

**St. Joseph Public Library
Collection Development Policy**

St. Joseph Public Library’s Mission & Service Area

The St. Joseph Public Library (SJPL) provides our community physical and virtual gathering spaces to access information, education, and recreation.

SJPL serves the residents of St. Joseph, which is in Buchanan County in the northwestern part of Missouri. The SJPL district boundaries are the 1965 St. Joseph city limits, as set by Missouri State Statute RSMO 182.480. As of the 2020 census, the population of St. Joseph is 72,473, while the population of the SJPL district, as determined by the Missouri State Library is 61,245.

Manufacturing represents one of the top employer segments in St. Joseph, including global leaders in the animal health and meat packing industries. The three largest single employers in St. Joseph are Mosaic Life Care, Triumph Foods, and the St. Joseph School District.

As of the 2020 census, 6% of the St. Joseph population is under 5 years old, 21% is 5-19 years old, 20% is 20-34 years old, 24% is 35-54 years old, and 29% is 55 years old or older. The population is 85% white, 6% black, and 7% Hispanic. 88% of residents over 18 years old have a high school education and 21% have a college degree. The median household income is \$48,716 and 17% of residents live below the Federal poverty line¹.

Other libraries in St. Joseph include the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library, and libraries at the Northwest Missouri Genealogical Society, Missouri Western State University, and Mosaic Life Care. SJPL considers these demographics and other library collections when making collection decisions.

Purpose of this Policy

The SJPL Collection Development Policy guides staff decisions and informs the public of the principles on which those decisions are based. It outlines the basic criteria for selection, retention, and removal of materials and digital resources in the library collection. The SJPL collection strives to anticipate and meet the needs of the St. Joseph community and reflect the library’s mission.

Scope

SJPL strives to develop a diverse and balanced library collection that serves the needs of the community. The scope of the collection is sufficiently broad to offer a choice of format, age appropriateness, and level of difficulty among subjects and genres so that the widest array of needs can be met, and all ages can be served. The collection provides general coverage of subjects; scholarly and highly technical or specialized materials are rarely added to the collection.

All branches collect materials to meet the needs of that branch’s unique community while maintaining a cohesive collection across the branches. In addition to print books, all branches also offer audiobooks, DVDs, magazines, and newspapers. Digital content including eBooks,

¹ <https://censusreporter.org>; <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

eAudiobooks, streaming music, movies, and television are offered via the library's digital resources. Circulating physical materials available at one branch may be transferred to any other branch for pick-up. Materials not owned by SJPL may be requested from other libraries through resource sharing agreements or Interlibrary Loan.

Responsibility for Selection

Ultimate responsibility for the collection of library materials lies with the Director of the library. The Director delegates the actual selection and weeding of material to qualified library staff, who are referred to as selectors. The collection development work done by selectors is overseen by Branch Managers, who report to the Director.

All selectors are expected to adhere to the selection objectives and principles expressed in this policy and to apply their knowledge and expertise in making selection decisions. The selectors of materials consider the needs, interests, and demands of the library's community, rather than a reflection of the tastes, views, and interests of the selectors. This regard for the needs and interests of the community being served is at the heart of public library material selection.

General Selection Criteria

Selection is based on the merits of a work in relation to the needs, interests, and demands of members of the St. Joseph community. Essential to this policy are the "Library Bill of Rights" (see Appendix A) and the "Freedom to Read Statement" (see Appendix B) as adopted by the American Library Association and to which SJPL adheres.

Materials are purchased through a variety of vendors, which are subject to change. All materials are considered for selection using the following criteria:

- Popular interest
- Age appropriateness
- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Currency of information
- Accuracy
- Community interest
- Diversity of viewpoints
- Reputation of author, publisher, editor, producer, or illustrator
- Creative, literary, or technical quality
- Cost and availability
- Budgetary limitations
- Support of library's mission statement
- Availability of materials in nearby and consortia libraries

Materials need not meet all criteria to be added to the library collection.

Selection Sources

SJPL selectors may consult reviews and recommendations before purchasing materials. These reviews and recommendations may be found in

- Professional journals
- Vendor and publisher catalogs

- Popular and news magazines
- Best seller lists
- Award lists
- Newspapers
- Various online sources such as Amazon, Goodreads, and Internet Movie Database

Age Designation of Materials

All physical library materials are given an age designation of Juvenile, Young Adult, or Adult to aid patrons in determining appropriate reading level and content of materials. These age designations are a recommendation only. The Juvenile collection is recommended for ages 0-11, Young Adult for ages 12-17, and Adult for ages 18 years and older, with each collection physically separated among the shelves in all libraries. Age designation of individual materials can also be found in the online public access catalog (OPAC) by Shelving Location or by Call Number. The age designation of materials is determined by SJPL selectors using information from selection sources, reviews, and professional knowledge.

All adult patrons are ultimately responsible for determining what materials are appropriate to access for themselves. For all minor patrons (under the age of 18), responsibility for what is appropriate to access lies with their parent or legal guardian in accordance with *314-Library Card Policy*. While separate collections are designated as Juvenile, Young Adult, or Adult, it is not the responsibility of SJPL, its Board of Trustees, staff, or volunteers to determine which collections any patron should access or what materials in a collection are suitable for any patron.

Material Formats

Most library materials will be purchased in print, audiovisual, and electronic formats. SJPL may purchase the same title in various formats to meet the needs and expectations of patrons. SJPL monitors industrywide trends and internal circulation numbers to determine if a format is outdated and should be discontinued or if new formats should be adopted. Formats are chosen based on cost, availability, and expected use.

