



Los Alamos County Library System

Collection Development Guidelines 2021-2026

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TABLE OF CONTENT:

p. 1-3:	POLICIES - EXCERPTS
p. 4-6:	COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES
p.7-11:	COLLECTIONS OVERVIEW
p. 12-14:	COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

POLICIES

Excerpts relevant to collection development from:
Los Alamos County Library System Policies
Adopted 9.11.2019 by Los Alamos County Council

1.1 Mission

The Library offers opportunities for our diverse regional community to learn, know, gather and grow by providing open and equal access to a variety of ideas and information through evolving technology and services.

The Library recognizes that its services must be valued by members of the community and must be of such relevance that support for the Library remains a valid use of community resources.

Recognizing that the community is constantly changing, the Library will continually assess its services in the context of professional library standards and community needs. The intent is to identify and provide, to the broadest range of individuals and entities possible, those public library services determined to be both appropriate and reasonable.

The Library will strive to maintain reasonable levels of service in a consistent and dependable manner.

1.2 Purpose

The Library provides educational, cultural, leisure, reference, technology, and information services, resources, and programs for all ages. The library is guided in the nature and type of services offered by available financial resources, community needs, and professional standards and has historically emphasized direct public service rather than archival activities.

1.3 Goals

Goals, objectives, and related activities are established as part of a dynamic response to community needs as identified by various assessment methods. Goals will reflect selected public library services responses. The extent and mix of services will vary according to the needs of the community and the availability of resources. Delivery methods will change as technology develops.

4.3 Library Materials

The Library will develop and maintain a collection of materials that, to the fullest extent practical, meets the varying informational and recreational needs of the Library's service population, in particular, residents of Los Alamos County.

No library can meet all the needs of all of its users all of the time. The Library will, however, apply all reasonable diligence in developing and maintaining the best collection possible given available resources.

The Library will maintain a definite and recognizable process for the development of the collection. While the details of the process may change as needs require, the procedures will be defined clearly and be easily available and certain basic elements, as noted below, will be included.

4.3.1 Selection responsibility

The Library Manager is responsible for collection development, and is assisted by members of staff, with suggestions from library patrons. Those making selection or withdrawal decisions are guided by professional review and evaluation sources, practical experience, personal knowledge, expert advice, and community needs as reflected in collection usage statistics and individuals' comments.

4.3.2 Selection parameters

The principles of intellectual freedom do not require that any public library own or not own any particular item. The Library acquires materials to support a broad range of citizen interests, attempting to maintain a balance in an effort to achieve its service goals. The Library must, however, carefully consider the use of public funds to respond to individual requests.

In selecting materials of any format, the Library Manager and staff should neither avoid nor encourage political, social, artistic, or religious controversy. The Library takes no advocacy position on materials. Believing however, that the free and healthy intellect thrives on diverse opinions, the Library encourages an environment of intellectual stimulation.

In fulfilling its purposes, the Library strives to assure a measure of educational, cultural, recreational, research and informational materials, regardless of format. Certain materials may have educational, cultural, recreational, research and informational value even though parts of the materials contain salacious appeal. Selection of such materials is discretionary with the Library Manager, all other policies considered.

Patrons concerned about material in the collection are welcome to discuss those concerns with the Library Manager. Patrons who wish to ask the Library to reconsider material in the collection will be given the Request for Reconsideration forms and informed of the reconsideration process.

4.3.3 Collection characteristics

The Library's collection serves the needs of the community and may change over time. Among the most commonly discussed collection characteristics are format, audience, and availability.

4.3.3.1 Format

The Library does not restrict the format of materials to be considered for the collection. All formats are potentially appropriate and shall be given due consideration. Examples of formats include, but are not limited to, print, audio, video, digital, graphic, etc. New formats are evaluated for inclusion as patron interest warrants and resources permit.

4.3.3.2 Audience

Although the Library does not categorize nor limit access to materials designated as 'adult' or 'youth', certain materials will be of particular interest to or appropriate for different age groups by virtue of the subject matter, level of complexity, etc., and will be designated as such. These designations are intended to provide a convenient mechanism for the arrangement of materials of particular interest to adults, children, young adults, teens, and adults working with children and are not intended to restrict use to a particular age group.

