

# **Montgomery County Public Libraries**

*Where the County Reads, Where the County Meets, Where the County Learns*

## **Collection Policy**

## **Executive Summary**

The Montgomery County Public Libraries' Collections Policy presents the strategies to develop, expand, diversify, and build 21<sup>st</sup> Century library collections to meet the library needs and expectations of the Montgomery County residents/communities.

Collections Policy Objectives:

- To provide well-rounded and balanced collections which are comprised of new and popular materials; reference tools; materials that assist in life-long learning; and multilingual materials.
- To formulate cooperative agreements with organizations and groups to expand the Libraries' capacity to make more information and resources accessible to residents.
- To continue the Libraries' tradition of staying abreast of new and emerging resources; and, then to incorporate them into the collections as appropriate.
- To ensure intellectual freedom for all users.

The following chapters will present guidelines used by MCPL to fulfill these objectives.

- Materials Selection
- Cooperative Agreements
- Materials Deselection
- Intellectual Freedom

## **Introduction**

The mission of Montgomery County Public Libraries is “to offer free and equal access to services and resources that connect the people of Montgomery County to ideas and information which sustain and enrich their lives.”

The Collection Policy reflects the mission of the Libraries. The Collection Policy serves as a guide to staff in the selection and retention of materials. It also provides the public information about the principles which support selection decisions. The Libraries' users consist of many different types: early literacy age levels from birth to 5 years old; students from K-12; as well as higher education levels; ethnic communities; Seniors; the visually and hearing impaired; the homebound; local businesses; and prison inmates.

The Montgomery County population, which was 971,777 in 2012, will continue to increase an average of approximately 9,200 persons each year throughout the next eight years reaching over one million by 2014 and nearly 1,045,400 by 2018. There were 357,086 households in the

County in 2012, and current projections estimate the number of households will increase to 364,900 in 2012. The County's Senior population continues to grow with an estimated 119,769 persons 65 and older living here in 2010 and projected to increase to 154,061 by 2020. The County expects the public school student enrollment to increase by 7,062 between FY13 and FY18. The increase in diversity from 2000-2010 resulted in the County becoming a majority minority county for the first time.

This large diverse population possesses an unlimited range of interests. With a limited budget, Libraries must make decisions on how to best serve these myriad of interests. Therefore, Libraries has developed cooperative agreements or partnerships with other libraries to expand its capacity to make more information and materials available to residents which might not have otherwise been possible.

Montgomery County is fortunate to be surrounded by many high performance schools from elementary to universities; as well as numerous specialized libraries such as the National Library of Medicine, National Institute of Health, Library of Congress, National Agricultural Library, etc. With these easily accessible, MCPL does not purchase textbooks or in depth research materials.

Collection Management's annual workplan will delineate a variety of activities which will increase the communication and collaboration with staff and customers in the pursuit of the development of "relevant and inspiring collections that meet the evolving needs and expectations of our communities."

## **1. Materials Selection**

The Director of Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) is responsible for the collection development of the libraries. Authority for decisions on selection, maintenance, and withdrawal of materials is delegated by the Director to the manager and staff of the Collection Management division. The Collection Policy serves as a guide to staff in the selection and retention of materials. It also provides information to the public about the principles which support selection decisions.

Basic to the Policy are the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement and, the Freedom to View Statement. These statements pertain to all information formats, including print, video, audio, digital and electronic formats.

Libraries assure that the collection is open and accessible to all residents. Libraries is committed to a collection which presents a variety of points of view on all subjects. Libraries seeks to meet the community's needs, and recognizes that some materials may be controversial. It is the responsibility of each library user to choose materials which suit their individual tastes and needs. Individuals are free to reject materials for themselves that they do not approve; but they may not restrict the freedom of others to read, listen, or view materials for which they are interested. Responsibility for children's use of library materials rests solely with their parents or caregivers.

The primary objective of MCPL's materials selection is to provide well-rounded and balanced collections comprised of new and popular materials; reference tools; materials that assist in

lifelong learning; and multi-lingual materials. The collections are meant to anticipate, support and respond to the diverse informational, cultural and leisure needs of community residents of all ages.

