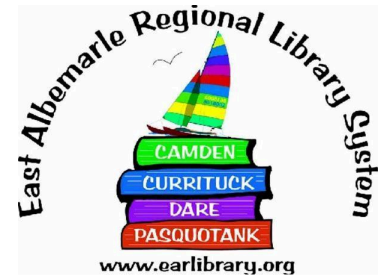


# Collection Development Policy



## **INTRODUCTION**

The East Albemarle Regional Library (EARL) is a regional system providing library services to the residents of and visitors to Camden, Currituck, Dare and Pasquotank counties in Northeastern North Carolina. System headquarters are located in the Pasquotank County Library in Elizabeth City.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The EARL Board of Trustees has adopted the following mission:

The East Albemarle Regional Library (EARL) System is a strong community partner that provides resources, services, and programs to foster inclusivity, creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Collection Development includes the planning, evaluating, selecting, acquiring, organizing, displaying, and weeding of the Library's collections.

Library materials include, but are not limited to, the following; books, magazines, newspapers, audiobooks, music, movies, large print materials, online databases, digital and streaming content, special collections, and new formats as they evolve.

## **SUPPORT FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM**

EARL provides information on many topics, reading levels, and interests in an environment that supports an individual's right to have access to ideas representing multiple points of view. To meet its goals and objectives, EARL must protect the freedom of all to choose their own information. Access is provided readily and equitably to users, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, disability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or political views.

## **OBJECTIVES**

EARL's collections are developed and managed to meet the majority of the educational, informational, and recreational needs of the Library's service area. Since each of the strategic directions noted above correlates with a materials goal, in order to accomplish its goals, EARL

will focus on print and non-print material to support community requests for information about topics of everyday interest and concern. EARL staff build and maintain patron-oriented collections by anticipating and responding to their needs and expectations.

Collection decisions are made in conjunction with EARL's Mission Statement, including the following:

- Committing to excellent service and convenient access for all library users
- To foster a love of reading
- Developing library services that incorporate both physical and digital collections
- To provide opportunities for lifelong learning for all library users

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION**

Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Regional Director and the County Librarians, who operate within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees. The County Librarians determine the budget, guidelines, and organizational structure for the staff who select resources and develop displays. Selectors choose appropriate materials for their collection areas, weed to keep their areas current and in good physical condition, and spend their budget in a timely and organized manner. Library staff members and the public are encouraged to recommend materials for consideration. The addition of new library resources requested by patrons shall meet the standards of the EARL's Collection Development Policy. If a requested material is acquired, the requestor will be notified as soon as it is available. Contact your county library for a *Request for Library Resources* form.

Staff have these responsibilities in the development of patron-oriented collections:

- Engaging in open, continuous two-way communication with library patrons and recognizing that individuals have different ways of expressing their needs based on age, language, economic status, culture, or other characteristics
- Interacting with patrons with understanding, respect, and responsiveness
- Handling all requests equitably
- Working in partnership with one another to understand and respond to community needs
- Understanding and responding to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Recognizing that materials of varying complexities and formats are necessary to satisfy diverse needs of library users
- Balancing individual needs and broader community needs in determining the best allocation of collection budget for acquiring or providing access to materials and information
- Seeking continuous improvement through ongoing measurement
- Reviewing the collection on a regular basis to identify areas of community interest that may need to be strengthened

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

East Albemarle Regional Library represents a broad demographic and selection criteria takes into

account the various interests and needs of the patrons served by EARL. Criteria for selection of materials fulfills EARL's mission and goals. EARL provides collections containing a wide variety of material formats, including print, audio-visual, and digital. In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, EARL staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, disability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and political diversity, not only of the region it serves but also the larger global perspective. Library collections will provide a wide range of opinion on current issues.

Collections contain popular works, classic works, and other materials of general interest. Works are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on subject matter or on political, religious, or ideological grounds. In building collections, Library staff is guided by the principle of selection, rather than censorship. Furthermore, the selection of a given item for EARL's collections should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a particular viewpoint.

When evaluating potential materials for EARL collections, the following criteria are applied according to the professional judgment, experience with library collections, knowledge of the subject and its literature, and experience of the staff regarding the needs of the community. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable.

#### **General Criteria:**

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Cost
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Attention by critics and reviewers
- Recognition as award-winning or classic titles
- Potential user appeal
- Requests by library patrons

#### **Content Criteria:**

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
- Reputation and significance of the author
- Objectivity
- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Clarity
- Currency
- Technical quality
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
- Vitality and originality

- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Sustained interest
- Relevance and use of the information
- Effective characterization
- Authenticity of history or social setting
- Local or regional significance

**Special Considerations for Electronic Information Sources:**

- Ease of use of the product
- Equipment needed to provide access to the information
- Technical support and training
- Available in full text
- Media type appropriate to the content and to the intended audience
- Format is effective for its intended use

**SELECTION PROCEDURE**

All materials and formats are selected by County Librarians and Branch Managers, or by staff members within that Library, who are qualified to do so by reason of education, training, experience, knowledge of subject area, and needs of the community. Subject specialists and the community members may also make recommendations for selection.

