by minors. Courts have held repeatedly that the government may not reduce the adult population to reading only what is fit for children.

7.8 The Library makes selections based on a work as a whole. Graphic or potentially controversial aspects of a work will not be considered out of the context of the whole, and their presence alone will not prevent the Library from selecting the work, or cause the Library to remove it from the collection or restrict access to it.

7.9 The Library encourages citizens' questions and comments about the collection.

7.10 Materials under review remain accessible in the collection until the review process is completed.

7.11 The Library does not charge for the use of any materials in the collection. Fees may be charged for special services such as holds.

7.12 With the exceptions noted in 7.15, 9.4, and in the Guidelines below, the entire Fort Worth Public Library collection is readily accessible to all users. The Library shelves its materials on open shelves, freely accessible to the public. The Library does not restrict any users from using any resource because of its content, format, or cost.

7.13 The Library does not place restrictions on the use of its resources based on the user's age, race, sex, nationality, educational background, physical limitations, or other criteria. Parents choose to allow youth to check out DVDs and videos when the youth registers for a card.

7.14 The Library does not monitor or restrict young people's access to any of its resources. The Library is not authorized to act in loco parentis. Responsibility for materials selected and read, viewed, or listened to by children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. The Library encourages all parents to establish guidelines for their own children's use of library resources. Each of Fort Worth Public Library's agencies has sections with materials that are specially selected to meet the needs and interests of children and adolescents. Staff are available to help children and parents find age-appropriate materials.

7.15 The Library does not sequester materials except to provide special environmental protections or to protect them from theft or mutilation. Primary source materials in the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit are sequestered to prevent damage from heavy casual use.

7.16 The Library does not label or alter any item with the intent of "warning" or prejudicially indicating its point of view, bias, accuracy, or contents.

7.17 The library does not make judgments concerning the suitability of materials with the intent of limiting access.

### **Guidelines:**

7G.1 The Library arranges materials according to subject or format for the convenience of its customers.

7G.2 The Library provides separate collections of materials written or produced specifically for children and teens.

7G.3 The Library provides bibliographies of recommended titles and may label materials to indicate subject, age level, or genre for the convenience of its customers.

7G.4 Seasonal materials, back runs of serials, and some older materials may be stored so that open shelves have room for the most popular items.

7G.5 The Library may offer professional recommendations or other resources that help customers locate materials that meet their needs, tastes, and interests.

### **Collection Policy Statement 8: The Library encourages customers to participate in the collection development process in order to make the collection more responsive to community interests.**

### **Regulations :**

8.1 The Library encourages users to make suggestions for specific materials they themselves would like to use. Request to Purchase forms are available at all public service desks, or e-mail.

8.2 The Library will try to purchase recommended materials if they fit within the Library's collection policies and if funds allow.

8.3 The Library is not an instrument for propaganda, proselytizing, advertisement, or self-promotion. It will not add materials to the collection merely because an individual or group wishes materials to be available to others.

8.4 If a recommended item is no longer in print, or not suitable for the library's collection, staff will offer customers the option of borrowing it from another library through interlibrary loan.

8.5 The Library welcomes the opportunity to discuss the interpretation and application of the Library's collection policies with Fort Worth residents. Customers who would like the Library to reconsider the inclusion, exclusion, or location of a particular item are encouraged to discuss the item with staff at their local library. If customers are not satisfied with the response, they may complete the Request for Review of Library Materials. Copies of these forms are available at all public service desks.

8.6 Materials that have been accepted or rejected under this Collection Policy will not be removed from or added to the collection, or moved to a different part of the collection, unless and until the material's inclusion, exclusion, or location is shown to be in violation of the Library's Collection Policy through the formal review process. This process is started when a customer completes a Request for Review of Library Materials, and follows the procedures outlined below.

### **Guidelines:**

8G.1 All librarians should be prepared to discuss the Library's Collection Policy with customers.

8G.2 Copies of the Library's Collection Policy should be available for public review at all times.

8G.3 Customers' opinions about the collection should be respected. Their concerns about the collection should be taken seriously.

8G.4 It is critical that customers be treated courteously throughout the process.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Customer Recommendations for New Materials**

Customers may use the Request to Purchase form to request that the Library add materials to the collection.

If the material is purchased and contact information is available, the Selector will place a free on-order hold for the customer.

#### **Customer Concerns about Materials in the Collection, or about Materials not Added to the Collection**

If the customer's concerns cannot be resolved by the staff member receiving the complaint, refer the customer to the unit head or unit head designate if the unit head is absent.

The unit head, with another librarian present, meets immediately with the customer. If the complaint concerns children's material, the children's librarian should be present if possible.

The unit head inquires about the nature of the complaint and allows the customer to speak freely without interruption. Both librarians take full notes for future reference.