4.3.3.3 Availability

As a public library, the Library emphasizes the circulation of library materials and for that reason, the bulk of the collection is available on loan to eligible users.

In order to support certain services such as reference and information activities, or to safeguard rare or costly items, the Library generally limits the use of some specialized materials and some equipment to library facilities.

4.3.3.4 Donations

Donations are accepted for the collection when they assist the Library in accomplishing its goals and objectives and also meet physical and subject standards required of similar items in the collection. Guidelines for the disposition of those items that the Library cannot accept will be maintained. Materials donated to the Library cannot be accepted on a conditional basis and items not added to the collection cannot be returned to the donor. The Library retains unconditional ownership of all donations and makes the final decision on acceptance, use, or disposition. The donor is responsible for disposing of items not accepted by the Library.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Los Alamos County Library System has a collection of more than 185,000 physical materials in addition to numerous digital resources. The collections of materials offer choices of format, perspective, and language. “Materials” has the widest possible meaning and includes but is not limited to print, audiovisual, and digital formats.

Funding for collections comes from the Los Alamos County appropriation from the General Fund, supplemented by New Mexico State Library Grants-in-Aid, donations from the Friends of Los Alamos County Libraries, the Mesa Public Library Gift Fund from private citizens and community organizations, General Obligation Bond funding, and other grants as available.

The library strives to develop a collection responsive to the changes in and the needs of the community. As charged by Library policy approved by the Los Alamos County Library Board and adopted by the Los Alamos County Council, the Library Manager and the Collection Development Committee regularly evaluate these needs and identify collection and weeding priorities.

Collection Scope

The library collection offers a broad choice of popular, classic, and research materials to acknowledge and enhance the diversity of tastes, reading levels, languages interests, and experiences of users. The digital collection is equally available at both Mesa Public Library and the White Rock Branch. The print and audiovisual collections of both libraries are shaped, in part, by the availability of space and by customer use through a floating collection system, in which some items move freely between library locations rather than being owned by a specific location. All library materials including physical and electronic collections are acquired and maintained in a coordinated effort to offer a balanced collection.

General Selection Criteria

The library attempts to obtain a variety of materials to satisfy the needs of all patrons. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are evaluated by the following standards. An item need not meet all criteria to be acceptable, nor is any single criteria decisive. The order of the general criteria in the list does not indicate priority.

The following general criteria are used:

- community needs, interests, and demand
- reputation, qualifications, and authority of the creators, publisher, or producer
- literary, artistic, or technical merit
- relationship to existing material in the collection
- accessibility from other lending sources
- format appropriate to library use
- recommendations of reviewers
- price (within limits of budgets for materials)

- suitability of subject, style, and reading level for the intended audience
- appropriateness and effectiveness of format to content
- accuracy of content
- date of publication
- special effort to obtain material representing all sides of lived experience including a balanced examination of controversial issues and current topics
- inclusion of resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers
- multiple formats to accommodate access for users with different needs
- content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups
- content in the major languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible

Gifts

Gifts of donated materials may be accepted if they meet the library's general selection criteria and one or more of the following criteria:

- are needed, i.e., not duplicating materials already in the library
- are in good condition and suitable for library use
- are fragile but of historical value to the collections
- are in a format currently supported by the library
- have been measured by evaluation criteria. (See Collection Maintenance)

Gifts may also be purchased by the library with money donated to the Library Gift Fund which is authorized under the Los Alamos County Code of Ordinances Sec. 20-367, and which is administered by the County Administrator or designee in accordance with approved administrative policy. Collection development teams will choose these materials according to donor's preference and the library's general selection criteria and recommend their selections to the Library Manager for final purchase approval.

The library endorses resource sharing, especially among area libraries, and may direct donors to the area library best suited to catalog, house, and promote their gifts.

Materials by Local Authors

Materials by local authors or creative artists who live or work in Los Alamos County or who created works while living or working in the County may be accepted as gifts or may be purchased if they meet general selection guidelines. The library maintains a representative, not a complete, collection of materials by local authors.