Library Staff select materials for EARL collections to fulfill the Library’s mission. Because the communities served by EARL differ in their needs and interests, the types or levels of collections developed also differ. Selectors may choose to develop collections on varying levels, ranging from minimal to comprehensive. Selectors are expected to exercise impartiality in materials acquisition practices.

Materials are selected for the general public. Materials are placed in children’s, young adult, or adult sections of the collection, depending on reading and interest levels.

Tools used in selection include professional and trade journals, online resources, and reviews from professional journals and other sources. Selectors are responsible for reading reviews and staying informed about current trends in purchasing.

Recommended lists may be consulted in the selection of materials, but selection is not limited to their listings:

- Best movie lists (e.g. Award winners, American Film Institute)
- Best books lists (e.g. Book awards, professional journal lists)
- Other specialized bibliographies

Review Sources include but are not limited to:

- Booklist
- Library Journal
- Horn Book

- Kirkus
- School Library Journal
- Publishers Weekly
- BookPage
- New York Times Book Review
- Novelist
- Goodreads

Popular Media Resources used as part of the selection process include:

- Talk and news shows
- Popular and local magazine
- Popular and local newspapers
- Online services
- Booksellers: online, local, and national

Materials are obtained through a variety of sources, primarily through EARL's two primary vendors, Baker & Taylor and Ingram, but also through the following:

- Direct from publishers (e.g. School of Government, Gale Cengage)
- Local Bookstores or Booksellers
- Other distributors (e.g. Barnes & Noble, Amazon)
- Gifts, in keeping with the EARL's Collection Development Policy

Gift materials and donations are judged by the selection criteria and are accepted or rejected by those criteria.

Textbooks are not purchased for the collection unless they fulfill a basic information need better than any other available material.

Selection is an ongoing process and materials that are removed are replaced as appropriate.

### **Selecting Materials on Controversial Topics**

EARL strives to have a balanced collection to represent multiple points of view. This includes having all sides of controversial issues as far as availability of materials, space, and budget allow. Selection is based upon criteria stated in this policy. The race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, disability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or political views of an author or creator; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content of an item; or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group in the community does not cause an item automatically to be included or excluded from EARL's collection.

The Library collection will be organized and maintained to facilitate access. No collection materials, book club selections, storytime selections, or library displays will be labeled, restricted, sequestered, or altered because of any controversy about the author, subject matter, or intended or potential audience.

All public libraries contain materials that some patrons may find objectionable. Libraries may omit from the collection materials that some patrons feel are important. In either case, EARL has procedures that patrons may use in requesting the review of materials.

## **GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

Gifts and donations of materials or funds for the purchase of materials are accepted in accordance with the local Gift Policy. Materials are reviewed using the same criteria as purchases. EARL reserves the right to dispose of any gifts that are given to any of its member libraries. EARL Librarians will determine how to best incorporate gift materials into the existing collections. Materials not added to the Library collections may be used for programs or given to other local organizations such as Friends of the Library, schools, or senior centers. Most gift materials received by EARL that are not added to the Library's collection are forwarded to the appropriate Friends of the Library, Library Foundation, or Trusts group for sale at their Bookstores or Books sales. Monies from such sales are used to benefit member libraries of EARL. The library is happy to provide a written acknowledgment of donations, but cannot legally appraise the value of materials.

Monetary donations may be made for the purchase of library materials. Recommendations from donors on the use of the funds are considered if the suggestions align with the Collection Development Policy.

*Contact your local library for their Gift forms for monetary donations and materials donations.*

## **COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND WEEDING**

Evaluation of EARL collections is done under the supervision of County Librarians and Branch Managers. EARL Library staff continually withdraws items from the collection to maintain a viable, relevant, and useful collection. Staff base their decisions on a number of factors, including publishing date, frequency of circulation, community interest, historical value, condition, unnecessary duplication of titles, space considerations, cost of replacement, availability in the NC Cardinal consortium, the availability of newer or revised materials, or whether another item or format better serves the same purpose.

Some areas of the collection, such as classics, award winners, and resources of local interest, may be retained despite low usage statistics. Some special collections are important to the community and material is not regularly weeded from those collections. The Marion Fiske Welch Collection at the Currituck County Public Library, The Gregory Williams Collection at the Dare County Library, and The Sawyer Collection at the Pasquotank County Library are three of these special collections in EARL.

To maximize the effectiveness of the collection, materials will be kept in their best possible condition by proper storage, cleaning, repairing, and rebinding.

Books that are removed from the library collection may be sold in library book sales, with the proceeds benefiting the Library, Friends of the Library, Library Foundations, or Trusts. Any unsold books will be disposed of according to local guidelines.

## **REVIEW OF LIBRARY RESOURCES**

All library users have a First Amendment right to read, view, and listen to library resources. The acquisition, retention, and removal of all library resources is determined by the EARL Collection Development Policy (“Policy”). All decisions about resources in collections must be based on that Policy. Patrons either individually or in a group may request a formal review of resources based only on their specific failure to conform to the Policy. Patrons must be residents of Camden, Currituck, Dare or Pasquotank counties and full-service library card holders.

As a North Carolina governmental entity, a county or branch public library part of the EARL system cannot acquire, retain, or remove any resource based on a patron’s objections to the content or viewpoint of the resource. Requests for review that are based on anything other than the resource’s nonconformity with the Policy will not be considered.

### **Procedures for Review of Library Resources**

#### **Informal Consideration**

The library staff will endeavor to assist patrons to find alternative resources that will better meet their needs and interests or those of their family members.

#### **Formal Request**

If the patron chooses to go forward with a formal complaint, Library staff will provide a packet of information, including the Collection Development Policy and the Request for Review of Library Resources form. The individual must be a resident of Camden, Currituck, Dare or Pasquotank counties and a full-service library card holder. The patron should put their request in writing by completing the form.

Formal complaints that object to library resources on the ground that they do not conform to the Policy must be in writing on the *Request for Review of Library Resources* Form. The Requestor must identify the specific criterion, norm, or standard in the Policy that is not conformed with and describe in detail how the resource fails to conform to the Policy.

Adherence to the Policy is an essential goal of EARL and the *Request for Review of Library Resources* plays an essential role in assuring that the Librarians do their job by adhering to and properly administering the Policy. EARL cannot adjudicate questions about the lawfulness of resources in its collection. Nor can it consider objections to resources based on their content, viewpoint, or patrons’ personal reactions to or opinions about resources. Such Requests or those otherwise unrelated to the Policy cannot and will not be considered.

Formal Requests for Review of Library Resources will be reviewed initially by the County Librarian (in conjunction with Branch Librarians, where applicable). The initial review determines whether the resource named in the Request was acquired, retained, or removed inconsistently with the Policy. Materials retain their status in the collection for the duration of the Request for Reconsideration period.

The Librarian’s written findings and recommended action(s), if any, are forwarded to the EARL

Director for further review and a recommendation of approval or disapproval. The Director's recommendation is reported to the EARL Board of Trustees for final action, either approving or disapproving the Director's recommendation.

The decision of the EARL Board of Trustees is final and material cannot be re-challenged for a period of five years from the decision date.

All steps in the Request for Review of Library Resources must be completed within a reasonable time. Decisions to acquire, retain, or remove resources for failure to conform to the Policy are serious and require timely action at every step of the reviewing process. In the event that a decision is not made within 6 months, the requestor will receive an update.

Patrons are to be notified in writing of the final disposition of their requests.

Approved by the EARL Board of Trustees  
October 23, 2024



**REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF LIBRARY RESOURCES**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

County of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an East Albemarle Regional Library card? Circle one: Yes No

1. What is the title, author, or identifier of the East Albemarle Regional Library resource for which you are requesting review?

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you read/examined the entire resource? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What about the resource is inconsistent with the East Albemarle Regional Library's Collection Development Policy? How is it inconsistent? Be specific.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest in our Collection Development Policy.

## Formal Complaint

1. If the patron chooses to go forward with a formal complaint, Library staff will provide a packet of information, including the Collection Development Policy and the ***Request for Review of Library Resources*** form. The individual must be a resident of Camden, Currituck, Dare or Pasquotank counties and a full-service library card holder. The patron should put their request in writing by completing the form.
2. Once the completed form is returned to the Library, it is given to the County Librarian or Branch Manager.
3. Library resources under reconsideration are not removed from the collection during the review period.
4. No single Library staff member or Library Board member has the authority to remove the resource under reconsideration.
5. The County Librarian (in conjunction with Branch Managers, where applicable) will review the completed form and the resource in question to consider whether it meets the criteria stated in this Policy.
6. The County Librarian forwards the written findings and recommended action to the EARL Director.
7. The Director will further review the resource and report a recommendation to the EARL Board of Trustees.
8. The Board of Trustees will recommend an action, either approving or disapproving the Director's recommendation.
9. The decision of the EARL Board of Trustees is final.
10. The Director will notify the patron in writing of the final disposition of their Requests within 9 months.
11. A title or resource will be reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees only once within a five-year period unless the content has undergone major revisions or at the discretion of the Library Director or the Library Board of Trustees.

Approved by the EARL Board of Trustees  
October 23, 2024