The librarians discuss the concerns with the customer. They review the materials selection process and its application to this situation. If appropriate, they refer the customer to relevant sections of the Collection Policy.

The unit head asks the customer for recommendations regarding the material.

If the customer is not satisfied with the explanation given and wishes to pursue the complaint, the unit head explains that the Library policy requires an official record of customer objection in order for the Library to take action. The unit head then asks the customer to complete the appropriate REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF LIBRARY MATERIALS form.

The unit head reviews the Materials Review Process with the customer, but makes no other commitment at this time.

If the customer refuses to complete the form, the unit head informs the Collection Management Administrator.

If the unit head is not immediately available, the designee listens to the customer's complaint and takes notes for the unit head. The designee arranges for a subsequent discussion, by phone or in person, with the unit head at the earliest possible date.

If limited staffing does not permit a librarian to leave the service area, or an appropriate librarian to whom the complaint should be referred is not available, staff take the customer's name and phone number and/or mailing address so that arrangements can be made for a phone call or meeting at the earliest possible date.

Complaints first registered in the Library administrative offices may be referred directly to the Collection Management Administrator.

Staff inform the appropriate Materials Selector about complaints they are able to resolve locally. Materials Selectors apprise the Collection Management Division Administrator.

### **Materials Review Process**

The unit head relays the basic details of the complaint to the Collection Management Division Administrator and the appropriate Branch or Central Administrator.

Upon receiving a REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF LIBRARY MATERIALS form, the Collection Management Division Administrator sends a letter acknowledging receipt as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours.

The Collection Management Division Administrator copies the complaint to the appropriate Materials Selector, who compiles reviews and/or other relevant selection information.

The Collection Management Division Administrator reviews the complaint with the Selectors, the unit head, and other appropriate staff.

Materials that obviously meet the Library's Collection Policy will be retained.

Materials in obvious violation of the Collection Policy will be removed or moved to a different part of the collection.

If it appears the material may be in violation of the Library's Collection Policy, the Collection Management Division Administrator meets with age or subject specialists to reconsider the title.

The Collection Management Division Administrator will apprise the customer of the Library's decision in writing. Under normal circumstances, this should be within 3 weeks of the date on the REQUEST TO REVIEW form. The customer should be notified if there will be any delays. The Material Selector may compose the letter, subject to the Collection Management Division Administrator's review. The letter should include a brief description of the process used to make the decision, and may cite reviews, usage history, and relevant sections of the Library's Collection Policy. Notes should be made of any telephone conversations with the customer and kept with the paperwork. Copies of the letter should be included in the file and sent to the unit head.

If the customer is not satisfied with the Library's decision, the matter is referred to the Library Director or the Director's designate.

**FORT WORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY: REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF LIBRARY MATERIALS:**

[REQUEST TO ADD MATERIAL](#)

**FORT WORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY: REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF LIBRARY MATERIALS:**

## REQUEST TO REMOVE MATERIAL

**Collection Policy Statement 9: The Library takes whatever practical steps it can to maintain an accurate record of holdings and to protect the collection from abuse, theft, and environmental damage.**

### **Regulations:**

9.1 All materials owned by the Fort Worth Library, with the exception of government documents, are entered into the Library's bibliographic/item database. The Library maintains paper check-in records for government documents.

9.2 The Library follows AACR2 Revised Standards for bibliographic records. Details may be found in the Library's Cataloging Manual.

9.3 The item database is purged according to a regular schedule.

9.4 The Library sequesters rare and fragile materials to protect them from damage that may be caused by casual use.

9.5 The Library employs various security measures to protect materials from theft.

9.6 The Library repairs worn materials that are still in demand, if repairing is more cost effective than replacing them. Binding and Mending guidelines will be developed at a later date.

9.7 Library staff are trained to respond to water damage emergencies.

9.8 While the Library does not have the specialized facilities or expertise needed for extensive preservation and conservation of all its materials, it does make special efforts to care for materials in the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit.

**Collection Policy Statement 10: The Fort Worth Library regularly withdraws worn, damaged, outdated, inaccurate, and underused materials from the collection.**

**Discussion:** Fort Worth Library is an active lending library that strives to maintain a dynamic, contemporary collection. Surveys, focus groups, and community meetings held during the development of the Long Range Services Plan demonstrated that Library customers want bestsellers and other current titles, accurate, up-to-date nonfiction, and the standard classics.

Weeding is a routine part of collection maintenance, and is as important to the ongoing vitality and relevance of the collection as adding new materials. Numerous studies have demonstrated the advantages of keeping a library collection well-weeded. Among these advantages are:

Customers can find needed materials more easily

Information is up-to-date and accurate

Materials are fresh and appealing

Underused materials are removed to make room for new publications

Circulation increases

The Library bases its Weeding Guidelines [provide link] on The CREW Method: Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding for Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries, published by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in 1995. The Library has adapted The Crew Method for use with a collection that supports the Current Topics and Titles, Lifelong Learning, Information Literacy, Local History and Genealogy, Cultural Awareness, and General Information service priorities.