Automated Orders

Certain materials are ordered automatically through agreements with vendors. Automatically ordered materials include, but are not limited to, regularly updated reference materials, preselected authors' print and audiobook titles upon publication, and preselected continuing series titles upon publication. Automated orders are reviewed by selectors annually for adherence to the General Selection Criteria.

eResources

SJPL subscribes to various electronic resource (eResource) platforms, which are accessible to all patrons with an SJPL library card. These platforms provide access to content that educates and entertains such as research databases; eBooks and eAudiobooks; and streaming movies, shows, and music. The General Selection Criteria is used to determine if a platform should be included in the SJPL collection. Generally, SJPL's subscription to a platform provides patrons access to the entire collection of that platform. SJPL cannot choose to include or exclude any patron's access to specific materials within that collection. Subscription to an eResource platform does not constitute an endorsement by SJPL of the electronic materials patrons may access.

Self-Published Materials

SJPL occasionally receives requests to include materials in the collection that are self-published or published independently through a vanity press. Due to the nature of self-published and vanity press materials, SJPL requires additional criteria called Indicators of Quality for those materials to be added to the collection. Not all criteria must be met, but self-published and vanity press materials will be evaluated holistically using the General Selection Criteria and the following Indicators of Quality:

- One or more positive reviews in a library review journal, including those that specialize in independently published materials such as Foreward, Small Press Review, or Independent Publisher
- Evidence that the material was professionally edited
- Review by SJPL staff for quality of writing, editing, and content

Local Authors and Local Interest

SJPL considers local authors to be those who reside in St. Joseph or the wider Northwest Missouri area excluding Kansas City. Local interest materials are those pertaining to the life, culture, history, etc. of those same areas, whether or not they were written by local authors. The library collects materials written by local authors if they fit the General Selection Criteria and will appeal to a wide audience. If the material is self-published or from a vanity press, Indicators of Quality will also be evaluated. Donated copies of works by local authors, or those of local interest, will be given special consideration to be included in the collection. SJPL cannot accept donations of eBooks or eAudiobooks.

Special Collections

SJPL's Special Collections contain materials relating to local, regional, and state history. Most of these materials are available for public use but are non-circulating. For preservation purposes, SJPL reserves the right to remove materials from public use or make reformatted or facsimile copies available for patron use in lieu of the actual materials. Original materials will receive the highest level of preservation possible within the institution.

Selection for Special Collections is performed by Reference Department staff. While most materials are purchased through regular SJPL vendors, occasionally materials may be purchased from specialized vendors. Special Collections also acquires materials through donations. Donations added to the Special Collections require an accompanying Deed of Gift/Donation. See *504-Gifts and Donations Policy* for more information.

Selection Requests from Patrons

SJPL welcomes suggestions of specific titles to be purchased at all branches. Patron requests will be given high priority for selection while still being evaluated using the General Selection Criteria. For nonfiction material cost, general interest, and scholarly level are factors given high consideration in the decision to purchase.

If requested materials are not purchased, the patron will be contacted by the selector and offered interlibrary loan service if possible.

Interlibrary Loans

Due to space and budgetary constraints, not all materials that a patron may request will be available within SJPL's collection. SJPL belongs to multiple resource sharing consortia that expand patron access to materials outside of SJPL's collection. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services can be used to request materials not otherwise available. Titles frequently requested through ILL will be considered for purchase if possible. SJPL takes no responsibility for any other library's age designation or material content.

Gifts and Donations

SJPL is pleased to accept donations of materials or of money for the purchase of library materials, with the understanding that adherence to the General Selection Criteria will determine whether materials are added to the library collection. SJPL accepts material donations with the understanding that materials donated to any branch become the property of SJPL. Material or financial donations that are intended for specific purposes, subject areas, or are in other ways designated, should be negotiated through the appropriate Branch Manager, Library Administrative Assistant, or Library Director. A donation form letter is provided to patrons who request it. See *506F-Materials Donation Tax Letter*. SJPL does not place a monetary value on material donations nor is it responsible for the appraisal of gifts for income tax or other purposes.

Donations not added to the library collections may be placed in the Friends of the St. Joseph Public Library Book Sale. Materials not added to the collection or the book sale are recycled or offered to the public for free.

Occasionally materials are received either as a one-time occurrence or on a subscription basis without being ordered by the library. If these materials' provenance cannot be established, they will be considered gifts, and the same criteria applies to these as applies to other donations. Invoices of unsolicited materials received by the library are not acknowledged, returned, or paid. See *504-Gifts and Donations Policy* for more information.

Reconsideration of Materials

Residents of the library district wishing to recommend the removal or reclassification of materials in the library collection must submit a completed *512F-Patron Challenge to: Library Materials, Programs, Events, or Displays* form, which is available at all library branches and on the SJPL website. The form will be reviewed in accordance with SJPL's *512-Reconsideration Policy*.

Weeding

Weeding is the practice of removing materials from a collection to maintain its relevance, accuracy, and condition. It is a key aspect of collection maintenance and is conducted regularly at SJPL in all departments at all branches. SJPL's weeding practices adhere to the CREW Method, developed by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, which has been widely adopted by public libraries². CREW stands for Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding, and constitutes a specific process for weeding collections. Materials withdrawn from the collection are offered to the Friends of the St. Joseph Public Library Book Sale, recycled, or offered to the public for free.

² <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/1d/pubs/crew/index.html>

Appendix A

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Appendix B

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and

librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.