

Collection Development Policy and Materials Review Request Form — Proposed Revisions

Rationale for Update

The Board is asked to consider revised versions of the Baker County Library District Collection Development Policy and Materials Review Request Form.

The current Collection Development Policy was last revised in 2019. Since that time, library collections have continued to expand beyond traditional print and audiovisual materials to include e-books, streaming resources, databases, digital platforms, games, equipment, and other nontraditional circulating materials. The District has also updated several related policies, including its Materials Review Request Form in 2024 and policies addressing privacy, gifts and donations, administrative review, and public complaints. Updating the Collection Development Policy provides an opportunity to ensure that these policies operate together consistently and that the District's collection practices are clearly documented.

The proposed revisions are intended to preserve the principles of the existing policy while making the policy more comprehensive, current, and easier to administer. The revised policy continues BCLD's commitment to intellectual freedom, broad access to information, professional selection, responsible stewardship of public resources, and the responsibility of parents and guardians to guide the library use of their own minor children.

Revision of the Materials Review Request Form is recommended at the same time so that the form accurately reflects the procedures and standards established in the revised Collection Development Policy. Although the form was substantially updated in 2024, review of the two documents together identified several procedural differences and areas where the form could be simplified, clarified, and better aligned with the proposed policy.

Revision Process

Staff began with a review of BCLD's 2019 Collection Development Policy and 2024 Materials Review Request Form, together with related current District policies.

The review also considered recently updated collection-development and reconsideration policies from other public libraries, including King County Library System, Multnomah County Library, Deschutes Public Library, Washington County Cooperative Library Services, Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, and Sno-Isle Libraries. Professional guidance from the American Library Association and Oregon Library Association was also considered.

Particular attention was given to:

- maintaining BCLD's existing commitment to intellectual freedom and professional collection development;
- addressing contemporary physical, digital, licensed, and nontraditional collections;

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- distinguishing collection-management decisions from endorsement of a particular work or viewpoint;
- clarifying the respective roles of staff, the Library Director, and the Board;
- establishing a fair, objective, and administratively workable materials-review process;
- maintaining access to materials while a review is pending;
- ensuring that works are evaluated as a whole and under the same criteria used for selection;
- coordinating the reconsideration process with BCLD privacy, complaint, donation, and administrative-review policies; and
- removing inconsistencies between the policy, the 2024 form, and current District practices.

The resulting drafts are intended for Board discussion and may be further revised before adoption.

Overall Summary of Changes

The proposed revisions:

- reorganize and substantially modernize the Collection Development Policy while retaining its core intellectual-freedom principles;
 - broaden the definition of the collection to include digital resources, licensed content, nontraditional collections, and emerging formats;
 - provide more detailed and transparent selection and withdrawal criteria;
 - clarify that inclusion of material does not constitute Library endorsement;
 - reaffirm that materials are evaluated as complete works and are not excluded solely because they are controversial or objectionable to an individual or group;
 - clarify parental and guardian responsibility for the library use of minor children;
 - establish clearer standards for digital resources, third-party platforms, and Library of Things collections;
 - strengthen provisions concerning local and regional materials, purchase suggestions, gifts, resource sharing, and collection maintenance;
 - establish a single, defined process for informal concerns, formal requests for review, professional evaluation, a Director's decision, and Board appeal;
 - align eligibility, filing limits, repeat-review provisions, timelines, and public-record language between the policy and form; and
 - simplify the Materials Review Request Form so that it requests information directly relevant to applying the Collection Development Policy.
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Detailed Changes — Collection Development Policy

1. Updated Purpose and Scope

The revised policy begins with clearer statements describing why BCLD maintains a collection-development policy and what resources are covered by it.

The definition of the collection is expanded beyond books and traditional media to expressly include physical and digital formats, databases, downloadable and streaming resources, games, equipment, Library of Things materials, and emerging technologies.

The policy also recognizes that some resources are obtained through consortia, licensing agreements, resource-sharing arrangements, or third-party platforms and may therefore be affected by decisions outside BCLD's direct control.

2. Expanded Collection Philosophy and Intellectual Freedom Provisions

The revised policy retains the existing commitment to intellectual freedom and broad access to information while stating those principles more explicitly.

The draft provides that:

- the collection should represent a broad range of subjects, experiences, ideas, and viewpoints;
- inclusion of an item does not constitute BCLD endorsement of its content, creator, accuracy, or viewpoint;
- materials are not to be selected, excluded, relocated, restricted, or withdrawn solely because they are controversial or because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval;
- individual works may contain material some users consider offensive, disturbing, inaccurate, or inappropriate without that fact alone determining whether the work belongs in the collection; and
- works are evaluated in context and as a whole rather than on isolated passages, images, or excerpts.

The policy continues to recognize the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement as guiding intellectual-freedom principles.

3. Clarified Access and Parental Responsibility

The revised policy states more directly that reading, viewing, listening, and use of library resources are matters of individual choice.

It clarifies that BCLD does not restrict one person's access solely because another person objects to the material.

The policy also retains and strengthens the principle that parents and legal guardians are responsible for determining what their own minor children may read, view, hear, or borrow. Library staff may assist families in finding materials appropriate to their preferences but do not act in place of a parent or guardian.

4. Clarified Board, Director, and Staff Responsibilities

The revision distinguishes governance from day-to-day collection administration.

The Board establishes collection policy. The Library Director administers the policy and may delegate selection, evaluation, acquisition, maintenance, and withdrawal responsibilities to qualified staff.

This structure reinforces that individual selection and withdrawal decisions are professional administrative functions carried out under Board-established standards.

