

*Subject Heading*

## **Book and Nonbook Selection**

*Topic*

## **Materials Selection Policy**

*Approved*

**July 28, 1981**

*Revised*

**February 25, 1982**

**May 13, 1999**

### **Policy Statement**

The Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees recognizes that within Harford County there are groups and individuals with diverse interests, backgrounds and needs, and further recognizes that the library was created to serve all Harford County citizens.

Materials selected for the library collection are intended to meet the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the citizens of Harford County. Materials selected will meet the library's mission to provide library resources that enrich the quality of life and support and encourage life-long learning. The primary objective of selection is to acquire materials of both contemporary significance and permanent value. Harford County Public Library strives for representative and current materials that reflect new trends, ideas, and controversial topics from various points of view as well as a broad range of material that illuminates the past. The library provides materials to support the needs of specific populations including children, youth, older adults, adults learning to read, and the disabled. The library provides a sampling of experimental and ephemeral materials that stimulate the imagination, increase potential for creativity, and, even though controversial at times, may extend the individual's capacity to understand the world.

With this in mind, the Harford County Public Library and the Library Board of Trustees uphold the following principles of service:

- Provide open, non-judgmental access to collections and services without regard to race, citizenship, age, educational level, economic status, religion, or any other qualification or condition.
- Provide free access to, and promote the communication of ideas and information.
- Advocate and support First Amendment rights and the Library Bill of Rights, and protect library materials from censorship.
- Create an environment that encourages users to encounter the rich diversity of concepts on which a democratic society depends.

## Criteria for Selection

Each item selected or donated, regardless of format, is evaluated by professional library staff in terms of the criteria listed below in order to build collections of merit and significance that reflect community needs. The criteria used apply to materials for all age levels, and may not apply equally to any single item, but should be flexibly applied according to the individual title, format, and specific population being considered.

- Subject relevance and importance of the material in meeting the needs of Harford County citizens
- Appropriateness and relevance to the interests and skills of the intended user
- Significance of subject matter and its relationship to other materials in the collection
- Timeliness of information
- Interest in the material itself which will create public demand
- Reputation, authority, popularity, or significance of the author, publisher, film director, composer, performer, or producer
- Accuracy and currency of information
- Literary, artistic, or other recognized merit including receipt of or nomination for major awards or prizes
- Inclusion of title in standard bibliographies or indices
- Favorable reviews from professional sources, or reviews which point to particular significance of material (see Procedures for list of review sources)
- Clarity and accuracy of presentation
- Contribution to the diversity or breadth of the collection including the need to provide materials of differing points of view
- Important as a record of the time or of current and/or permanent value to the collection for present and future use
- Price
- Suitability of format (size, paper quality, binding) to the contents and intended audience
- Readability, style, and presentation of concepts and issues at the sophistication and developmentally-appropriate level of the intended audience
- Ease of use (in particular, relating to electronic resources and reference materials)
- Quality of production
- Space limitations
- Sustained interest or anticipated need
- Need to balance the cost/accessibility of print materials with the cost/accessibility of material in online or electronic format

## Selection Sources

Harford County Public Library identifies materials for purchase in a number of ways, including the use of print and electronic selection and review sources (as specified in library procedures). Other sources include customer and interlibrary loan requests, gifts, subject bibliographies, library-generated replacement lists, vendor-generated replacement lists, standing orders,

publisher approval plans, trade and association publication catalogs, publishers' catalogs, and publisher representatives' samples.

### Impact of Electronic Access on Collection Development

Advances in electronic publishing and other forms of electronic access have far-reaching implications for Harford County Public Library's collection development plan. Limited space and budgets and the possibilities of simultaneous and remote users make electronic access an attractive alternative to some print sources. As more materials become available electronically, the selection process will involve deciding what format (print or electronic) is the most appropriate to provide optimum accessibility, ease of use, and cost-effectiveness.

### Cooperation with Other Agencies

Harford County Public Library recognizes the wealth of resources available through other libraries and agencies and does not needlessly duplicate materials.

### Collection Maintenance: Duplication

Duplication of titles is essential in meeting the public demand for best-sellers and other heavily used materials. However, Harford County Public Library does not duplicate every title, nor can it duplicate specific popular titles in sufficient quantities to fill every request immediately given budget constraints and the necessity of meeting other collection needs. Because it is often impossible to supply enough copies to satisfy demand for materials used in school assignments or those materials subject to high loss or theft, branches may keep reference copies of these items to ensure access.

### Collection Maintenance: De-Selection

Materials within the library collection are continuously monitored. Items may be withdrawn if they contain outdated or inaccurate information, are superseded by a newer edition, become worn, badly marked or damaged, or are duplicates or seldom-used materials. Space, replacement cost, and the quality and appearance of the collection are factors in this decision. The de-selection process is an integral part of collection development and maintenance. De-selection and retention criteria are detailed in library procedures.

### Collection Maintenance: Gifts and Memorials

Harford County Public Library accepts books and other materials with the understanding that they may not necessarily be added to the collection. The material is evaluated by the same selection criteria standards employed for the purchase of new materials. If the material is not suitable because of condition, out-dated information, or other considerations, the library reserves the right to discard, sell, or refer such material to another institution or to the Friends of the Library for re-sale (all proceeds which benefit the library directly or indirectly). The library accepts gifts of money for the purchase of materials, from individuals and organizations. Such gifts may be in the memory of an individual, in which case a memorial plate is added. Library selection criteria also apply in these cases.

### Freedom to Read and Parental Responsibility

The Library Board of Trustees believes that while anyone is free to reject for himself/herself library materials which he or she does not approve, the individual cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, view, or hear. Parents or legal guardians have the responsibility to guide and direct the reading, viewing, or listening of their own minor children. The library does not take the place of the parent or legal guardian.

Ultimate responsibility for the selection of library materials rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of this policy determined by the Library Board of Trustees. Ongoing responsibility is shared with the Associate Director and the Materials Manager, who monitor the selection process. Initial selection of materials is delegated to members of the professional staff who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience.

Virginia M. O'Rourke, Chairperson

Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees