



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Mission Statement.....	1
Purpose of the Collection Development Policy.....	1
Strategic Alignment.....	1
County Initiative.....	1
Responsibility.....	2
Selection Philosophy.....	2
Collection Focus.....	3
Children and Teen Collections.....	3
Parent Resource Collection.....	4
Selection Criteria.....	5
Media and Format Considerations.....	5
Community Title Suggestions.....	5
Gifts and Donations.....	5
Local and Self-Published Authors.....	5
Consortium Membership.....	6
Collection Scope.....	7
Special Collections.....	7
Collection Maintenance and Evaluation.....	8
Reassignments and Disposition of Deselected Library Materials.....	9
Replacements.....	9
Reconsideration of Materials.....	9



MISSION STATEMENT

The Library Department’s Collection development Policy supports its mission to serve as a vital information resource for all County residents. Through a broad and inclusive collection of material, the Library fosters community engagement, lifelong learning, and equitable access to information in multiple languages and formats. 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, ensuring that the collection serves people of all backgrounds, ages, and lifestyles.

PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

This policy guides the selection, acquisition, maintenance, and evaluation of library materials. It ensures the collection remains responsive to community needs, protects intellectual freedom, and provides a framework for addressing public concerns. The policy also helps safeguard the collection from external pressures and supports transparency in decision-making. The Library’s collection meets the broad and diverse interests of the community and respects both the library’s autonomy and their specific community needs.

Strategic Alignment

The Library Department’s collection development practices and protocols directly support County of Kern’s strategic initiatives to enhance quality of life for all residents. In alignment with the County’s commitment to innovation, inclusion, and service excellence, the Library’s collection serves as a cornerstone of community enrichment, lifelong learning, and equitable access to information and contributes to the broader County goals in the following ways:

County Initiative: Enhance Quality of Life for all Kern County Residents

County Goal: Improve customer accessibility and satisfaction across all business functions.

Library Goal: Expand access and increase utilization of Library resources and services.

- The Library’s collection is curated to reflect the diverse interests, languages, and learning needs of Kern County residents. Materials are available in multiple formats and reading levels to ensure equitable access for varying ages and abilities.
- Through consortium partnerships, digital platforms, and community-driven acquisitions, the Library increases the reach and responsiveness of its collection.
- Targeted initiatives such as early learning programs, workforce development resources, and digital equity efforts guide the selection of materials that support education, career readiness, and technology access.



- The Library promotes learning by offering materials that support literacy, educational goals, and personal growth for all ages.

County Initiative: Enhance Quality of Life for all Kern County Residents

County Goal: Elevate all people, neighborhoods, and communities.

Library Goal: Advance equity and promote inclusivity in the Library.

- The Library prioritizes materials that represent the cultural, social, and economic diversity of Kern County.
- Local author contributions, multi-lingual resources, and youth collections are selected to reflect and celebrate the lived experiences of the community.
- Branch collections are tailored to meet the unique needs of their neighborhoods and communities, ensuring that all residents see themselves reflected in the Library's offerings.
- Special collections, such as the Local History Room, preserve community heritage and support local research and storytelling.
- The Library champions civic engagement by providing resources that encourage informed participation in community and government.
- It also creates opportunities to experience culture and the arts through diverse materials that reflect local heritage, global perspectives, and creative expression.

This strategic alignment ensures that the Library's collection remains a vital tool for community empowerment, lifelong learning, and inclusive public service, helping residents connect, learn, and thrive.

Responsibility

The Director of Libraries holds ultimate responsibility for the collection. The selection and deselection duties are delegated to qualified professional staff who apply this policy with informed judgment and expertise.

Selection Philosophy

The Library's collection is shaped by community interest and usage, with a commitment to:

- Serving individuals of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and identities.
- Ensuring a balanced representation of viewpoints, prioritizing broad appeal, rather than academic or other specialized works.
- Offering materials in a variety of formats and reading levels.



- Supporting access to a wide range of ideas and experiences, recognizing that the public has the right to receive access to a range of social, political, aesthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences.
- Respecting individual needs without placing value judgments on preferences.
- Upholding the right to access information, even if content is controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others.
- Providing youth materials that encourage exploration and growth, while recognizing that parents are responsible for their children’s reading choices.

Collection Focus

The Kern County Library is a popular materials library, with a primary focus on acquiring resources that reflect current interests and high demand. The collection is designed to represent a wide range of viewpoints and the social, economic, and cultural diversity of Kern County.

In addition to popular materials, the Library maintains resources that support lifelong learning and general informational needs, even when those materials may be less widely requested. Educational support is provided for students in grades K-12 as a complement to, not a replacement for, school libraries. Materials that support higher education are included when they align with the broader community interest or overlap with other services areas.

