



Collection Development and Maintenance Policy

Purpose

Collection Development is the ongoing process of assessing the materials available for purchase, subscription or licensing and making decisions about their inclusion and retention within the Library. Collection Development supports the priorities of the Library's strategic plan and includes the selection and deselection of Library materials.

Scope of Collection

The Essex Library provides free access to materials in a number of formats including print, media and digital. It is the Essex Library's goal to provide our community with library resources that reflect a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. In developing and adopting this policy, the Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of the Library as a place of voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by the residents of Essex.

All library materials are evaluated and made available in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Section 46a-64 of the Connecticut State General Statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Responsibility of Selecting Library Materials

Librarians responsible for the selection of materials are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides residents with the widest array of informational, educational, and entertaining materials. Collection development and management decisions are made by professional library staff based on the recognized merit of the work and in furtherance of the Library's mission and its ability to meet the needs and interests of the community for free access to materials and the right of readers to select what they read in a manner that is "uninhibited, robust, and wide-open". Direct selection of certain individual or categories Library materials may be delegated to Staff based on particular education, or training. The designated selectors and material specialists work collaboratively to ensure a robust, relevant, and inclusive overall collection.

Controversial Materials and Intellectual Freedom

Essex Library is committed to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We recognize and embrace the strengths of our differences, and celebrate the varied experiences and viewpoints that make up our community. To ensure a collection that reflects these ideals, we are flexible and conscientious in our selection and evaluation of materials. Specific acquisitions may include items that

may be unorthodox or unpopular with a majority of residents or may be considered by many controversial in nature.

Selection Criteria

Within the constraints of its budget, the Library provides a diverse range of materials in a variety of formats to support the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the community. Included are works of enduring value and timely materials on current issues. Collections are reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis to meet contemporary needs. The Library's acquisition of items does not constitute endorsement of their content or point of view but rather recognizes the value to the community in making available its expression, even if such expression is objectionable to some members of the community. Ultimate responsibility for the selection of materials lies with the Library's Executive Director, who develops the library's collection within the framework of the policy set by the Board of Trustees.

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. (An item need not meet all criteria in order to be accepted.)

- Literary quality as judged by reviewers, the staff, and the public
- Potential popularity or relevance among our readers
- Importance or interest of the subject
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- The authority and accuracy of the author
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Representation of diverse points of view
- The quality and appropriateness of the format, including ease of use, and availability of duplicates
- Titles recommended from standard bibliographies

Gifts and Donations

The Library may accept gifts of new materials with the understanding that the same guidelines of selection are applied to gifts as to materials acquired for the collection. The Library reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of gifts in accordance with criteria applied to purchased materials. Monies donated for the purchase of materials are gratefully accepted. Library staff will make the final determination of the materials to be purchased with such donated funds.

Digital Collections

Electronic materials play an important role in the Library's collection. These materials include databases, e-Books, e-Audiobooks, and downloadable and streaming media. Criteria used in selecting digital resources include ease of use, uniqueness of content, technology requirements, vendor reputation and customer service, availability for remote access, and cost. Certain digital collections the Library makes accessible to users are governed by the vendor's specific terms of service, including patron residency and minimum age requirements. Some material available in a broader digital collection might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. Library patrons are trusted to make their own

choices as to what they will use based on individual interests and needs. The Essex Library supports the right of each family to decide which items are appropriate for use by themselves and their children. Responsibility for a child's use of library materials lies with the parent or guardian. Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor are materials sequestered except to the extent required to protect them from damage or theft. The fact that children possibly may access materials their parents or guardians consider inappropriate does not impact the selection of databases and digital platforms.

The Essex Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom, adopted by the American Library Association, as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights and its Freedom to Read and Freedom to View Statements (see links below). In considering a complaint, the Library may seek advice from other groups who are concerned with intellectual freedom, such as the local media, the Connecticut Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee, and the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom, among others.