## Regulations:

10.1 Except for the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit, the Fort Worth Library is not a library of historical record and does not attempt to provide archival or research-level collections.

10.2 Shelving space for materials that do not support the Library's service priorities is kept to a minimum.

10.3 Unused materials that do not support the Library's service priorities are de-emphasized and/or withdrawn from the collection.

10.4 Autographed materials and donated materials with bookplates that no longer support the Library's collection needs may be withdrawn from the collection.

10.5 The possibility of having "nothing on a subject" does not prevent weeding an area.

10.6 The Library withdraws materials of a factual nature that are no longer accurate.

**Discussion:** The Library believes that it is better to have no books on a subject at all than it is to have books and other materials that are inaccurate. Misleading or inaccurate information does our customers a disservice and damages the Library's credibility.

Exceptions may be made in cases where controversy about an author or title may generate public interest.

10.7 The Library withdraws materials that are outdated. Outdated materials in date-sensitive areas are withdrawn even if they are still heavily used. These areas are given a high budget priority.

**Discussion:** Up-to-date materials are critical in subject areas where information and issues change rapidly. Travel, geography, health and medicine, much science, current social issues, social services, self-help legal guides, personal finance, business, computers, home economics, technology, and child development are among the subject areas where the publication date is especially critical to a work's accuracy.

Even if age is not a factor in an item's accuracy, it is a factor in its appeal to the Library's current customers. Materials with outdated photos or illustrations, with outmoded styles, with situations and examples that are not relevant to today's issues, and materials that do not reflect the community's diversity are removed and replaced.

10.8 The Library withdraws materials that are in poor condition (worn, dirty, stained, torn, marked up, wrinkled, bent, brittle or yellowed pages, pages falling out, no dust jacket, molded, mildewed, bug infested, unpleasant or unhygienic smell, etc.). Such materials show a lack of respect for customers, reflect poorly on the Library, are not appealing, and do little to promote use or instill a love of reading. Materials in poor condition are weeded and replaced with new copies if the title is still in print, its contents are still accurate, and demand is still anticipated.

10.9 The Library withdraws materials that do not support its annual collection turnover objectives. The Library establishes collection turnover rates to meet or exceed state standards.

10.10 The Library routinely weeds materials that have not been used within the last 1-5 years, the cut-off depending on the size of the unit, available shelf space, factors outlined in 2.1 General Material Selection and Retention Criteria, and the unit's service priorities. This practice removes materials that customers no longer need, and makes room for newer items. The Library purchases multiple copies of titles expected to be in high demand, and weeds duplicate copies as soon as demand for these titles wanes.

10.11 The Library does not retain any material, without regard to use, merely because it is on a "best books" list. The Library keeps important, significant, and classic works in fields of interest to the general public as long as there is demonstrated interest. These titles can be identified by any of the standard "best book" bibliographies, such as Public Library Catalog, Children's Catalog, and Fiction Catalog. "Best books" are considered such because they are widely recognized to be seminal, best, or important in that field of knowledge. It is to be expected that these materials will be

consulted more often than other materials in the field. Significant or classic titles that are not used at neighborhood branches will be weeded to make room for materials that are requested more often. These titles will be retained at the regional libraries or Central in sufficient quantities to meet system needs. The only unit of the Fort Worth Library whose role is to collect and retain as much as possible on a subject, without regard to use or age, is the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit of the Central Library.

10.12 As the Fort Worth Library is not a research library, it does not attempt to retain at least one copy of every title it has ever purchased. If branches weed last copies of standard works found in Public Library Catalog and other such bibliographies, they may send the items to the appropriate Central subject department for evaluation and possible retention. The Library removes bibliographic records associated with withdrawn last copies from the database.

Exceptions to this Regulation are made for materials that relate to the history of Fort Worth or Texas. All last copies of these materials should be routed to the Genealogy, Local History and Archives Unit.

10.13 Satellites and smaller branches (BOLD, COOL, Diamond Hill/Jarvis, East Berry, Meadowbrook, Northside, Riverside, Seminary, Ella Mae Shamblee, and Wedgwood) weed their entire collections annually. Larger branches (Ridglea and Summerglenn), regional libraries, and the Central Library units establish schedules that enable them to weed their entire collections every three years, although they address the date-sensitive areas of their collections each year. The Collection Management Division may establish system-wide weeding schedules for specific areas as needed.

10.14 The Library does not normally store weeded materials for possible future use in another unit or for a possible new facility.

**Discussion:** Climate-controlled storage, which would be necessary to maintain the condition of the materials, is expensive. Materials that have been weeded from one unit because they have not circulated will rarely circulate at another. Since most building projects take two to three years to complete from the time a bond package is approved, most weeded materials would be much too outdated to put into a newly-opened branch. Once a bond package is approved, weeded hardback fiction in excellent condition may be stored for the new branch.

