



# San Diego County Library

## COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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### BACKGROUND

San Diego County Library serves the public's informational, educational, and general interest needs through 33 community libraries, five (5) MySDCL Library Kiosks, mobile outreach vehicles, and an Administrative Office. SDCL's service area comprises eleven (11) incorporated cities and the unincorporated portion of San Diego County, California. SDCL does not have a Central Library, has no subject departments, and serves its customers exclusively through suburban, small-town, and rural branch libraries.

SDCL's collection supports the following strategic objectives defined in the Library's strategic plan:

- Promote learning
- Champion civic engagement
- Encourage reading
- Design opportunities to enjoy culture and the arts

### PURPOSE

The collection development policy serves many functions. It is a framework for the growth and development of the library collection. It helps focus Collection Development staff on SDCL's mission. It informs library staff, the public, and our partners of the principles guiding our collection. It supports the principles of intellectual freedom, which is the access to a wide variety of ideas and information for all. It provides a process for addressing library user concerns about the collection.

## **COLLECTION FOCUS**

SDCL is a popular materials library which focuses on resources that are new and in high demand by our community. The Library's collection reflects the range of viewpoints and the social, economic, and cultural diversity of the region. The Library also maintains a collection of materials that support the basic informational and lifelong learning needs of the general public, even where less popular. Educational needs are supported for students in grades K-12 as a supplement to the school library, not supplanting it. The needs of higher education students are supported when they overlap with other areas of service. Reading and research needs that are not met through the collection are accessed through consortia agreements and interlibrary loan.

## **SELECTION RESPONSIBILITY**

SDCL has a Collection Development Department, composed of professional librarians, whose primary responsibility is to select all materials added to the collection, except those listed below.

- Magazines – selected by branch staff
- Databases - selected by a committee of librarians through the competitive procurement process
- Individual Friends of the Library groups also select and purchase titles that have restricted use for a limited period of time

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

### General Criteria

- Current or anticipated community demand or need
- Favorable reviews in professional or popular media
- Qualifications and/or reputation of author, artist, or publisher
- Receipt of or nomination for major awards
- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- Contribution to breadth of collection
- Contribution to the diversity of collection
- Suitability of format for library use
- Quality of production

- Suitability for intended audience
- Community relevance
- Cost
- Physical space limitations
- Licensing model for digital materials

**Demand** – The Library purchases additional copies of titles in order to reduce wait times for titles with customer requests. SDCL’s goal is to achieve a wait time of three months or less.

**Requests for Purchase** – SDCL considers items requested by both customers and staff. Recommended items are subject to the same selection criteria as all other materials selected by Library staff.

**Formats** – The Library collects materials in a variety of formats including print, audiovisual, and digital. Formats are determined based on community demand, durability, availability, and cost effectiveness. New formats of electronic and digital media are frequently introduced into the market. The library studies each new format carefully to assess its suitability for public library use. Sufficient time is often needed to properly determine whether they will receive lasting and widespread public acceptance, before determining which will be added to the collection. Old formats are phased out as community demand diminishes.

**Diversity** – SDCL is dedicated to providing a collection that is both representative of our population and also allows readers to explore the perspectives and experiences of others. We recognize that, historically, our selection practices have not reflected the diversity of San Diego County. This has resulted in a collection that does not adequately represent our community. SDCL is taking steps to remedy this by 1) ensuring that a significant percentage of new titles purchased center around populations that have been underrepresented; 2) repurchasing copies of older, but still relevant titles, as they wear out and are removed from the collection. An emphasis is placed on titles produced by individuals that share the perspectives or characteristics represented by their works. However, the publishing industry does not reflect the populations, in our county, state or country. As the publishing industry works towards improving representation, we hope that through these changes combined with our efforts, we can achieve a collection that more closely represents our population over the coming years.

**World Languages** – The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has designated languages that have more than 5,000 speakers in the County as threshold languages. In SDCL’s effort to provide materials to everyone, the library is purchasing materials in the threshold languages as available. In addition, SDCL collects materials in other languages that are actively used in the community, have demonstrated demand, and are available for purchase.

**Children and Teens Collections** – The Library seeks to provide a collection that reflects the diverse experiences of children and teens in our community and allows them to explore the world and their interests. The intended reading and developmental level is birth through grade 6 for the children’s collection and grades 7 through 12 for the teen collection. Reading and developmental levels are subjective measures, however, and are assigned by the library based on publisher recommendations and professional reviews. The Library recommends that parents and guardians review materials with their children to determine if they meet their needs.

The collection may include material which is controversial or offensive to some. The Library does not restrict the freedom to read or inquire for customers of any age. Parents and guardians have the responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing choices of their own minor children.

**Reference** – San Diego County Library has large reference collections at the El Cajon and Vista branches as well as small reference collections at neighborhood branches. Reference items are typically limited to in branch use at their designated location.