Materials for People with Disabilities

The library provides materials for people with disabilities in accordance with patron needs and the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and related acts. Physical collections include Large Print books and magazines, Books on CD, DVDs with subtitles or captioning, and Braille books for children. Digital collections with accessible features include eBooks and magazines,

downloadable audiobooks, streaming audio and video, and research databases. Home delivery is available to individuals in need.

Multiple copies

The library may buy multiple copies in multiple formats of titles with anticipated high patron demand. Acquisition of multiple formats of the same titles also supports accessibility for all users including users with disabilities. Digital and physical formats are acquired in a coordinated effort based on interest, usage, and budgetary considerations. The library does not strive for complete duplication of titles in all offered formats.

Patron Requests

Patron requests are an excellent indicator of the needs and desires of current library patrons. The library makes an effort to honor patron requests if the requests meet the library's general selection criteria and can be acquired with a reasonable effort. Requests are reviewed as staff resources permit.

Replacements

Replacement of damaged or lost materials is made predicated on the following:

- resources available for replacement
- need for the item
- availability of the item
- historical value of the item

Subject replacements are made for items according to the library's general selection criteria.

Standing Orders

Standing orders may be in place for materials that are important enough to the library's collection that receiving them automatically without evaluating individual volumes is more important than missing them.

COLLECTIONS OVERVIEW

In addition to the general selection criteria above each collection is developed with a special emphasis as follows:

Audiovisual Materials

The audio collection, music CDs as well as audiobooks, may be in compact disc or digital format; the video collection may be in DVD or digital format. This does not exclude other formats that may emerge. Older formats may be withdrawn when the technology is no longer supportable.

Musical audio recordings consist of classical and popular music and patron requests. Audiobook recordings consist of information, how-to, youth, world languages, and popular entertainment items. Video recordings consist of documentaries, television series, youth, world language films, and feature films as well as major award-winning films.

The library does offer a small collection of video games for popular, current models of gaming consoles. Video games are evaluated by the following additional criteria and need not meet all to be acceptable, nor is any single criteria decisive. The order of the criteria in the list does not indicate priority:

- quality of animation
- quality of sound effects
- originality of concept and style
- accessibility of display
- challenge level of controls
- durability of appeal
- current appeal

Digital Collection

Digital resources, including subscription databases, apps, and links to websites, are provided through the library website to increase the depth and breadth of the collection. These digital resources enhance the library's collections of books, magazines, films, and music. Some links may be available only within a library building or only to library card holders.

Criteria used to select website links shall include but not be limited to those that:

- Are useful sources of current, consistently maintained information
- Are created by credible authors/producers
- Are well-organized and easily navigable
- Complement the physical collection

English Language Learners

The library provides materials and databases featuring literacy skills, speaking and writing aids and practice, motivational stories, work literacy, tutoring and teacher training, workbook texts, citizenship, and pleasure reading. This collection is of value to ELL (English Language Learners),

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), ABE (Adult Basic Education) and other groups studying to improve English communication skills.

Fiction

Staff selects fiction titles based on circulation statistics, demand, reputation, and reviews that consider the following additional criteria:

- the appeal of a book for a specific audience taking care to select for all identified segments of our library community.
- providing a broad selection of literature for diverse audiences, reflecting the widest possible range of experiences, emotions, perspectives, voices, and literary styles.

Framed Art

The library maintains a collection of framed art for checkout. The collection consists largely of prints, but some original art may also be included. From time to time, staff selects new purchases from a variety of painting styles, subjects, and artists, but with a special focus on South Western and local motifs.

Government Information

The library provides an ever-changing group of local government print resources for public review, including Los Alamos County reports and presentations related to ongoing projects. Depending on their long-term informational value, some of these materials become a part of the library's permanent collection. The library also provides online access to local, regional, and national government information.

Graphic Novels

Graphic novels are evaluated by the following additional criteria and need not meet all to be acceptable, nor is any single criteria decisive. The order of the criteria in the list does not indicate priority:

- compelling and expressive artwork
- narrative structure
- balance between dialog and illustration, which should work well together
- well-drawn and well-developed characters
- variety and diversity of genres of nonfiction and fiction

Kits

The library has book discussion kits available for checkout. Kits contain 9 copies of the same title in regular print, a large print copy as well as biographical information about the author and discussion questions. Materials are selected according to the following additional criteria:

- availability in paperback format
- availability in audio format
- availability in large print format
- of interest to and suitable for book group discussion

The youth collection provides some kits for checkout, based on specific themes. Each kit contains a set of single, individual titles on the same subject, selected by staff for their quality and interest levels.

