

# Denver Public Library Collection Development Policy

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### 1. Library Mission Statement

Together, we create welcoming spaces where all are free to explore and connect.

### 2. Purpose of Collection Development Policy

This Collection Development Policy, approved by the Library Commission, is one of the Library's fundamental policy documents. It outlines the philosophy that creates and shapes the Denver Public Library's unique collection and the practices that maintain it over time. It includes guidelines that help the collection respond to community needs while insulating the collection process from societal and political pressures. The Collection Development Policy ensures the Denver Public Library's collection addresses the needs of Denver's community while creating meaningful and unique experiences and offering inspiration for the individual Library user.

The Library Commission serves in the role otherwise provided by a library board of trustees in other jurisdictions under applicable law. In accordance with Section 24-90-122(2), Colorado Revised Statutes, this Collection

Development Policy complies, at a minimum, with the following standards:

- a) A public library serves as a center for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas;
- b) The public has the right to access a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences through a public library;
- c) Each library resource is provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of the community and should present diverse points of view in the collection as a whole;
- d) A public library shall not exclude a library resource because of the ethnic origin, ethnic background, or gender identity of those contributing to the creation of the library resource or because of the topic addressed by the library resource or the opinions expressed in the library resource;
- e) A public library shall not proscribe or prohibit the circulation or procurement of a library resource because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval of the library resource;
- f) It is the responsibility of a public library to challenge censorship in the fulfillment of its responsibility to provide information and enlightenment;
- g) A public library shall consider the perspectives of marginalized groups, including those identified in Section 22-1-104(1)(a), Colorado Revised Statutes;
- h) For a public library that provides facilities to the public, the library shall make the facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use; and
- i) A public library shall prohibit discrimination based on age, background, political or religious views, origin, disability, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, national origin, or ancestry in the selection, retention, display, use, or reconsideration of library resources and public meeting spaces.

### 3. Philosophy and Scope of the Collection

The Denver Public Library collects materials in a variety of popular formats and languages that support its function as a major information source for the demanding needs of a metropolitan population. The collection serves the general educational and personal interests, recreational, and entertainment needs of the public, and reflects the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the

community.

Widespread interest and usage are the most powerful influences on the Library's collection. The other driving force is the Library's strategic plan.

Selections are made to provide depth and diversity of viewpoints to the existing collection and to build world-class Special Collections and Archives. The Denver Public Library collects to the research level in the following areas:

- History of the American West
- Genealogy
- The American Conservation Movement
- The Tenth Mountain Division
- African American History in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West.

Inherent in the collection development philosophy is an appreciation of each user of the Denver Public Library. The Library provides materials to support each individual's journey, and does not place a value on one customer's needs or preferences over another's. The Library upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox or unacceptable to others. No materials are excluded from selection solely because of race, ethnic group, nationality, immigration status, socioeconomic status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, language, religious affiliation, beliefs, age or viewpoint of the creator, content of the work or any other invidious characteristics of the materials. Materials available in the Library present a diversity of viewpoints enabling citizens to make informed choices on their own.

The Library endorses and supports:

- The American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights
- The ALA Freedom to Read Statement
- The ALA Freedom to View Statement
- The ALA Digital Resources and Services Statement, an Interpretation of the ALA Bill of Rights
- The ALA Statement on Censorship

These policies are part of the criteria for selection and maintenance of the Library collection. Librarians who select library materials also follow the ALA

Code of Ethics. Special Collections and Archives librarians and archivists adhere to the SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics

Materials for children and teenagers are intended to broaden their vision, support recreational reading, encourage and facilitate reading skills, supplement educational needs, stimulate and widen their interests, lead to recognition and appreciation of literature and reflect the diversity of the community and our world. The reading and viewing activity of children is ultimately the responsibility of parents and guardians, who guide and oversee their own children's development. The Denver Public Library does not intrude on that relationship.

#### 4. Scope of the Central Library

The Central Library contains the core fiction and nonfiction collections of the Library system and includes material of an enduring nature as well as current-interest materials.

Central Library collections include information in multiple formats and represent the diverse viewpoints and interests of the community the Library serves. The Reference collection contains current and historical non-circulating publications, including many periodicals, to support extensive and in-depth reference service for the public, students and business people.

#### 5. Scope of the Branch Libraries

Branch libraries serve the needs of the communities in which they are located. Library staff regularly evaluate the collection to ensure its relevance. Collections of the branch libraries concentrate on materials of high interest and materials that support the Library's strategic goals. Branch collections are shaped, in part, by customer use through the floating collection system, in which items move freely among library locations rather than being housed at a specific location.