Collection Management librarian selectors apply their knowledge, judgment and expertise in selecting materials along with the following standard criteria. An item need not meet all criteria to be selected. Selectors also consult reviews, bibliographies and other evaluative sources.

### **General Selection Criteria**

- Relevance to current and anticipated community needs
- Intended audience
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Critical reviews and other evaluative sources
- Number and nature of requests from the public
- Relation to the current collection and other materials on the subject
- Reputation and qualifications of the author/artist and/or publisher/producer
- Local significance of the author or topic
- Comprehensiveness of treatment
- Representation of majority and minority points of view
- Usefulness to patrons with special needs
- Relevance to the experiences and contributions of diverse populations
- Quality of illustrations and effective characterizations
- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Cost

Selectors determine the distribution and number of copies to branches based on anticipated demand, input from branch staff, physical space available in branches, local interests, and budget. Libraries recognizes that users have differing abilities and backgrounds, and therefore, provides materials of varying levels of difficulty.

Branch library collections are developed to meet the informational, educational and leisure needs of their specific communities. These needs are continually assessed by selectors and branch staff through the review of census data; evaluation of the use of the collection; monitoring community interests and activities; monitoring other services and programs available in the community; and collaborating with appropriate neighborhood organizations and schools. Evaluation tools, which assist in assessing the collections, include various reports from the Libraries' circulation system and CollectionHQ. CollectionHQ is a software application that is used to gather and analyze library circulation data from which system and branch level reports about the collection's availability, currency, condition, and use throughout the year are generated. CollectionHQ will help Collection Management and branch staff to determine customers' usage patterns; as well as to weed collections to keep them fresh and relevant. Branch library collection profiles are updated periodically to determine any significant changes within the local communities (e.g. more families, seniors, or preschoolers, a change in ethnic populations).

Each library has staff whose primary responsibility is the management of the branch collection. This staff, which interacts directly with customers, will work closely with Collection Management selectors in the development of strong local collections through ongoing

communication. Selectors will solicit input and feedback from branch staff on a variety of topics about local needs.

Libraries also encourages continuing input from residents. A customer “suggestion for purchase” form and a general “comment and suggestion” form are available on the Libraries’ website and at all library agencies. Regular feedback is solicited from members of the Library Board and Library Advisory Committees (LACs). In addition, staff will meet with Library Advisory Committees, Friends of the Library chapters and sometimes community groups to gather ideas about their new or renovated library collections’ focus. Guidelines for authors or publishers who are asking Libraries to consider the purchase of their material(s) can also be found on the Libraries’ website (Information for Authors and Others Submitting Work for Consideration by MCPL).

## **Electronic Resources**

Electronic resources provide opportunities to expand the scope of information and materials available to users. Electronic resources include internet sites, databases, and e-books. Streaming of movies and music sites is fast becoming a popular new electronic format which Libraries will continue to investigate. Libraries have been in the forefront in the provision of new formats and technology for reading and information to its users. The impact of information in digital formats and library users’ expectations to access them through their local libraries has increased tremendously.

E-books are defined as digital objects specifically designed to be accessible online and read on either a handheld device or a personal computer. MCPL subscribes to downloadable e-books through Overdrive and e-audiobooks through OneClick Digital. Libraries also provides numerous non-downloadable e-books purchased through various publishers and vendors. E-books can facilitate information discovery through search features, expand collections, save space, and reduce costs. Customers have the option of either checking out an e-book, viewing it online, or viewing it offline by downloading it onto their personal computers, e-readers, tablets, and a variety of handheld devices.

While the general Selection Criteria of traditional formats also apply to electronic resources, additional selection criteria need to be considered in the acquisition of electronic resources.