Large Print

Large print materials are selected in accordance with general selection criteria, based on demand and availability.

Local History

The library collects historical print, audiovisual, and digital materials that pertain to the Manhattan Project, the Los Alamos Ranch School, and Los Alamos County. The library is not an archive for primary source material. The library also collects materials pertaining to Northern New Mexico and New Mexico generally if they are of interest to patrons.

The library maintains microfilm and digital archives of current and historical Los Alamos newspapers. In addition, the local history collection includes microfilm of the Albuquerque Journal through 2016. The library also maintains a file of newspaper clippings and other ephemera on Los Alamos news and events, suitable for research interests.

Maps

The library provides a basic collection of maps appropriate to the needs of the majority of our patrons. In addition to general and subject atlases, this includes selected city maps, local and regional USGS topography maps, and regional Forest and Park Service recreation maps. Format, including durability and feasibility of storage, is an additional selection criterion for maps.

Non-fiction

Staff selects non-fiction titles based on reviews that consider the following additional criteria:

- the amount, quality, and accessibility of the information presented
- the potential value to patrons

Periodicals

The periodicals collection provides print and digital magazines and newspapers with current information on a variety of popular and practical topics. Selection is based on the following additional criteria:

- an examination of a sample copy
- availability and ease of digital access

Bound volumes of periodicals may be retained for research purposes.

Professional Collection

The focus of the professional collection is to help library staff, library boards as well as other members of the library community by providing a broad scope of materials on planning, implementing, maintaining, and evaluating all aspects of public library service; and to encourage continuous learning for staff.

Rare/Limited Access Materials

The library does not have a designated rare materials collection. There is a small collection of titles held in locked bookcases. Items selected for the locked case should match the library's general selection criteria. When feasible, the library should also hold a circulating copy of these items and should buy current reprints of historical items to increase patron access.

An item is placed in the locked case if it is of lasting local or historical interest and difficult to replace or too fragile to be housed in open stacks. Examples of topics of lasting local or historical interest include:

- the history of Los Alamos
- the Manhattan Project
- the natural history of Los Alamos and the Jemez region
- the surrounding northern Indian pueblos
- Bandelier National Monument

The purpose of the locked case is not to deny patrons access to certain items; rather it is to ensure that the library will always have a copy of these important items on the premises.

Reference Materials

Reference works are factual in nature and designed to provide patron access to needed information. Additional criteria for selecting reference materials are:

- authority
- accuracy
- currency
- scope
- impartiality
- organization (ease of access to the contents, thoroughness of indexing)
- special features (for example graphics and special topics)

Small Press and Self-Published Materials

Following the library's general selection criteria, staff selects fiction and non-fiction titles based on reviews that consider the following additional criteria:

- Published by a small press, independent press, or is self-published
- Award winners, recommended titles, long- and shortlisted for awards
- Appeal and value to patrons

Southwest Collection

The subject area of materials added to the Southwest collection falls within the borders of New Mexico and Arizona. Materials containing information on the Four Corners area, Texas, Colorado, Utah, Native American history, Native American arts and crafts, the Santa Fe Trail, the Rio Grande, and Spanish Colonial history that are outside of the New Mexico and Arizona borders or materials with only a portion within New Mexico or Arizona are evaluated on a case by case basis for inclusion in the Southwest collection. Considerations for inclusion are:

- geographical proximity to New Mexico and Arizona
- historical influence
- cultural influence
- environmental influence
- amount of information about New Mexico or Arizona

World Languages Materials

The library maintains a small collection of materials in world languages. The collection consists of popular fiction and nonfiction items selected according to the library's general selection criteria. It is primarily intended for the recreational reading of patrons fluent in the languages represented.

Collections in additional languages may be added on a trial basis upon demonstrated community interest and input.