#### 6. Scope of the Online Collection

The online collection represents the diverse viewpoints and interests of the entire community the Library system serves. The online collection evolves as new formats and products become available. This collection may include

research and learning databases, eBooks, and other downloadable and streaming media.

## 7. Scope of Special Collections

The Special Collections and Archives Department collects to the research level original and secondary materials in a variety of formats in the following subject areas: history of the American West, genealogy, conservation, the 10th Mountain Division and the history of African Americans in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West. The Department is also the repository of the Library's institutional archives. Formats include published materials, archival collections, maps, photographs, rare books, art, objects and audiovisual materials

### Federal Government Publications

The Denver Public Library is a selective depository in the Federal Depository Library Program. The government documents librarian selects current material, mostly in electronic format, that provides information about the operation and activities of the United States Government and optimizes access to authoritative information from government sources. Tangible and electronic historical documents reflecting major events and themes as well as illustrating everyday life in the past are retained and made accessible. The collection level is aimed at a general audience consisting of engaged citizens and residents, business people and students of all ages.

### Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library

The Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library collects materials on the history, literature, art, music, sports, religion and politics of African Americans in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West. By collecting primary and secondary source materials such as archival papers, photographs, periodicals, artwork, books, and artifacts for the research collection as well as for the museum, the Library documents the African American experience from the Five Points neighborhood to the trans-Mississippi West.

## 8. Selection Criteria

Collection development staff use their training, knowledge and expertise along with the following general criteria to select materials for the collection:

- Relevance to interests and needs of the community

- Extent of publicity, critical review, and current or anticipated demand
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses
- Reputation and qualifications of the author, publisher or producer, with preference generally given to titles vetted in the editing and publishing industry
- Suitability of format to Library circulation and use
- Date of publication
- Price, availability and Library materials budget
- Online resources are also evaluated based on accessibility and the availability of library licensing
- Rare books, manuscripts, photographs, artwork and other unique materials are only to be considered for inclusion in the non-circulating special collections.

#### 9. Customer Recommendations

Customers may request items the Library does not own. Each request is reviewed for inclusion in the collection using the Selection Criteria.

#### 10. Requests for Reconsideration

The Denver Public Library selects material using established criteria and full consideration of the varying age groups and backgrounds of customers.

Requests for removal of items from the collection may be made using a formal procedure outlined in Appendix 4.

#### 11. Collection Management

##### Philosophy of Collection Management

The Library's collection is a living, changing entity. As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes withdrawn from the collection. Great care is taken to retain or replace items that have enduring value to the community.

Decisions are influenced by patterns of use, the capacity of each location and the holdings of other libraries that may specialize in a subject matter. Staff review the collection regularly to maintain its vitality and usefulness to the community.

##### Responsibility for Collection Management

The final authority for the Library collection rests with the Library Commission.

Implementation of collection development policy and management of the collection is assigned to Library staff. The Denver Public Library disposes of materials that have been withdrawn according to the criteria for weeding and withdrawal outlined below. The Friends Foundation serves as an instrument for the Library to resell and redistribute Library materials that are withdrawn from the collection or donated to the Library and designated by the Library for resale.

Criteria for Weeding and Withdrawal. The following criteria are used in selecting materials for withdrawal:

- Damage or poor condition
- No longer relevant to the needs and interest of the community
- Infrequent use and lack of demand
- No longer accurate
- Availability elsewhere including other libraries and online

In addition, staff use the following guidelines for the withdrawal and sale of items from special collections:

- Curatorial or environmental requirements exceed the resources of the Library
- Legal restrictions, possession of valid title and the donor's intent
- Relevance to the scope of the special collections

When a statement of a donor's preferences accompanies an acquisition, any departure from it is carefully considered and negotiated with the donor or the donor's heirs or settled by appropriate legal procedures. For an item withdrawn from special collections including rare books, artwork, photographs, antiquarian maps, and archival materials, the Library will document its disposition.

Sale of withdrawn items will be carried out in the manner most advantageous to the Library. This may entail a relationship with a dealer, auction house or other institution. Staff will deposit the proceeds from the sale into a special revenue fund of the City for development and maintenance of special collections. In accordance with Denver City rules regarding the sale of municipal property, Library employees cannot privately acquire materials from a special collection.

#### Gifts

The Denver Public Library accepts donations of books and other materials.

The Library retains the authority to accept or reject gifts. Library staff and/or representatives of the Friends Foundation make all decisions as to the use, housing and final disposition of donations. The Library does not evaluate or appraise gift materials for tax purposes.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Statements Endorsed by the Library Commission

In August 2012, the Denver Public Library Commission reaffirmed its endorsement of the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights.

### Appendix 2: Special Collections and Archives

#### History of the American West

The Western History Collection encompasses primary and secondary source material of the trans-Mississippi West with special focus on the Rocky Mountain region.

Primary sources include:

- Archival Collection – original personal papers, family papers, records of organizations including architectural records, electronic records, and unpublished audio/visual media
- Maps – 22 contiguous states west of the Mississippi River, plus Alaska and Hawaii
- Photography Collection – original negatives, photographic and digital images
- Art Collection – works of original art and other illustrative materials of the Rocky Mountain Region, and artwork by Colorado artists
- Denver Municipal and Regional Documents – publications produced by Denver City and County agencies along with RTD and DRCOG

Secondary sources include books, pamphlets and other published material covering historical and contemporary subjects.

#### Genealogy

The Genealogy Collection focuses on United States source and research materials and international how-to guidebooks. The Library collects regional, state, county and local histories, and primary and secondary source materials such as maps, family charts, cemetery, mortuary, tax, probate, census, vital records and passenger and immigration lists.



## Conservation

The Library collects conservation materials as they relate to the politics and preservation of natural resources. This includes archival collections, and also photographs, books and ephemera. The Conservation collection is national in scope.

## 10th Mountain Division

In association with History Colorado, the Library acquires the personal papers and records of the men and units of the World War II United States ski troops. This relationship is called the 10th Mountain Division Resource Center.

## Ross-Barrett Historical Aeronautics Collection

Focusing on commercial and military aviation, the library collects books and other materials that document the history of aeronautics through 1970.

## Douglas Collection of Fine Printing and Binding

The library obtains examples of craftsmanship in the art of bookmaking, including books representing typography, papermaking and decoration, unique binding and artists' books.

## History of the Book

The library collects examples demonstrating the history of writing and printing. This includes representative examples of papyrus, incunabula, vellum and historical first editions.

## African American Research Library Collections

The research collection at the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library encompasses primary and secondary source material of the African-American experience in the trans-Mississippi West.

Primary sources include:

- Archival collection - original personal papers, family papers and organizational records
- Photography collection - original negatives, photographs and digital images
- Artwork and Museum collection – art and artifacts that document and illustrate the history and contributions of African Americans

Secondary sources include books, pamphlets, maps, government publications, and periodicals that support African American research and scholarship

### Appendix 3: Federal Government Documents

The Denver Public Library has received documents from the federal government since the late 19th century. Before 2009, the Library was a regional depository in the Federal Depository Library Program, and received copies of all distributed publications. As of late 2023 nearly all new documents are electronic. Selected documents include core U.S. government resources and other materials that support the Library's mission and fill information needs of the community.

The Library selects and retains documents in the following subject areas:

- Executive and legislative activities of the federal government, including hearings and annual reports
- Consumer protection
- Health
- Civil rights
- Public lands and recreation, with an emphasis on Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West
- Historical studies, with special emphasis on subjects of regional interest
- Arts
- Environmental issues
- Water policy
- Materials supporting the K-12 curriculum
- Materials about and of use to small business

Materials that are not selected and are weeded as time allows:

- Newsletters
- Directories
- Catalogs and bibliographies
- Forms
- Announcements
- Technical reports, notes, bulletins
- State-specific publications for states outside the Rocky Mountain West
- Internal/administrative agency materials unless of unusual historical interest

### Appendix 4.: Procedure for Request for Reconsideration

Denver resident customers may request reconsideration and removal of items in the collection by submitting a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

form, available at any Library location. Staff review the request in relation to the Library's mission and selection criteria. The City Librarian reviews the request and staff evaluation and will reply to the request within thirty days of its receipt.

If multiple titles are submitted for reconsideration, they should be submitted on separate request forms and handled individually or together as the library sees fit. The library will not reconsider the same library resource more than once every two years. The library reserves the right to deny consideration of a request when multiple requests are submitted which would create an unreasonable workload, or when the library determines that a request lacks sufficient merit. Once a final determination has been made for a library resource that is the subject of a request for reconsideration, the library will make the determination and how it comports with this Policy available to the public; the library will not remove, discontinue, or restrict a library resource as a result of a request for reconsideration until the determination regarding the library resource has been made available to the public. A written request for reconsideration is not considered a library user record and will be made publicly available under the Colorado Open Records Act.

Library staff are not subject to termination, demotion, discipline, or retaliation for refusing to remove a library resource before it has been reviewed in accordance with this policy.

Requests for Reconsideration will always conform to the requirements of Section 24-90-122, of the Colorado Revised Statutes as it may be amended from time to time.

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