5. Expanded Selection Criteria

The 2019 policy's selection principles are replaced with a more detailed set of criteria that can be applied across formats and subject areas.

Criteria include community needs and demand, relevance to BCLD's mission, diversity of perspectives, intended audience, accuracy and authority where applicable, literary or cultural value, local significance, professional reviews, cost, durability, accessibility, collection balance, availability elsewhere, physical space, licensing terms, and operational requirements.

The policy expressly states that no single criterion controls every decision and that an item need not satisfy every criterion to be selected.

6. New Digital Resources and Third-Party Platform Section

A new section addresses the realities of licensed digital collections.

In addition to general selection criteria, staff may consider usability, accessibility, device compatibility, vendor support, privacy practices, licensing restrictions, simultaneous-use limitations, subscription costs, and the Library's ability to maintain continued access.

The draft also recognizes that selection of a database or vendor package does not mean staff have individually selected or endorsed every title supplied through that platform.

7. New Nontraditional Collections / Library of Things Section

The revised policy expressly authorizes development of nontraditional circulating collections when they further the Library's mission and serve community needs.

Additional considerations include safety, durability, sanitation, storage, replacement parts, maintenance, staff workload, training, technological obsolescence, and liability considerations.

The policy also permits pilot collections so staff can evaluate demand, cost, and operational impact before establishing a permanent service.

8. Expanded Local and Regional Collection Provisions

The draft recognizes BCLD's particular responsibility to collect materials concerning Baker County, eastern Oregon, Oregon, and the surrounding region.

Local authors and creators may suggest works for inclusion, but local authorship alone does not guarantee selection. Local historical materials may also receive different retention treatment from ordinary circulating materials because of their long-term community value.

9. Purchase Suggestions and Resource Sharing

The revised policy expressly invites members of the public to suggest resources for purchase.

Suggestions are reviewed under the same criteria as other selections. When purchase is not warranted, staff may use interlibrary loan, cooperative borrowing, digital resource sharing, or referral to provide access.

10. Gifts and Donations

Rather than duplicating detailed donation rules, the policy cross-references BCLD's separate Gift and Donation Policy.

Donated materials are subject to the same collection-development criteria as purchased materials, and acceptance of a donation does not guarantee addition to or permanent retention in the collection.

11. Expanded Collection Maintenance and Withdrawal Standards

The revised policy treats withdrawal, replacement, and relocation as ongoing components of collection development rather than separate or exceptional actions.

Factors include use, condition, accuracy, currency, duplication, availability of newer editions, historical significance, space, licensing, cost, obsolete formats, and availability through partner libraries.

The policy specifically states that materials are not withdrawn solely because they are controversial or because an individual or group objects to their content.

12. Organization, Cataloging, Labeling, and Placement

A new section clarifies that shelving, cataloging, audience designation, subject headings, and labels are based on professional and operational considerations.

Materials are not to be labeled, sequestered, altered, or relocated for the purpose of warning against or discouraging access to a particular viewpoint.

13. Defined Informal Concern Process

The revised policy encourages concerns to begin with discussion between the requester and the Library Director or designee.

This allows staff to explain the collection policy, provide context, correct misunderstandings, or resolve straightforward concerns without immediately initiating a formal review.

Completion of this informal consultation is required before filing a formal Materials Review Request.

14. Formal Materials Review Eligibility and Filing Rules

The revised policy incorporates procedural provisions that had previously appeared primarily on the 2024 form.

Under the proposed draft:

- formal requests may be submitted by an adult Baker County resident who is a registered BCLD cardholder;
- the requester must first complete the informal consultation step;
- each request must address one title, work, item, or discrete resource;
- a person may ordinarily submit no more than one formal request within a 30-day period;
- incomplete requests may be returned for completion; and
- a resource that has completed formal review ordinarily will not be reconsidered again for three years unless materially different circumstances justify reopening the review.

The discretionary fee provision appearing in the 2024 form is not carried forward.

15. Professional Reconsideration Process

The revised policy provides a defined review procedure rather than relying on the form alone.

A formal request does not automatically result in removal, restriction, relocation, or recategorization. The resource remains available under ordinary Library rules while review is pending unless another legal or operational reason requires different treatment.

The Library Director may assign review to a committee of qualified staff and may seek outside professional or subject expertise when useful.

Reviewers consider the complete work, the request, intended audience, applicable collection criteria, professional reviews, collection information, and other relevant evidence.

Personal agreement or disagreement with the work is not the standard. The question is whether the material is consistent with Board-approved collection policy.

16. Written Decision and Timeline

The Library Director issues the final administrative decision.

The proposed policy establishes a goal of providing a written decision within 30 calendar days after receipt of a complete request. If additional time is reasonably necessary, the requester will receive a status update and anticipated decision date.

17. Defined Board Appeal

The revised draft establishes a materials-specific appeal procedure instead of relying primarily on the general Public Complaint / Patron Grievance procedure.

A requester may file a written appeal within 10 business days.

The Board's review is focused on whether the Collection Development Policy and reconsideration procedure were properly applied, rather than conducting a new selection review based simply on disagreement with the result.

The Board may affirm the decision, return the matter for additional review, or take other action consistent with its policy authority.

18. Recordkeeping and Professional Reporting

The revised policy authorizes administrative recordkeeping consistent with applicable public-records requirements.

It also allows the Director to report intellectual-freedom challenges and outcomes to appropriate state or national professional organizations while protecting confidential information as required by law and District policy.

19. Related Policies and Periodic Review

The proposed policy expressly identifies related BCLD policies so staff and patrons can more easily determine which procedure applies to a particular issue.

It also establishes periodic administrative review and recommends formal Board review at least every four years.