### **Electronic Formats Selection Criteria**

- Quality, relevance, currency, comprehensiveness and accuracy of information
- Ease of use
- Availability to multiple users, usually simultaneously
- Ease of navigation and training requirements
- Hardware and software requirements
- Technical support
- Remote access availability
- Enhancement of print equivalents in terms of speed, flexibility, and full text availability
- Reduction or elimination of the purchase of multiple copies for multiple locations
- Updating frequency
- Purchase or lease
- Cost

The increasing use of electronic resources presents different challenges for analysis. The standard methods of analyzing a collection cannot easily be applied in the analysis of electronic resources. Many electronic resources do not circulate; circulation of some e-resources is sometimes limited by the publisher/vendor. The circulation of most of these resources is not included in the Libraries' circulation system, only through vendor data reports. The reports provide the following data elements: number of sessions (logins); number of searches; number of materials downloaded; and the number of turn-aways. Circulation, cost-effectiveness, along with the increasing demand by users, and analysis of how successful the users' needs are met should also be considered. Tracing usage patterns is increasingly important as more funds are devoted to electronic resources.

E-books in public libraries changed radically in the beginning of 2011. With the increased sale of e-readers during the holiday season at the end of 2010, public libraries experienced a substantial jump in e-book use. The American Library Association's 2012 *State of American Libraries Report* states that "The proportion of U.S. libraries that made e-books available almost doubled over the past five years, climbing from 38.3% in 2007 to 67.2% in 2011." In FY11, MCPL had an 89.71% increase in circulation of downloadable e-books and e-audiobooks. In the coming years, increased usage is expected to continue to rise at startling rates, raising a host of challenges, opportunities and new realities for MCPL and other public libraries.

The e-book industry is in a state of rapid flux and rapid growth with new developing trends which will push libraries to implement new collections, services, and lending solutions. With new entrants into this industry and major advances of current players, assessing what is on the market can be a challenge. MCPL will need to stay informed and engaged in this ever-changing e-book market. Libraries' users have high expectations in having libraries provide more ebooks, which is complicated by budgetary restraints. Being familiar with the myriad of issues will assist MCPL to make informed decisions about better systems for e-book and e-reader use. It will also assist Libraries in the provision of a balanced collection of print and electronic books.

## **World Languages Collections**

MCPL currently has Chinese, French, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese collections at various branch libraries throughout the County. These collections are popular browsing collections of books, magazines, and newspapers that provide leisure reading to children and adults. These collections reflect the literature and interest of multiple cultures living in the County. These collections are not intended to offer the breadth of information offered in the English language collection. The primary audience is recent immigrants who need practical, educational and recreational reading for themselves and their children in their first language. Speakers of English who are students of another language, especially students in the Montgomery County Public Schools, are a second target group. The Montgomery County Public School system reports that students come from 164 countries and speak 184 languages. Of these, 13.1% participate in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. MCPL provides English as a Second Language (ESL) CD-books, DVDs, workbooks, and two databases that assist foreignborn users to learn English. More and more databases that Libraries provide also have the capability to access the information in a user's native language.

The languages currently in the collection represent the largest linguistic groups of new immigrants in the County as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and Montgomery County Public School data.

Montgomery County's population projections for FY12 to FY18 reveal that its population will continue to increase and become more diverse, both ethnically and racially. The increase in diversity from 2000-2010 resulted in the county becoming a majority minority county for the first time.

During the next four years, location or relocation of these world collections, as well as the addition of any new language collections or a new site will be determined by the following criteria:

- The review of the most current census demographic information.
- The percent of the speaker population in the community. Libraries will work with the Office of Community Partnerships on an annual basis to determine this percentage which is based on current census data for Montgomery County.
- Level of participation in County ESL programs and related programs for immigrants.
- Expressed demand, including individual requests from groups, ESL teachers and programs, and branches. Patterns of these requests will be used to guide the addition of selected magazines, donated materials, small collections of children's and other targeted materials; and to determine which languages merit a browsing collection.
- Immersion programs in service areas and other patterns of demand by speakers of English will be considered in determining the need for small focused collections.
- Libraries' budget, the cost of purchasing materials fully processed, or the capability and cost of purchasing bibliographic records.
- Availability of databases in world languages that will serve a wide range of customers.
- Availability of grants, endowments, etc. to establish new world language collections.
- The increased growth of e-books offers a viable solution to the inclusion of additional world language materials into the MCPL collection.

