

# COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

## Materials Selection Policy

### Definitions:

“Selection” refers to the decision that must be made either to add a specific item or type of material to the collection or to retain material already in the collection. It is a means of developing the collection to meet the user needs and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or values of the individual selector or the Library Board of Trustees.

The words “book”, “library materials,” and other synonyms as they appear in this policy have the widest possible meaning; all forms of recorded communication, from the traditional printed forms to the latest development in non-printed media.

The word “collection” refers to a group of books or other library materials having a common characteristic or located in a specific place.

“The Library” refers specifically to the Montgomery County Memorial Library System.

“Electronic Resources” will include CD-ROM and online subscriptions, as well as Internet sites.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide librarians in the selection of materials of contemporary significance and of permanent value and to inform the public of the principles upon which selections are made. Its primary objective is to insure that public moneys are spent wisely so that The Library can provide the county residents materials in sufficient supply to make The Library a dependable source for most people most of the time.

### 2. Goals

The basic function of The Library is to serve people through print and non-print resources, helping them, as individuals or as groups, to achieve informational, educational, and recreational objectives. In fulfillment of this common function, The Library sets the following goals:

- a. To select and organize reliable print and non-print materials significant to the people of this area;
- b. To fulfill its responsibility in a democratic society by providing each individual with the easiest possible access to informational resources;
- c. To serve a heterogeneous community of more than 200,000 people who have different cultural, inspirational, informational, and recreational pursuits through building collections of printed and other materials suitable to such a diverse group, within the limitations of budget, space, and availability of materials;
- d. To provide the means for stimulation and encouragement for children, young people and adults in educating themselves continuously and to promote self-development toward enrichment of their lives;
- e. To give guidance in the use of library materials and resources toward meeting the needs of people individually and in groups or organizations;
- f. To cooperate with groups and agencies in stimulating and supporting educational, cultural, and social awareness activities.

### 3. Responsibility for selection of library materials

Ultimate responsibility for selection of materials lies with the Library Director. The Library Director will delegate to appropriate staff members the authority to interpret and apply the selection policies in daily operations. It is the responsibility of each employee to record and communicate user requests and needs so that they may be considered in selection.

### 4. General guidelines for selection

- a. The Library recognizes its responsibility to have available a representative selection of materials of interest to its users. This responsibility includes having materials on the various sides of controversial questions. The Library provides a forum where individuals can examine issues freely and formulate their own conclusions.

- b. The Library incorporates as part of this policy the selection principles contained in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement*, *Freedom to View*, and the *Texas Library Association Intellectual Freedom Statement*.

#### 5. Use of selection aids

- a. The Library Staff utilizes professional judgment and expertise based on an understanding of community needs and knowledge of authors and publishers in the material selection process. Other selection aids include authoritative reviews, standard lists of basic works, recommendations of professional journals and bibliographic essays prepared by subject specialists.
- b. Recommendations from the public are welcomed and will be given careful consideration in terms of overall objectives and the existing book collection.

#### 6. Selection criteria

- a. Expanding areas of knowledge, changing social values, technological advances, and cultural differences require flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness in the evaluation of all new and old library materials. Materials in a variety of media are acquired and made accessible as they are judged useful and relevant to the community's interest and needs.
- b. Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own merit and the audience for which it was intended. No single standard can be applied in all cases. Some materials may be judged primarily in terms of artistic merit, scholarship, or documentation of times; others may be selected to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of the community.
- c. Some materials are considered because of widespread or local demand.
- d. In addition, as the social and intellectual climate of the community changes, material which originally was not selected for purchase may become of significant interest. Such materials will be reevaluated on a continuing basis.

- e. To build collections of merit and significance, materials must be measured by objective guidelines. While an item need not meet all criteria to be added to the collection, all acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following guidelines:

## 7. General Criteria

- a. Reputation and/or significance of the author, his or her skill, competence, and especially purpose;
- b. Content determined by its present and potential relevance to the community needs, its importance as a document of the times, its originality and creativity, and its relationship to existing collections and other material on the subject;
- c. Treatment based on its appropriateness and effectiveness according to its content, its insight into human and social conditions, and its suitability of subject and format for its intended audience;
- d. Attention of critics, reviews, and the public.
- e. Suitability of format for library use.

## 8. Specific criteria for evaluation of :

- a. Works of imagination -- fiction, drama, and poetry
  - i. Representation of an important movement, genre, trend, national culture;
  - ii. Vitality and inspiration;
  - iii. Artistic presentation and experimentation;
  - iv. Sustained interest and entertainment;
  - v. Effective characterization;
  - vi. Authenticity of historical or social setting.
- b. Works of information and opinion
  - i. Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment;

- ii. Accuracy;
  - iii. Clarity and logic of presentation;
  - iv. Representation of challenging points of view, even though extreme or unorthodox;
- c. Pamphlets and other vertical file material
- i. Selection of pamphlets follows the general policy outlined for other material. These serve as supplements to the book materials.
  - ii. Pamphlets are selected with great care to avoid those issued with the intent of propaganda or advertisement. A balance of viewpoints on controversial subjects is the aim of library selection. Inflammatory and emotional treatment is avoided. Pamphlets which contain advertising that distorts facts, contain misleading information or statements or intrude commercial messages unduly, are not added to the collection. Acceptable pamphlet material should always have the issuing agency or publisher clearly identified and should be of current value.
- d. Periodicals

