

Collection Development Policy

Lambda Archives of San Diego

Approved: February 2026

About

The mission of the Lambda Archives of San Diego (LASD) is to collect, preserve, and teach the history of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people in the San Diego, Imperial Valley, and Northern Baja California region. To support this mission, LASD seeks to build collections that reflect the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community in the region. LASD also collects in two areas with a national/international scope: bisexuality and LGBTQ+ Pride.

LASD has a limited physical space at our 4545 Park Blvd. Suite 104 location. We cannot accommodate physically large individual items, nor collections whose quantity of boxes is excessively large. While we are a community LGBTQ+ archives, we are not a storage unit for our community. Like all cultural institutions, curation is an important aspect to our work and stewardship. It is both impossible and detracting to try to collect *everything* regardless of its relevance to our mission and enduring historical value. Decisions must be made on how much and what types of materials we collect given our physical, resource, and collecting limitations.

Community members must understand that *all* materials must be evaluated before we accept them for donation. Please do not assume your materials will be accepted without consultation. We encourage community members to take an active role in the curation process and spend time looking over materials they want to donate to make sure there are not items they wish to retain or personal materials that are irrelevant for the archives.

What We Accept

The following formats have been identified as appropriate for preservation at LASD:

- Archival papers: original diaries, documents, handwritten journals, ledgers, manuscripts, minutes, and other primarily unpublished materials, unpublished reports, theses/dissertations
- Audio/Visual: videotapes, films, tape recordings (VHS, cassette tapes, CDs/DVDs)
- Art: original artwork, prints
- Books about LGBTQ+ topics and/or by LGBTQ+ authors
- Born-Digital: disks, digital images or video, hard drives, website backups, emails, other electronic data
- Ephemera/Memorabilia: announcements, flyers, invitations, pamphlets, bumper stickers, posters, event programs, etc.
- Periodicals: journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, zines
- Photographs: color or black & white prints, slides and/or negatives

- Realia (Object/Artifact): clothing, banners, buttons/badges, jewelry, products (with exceptions)

What We Do NOT Accept

LASD is generally unable to accept materials and collections deemed unsuitable for reasons of space, limited resources, contamination, irrelevance to mission, or limited research/cultural value. This may include but is not limited to the following types of materials and collections:

- Most three-dimensional awards, plaques, commendations, trophies
 - We photograph and textually document these materials to retain non-physical surrogates. The ratio of how much space these items take up to how much information they offer is particularly mismatched and has limited research/cultural value materially.
- Collections of paper based materials of excessively large box quantity (our shelf space is limited)
- Older audiovisual formats including film reels, reel video, non-VHS tapes, historic photographic formats such as Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, tintypes, glass plates, and gelatin silver prints
- Rare books that need specialized care
- Most promotional materials
- Certain three dimensional memorabilia such as cups, water bottles, mugs, inflatable items, stuffed animals, etc. whose contents/branding could instead be found on two dimensional materials such as flyers or pamphlets
- Most periodicals outside of our geographical collecting scope (San Diego, Imperial Valley, and Northern Baja California), some exceptions may be made for California specific publications
- Materials that duplicate current holdings
- Materials that could cause LASD to be liable for copyright infringement (for example, unauthorized reproductions)
 - Additionally, we avoid audiovisual materials such as movies or CD albums that were mass produced and can be acquired through regular means. The San Diego Public Library or County Library Systems would be a better home for those materials if they're accepting them.
- Materials that are extremely large (e.g. large signage, large sculptures/canvas, etc.)
- Materials in poor physical condition or those that present a preservation threat (e.g. mold, mildew, or pests) to our existing collections
- Materials that contain glitter or biological/organic matter

LASD reserves the right to distribute materials to other institutions as the staff deems appropriate, in consultation with the Board of Directors as necessary and in accordance with directives on a relevant Deed of Gift. Materials received may be added to LASD collections or passed on to other institutions. We only discard materials after thorough review by the staff. As much as possible, items selected for retention at LASD are held in perpetuity, except under rare and unusual circumstances.