MCPL will also work closely with the Office of Community Partnerships and the Literacy Council of Montgomery County in the development of future world languages collections. The Office of Community Partnerships coordinates the County's efforts to monitor, evaluate and improve its services to the County population with limited English proficiency (LEP). Montgomery County has a policy that requires agencies serving the multilingual population to make reasonable efforts to provide language-appropriate services in some of the most used languages in this County.

## **Gifts**

Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that the same standards of selection are applied to gifts as applied to materials purchased for the collection. Gifts are accepted with the understanding that they may not necessarily be added to the collection. Gifts, which can expand ownership and availability of titles in the Libraries's collection, will be accepted and placed in

branches throughout the system. Gifts not added to the collection may be sold by the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc. or its chapters. Proceeds are used to enhance library services in the County. Libraries reserves the right to the disposition of the gift materials. Libraries may choose not to accept some gifts.

Some general guidelines in the acceptance of gifts are: materials should be no older than three years old; materials must be in good condition; limited magazine titles are accepted; textbooks, encyclopedias and curriculum materials are not accepted. Libraries will give a donor an acknowledgement of receipt, which may be used for tax purposes, stating the number and types of materials, but not their value. It is the donor's responsibility to determine the value of their materials.

Gift materials and funds are often given in memoriam. In this case, prospective donors should contact the manager of the Collection Management division to discuss the various aspects of the gift.

### **Local Authors Program**

The Local Authors Program provides an ongoing way for Montgomery County residents who have published books to be part of the cultural conversation of the community, where the work would not otherwise be selected for inclusion in the Libraries' collection. A single copy only, of a book by a Montgomery County resident, may be sent to the Cataloging and Processing supervisor to receive a brief catalog entry and minimal processing. The book can then be placed on a Local Authors Shelf in the branch designated by the resident without further evaluation for inclusion in the collection. Library managers may choose to begin a Local Authors Shelf after consulting with the Manager of the Collection Management division.

### **Opening Day Collections**

Libraries uses "opening day collection" in many ways, but ultimately, it always means the collection that is in the library when the building opens (or re-opens) for the first time. In some cases, the entire collection is new. Libraries also uses "opening day collection" to refer to specific collections (YA, genealogical, audio books, etc.) as an area that is being highlighted on opening day. The makeup of those collections varies widely.

Prior to the closing of a library which is to be renovated or expanded, a checklist should be developed to include the following information:

- Weed all collections of worn materials. Do not pack and store these materials.
- Weed outdated materials, i.e. videos which will not go back into the new collection.
- Assess the need to move specific collections before the branch's closure to other branches which will be impacted. Identify those popular and high demand materials to be moved.
- Determine the highest circulating collections (book stock, percentage of total collection, turnover rate).
- Identify new collections or collections which need expansion as identified in the Facilities Project Specifications. (Ex. if a small business focus is planned determines number, types and currency of already owned materials.)



- Collect subjects or titles for which customers are asking but are not currently owned by Libraries. This information will help when developing the opening day collection.

Looking to the future, Libraries' print collections are being reduced in favor of electronic resources which provide more convenience, improved access, and the reduction of physical space which is usually needed to house a print collection. MCPL and other libraries are realizing that customers are seeking other uses of library space such as small and large tutorial rooms, discovery rooms, computer labs, etc. Reference and magazine collections which require continual updating and currency are the collections which can best be changed from print to electronic. Opening day collections of new or renovated MCPL branches should look to discontinue these print collections and provide electronic access. Current print magazine subscriptions are already offering them online simultaneously. To enhance this new magazine service, it will be necessary to also purchase handheld devices to allow customers to easily access and read "ezines." MCPL currently has some reference materials available electronically. Use of reference materials should continue to be assessed to determine other reference materials that should be purchased electronically rather than print

The DVD/movie industry is also starting to change due to such new advances such as pay-per-view, streaming, Netflix, etc. Some Maryland public libraries have already seen a decrease in circulation of their feature films and an increase in network, PBS and cable television shows. Collection Management will need to closely watch this market and any changes in this collection's circulation and adjust the purchase of DVDs accordingly prior to opening a new library.

With early literacy as a goal of the MCPL FY17-FY20 Strategic Plan, and the inclusion of "early literacy children's areas" in new or renovated libraries, children's materials should be purchased in quantities to meet the demands of the communities.

Merchandising is one of the best ways to market a library's collection. Self-standing display units, end of aisle displays, and ample top and bottom library shelves should be included to allow for effective merchandising of the new opening day collections.

## **2. Cooperative Arrangements**

Montgomery County Public Libraries has many cooperative arrangements with organizations and groups. The goal of these agreements is to expand Libraries' capacity to make more information and resources accessible to residents; and, the leveraging of available funds. Resource sharing offers County residents a wide range of historical, research oriented and specialized materials which Libraries would otherwise not be able to provide. The following is a list of MCPL's cooperative agreements.

- Interlibrary loan is the most familiar to users. Materials from libraries across the United States can be located and reserved through the Maryland State Marina and Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) systems.
- Montgomery County Public Schools – shared school booklists for summer reading

- Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped – This organization provides comprehensive library services to eligible blind and physically handicapped residents of the State of Maryland (e.g. digital books and players, Braille materials).
- Federal Depository Library Program – As a member, the Rockville Memorial Library provides access to U.S. Government documents online and a selection of print government documents. Libraries’ catalog contains records for the print documents received under the program.
- Montgomery County Historical Society – This library’s collection holdings are listed in MCPL’s catalog.
- Maryland Consortium – Provides access to downloadable audio and e-books through the MCPL website
- Maryland state agreement with several database vendors in the provision of special pricing for Maryland county library systems.

### **3. Materials Deselection**

Material deselection, or weeding, is the process of removing materials from the active collection for withdrawal or transfer. It is an essential element of collection development that ensures Libraries’ materials are useful, accessible; and, that Libraries continue to maintain quality collections. Branch collections are regularly reviewed to assure their currency and usefulness. Some of the guidelines used by staff are:

- Condition of materials
- Outdated materials
- Accuracy of information
- Improve access to the collection by staff and users
- Alleviate space problems
- Identify collection gaps
- Items no longer of interest or in demand
- Unused duplication

Other evaluative tools that staff use to make informed decisions about the removal or the transfer of materials are reports from Libraries’ circulation system and CollectionHQ. With the increased use of electronic resources, periodical and reference collections will continue to be assessed to determine the most appropriate format to offer these materials to library users.

Withdrawn and discarded materials cannot be given or sold to individuals or organizations. Periodicals and newspapers must be discarded. Materials in poor condition must be recycled. All other materials withdrawn from the Libraries’ collections will be sent to the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc.

### **4. Intellectual Freedom**

Basic to the Collection Policy is the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement and, the Freedom to View Statement. These statements pertain to all information formats, including print, video, audio, digital and electronic formats.

Libraries assure that the collection is open and accessible to all residents. It is committed to a well-balanced print and electronic collection which presents various points of view on all subjects, controversial or not. Libraries does not remove, restrict or withdraw materials because they are regarded as discriminatory or inflammatory by an individual or group. Libraries seeks to meet the community's needs, and recognizes that some materials may be controversial. It is the responsibility of each library user to choose materials which suit their individual tastes and needs. Individuals are free to reject materials for themselves that they do not approve; but they may not restrict the freedom of others to read, listen, or view what they are interested in. Responsibility for children's use of library materials rests solely with their parents or caregivers.

## **Conclusion**

Montgomery County Public Libraries is committed to anticipating future user and community needs and expectations to help the Libraries design and provide collections to meet them. Input from the community will continue to be a high priority in the future development of the Montgomery County Public Libraries' collection. New materials and formats that meet the community needs will be reviewed according to the selection criteria and purchased as resources allow. Technological advances, societal values, and cultural differences require flexibility, openmindedness, and responsiveness in the evaluation and re-evaluation of all Libraries resources.