When specific reading or research needs cannot be met through the local collection, residents can leverage titles available through SJVLS that may provide a wider range of materials to access through requests. This collaborative approach ensures that residents have access to both curated local collections and a broader network of information across the region.

Children and Teen Collections

The Library is committed to providing collections that reflect the diverse experiences, interests, and developmental needs of children and teens in our County. These materials are selected to encourage exploration, support literacy, and foster lifelong learning.

The children’s collection serves readers from birth through eighth grade, while the teen collection is designed for those residents that are in high school. Reading and developmental levels are assigned based on publisher recommendations, professional reviews, and staff expertise. These levels are intended as general guidelines, recognizing that individual needs and abilities vary.

The Library encourages parents and guardians to actively engage with their children’s reading choices and to determine which materials best align with their family’s values and needs. While the collection may include content that some may find challenging or controversial, the Library does not restrict access based on age. We uphold the right of all individuals to read, view, and inquire freely.



Parent Resource Collection

The Library offers a well-rounded collection of titles with the goal of covering a broad spectrum of topics to support caregivers at every stage of parenting. Those essential areas of focus are:

- **Child Development:** Milestones, cognitive and emotional development, language and literacy development, social skills, and play.
- **Parenting Strategies:** Behavior management, discipline, attachment and bonding, blended families, and single parenting.
- **Health & Wellness:** Nutrition and meal planning, sleep routines, physical well-being, pediatric health and safety, mental health for children and parents.
- **Sexual Health & Puberty Education:** Body changes, emotional development, and reproductive health.
- **Sexual Identity Support:** LGBTQ+ youth support, parenting LGBTQ+ children, gender identity and expression, coming out and family dynamics.
- **Needs & Disabilities:** Autism spectrum disorders, advocacy and support services, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and learning disabilities, IEPs (Individualized Education Plan), and 504 plan (civil rights accommodation under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act).
- **Education & Learning Support:** early literacy and school readiness, homework help and study skills, navigating school systems, and homeschooling resources.
- **Technology & Media:** Screen time guidelines, internet safety, digital tools, and educational apps or platforms.
- **Family Life & Relationships:** Sibling relationships, grandparent caregivers, work-life balance, divorce and separation.
- **Cultural & Language Diversity:** Bilingual parenting, multicultural family dynamics, resources in multiple languages.
- **Financial & Legal Advice:** Budgeting for families, childcare options, legal rights, and custody issues.
- **Crisis & Trauma Support:** Grief, loss, domestic violence, child abuse, neglect, bullying, substance abuse, and emergency preparedness.

Parents and guardians are responsible for guiding and directing the reading, listening and viewing choices of their own children.



Selection Criteria

Collection development staff use professional judgment and the following criteria to evaluate materials:

- Community interest and demand.
- Professional reviews and literary merit.
- Author/publisher credibility and industry vetting.
- Representation of multiple viewpoints.
- Cost, availability, and budget constraints.
- Durability and format suitability.
- Accessibility and licensing for digital resources.

Media & Format Considerations

The Library collects materials in a variety of formats, including print, audiovisual, and digital, to meet the evolving needs and preferences of the community. Format decisions are guided by factors such as demand, durability, availability, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness.

As new formats and technologies emerge, the Library evaluates their suitability for long-term viability, user accessibility, and potential for widespread adoption. Adequate time may be required to determine whether a new format will gain lasting public acceptance before it is added to the collection.

Older formats may be phased out when usage significantly declines. This ensures that the Library's resources remain relevant, accessible, and responsive to current trends in media consumption.

Community Title Suggestions

Residents may suggest purchases through the Library's website, phone, or in-person. Suggestions are evaluated using the same criteria as other acquisitions and considered within budgetary limits.

Gifts and Donations

For information on donating materials, funds, or other items, please refer to the Gifts and Donations Policy.

Local and Self-Published Authors

The Library Department values the creative contributions of local authors or illustrators and supports the inclusion of their works in our collection. Titles by Kern County residents and self-published creators are considered using the same selection criteria outlined in this policy.

To encourage community representation, the Library accepts donations of one copy of a work by a local



author or artist for review, even if the item does not meet standard purchasing requirements. If the donated item meets minimum standards for accuracy, quality, timeliness, and format, it may be added to the collection.

Due to the volume of self-published works and limited cataloging resources, print titles by local authors are typically housed at the author/artist local branch and made available for “honor” checkouts. Titles that meet the criteria for the Local History collection may be cataloged and added to the Local History Room at the Beale Memorial Library.