**Local History** – Many branches have collections of titles on the local history of the community and natural history of the region. These collections include ephemeral, scholarly, and specialized items and formats excluded from the regular collection. SDCL also curates a digital local history collection. See “*Digital Local History Collection*” for more information.

**Sustainability** – The County of San Diego’s vision of sustainability asks us to secure the future of our region, by placing sustainability at the forefront of our operations deeply embedded into our culture. Furthermore, SDCL is a member of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative and supports the County in their efforts to promote sustainable living. This includes purchasing a robust collection of general interest titles on related topics, adding specialized documents recommended by

the County Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice and other governmental entities.

Our efforts to increase the sustainability of our collection include a digital collection, floating collection, centralized collection development, re-selling and or recycle deaccessioned materials, and actively curating and promoting a diverse collection reflective of the community. In addition, SDCL manages the collection to ensure that it reflects the interests of the community by using a variety of data, including turnover, circulation, and customer input.

**Literacy Collection** – The Library purchases materials to support SDCL’s Adult Literacy programs, English as a Second Language (ESL) and teaching adults to read. Materials include educational books and media relating to reading, writing and comprehension, as well as fiction and nonfiction for adults learning to read. The Literacy collection includes materials that are housed in limited access collections, as well as, the general collection.

**Consortia Partners** – SDCL participates in two consortia lending partnerships, Circuit and Link+. Circuit is a collaboration between public and university libraries in San Diego. Link+ includes public and university libraries throughout the state of California. By using these partnerships, SDCL is able to focus on a curated collection for our local communities, while still maintaining access to a broader variety of titles and interests.

**Local and Self-published authors** – The Library purchases local and self-published titles when they meet the selection criteria outlined in this policy. Donations of one copy of works by local San Diego County authors or artists are, however, accepted for review even when they don’t meet standard requirements for purchase. One copy of the title is added when they meet minimum requirements for accuracy, quality, timeliness, and format. Common reasons that local items are not added include:

- Spiral or staple bound books
- Consumable pages (coloring pages, tear out pages, etc.)
- Out of date nonfiction
- Nonfiction on topics authored by individuals without proper credentials
- Excessive grammatical errors

**Donations** – The library accepts monetary donations to enhance the collection, which may be designated for specific audiences or types of materials. Requests for specific titles cannot be accommodated. Designations must be approved by Collection Development staff prior to acceptance.

Donations of physical materials are not accepted for addition to the collection except when they are unavailable preprocessed for circulation through the Library’s primary materials vendors. All exceptions must be approved by Collection Development staff.

Some examples of items that may be accepted include:

- Titles by local authors
- Titles relevant to San Diego County
- World language materials

All donations become the property of the collection.

## **COLLECTION MANAGEMENT**

The San Diego County Library has one shared collection across all locations. Individual titles and copies are not considered the property of a specific location. Therefore, the needs of the library system, as a whole, in addition to the needs of the individual branch are considered when staff perform collection management.

### **Floating collection**

The San Diego County Library has a floating collection. Materials move from branch to branch based on customer requests and the needs at specific branch locations. The Collection Development Team selects titles and quantities based on anticipated needs of the system. Items are assigned to initial locations based on customer requests, branch size and circulation, and community interest.

### **Weeding**

Collections are weeded on an ongoing basis to remove items that no longer meet the collection criteria, most often when they are outdated, in poor condition, or when demand declines. Discarded materials are resold to benefit SDCL, recycled, or given to County departments and community organizations per the policy outlined in Policy O.18 Disposal of Discarded County Library Materials.

## **Inventory**

The Library's catalog is the official record of the collection. To ensure that the record is accurate, an inventory of the entire collection is completed every year. Staff review a different portion of the collection each month, searching for items that have not circulated within the past two years. An additional sample inventory is completed at 4 branches every year to identify potential issues.

## **Deposit collections**

Some branches support the community through deposit collections, which reside at offsite locations. Deposit collections are curated and maintained by branch staff, based on the customer profile in the Deposit Collection Agreement and materials on-hand at the branch. Sites can request a format, reading level, genre, or subject, but requests for specific titles cannot be accommodated. Materials remain the property of SDCL and will be returned to the general collection at the end of the 30-day loan period. For more information see Policy O.68 Deposit Collection.

## **Collection Balance**

SDCL reviews collections, both systemwide and by branch, on an annual or semi-annual basis to determine if each category of material is appropriately sized when compared to demand. Collection balance is adjusted when needed, as allowed by availability of materials and budget.

## **INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND THE FREEDOM TO READ**

SDCL supports the freedom of information and an individual's right to read, listen to, or view materials of their choosing, for both educational and recreational purposes without restriction, as outlined in the following documents (see Appendices):

- AB1825 California Freedom to Read Act
- COSD BOS Challenged & Banned Books 8-27-24, Minute Order No. 18

In accordance with the California Freedom to Read Act, SDCL further acknowledges: the collection meets the broad and diverse interests of the community and respects both the library's autonomy and their specific community needs; the public library serves as a center for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas; 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; the right of the public to

receive access to a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences.