Youth and Teen Materials

The youth services collection serves young people from birth through high school, as well as parents and other adults working with young people, and students of children's literature.

Youth Collection

The library's general selection criteria are applied, with emphasis on:
recommended book lists (award winners, required class lists)
library programs, community activities, and school assignments

Teen Collection

The teen collection serves patrons from the approximate age of 13 to 18 years. Additional selection criteria are:

- recreational titles, classics, titles on recommended lists, award winners, class requirements
- materials produced for mid and high school students with teen viewpoints, protagonists, issues of interest, reflecting pop culture
- materials chosen from young adult review sources with input from a panel of teen patrons
- materials that deal with a subject in more detail and depth than titles in the juvenile collection.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

Maintenance of the collection is a fundamental responsibility of all library staff members. Staff members continuously evaluate materials, withdrawing, replacing, or repairing them.

As new books are constantly added to the collection, “weeding” of existing materials creates space for the new; keeps the appearance of the collection fresh; keeps the content of the collection up to date; makes it easier for patrons to find what they need; and creates a balanced collection that reflects the changing needs of its community.

The library’s weeding procedures are based on CREW: a Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries, produced by the Texas State Library and available at: <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/ld/pubs/crew/crewmethod12.pdf>

Materials may be withdrawn from the collection if they are:

- no longer accurate or factual
- worn out through use
- trivial, representing a topic that was popular at a specific point in time
- seldom used
- available digitally

System last copies are retained only if they are in demand and meet general collection criteria.

Statistical tools such as circulation reports, shelf allotments and average age of the collections are studied to determine how the collection is being used and how it should be changed to respond to patron usage. Staff members aggressively search for newer materials to update those that have been withdrawn.

Weeding is not employed as a convenient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by segments of the community. Such use of the evaluation function is a violation of the principles of intellectual freedom as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights.

Depending on condition, materials withdrawn from the collection as part of the evaluation process are offered to the used bookstore operated by the Friends of Mesa Public Library in accordance with a written contract. When deemed appropriate, materials may also be given to other tax supported agencies, such as other libraries or schools.

Mending

Materials are mended in-house if the mending process is straightforward, successful and cost effective. Materials are not mended if they have water or animal damage, have mold or mildew of any kind, or have an odor, nor if they are badly damaged.

Materials that cannot be mended are withdrawn or replaced. Books may be rebound according to selection, evaluation, and bindery criteria.

Bindery

A book or periodical is rebound if it is:

- a volume of a set that remains in use
- expensive and of value to the collections
- out-of-print and of great value to the library and community

A book or periodical should not be rebound if it:

- is a mass market paperback
- can be replaced readily
- has already been rebound
- has fragile paper
- has margins that are too small
- has missing pages

Complaints and Censorship

When dealing with patrons complains and matters of censorship, the library refers to the principles laid out in the Library Bill of Rights:

Library Bill of Rights

The Los Alamos County Library System will uphold the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights:

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

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

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

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

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

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

Complaint Procedure

The Los Alamos County Library System will follow the following procedure if a patron has a complaint about library materials:

The concerned patron will be offered the opportunity to discuss her/his concern with the Library Manager with input from the staff person responsible for selection.

If the patron is dissatisfied with this discussion and wishes to pursue the issue, the patron must complete and submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources.

The Library Manager will review the complaint and Request for Reconsideration and will respond in writing.

If the issue is still not resolved to the patron's satisfaction, the complaint will be taken to the Director of Community Services. The matter will also be reviewed by the Library Board, along with any supporting documentation from the patron and/or the Library Manager. The Director of Community Services will prepare a written response, taking into consideration the Library Board's review

Labeling

In keeping with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the library uses only labels which are viewpoint neutral directional aids that make it easier for patrons to locate materials of their choosing. The library does not use prejudicial labels that are designed to warn, discourage, or prohibit patrons or certain groups of patrons from accessing the material.

A variety of organizations promulgate rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public concerning their opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of materials. In keeping with the Library Bill of Rights, the library does not adopt, enforce, or endorse any of these rating systems; however, neither does the library remove or destroy ratings that are included as part of the material or permanent packaging, as that could constitute expurgation.