### **Regulations Regarding Disposal of Weeded Materials:**

10.15 Materials that are very dated or in very poor condition—both those removed from the Library’s collection and those given to the Library— are recycled or otherwise disposed of.

10.16 All other materials that are weeded from the Library’s collection, as well as gifts that the Library has not added, are sent to the Friends for their book sales, or made available in special sales to North Texas Regional Library System member libraries and area independent school districts.

10.17 Withdrawn materials may not be held aside for a specific person to purchase. Materials will not be withdrawn from the collection so that someone can purchase them. Such action would violate City of Fort Worth regulations governing the disposal of City property. Such action would also not be in keeping with the City of Fort Worth’s Ethical Standards for City Employees.

### **Collection Policy Statement 11: The Fort Worth Library strives to meet or exceed the Texas Public Library Standards for Comprehensive Collections and the North Texas Regional Library System’s minimum collection standards for system membership.**

#### **Definitions:**

**Texas Public Library Standards for Comprehensive Collections** in Texas public libraries serving populations over 5,000:

- 4 items per capita
- 7.5 circulations per capita

- 2.5 collection turnover rate (circulating collection only)
- 25% of collection less than 5 years old
- Entire collection weeded every 3 years
- Core reference collection (as listed in Margaret Irby Nichols' *Selecting and Using a Core Reference Collection*, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 4th ed., 2003).
- Local history materials
- Library extends its collection by providing access to Internet and full-text databases provided by the state library and by providing licensed full-text databases purchased locally
- Remote access to full-text databases purchased locally
- Library offers Interlibrary Loan services
- Library offers materials in a variety of current non-print formats
- Library offers digitized local history materials
- Library collects and reports electronic use

**Collection Criteria for Membership in the Texas State Library System for Libraries Serving a Population of Over 200,001:** one item of library materials per capita or expend 25% of library budget on materials

### **Regulations:**

11.1 The Fort Worth Library's goal is that 70% of the materials in date-critical subject areas have publication dates within the last 5 years. These date-critical subject areas are detailed in the Library's Weeding Guidelines [link]. Fiction and media titles can be older as long as community interest warrants retention.

**Discussion:** Materials in rapidly changing or advancing fields such as health, medicine, law, social issues, personal finance, business, science, technology, computers, social services, child development, home economics, travel, and geography can become outdated quickly. Most published weeding guidelines recommend weeding materials in these areas that are older than 5 years. Providing up-to-date materials in these areas is critical to the Library's goal of providing accurate and relevant information for its customers.

11.2 The Library attempts to answer customers' informational questions accurately and completely. However, since General Information is the Library's 6th service priority, it is neither feasible nor desirable to maintain all listed reference titles in all units. The Library consults Nichols' book when purchasing reference materials to meet community needs, but does not attempt to provide all titles in all units. The Library acquires more up-to-date editions or titles when necessary, and weeds outdated titles.

**Collection Policy Statement 12: All library units develop collection plans to help them meet their customers' needs and state standards.**

### **Regulations:**

12.1 Library staff review the community, the collection, and the collection's use on an ongoing basis in order to provide a collection that is useful and relevant to the community.

12.2 Unit profiles describing community demographics, unit circulation and collection turnover, collection age, audience, demand, and condition, shelf space allocation (percent of total unit holdings) are updated annually.

12.3 Units will develop Collection Plans to address Library service priorities, Library Business Plan objectives, and state library standards. Using the Unit Profiles, as well as an analysis of customer requests and interlibrary loans, the plans will:

- Assess the community's demographics
- Assess the existing collection's relevance to the unit's service priorities
- Identify gaps in meeting state standards
- Outline a strategy for meeting Library collection objectives and state standards
- Identify appropriate collection levels for each part of the collection
- Identify areas that should be added or expanded
- Identify areas that should be reduced or eliminated
- Establish a timeline for completing the work to be done
- Address space allocation and merchandising issues
- Allocate discretionary materials funds accordingly

12.4 Unit staff develop Collection Plans for the adult, young adult, and children's collections. Collection Management Division staff assist units with the development, implementation, and evaluation of their Collection Plans.

12.5 The Collection Management Division will use the units' Collection Profiles and Collection Plans to allocate the materials budget, select materials, make decisions regarding selection, acquisitions, cataloging and processing practices and priorities, and to establish special unit and system-wide collection management projects.

12.6 Unit Collection Plans will be updated following the triennial system-wide review of Library mission and service priorities.

**Collection Policy Statement 13: Gift Policy. The Fort Worth Library supplements its materials budget through gift materials and monetary donations. [Gifts Policy.](#)**

*Approved by Library Advisory Board October 6, 2005*