As such, the Library provides the San Diego County community with access to a broad range of ideas and perspectives through the Library collection and consortial borrowing agreements.

## **REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

Some materials held in the Library collection might be controversial and certain individuals may believe they are inappropriate for the collection. In these instances, library users are encouraged to discuss their concerns with library staff at their local branch. If the library user would like further review of the title, a staff member can provide a **Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources** form\_(LIB 03-17).

When a *Request for Reconsideration* form is received, it will be forwarded to the Collection Development Manager and the Intellectual Freedom Committee. The Collection Development Manager will convene a team to review the challenged material. The team will read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety. Once completed, information is gathered about the challenged material and the criteria used in selecting the item and the material is evaluated within the context of the Collection Development Policy. Based on this information, the team will make a recommendation to Library Administration regarding the material in question. Library Administration will provide a written response to the library user after the item has been reviewed. Library users seeking further review of the title may appeal the decision to the Library Director. Materials under review will remain available for circulation.

**Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources** forms are accepted and reviewed when:

- Requester is a San Diego County resident.
- The title requested for consideration has not been reviewed via this process in the past 12 months.

## **DIGITAL COLLECTIONS**

SDCL's collection includes a variety of resources in digital format such as databases, online learning tools, websites, eBooks, downloadable audiobooks, streaming media, and digitized versions of physical media. Demand for a digital



item may or may not mirror that of the physical item. As a result, the digital collection may include titles, genres and formats that are not included in the physical collection and vice versa. Digital collections are selected using the same criteria above, with the following additions or exceptions:

### **Databases**

SDCL provides customer access to various online resources, which offer lifelong learning and research opportunities. These are subscriptions-based paid resources that the library offers to County residents for free. Additional selection criteria:

- Ease of use
- Feedback on database trials
- Number of simultaneous users
- Remote access
- Relationship of the resource to the print and digital collection
- Usage statistics

### **Outside Websites**

SDCL also includes a limited number of resources and databases on the website that complement our paid subscriptions. These resources are carefully curated by our Collection Development team.

- Relationship of the resource to the print and digital collection
- Scope of the website. Sites with a broader scope that appeal to a wide audience are given greater consideration
- Clear identification and reliability of the information providers
- Accuracy and appropriateness of content
- Presence of ads, pop-up or otherwise
- Level of commerciality
- Sites that charge library customers to use some or all of the content on the site are not added, unless the free content is significant, and the site does not use aggressive marketing techniques to encourage the customer to pay for the additional content

### **Digital Local History Collection**

SDCL curates a digital local history collection of original source materials, including but not limited to photographs, documents, and oral histories, that are historically significant to the San Diego County region. Every effort will be made to seek out stories showcasing the voices of all people represented in our communities. Some documents about the history of hate groups may be included for research purposes, but not when they exist only to incite and/or divide

populations. SDCL considers the following criteria when choosing items for this collection.

- **Historical significance** – makes a significant contribution to the historical record of San Diego County
- **Copyright** – an item will only be considered if it is not under copyright or permission from copyright holder is provided
- **Access** – digitization increases public access to information that is currently limited. SDCL’s digitized collection will be shared via partners for a broader access and discovery
- **Availability** of the resource in other publicly accessible digital collections
- **Preservation** – digitization preserves access to materials that are fragile. If an item must be destroyed to digitize it, preservation will be balanced with the increased access and rarity of the item
- **Longevity** - content is useful for generations to come
- **Demand** – priority will be given to resources that have a larger community demand
- **Format** – item is in a format that can be digitized. Items may be given priority based on ease of digitization
- **Diversity** - resource(s) help portray the depth and diversity of the community
- **Provenance** – source and descriptive information are available to support the discovery and use of the item
- **Partners** – partnerships with outside organizations. SDCL will host collections for partner organizations to increase public access, where the collection meets the stated selection criteria and SDCL has the resources available
- **Cost to the County**  
**Funding** – priority may be given to digitization projects when specialized funding is available, such as grants or donations, the project meets the criteria above

Items may be removed from the digital collection if:

- Content is determined to be inaccurate or misrepresented
- Notification of copyright violation or plagiarism
- They are no longer historically significant
- The collection has changed such that the item no longer adheres to the mission, collection development criteria or standards stated in this policy

## Maintenance

All digitized materials should be viewed as long-term digital assets and preserved in a manner that will ensure their long-term viability and ability to migrate to new formats.

## APPENDICIES

### **CALIFORNIA FREEDOM TO READ ACT (2024)**

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240AB1825](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1825)

### **COSD BOS CHALLENGED & BANNED BOOKS 8-27-24, MINUTE ORDER NO. 18**

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cob/bos-document-search.html>

### **LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS**

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

### **FREEDOM TO READ**

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

### **FREEDOM TO VIEW**

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>

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