A well-balanced subject collection of periodicals is maintained as a current and in-depth supplement to the book collection. Selection is based generally on the accessibility of a periodical's content through indexes, the accuracy and objectivity of the editor and authors, and its contributions to current thinking in the field covered as well as to the balanced viewpoint of the collection. Other media may be purchased when this form will serve better than the paper copy.

e. Reference Materials

Reference materials must be selected to satisfy the research and reference needs of the community. All material must be accurate and authoritative, factual and informative. Yearbooks, business services and other serial publications are added regularly. Reference books should be evaluated on the following basis:

- i. Purpose of the book and its attainment;
  - ii. Authority (author's qualifications and publisher's reputation);
  - iii. Scope;
  - iv. Timeliness;
  - v. Format (arrangement, indexing, organization, and consistency);
  - vi. Suitability to the intended audience.
- f. Audio-visual Materials
- i. CDs, software, filmstrips, audiotapes, educational videos, and microforms are purchased upon need and within budget and space limitations. Selection of audio-visual materials should be governed by the same principles and criteria applied to book purchases.
  - ii. Motion picture videotapes are purchased using the following guidelines; award winners, classics, literature based or top rated in a video rating guide. Audio-visual funds are limited, therefore instructional and educational videos should be targeted for purchase.
- g. Paperbacks
- The same standards for selection are applied to purchased paperbacks as to other materials. The original copy of a book is usually purchased in hardcover, if available. Paperbacks are examined to insure that the text, translation, illustrations, and format are of acceptable quality. Paperbacks are purchased on the following basis:
- i. A great demand for a particular title;
  - ii. A title which has only occasional or temporary interest;
  - iii. No other edition available;
  - iv. The original title published only in this form.

#### h. Controversial works

- i. The Library recognizes that some materials may be considered controversial or offensive to some patrons. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to building collections and to serving interests of readers. If any title in the collection is criticized or questioned by individuals or organizations, a library *Request for Reconsideration of Materials Form* will be provided for the patron. Upon receipt of this form, a re-evaluation will be made.
- ii. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no library materials will be placed on closed shelves, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.
- iii. Responsibility for the choice of library materials for children's use rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that controversial materials may come into the possession of children.

#### i. Gifts

- i. Gifts of needed materials or funds for the purchase of materials are acceptable as well as appreciated.
- ii. The Library reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of gifts in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased material. In addition, donated materials must be in a condition suitable for processing and regular library use. The Library allows no attachment of conditions to gifts and no conditions may be imposed relating to any gift after its acceptance by The Library.
- iii. Gifts which do not comply with The Library's objectives and policies will be declined.

#### j. Duplication

Duplication of titles is determined by popularity, importance of the material, and the budget.

#### k. Young Adult Collection

Materials for young adults are selected with the realization that literature for young adults is an important part of the collection. It shall be judged by the above general criteria. The term young adult collection applies to both fiction and non-fiction. In selecting material for young adults, the Library acknowledges the special needs and interests of the 7th through 12th grade age-group. The collection is fluid, flexible, current, and attractive and provides materials that satisfy the informational, recreational, and cultural reading needs and potentials of young adults.

Specific criteria for young adult materials selection:

- i. Literary and artistic worth;
- ii. Sustained interest and entertainment;
- iii. Vocabulary suitable to the age of the readers;
- iv. Contribution of the material to the balance of the total collection in representing an important movement, genre, trend, or national culture;
- v. Effective characterization, i.e. the age of the protagonist;
- vi. Authenticity of historical or social setting.
- vii. Accuracy; clarity, and logic of presentation;

#### l. Children's Collection

Materials for children are selected with the realization that literature for children is an integral part of all literature. It shall be judged by the above general criteria. The term children's collection applies to fiction, non-fiction, and other necessary children's materials. In selecting material for children, The Library's objective is to make available a collection that satisfies the informational, recreational, and cultural reading needs and potentials of children from preschool through the sixth grade. Materials are included

which meet the general demands of the majority of children, along with books with special qualities valuable to children with particular needs, talents, problems, and interests.

Specific criteria for children's materials selection:

- i. Literary and artistic worth;
  - ii. Sustained interest and entertainment;
  - iii. Vocabulary suitable to the age of the readers;
  - iv. Contribution of the material to the balance of the total collection in representing an important movement, genre, trend, or national culture;
  - v. Effective characterization;
  - vi. Authenticity of historical or social setting.
  - vii. Accuracy; clarity, and logic of presentation;
- m. Genealogy

The primary focus of materials purchased for the Genealogy collection is on the history and genealogy of Texas and surrounding Southern states. Materials for other regions of the United States will be collected to meet the demands of the community.

n. Foreign Language Materials

The Library will collect materials primarily in the English language. Translations of foreign language materials to English will normally be preferred. Materials will be acquired in other languages as community needs demand.

o. Literacy

The primary focus of the materials purchased for this collection is designed for adults who are beginning to read, adults for whom English is a second language, and Adult Basic Education students. It also serves those who need a simple introduction to a topic in an adult format. Materials focus on grade six reading level and below in a variety of formats.

