Harford County Public Library Selection Procedures

Criteria for Selection

Each item selected or donated, regardless of format, is evaluated by Materials Specialist staff in terms of the criteria listed below in order to build collections of merit and significance that reflect community needs.

The criteria guide us in our good-faith efforts to judge what may fall inside or outside of the scope of the Harford County Public Library's collection, and are intended to be inclusive rather than exclusive, and are deliberately flexible. This supports an evaluation of the entire set of factors and the ability to demonstrate that we had reasonable grounds to believe that something fits or does not fit the criteria.

The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs and interests of the residents of Harford County. These changing needs and interests require that materials be evaluated initially and on a continuing basis. As a result, materials which may not have been recommended for purchase initially may later be purchased, or materials considered for purchase initially may not be later purchased.

Selection decisions are made by evaluating reviews and other selection tools and criteria, on the basis of staff member judgment and expertise and a knowledge of the existing collection. 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 served.

Selection Criteria

- Current and anticipated needs and interests of the public
- Readability, style, and presentation of concepts and issues at the sophistication and developmentally-appropriate level of the intended audience
- Significance of subject matter and its relationship to other materials in the collection
- Accuracy and timeliness/currency of information
- Interest in the material itself which will create public demand (popularity and anticipated demand by patrons)
- 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

- Evaluations in review media. Favorable reviews from professional sources, or reviews which point to particular significance of material
- 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. No one group's standards can determine what the library purchases. Fear of offending certain groups, or of challenge or reprisal by these groups, does not influence the library's selection decisions.
- Important as a record of the time or of current value to the collection for present and future use
- Price and availability
- Suitability of format (size, paper quality, binding) to the contents and intended audience
- Ease of use (in particular, relating to electronic resources and reference materials)
- Quality of production (This refers to the physical or technical caliber of illustrations, covers, bindings, descriptive covers, recording, filming or printing)
- 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
- Availability and accessibility of the same material in the State Library Network
- The library generally purchases movies that carry up to a "R" MPAA rating
- The library generally does not purchase materials professionally reviewed as pornographic

Selection Sources

Selectors use a variety of selection tools that includes professional reviews in journals and media resources to select materials to create a diverse and balanced collection. Major library review journals may include, but are not limited to: *Library Journal, Publishers Weekly, Horn Book, School Library Journal, Video Librarian and Booklist*. Additional review and media sources will be added and/or referred to as needed.

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.

When selecting websites we will consider the following:

Authority

Where possible, we recommend sites that come from a known and authoritative source. Where such an official source is not available, we carefully consider the credentials of any site included. The library receives many requests to add websites to the homepage.

<u>Accuracy</u>

We look for evidence that sites are accurate and regularly maintained.

<u>Relevance</u>

Resources are included only if they contain substantive information of relevance to our users.

<u>Usability</u>

Unless they have exceptionally valuable information that is difficult to locate elsewhere we generally will exclude

- sites that require registration or fee for service.
- sites where the content is predominantly designed to sell merchandise or market services.
- sites whose information is obscured or compromised by advertising, pop-up boxes confusing design or specialized plug-ins.
- sites that are inaccessible to those using adaptive technology.
- sites that are for-profit and give patron information to third-parties

Impact of Electronic Access on Collection Development

Limited space and the possibilities of simultaneous and remote users make electronic access an attractive alternative to some print sources. The growth and popularity of digital resources requires the library to balance print and digital purchases to meet the needs of county residents.

Cooperation with Other Agencies

Harford County Public Library recognizes the wealth of resources available through other libraries, agencies and consortia, and may not duplicate materials that we are able to borrow from these organizations.

Collection Maintenance: Duplication

Duplication of titles is essential to meet the public demand for best-sellers and other heavily-used materials.

Collection Maintenance: De-Selection

Materials within the library collection are continuously monitored. Systematic withdrawal of materials which are no longer useful in maintaining an active, accurate collection is necessary. 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 unneeded 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.

Collection Maintenance: Gifts and Memorials

Harford County Public Library accepts books and other materials with the understanding that they may be used in the collection or disposed of according to the needs of the library. 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, outdated 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.

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