

Collection Development Policy

Mission

The Collection Development policy of the Library supports the mission of the Kern County Library. The Library functions as a major information source for County residents by providing a broad and relevant collection of materials to engage and inform people from differing communities, backgrounds, ages, and lifestyles. Our diverse collection of materials in English and other languages, in standard and emerging formats, builds community and cultivates opportunities for Kern County residents.

Purpose

The Collection Development Policy is designed to support the Library's mission and serves as a guide for the selection, acquisition, maintenance, and retention of materials by establishing procedures and guidelines that help the collection respond to community needs while protecting the collection from societal and political pressures and offers a process for addressing Library visitor concerns.

Responsibility Statement

The ultimate responsibility for selecting and weeding/deselecting library materials rests with the Director of Libraries. The Director delegates selection responsibilities to professional staff with the authority to interpret and apply selection policy.

Selection Philosophy

Widespread interest and usage are the most powerful influence on the Library's collection in addition to the following:

- Library visitors include individuals of every age, income level, education, religion, physical/mental/emotional ability, political or sexual orientation, culture, and ethnicity.
- Selections are made to provide a balance and diversity of viewpoints to the existing collection.
- Materials are provided in a variety of formats, both physical and digital, and reading levels to meet individual needs.
- Budget and space limitations require a focus on materials that appeal to a broad range of users, rather than classroom sets, textbooks, test manuals, or other specialized works.
- The Library provides materials to support each individual's journey and does not place a value on one visitor's needs or preferences over another's and upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others.

- Materials for children and teens are intended to broaden their vision, support reading, and to stimulate/widen their interests. The reading and viewing activity of children and teens is ultimately the responsibility of parents and the Library does not intrude on that relationship.

Selection Criteria

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

- Popular or community interest
- Professional reviews and literary merit
- Reputation and qualifications of the author or publisher, with preference given to titles vetted in the editing and publishing industry
- Materials reflecting all sides of issues
- Price, availability, and Library budget
- Quality of the physical or digital format for high volume use
- Online resources are also evaluated based on accessibility and the availability of library licensing

Purchase Recommendations

County residents may request items the Library does not own via website, phone, or in person. Purchase suggestions are considered using the above criteria and as budget permits.

Gifts and Donations

If interested in donating books, materials, money, or other items, please refer to the [Gifts and Donations Policy](#) for more information.

Consortium Membership

Kern County Library belongs to the San Joaquin Valley Library System (SJVLS). The Library, along with the other library systems in the consortium, has a reciprocal borrowing agreement which allows Kern County borrowers to request, checkout, and return items from other consortium libraries at no cost. Additionally, Kern County Library cardholders receive access to a wide variety of databases purchased with the consortium's shared funds.

Scope of the Main Library – Beale Memorial Library

The Beale Memorial is the main Library of the county system and contains the core fiction and nonfiction collections for Kern County. It includes material of an enduring nature as well as popular materials.

The Beale Memorial Library's holdings represent the diverse viewpoints and interests of the community the Library serves as well as the county as a whole. The Library houses a large adult and children's collection in regular and large print as well as a large audio-visual collection in multiple formats.

The Local History and Genealogy collections support extensive and in-depth research for the general public, students, and researchers.

Scope of Special Collections

The Jack Maguire Local History Room, located in the Beale Memorial Library, seeks to collect and maintain a non-circulating collection of published works, personal papers, photographs, documents, and historical records of municipal agencies, local businesses, churches, clubs, organizations, and residents of Kern County.

It includes:

- Books (directories, phone books, local yearbooks, etc.)
- Kern County newspapers (both physical and on microfilm)
- Periodicals
- Pamphlets
- Maps
- Manuscripts
- Photographs
- Audiovisual materials

If interested in more information on the Local History Room, please refer to [Jack Maguire Local History Policy](#).

The Genealogy Room, located within the Beale Memorial Library, seeks to collect and maintain a non-circulating collection focused on United States sources, research materials, and international how-to guidebooks.

It includes:

- Regional, state, county, and local histories
- Family charts
- Cemetery and mortuary records
- California census records and access to other state/federal records
- Passenger and immigration lists
- Books on heraldry and family names

If interested in more information on the Genealogy Room, please refer to [Genealogy Room Policy](#).

Federal, State, and Local Government Publications are housed at the Beale Memorial Library and select branch locations. The Beale Memorial Library is a depository site for government information published by:

- U.S. Government Publishing Office
- State of California
- Kern County
- City of Bakersfield
- Other Kern County municipalities

Most government publications are available online.

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 in the branch libraries concentrate on materials of local interest and are shaped by the community's needs.

Scope of the Online Collection

The online collection represents the diverse viewpoints and interests of the entire community the Library 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. Digital materials are selected using the same criteria as physical materials.

Weeding/Deselection and Withdrawal of Library Materials:

Philosophy

An optimal library collection is one that is reviewed on a consistent basis for accuracy, currency, usage, diversity, and subject area gaps. Weeding, or the deselection of material, is critical to collection maintenance and involves the removal of resources from the collection. While weeding is essential to the collection development process, it is not used as a deselection tool for controversial materials.

Withdrawal of Weeded Materials

Library materials weeded/deselected from one branch may be reassigned to another if criteria for condition, space, relevance, and community interest allows.

If not reassigned, the remaining weeded materials are transferred to the Friends of the Kern County Library, Inc. for inclusion in their book sales at the Beale Memorial Library per the Kern County Board of Supervisors agreement (Approved on [1/18/2000](#)). All proceeds from the book sales are donated to the Library in support of its mission, programs (ex. Summer Reading

efforts), and to enhance the Library's collection. The Friends reserve the right to dispose of unneeded materials in any manner they deem appropriate.

Weeding/Deselection Criteria

The following standards are used in removing materials from the Library's collection:

- Damaged or in poor condition (moldy, shabby, torn, etc.)
- Outdated/newer editions
- No longer relevant to the needs and interest of the community
- Infrequent use, lack of demand, and duplicate copies (ex. former bestsellers)
- Availability elsewhere including other libraries and online

Requests for Reconsideration

Any Kern County resident has the right to express concerns about Library resources and have the objection taken seriously. However, the Library believes that no citizen has a right to prevent another from reading, viewing, using, or listening to a specific work and cannot demand the removal of an item from the Library collection.

These guiding principles are followed by the Library when considering any request for removal or reclassification:

- Libraries have diverse materials reflecting differing points of view, and a library's mission is to provide access to information to all visitors
- All library visitors have a First Amendment right to read, view, and listen to library resources
- The [Library Bill of Rights](#) and the [Freedom to Read Statement](#) of the American Library Association are used as guiding documents
- When library resources are reconsidered, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view are defended rather than specific materials
- A questioned item will be considered in its entirety, not judged solely on portions taken out of context
- Parents or guardians have the right to guide the reading, viewing, and listening of their children but must give the same right to other parents/guardians

After the [Request for Reconsideration or Reclassification](#) has been submitted, Library staff review the request in relation to the Library's mission and selection criteria. The Director of Libraries reviews the request and replies within thirty days of receipt of the request. The item in question is not removed from the shelf during the reconsideration process.