- p. Electronic Resources – the Library will maximize access to electronic resources through links from our home page and cataloging of each resource selected.

Indicators of resource quality:

- ease of use/access
- clearly stated scope of content
- documented, accurate and verifiable content
- easily identifiable target audience
- clear and helpful headings and annotations
- rapid connectivity
- useful graphics that provide content support
- easily identifiable authority with contact information
- consistent updates (unless the nature of the resource is such that updating is unnecessary, e.g. an online Bible)

i. Specific considerations for CD-ROM and online subscriptions

- licensing agreements/copyright restrictions
- multi-user access
- hardware/software requirements
- technical support
- remote access availability/controlled security
- cost-effectiveness
- relationship to print counterpart, if one exists

ii. Specific considerations for Internet sites

- stability of website
- advertising and its impact on content

- reliability of links to other sites
- provision for text-only interfaces

## 9. Collection development and maintenance

- a. The Library will evaluate its collection on a continuing basis in response to the changing nature and needs of the community. The criteria used in the selection of materials will be used in its withdrawal.
- b. In order to maintain the collection in its most useful and attractive condition, the professional staff will consider for withdrawal material that is:
  - i. no longer in demand;
  - ii. superseded by a newer edition or a more accurate resource;
  - iii. in poor condition.
- c. Replacement of a withdrawn item is not automatic; the decision to replace will be based on the selection policy.
- d. When appropriate, deteriorating items will be rebound.

## 10. Review and revision of selection policy

The materials selection policy will be reviewed regularly by the policy review committee and the Library Director to insure that it meets the needs of the community. Any revisions must be adopted by the Library Board and approved by Commissioners' Court.

## MATERIALS CHALLENGE

### Preamble:

Montgomery County Memorial Library System acknowledges that the freedom to read is a corollary to the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press. Freedom of access is the essence of democracy and is a necessary safeguard to the freedom to read. The Library shall have available a representative collection of materials of interest to its users whereby individuals can examine issues freely and formulate their own conclusions. A citizen's right of free inquiry shall be protected against attempts to abridge it.

### Request for Reconsideration of Materials:

1. The Request for Reconsideration should be handled by a Department Manager, or the employee in charge.
2. Department Head or Branch Manager will contact the Collection Development Coordinator when the completed Request is returned by the patron.
3. They will select a Review Committee.
  - a. The Review Committee will consist of
    - i. Branch Manager or Department Head that received the original request.
    - ii. Collection Development Coordinator
    - iii. Adult Services Coordinator or Children's Coordinator
    - iv. Branch Coordinator or Library Director
    - v. An additional librarian
    - vi. When the Request for Reconsideration involves a work pertaining to materials in the children's or young adult section, a panel of citizens, appointed by members of the Commissioners' Court, will be included in the review process.

Appointments shall be made as follows:

Each member of the Court will appoint one citizen. Appointees will be registered borrowers of the MCMLS, in good standing, for at least 1 year prior to

Appointment and have some training regarding or work association with the indicated age groups. The term of appointment will be a maximum of 3 years.

Terms will be staggered to provide ongoing consistency on the committee.

Initial appointments will range from 1 to 3 years and will be determined by lot, following the participant's acceptance.

- b. Each committee member will read or review the material in question.
    - c. Collection Development Coordinator will set a meeting date to review the Request.
4. The Collection Development Coordinator will locate at least two reviews on the material, if at all possible.
5. The committee will meet and review the material and the reviews and make a decision concerning the Request, in keeping with the criteria set out in the Materials Selection Policy. The committee's decision shall be advisory only.
6. The Collection Development Coordinator will send a letter to the patron advising the patron of the committee's recommendation.
  - a. Copies of the letter will be sent to the Department Head or Branch Manager of the originating area.
  - b. Each letter will include the following:
    - i. Library Bill of Rights
    - ii. Freedom to Read Statement
    - iii. Any reviews on the material.
    - iv. Information on the author's or title's awards and merits.
7. Items may be submitted for reconsideration only once within any twelve month period.

Revised and Approved by Montgomery County Commissioners' Court,  
October 7, 2002.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY MEMORIAL LIBRARY SYSTEM  
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS**

Please answer all the questions as completely as possible. Use the back if additional space is required. Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns.

Author:

Title:

Type of Material:

Specific objection(s) to Material including specific page(s) or instances:

Are you considering the material as a whole?

What was good about the material?

Have you read any reviews on this material?

How did this material come to your attention?

What would you like to have the Library do about this material?

Requester Represents: Individual \_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

Request initiated by (please print):

Telephone number:

Address:

Library Card Bar Code Number:

Date:

Signature of Initiator:

Your request for reconsideration will be reviewed by a committee of Library Staff and, when applicable due to the classification of the work, a group of citizens. You will be notified of the decision in writing.

Date Reviewed:

Signature of Reviewers: