

COUNTY OF VENTURA		POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL		VENTURA COUNTY LIBRARY
Originating Agency: Policy of:	Library Services (VCLS) VCLS - Branches	Last Issued 1/7/2023	Revised 1/7/2025	Materials Collection and Selection Policy
Procedure: Policy of:	Library Services (VCLS) VCLS - Branches	N/A	N/A	
Forms (if any):		N/A	N/A	
Policy Change Requires:		[x] Director consultation with Deputy Director		
Procedure/Forms Change Requires:		[] Review with Fiscal Manager		
		[]		
		Other		

POLICY

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBILITY & COMMUNITY PROFILE

Ventura County is an area of rich cultural tradition. Our community is proud of its many arts, civic, philanthropic, educational, sports, and recreational opportunities and institutions. Knowledge of our community is essential in making decisions about the Library's collection. Our collection reflects the diverse, dynamic community we serve through our library branches. As our community changes, the Library continues to reassess and change its collections to reflect those community needs.

Ultimate responsibility for collection development rests with the Ventura County Library Director, who administers under the authority of the County Board of Supervisors. The Ventura County Library Director, in turn, delegates the authority for selection to designated professional staff who make individual selection decisions.

PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

This policy serves three purposes:

1. It acts as a blueprint for our collection, guiding staff in decision-making regarding the selection, management, and preservation of the collection.
2. It informs the public of the principles guiding our collection development.
3. It states the Library's commitment to intellectual freedom and to providing information expressing a variety of viewpoints.

SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Selection Criteria

Library staff utilize professional judgment and expertise in making collection development

decisions, including decisions about choosing titles, identifying quantities for purchase, and selecting locations for materials. Anticipated demand, community interests, strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, system-wide availability, physical space limitations, acquisitions procedures, and available funds are all factors taken into consideration. Materials are acquired in multiple formats and languages when appropriate, including print, audiovisual, and digital resources. Selection priority is given to those materials in formats having the broadest appeal. Library staff use their training, subject knowledge, and the selection criteria below to identify collection goals and priorities for their assigned libraries and collections. The “right of the public to receive access to a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences” is acknowledged. The following criteria are used to evaluate and select items for the collection. An item need not meet all of these criteria to be selected. Certain materials are selected to address local community needs; branch materials, therefore, are not necessarily duplicated in all collections. Materials are acquired with varying levels of literacy. We value and support all readers at whatever their reading ability. The collection meets the broad and diverse interests of the community and respects both the library’s autonomy and their specific community needs. Library materials should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people, and should present diverse points of view in the collection as a whole.

Criteria:

Accuracy of the information

Comprehensiveness and relation to the existing collection

Enduring significance or interest

Representation of diverse points of view

Cost in relation to use and/or enhancement to the collection

Critical reviews

Current and anticipated appeal

Local interest

Historical significance

Timeliness

Format

Additional format criteria are considered when selecting digital content, including: accessibility; ease of use; equipment, training, and technology requirements; license agreement requirements and vendor support; and uniqueness of content.

Sources for selection decisions encompass, but are not limited to, published reviews from standard review sources, publisher/vendor catalogs, and professional and trade bibliographies. The Library strongly encourages customer input. All customer requests and recommendations are subject to the selection criteria outlined above.

Gifts

The Library accepts gifts of materials for the collection using the same selection criteria that are applied to purchased materials. The Library retains unconditional ownership of gifts. Decisions regarding the final disposition of gifts are the responsibility of staff at individual libraries, using the following guidelines:

Not all gifts are added to the collection. Gift materials not added to the collection are not returned to the donor.

Unused gifts may be given to the local Friends group for public sale or further disposal as those groups deem suitable, or they may be disposed of through other means determined by the Library.

The Library does not place a value on gifts, nor provide appraisals for income tax or any other purpose.

Monetary gifts for purchase of materials are accepted. Items purchased with donated funds will be consistent with collection development criteria.

Collection Evaluation & Maintenance

Once materials have been added to the Library's collection, they are managed through an assessment and evaluation process to ensure that ongoing collection priorities are met; that collections remain up to date, balanced, and attractive; and that space limitations are minimized. This process identifies items for replacement, retention, or deselection. Library staff utilize professional judgment and expertise in deciding which materials to retain, replace, repair, or de-select. De-selection (removing items from the collection) is an integral part of collection development. The Library retains those materials that continue to have enduring or permanent significance to its mission and overall collection goals.

Along with the same criteria used to select new materials, general criteria for retaining, replacing, repairing, or de-selecting include but are not limited to:

Availability of item in alternative formats

Historical significance, interest, or value

Physical condition

Space considerations

Superseded, inaccurate, or out-of-date content

Usage

Focus on Local History

Ventura County Library provides the connection to Ventura County's past by providing access to local history materials. These collections are useful to a wide variety of library customers, from genealogists and family historians, to customers researching the history of their home, and local students searching for class project resources. The Ventura County Library local history collections preserve the collective memory of the county's community. Access to these collections is crucial to meeting the lifelong learning needs of the county library's customers to connect with their past and inform their future. On a regular and recurring basis, staff at county libraries that have local history collections along with appropriate staff in technical services, and community partners will actively collect items of historical significance, ensure that they are cataloged, organized, preserved and made accessible to the library's customers. Materials should be accessible either physically, digitally, or both.

Intellectual Freedom

The Library is committed to the principle that the constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and press are enjoyed by all. To this end, the Library strives to offer a collection that represents the needs of our diverse community. Inclusion of an item in the collection does not mean that the Library endorses any theory or statement contained in those materials and resources.

While every customer may not agree with the viewpoints offered in some Library material, the Library has a responsibility to provide a balanced collection with access to material reflecting diverse ideas through which any side of a question, cause, or movement may be explored, provided that the material meets the outlined selection criteria. The public library serves as a center for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas. The balanced nature of the collection is reflected in the diversity of materials, not in an equality of numbers. Customers are free to choose what they like from the collection, to reject what they do not like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to choose.

The Library is committed to free and open access to its collections and to connecting people with the world of ideas, information, and materials they wish to explore in a friendly, nonjudgmental manner. In this the Library is guided by the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Bill of Rights.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from customers concerning materials selected or not selected for the collection. If a customer questions the content, tone, or placement of an item in the collection, he/she should first address the concern with a Library staff member. Customers who wish to continue their request for reconsideration of library material may submit the Request for Reconsideration form. The Collection

Development Committee will evaluate all requests to add or remove material from the collection within the context of the Collection Development Policy. During this process, the material in question will remain accessible to Library customers. After a decision is reached, the committee will respond by letter to the customer.