Digital titles by local authors may be considered for inclusion in the Library’s OverDrive platform, providing broader access to community-created content.

To be eligible for the Local Author Collection, contributors must:

- Non-standard formats such as spiral bound or staple-bound materials.
- Consumable content such as coloring pages or tear-out pages.
- Outdated or inaccurate nonfiction.
- Nonfiction authored by individuals lacking subject-matter expertise.
- Significant grammatical, spelling, or editorial issues.

The Library encourages local authors to review the selection criteria prior to submitting materials and to contact their branch if they have additional questions. We appreciate the role local authors and illustrators play with enriching the cultural and literacy landscape of Kern County.

Consortium Membership

Kern County Library is a member of the San Joaquin Valley Library System (SJVLS), a consortium of public libraries across the San Joaquin Valley region. This partnership enhances access to materials and services beyond the local collection.

Through SJVLS, Kern County residents can:

- Request, borrow, and return items from other member libraries at no cost.
- Access shared consortium digital resources, including eBooks, audiobooks, and research databases.
- Benefit from collaborative purchasing, which expands the availability of specialized or high-demand materials.



COLLECTION SCOPE

Beale Memorial Library

As the system's central library, Beale Memorial houses core fiction and nonfiction collections, including:

- Extensive adult and children's materials in multiple formats.
- Large print and audiovisual collections.
- Local History and Genealogy resources for public and academic research.

Special Collections

Jack Maguire Local History Room

This non-circulating collection preserves Kern County's heritage through:

- Books, directories, yearbooks.
- Newspapers and microfilms.
- Periodicals, pamphlets, maps.
- Manuscripts, photographs, audiovisual materials.

See the **Jack Maguire Local History Room Policy** for more details.

Genealogy Room

Focused on U.S. and international research, this collection includes:

- Regional and local histories.
- Family charts and cemetery records.
- Census data and immigration lists.
- Heraldry and surname resources.

See the Genealogy Room Policy for more details

Government Publications

Beale Memorial Library is a depository for publications from:

- U.S. Government Publishing Office.
- State of California.
- Kern County and local municipalities.



Many government documents are available online.

Branch Libraries

Branch collections reflect the unique needs and interest of their communities. Staff regularly assess materials to ensure relevance and responsiveness.

Online Collection

The Library's digital collection reflects the diverse interests and viewpoints of Kern County residents. It includes eBooks, audiobooks, streaming media, research databases, and other online resources accessible through the Library's website and consortium platforms. These materials are selected using the same criteria as physical items, with additional consideration for:

- Accessibility across devices and platforms.
- Licensing terms and user limits.
- Relevance to community needs.
- Cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

Digital resources are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current, useful, and inclusive.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE & EVALUATION

Weeding & Deselection

To maintain a vibrant and relevant collection, materials are regularly evaluated and removed from the collection. Deselection is a necessary part of collection management and ensures that shelf space is used effectively to support active and diverse community interests. Weeding is an essential part of the overall collection development process, but it is not intended as a tool for deselecting controversial materials.

Weeded titles are based on the following:

- Physical condition and usability.
- Currency and accuracy of information.
- Usage statistics and circulation history.
- Duplication and redundancy.
- Space limitations.



Reassignments & Disposition of Deselected Library Materials

Library materials that are deselected from one branch may be considered for reassignment to another location, provided they meet criteria related to physical condition, available space, ongoing relevance, and community interest.

Materials not suitable for reassignment are transferred to the Friends of the Kern County Library, Inc., in accordance with the Kern County Board of Supervisors agreement, approved January 18, 2000. These items are made available for public purchase through book sales.

Proceeds from these sales directly support countywide library initiatives, including summer reading programs, collection enhancement, educational and cultural programming, local history events, and outreach and marketing efforts.

The Friends organization retains the discretion to dispose of any materials not selected for sale in a manner they deem appropriate.

Replacements

Items may be replaced if they are:

- Still in demand.
- Lost or damaged.
- Considered essential to the core collection.

Replacement decisions are made using the same criteria as new acquisitions.

Reconsideration of Materials

The Library respects the diverse perspectives of its community and provides a formal process for visitors to request the reconsideration of materials they find objectionable.

The reconsideration process includes the following steps:

1. Submission of a Request for Reconsideration form, available at all library locations and on the Library's website.
2. Review by Library Administration, guided by the principles outlined in the Collection Development Policy and established selection criteria.
3. Materials under review will remain available to the public throughout the reconsideration process.
4. A formal written decision, including the rationale, will be provided within thirty (30) days of receiving the completed request.

