

# LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

## Societies, Associations, and Nongovernmental Organizations

### Contents

- I. Scope
- II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement
- III. Research Strengths
- IV. Collecting Policy
- V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats
- VI. Acquisition Sources
- VII. Collecting Levels

### I. Scope

This statement covers reports, monographs, serials, and related publications of U.S., non-U.S., and international societies, associations, and nongovernmental organizations. For the purposes of this statement, a society or association is a group of people united by a shared aim, interest, profession, or branch of study or research<sup>1</sup>; a nongovernmental organization (NGO) is a group of people, usually not affiliated with any government, formed to provide services or advocate for policies.<sup>2</sup> These include political, cultural, philanthropic, professional, scientific, business, labor, religious, ethnic, fraternal and secret societies and associations, and NGOs addressing a wide variety of political, social, and scientific concerns.

Publications of societies, associations, and NGOs may fall into many different LC classes and subject areas, and other Collections Policy Statements (CPSs) may include guidance on these publications. Therefore, society, association, and NGO publications that are addressed by the relevant subject-based CPS are generally out of scope for this statement. The relevant subject CPS(s) (e.g., [Ethnic Materials](#), [Local History](#), [Genealogy](#), [Chemical Sciences](#)) should be consulted rather than this document. Society, association, and NGO publications that are not addressed by the relevant subject-based CPS, and those publications covering multidisciplinary topics, are in scope for this statement. Academies and learned societies of a general nature (Library of Congress Classification Subclass AS) are also addressed in the [General Works Collections Policy Statement](#).

Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) - organizations to which governments belong and to which they send official representatives – are covered in the [International Organizations Collections Policy Statement](#). For information on alumni directories, see the [Education Collections Policy Statement](#). For information on commercial firms, see the [Economics and Business Collections Policy Statement](#). For records of organizations, see the [Manuscripts Collections Policy Statement](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2021, [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com). Accessed 25 February 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from "Nongovernmental organization (NGO)." *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 29 Nov. 2007. [academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/nongovernmental-organization/395824](http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/nongovernmental-organization/395824). Accessed 2 Mar. 2022.

## II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's *de facto* national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

## III. Research Strengths

As the *de facto* national library of the United States, the Library collects material from most major societies, associations, and NGOs in the U.S., and from many major, national-level societies, associations, and NGOs outside the U.S. Reports and other publications from large NGOs are also collected. The Library's exchange program with partners outside the U.S. has historically played a key role in acquiring publications that are not commercially available, such as annual reports.

The Library has a long tradition of collecting the publications of major and minor societies, associations, and NGOs, such as the Heritage Foundation and the Trilateral Commission, as well as dissident groups. The Law Library collects all material published by the American Bar Association. The Library's web archives collections include the websites of organizations centered on a variety of issues and topics, such as Common Good, Chanan Development Association, and the National Association of Black Journalists.

## IV. Collecting Policy

The relevant subject-based Collections Policy Statement(s) should be used to guide collecting material from societies, associations, and NGOs. This Collecting Policy section is intended for considering material in multidisciplinary subjects, material for which there is no subject CPS, or material for which the subject CPS does not provide clear guidance.

The Library of Congress acquires reports, monographs, and serials of U.S., non-U.S., and international societies, associations, and NGOs whose activities are at the national or international level and are of general interest and importance.

The Library does not acquire the publications of U.S. societies, associations, and NGOs at the state,

regional, or local levels, except for substantial: directories, periodicals, biographies and local histories; and the publications of those lacking a national organization, which are acquired at the regional, state, or other next highest level.

The Library does not acquire the publications of non-U.S. societies, associations, and NGOs below the national level except for: publications that contain substantial information of research value and emanate from organizations with authority or recognized expertise in their area of coverage. Subject areas particularly sought for the Library's collections include economics, politics, history, education, the sciences, and law. Publications outside the listed subjects which otherwise fit these criteria may be acquired if, according to the relevant subject CPS, they cover a priority or highly-collected subject area.

In order to build a more complete and representative collection, the Library collects publications of nascent and dissident societies, associations, and NGOs on a selective basis. This includes publications across subjects and from organizations centered on a wide variety of aims, interests, or goals.

#### **V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats**

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>.

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources, open digital content, web archiving, and data sets, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf>, <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>.

#### **VI. Acquisition Sources**

Whenever possible the Library attempts to acquire materials through non-purchase means, such as copyright, exchange or gift. The Library of Congress collections are heavily dependent upon materials received through the copyright deposit provisions of U.S. copyright law ([17 USC section 407](#) & [17 USC section 408](#)). For copyright demand, the U.S. regulations allow for the Library to receive analog and some digital materials. When items are offered in both formats the Library's default is normally the Best Edition print version, unless the publisher has arranged a special relief agreement with the Copyright Office. For materials not available to the Library through copyright deposit, or other non-purchase means, the Library acquires materials through purchase. Purchase is used predominately for non-U.S. publications that are not widely available within the United States. The Library utilizes an array of traditional methods of library acquisition (firm orders, subscriptions, and approval plans) with vendors located in different areas of the world. In addition, the Library uses its six Overseas Operations Offices to broaden its acquisitions opportunities outside the United States.

#### **VII. Collecting Levels**

Meeting the Library's Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current

events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

For explanation of the Collecting Levels used by the Library, see <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cpc.html>.

The [General Works Collections Policy Statement](#) addresses academies and learned societies of a general character (Subclass AS) in its Collecting Levels section.

<b>LC Classification</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>U.S. Levels</b>	<b>Non-U.S. Levels</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Varies	Publications of societies, associations, and NGOs at the international level	5	4	
Varies	Publications of societies, associations, and NGOs at the national level	5	3	Non-U.S. materials may be collected at a level 4 on occasion, based on justification of the recommending division
Varies	Publications of societies, associations, and NGOs below the national level	3	2	

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