Clinton-Macomb Public Library Subject Headings Update Project

Executive Summary

➔ The objective of the Subject Headings Update Project is to review the current terminology used to categorize library materials to ensure subject headings are accurate, relevant, and inclusive.

➔ Language is constantly evolving, and it is important that the Library keeps up with these changes, particularly as they relate to social issues and identities. In keeping with the CMPL's mission of both growing lifelong readers and connecting the community, updated subject headings ensures that our library remains an inclusive and welcoming space for all by reflecting language people and communities use to refer to themselves, using language that is more updated or appropriate for possibly sensitive subjects, and providing relevant search terms that make the catalog easier to explore.

➔ For our first round of changes, we chose to select subject headings that needed to be updated to match existing standards, such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings, to allow for easier findability, and where alternatives were fairly straightforward.

➔ To keep the catalog and materials accessible, any replacement of a subject heading will only occur at the discovery level of the catalog. The item's MARC record will still contain that subject heading, along with any other additions. This ensures that even if a patron uses the language of the current subject heading, relevant items will still appear in their search results.

The table below shows the CMPL catalog's current subject headings next to the proposed alternatives, along with the source(s) we referenced to determine the changes.

The → symbol indicates that the current subject heading would be *replaced* by the proposed alternative(s) in the catalog, and the ↔ symbol indicates that the proposed subject heading(s) would appear *in addition* to the current subject heading.

Current Subject Heading	Proposed Subject Heading(s)
Illegal Aliens	→ Undocumented immigrants
Illegal Alien Children	→ Undocumented immigrant children
Children of Illegal Aliens	→ Children of undocumented immigrants
Alien detention center	→ Undocumented immigrant detention centers
Indians of North America	→ Indigenous peoples--North America
Off-reservation boarding school	→ residential boarding school
Drug abuse	↔ drug addiction
Abused children	→ child abuse
Family violence	↔ domestic violence

Homelessness ↔ houselessness, homeless people

Sexual abuse ↔ sexual assault

Lesbians ↔ LGBTQ+ people[1]

Gays → Gay People, LGBTQ+ people

African American Lesbians[2] → African Americans, Lesbians, BIPOC[3], LGBTQ+ people

African American Bisexuals → African Americans, Bisexuals, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people

Adoption ↔ Adopted Children, Adoptive Parents

Childlessness → Child free

Interracial Adoption ↔ Adoption, Adopted Children, Adoptive Parents

Brothers, Sisters, Brothers and Sisters ↔ Siblings

Granddaughters, Grandsons ↔ Grandchildren

Grandfathers, Grandmothers ↔ Grandparents

Fathers, Mothers ↔ Parents

Fathers and daughters, Fathers and Sons, Mothers and Daughters, Mothers and Sons ↔ Parents and Children

Husbands, Wives ↔ Spouses

Poor → Poverty

Rape ↔ Sexual Assault, Sexual Violence

Rape Victims → Rape Survivors

Blacks[4] → Black People

Whites → White People

Women Librarians[5] → Librarians

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[1] "LGBTQ+ people" will be added to other sexual orientation subject headings as well.
[2] Subject headings that contain multiple identifiers (e.g. race and sexual orientation) will be split into separate subject headings.
[3] "BIPOC" will be added as to all non-white race and ethnicity subject headings.
[4] Race and Ethnicity subject headings referencing people (e.g. Blacks, Whites, Asians) will have "people" added to the existing subject heading.
[5] "Women [Profession]" subject headings will be modified to only include the profession. (This change will not affect findability.)

<u>Sources and Documentation</u>

Illegal Aliens → Undocumented immigrants [ERIC]
Illegal Alien Children → Undocumented immigrant children [ERIC]
Children of Illegal Aliens → Children of undocumented immigrants [ERIC]
Alien detention center → Undocumented immigrant detention centers [ERIC]

- The Library of Congress recently updated its "Illegal Aliens" subject heading, a decision supported by the American Libraries Association. While LOC does not use the term "undocumented," the ALA adopted a resolution supporting the replacement of "illegal aliens" with "undocumented immigrants."

Indians of North America → Indigenous peoples--North America

- "Indians" is generally considered an outdated term, and also creates confusion for anyone searching for materials related to the country India and its people. While "Native Americans" is still occasionally used, Indigenous peoples is a widely used and accepted term and creates a connection to populations outside of North America/the US as well.

Off-reservation boarding school → residential boarding school

- This phrase refers to the forced relocation of Native Americans to Indian reservations in the United States. Because of this origin, the phrase is often considered offensive or inappropriate. As the nature of these schools gains more attention in the media, "residential boarding schools" is most commonly used.

Drug abuse ↔ drug addiction [drugabuse.gov]

- Addiction is a broader term than abuse, and the term is being added for specificity and to increase findability.

Abused children → child abuse [RAINN]

- "Child abuse" is more frequently used as a subject term, and the language is also less victimizing.

Family violence ↔ domestic violence [RAINN]

- "Domestic Violence" is frequently used and includes different types of family violence. This term is being added to increase findability.

Homelessness ↔ houselessness, homeless people [drugabuse.gov, https://dogoodmultnomah.org/blog/why-do-we-say-houseless]

- The term "houselessness" is being used more frequently, and references situations where people may have temporary living spaces (such as shelters or in cars/RVs) but no permanent address. These terms are being added to increase findability.

Sexual abuse ↔ sexual assault [RAINN]

Rape ↔ Sexual Assault, Sexual Violence [RAINN]
Rape Victims → Rape Survivors [RAINN]
- From RAINN: "When speaking about these crimes generally, we use "sexual violence" as an all-encompassing, non-legal term that refers to crimes like sexual assault, rape, and sexual abuse." "Victims" is being replaced by "Survivors" as that is the term generally preferred and used by people who have experienced sexual violence. The additional terms are more accurate and increase findability.

Lesbians ↔ LGBTQ+ people [LOC Subject Headings, Demographic Terms]
Gays → Gay People, LGBTQ+ people [LOC Subject Headings, Demographic Terms]
African American Lesbians → African Americans, Lesbians, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people [LOC Subject Headings, Demographic Terms]
African American Bisexuals → African Americans, Bisexuals, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people [LOC Subject Headings, Demographic Terms]
- Splitting identity-based subject headings allows materials to be accurately categorized without creating unnecessary hyper-specific subject headings, which also allows materials to be more easily found and accessed.

Adoption ↔ Adopted Children, Adoptees, Adoptive Parents [LOC Subject Headings, Demographic Terms]
- The LOC uses "adoptees" as a subject heading, and the additional terms are being added to increase findability.

Childlessness → Child free
- Usage of "child free" is becoming more common than "childlessness."

Interracial Adoption ↔ Adoption, Adopted Children, Adoptive Parents
- These terms are being added as subject headings to increase findability.

Brothers, Sisters, Brothers and Sisters ↔ Siblings [ERIC]
Granddaughters, Grandsons ↔ Grandchildren [ERIC]
Grandfathers, Grandmothers ↔ Grandparents [ERIC]
Fathers, Mothers ↔ Parents [ERIC]
Fathers and daughters, Fathers and Sons ↔ Parents and Children [ERIC]
Mothers and Daughters, Mothers and Sons ↔ Parents and Children [ERIC]
Husbands, Wives ↔ Spouses [ERIC]
- Gender-neutral terms are being added to family/relational subject headings so that they are more inclusive, and to increase findability.

Poor → Poverty [Chronic Poverty Research Center]
- "Poverty" is the more accurate subject term, whereas "poor" is an adjective.

Blacks → Black People [LOC Subject Headings, Demographic Terms]

Whites → White People [LOC Subject Headings, Demographic Terms]
- ○ Use of "blacks" and "whites" is considered outdated, and adding "people" to race and ethnicity categories explicitly humanizes racial and ethnic communities.