Concerns or complaints about library resources are limited to residents of Essex and should be brought to the attention of the Library Director. If the concern is not resolved through discussion with the Director, the complainant will be offered a ***Request For Reconsideration of Library Resources*** form. The form must be completed in its entirety and mailed or delivered to the Library Director to initiate a review of the item in question. Upon receipt of the completed Statement of Concern, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Library Director and the librarian responsible for selecting the material, or other library resource such as programs, displays, or other items or presentations will consider the issues and statements identified in the Statement of Concern and evaluate the material accordingly. This review will include an evaluation of the reasons for selecting the material, published professional reviews when available, and the information provided by the complainant.
2. The Library Director will decide whether to retain or withdraw the questioned resource and communicate that decision in writing to the complainant. The Library Director's response will include the procedure for appealing his or her decision.
3. If the complainant believes the Director's response is inadequate, a written appeal may be made to the Board of Trustees. The appeal will be considered at an open meeting with the Board of Trustees, with comment welcomed from the complainant and other interested Essex residents. No decision on the appeal will be made at that board meeting.
4. The Board's decision to retain or withdraw the questioned resource will be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees. Their decision will be communicated in writing to the complainant. The following guidelines will apply to items under reconsideration:
 - Items will not be removed from the collection or sequestered in any way during the reconsideration process.
 - Items that have been previously reconsidered and remain in the collection will not be reconsidered for 3 years from the date of the last reconsideration process.

- All requests for reconsideration will be reported to the Connecticut Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee and the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom.
- The Library Director will handle all requests for reconsideration with understanding, respect, and responsiveness.

Adopted by the Essex Library Board of Trustees

September, 15, 2025

Appendix A:

Libraries Online, Inc. Digital Collection Challenge Policy & Procedures Explanation of Digital Collections
Libraries Online, Inc. (LION) shares two digital collections among its member libraries, Overdrive electronic/audiobooks and Overdrive magazines. Overdrive electronic/audiobooks are selected by the LION eMaterials Committee, which is composed of librarians from member libraries. Given the cost of eBooks and audiobooks, the selection team follows collection development principles that focus on materials that appeal to a broad range of public library users of all ages. These include, but are not limited to:

- NYT best sellers
- Major prize winners & popular award winning titles
- Popular fiction and non-fiction authors
- Books that turn into movies
- Series – if available , including backlists of new releases
- Additional titles will be considered upon patron recommendation. Titles are withdrawn from the collection in order to maintain its usefulness, currency, relevance, or for contractual reasons between Overdrive, LION's content provider, and a publisher. Overdrive magazines are an inclusive collection for which the consortium pays a fixed fee. LION does not contribute to the development of the collection.

Policy Statement

Libraries Online, Inc. (LION) provides online access to electronic and other content to serve the interests of its member patrons. LION upholds the First Amendment and is dedicated to free inquiry. LION subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights and Connecticut Library Association Intellectual Freedom Statement Against Censorship. It also supports the "Freedom to Read" and the "Freedom to View" statements adopted by the American Library Association. LION endorses the Readers' First principles. LION believes responsibility for monitoring a child's access to resources rests with a parent or legal guardian. Individual member libraries do not have the authority to remove items in the LION collection. LION believes that no individual should censor or restrict the freedom of others to read or listen to the collection. LION will respond to patron concerns about the suitability of a particular title. Please direct these inquiries to info@lioninc.org. LION asks that you include the following information:

- Contact information (name, email address)
- Patron's LION Library • Item information (author/title)
- Examples of the unsuitability of the item in question The LION eMaterials Committee, in consultation

with the LION Board of Directors, will review the concern and respond to the patron within 30 days of submission.

LION Board approval, 2/22/22

ALA's Library Bill of Rights, 09/2023 <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

ALA's The Freedom to Read Statement, 09/2023
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

ALA's Freedom to View Statement, 09/2023
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>