

Collection Development and Maintenance Policy

Last Updated June 22, 2023

Mission

The mission of the Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries is to " provide equitable access to information, ideas, and experiences that spark imagination and expand possibilities for all." The Library collection is developed and maintained in support of this mission.

Authority and Responsibility for Collection Development

The Director is responsible for the collection development of Montgomery County Public Libraries. Authority for decisions on selection, maintenance, and withdrawal of materials is delegated to the Collection Manager, under the oversight of the Assistant Director responsible for Collection & Technology. The Collection Manager administers the collection selection and maintenance operations of the Collection Management Division and provides guidelines, support, and assistance for collection management in library branches.

Goals of Collection Management at MCPL

1. **Ensure intellectual freedom for all users.** Montgomery County Public 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 may not find all materials in the collection to their liking, but this should in no way restrict the freedom of others to read, listen, or view materials in which they are interested. Responsibility for children's use of library materials rests solely with their parents or caregivers.

To meet this goal the Library endorses and supports:

- The American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#)
- The ALA [Freedom to Read Statement](#)
- The ALA [Freedom to View Statement](#)
- The ALA [Digital Resources and Services Statement](#), an Interpretation of the ALA Bill of Rights
- The ALA [Statement on Censorship](#)
- These policies are part of the criteria for selection and maintenance of the Library collection. Librarians who select library materials also follow the [ALA Code of Ethics](#).

2. Expand and enhance library collections in appropriate formats to provide high-quality information and materials for the education and entertainment of customers through all County libraries to meet a wide variety of customer needs. Library collections are developed to meet this objective within the scope of the system-wide collection as a whole and within the collection maintenance guidelines outlined below.

Selection and Purchasing

Acquisitions of both physical items and electronic resources are made throughout the fiscal year (July 1–June 30) and are guided by this document, as well as County law and procurement regulations.

Montgomery County Public Libraries collects and maintains materials which reflect the diversity of Montgomery County’s community. In selecting materials, MCPL seeks to include works reflecting those in our community who have not had equitable representation in the publishing and creative industries. Creating an inclusive collection, exchanging stories and experiences of a wide variety of people, strengthens our connections between our customers and communities within Montgomery County.

Customer purchase suggestions, as well as staff suggestions for subject and title additions to the collection, are reviewed regularly by Collection Development. The library welcomes public input on the content of the collection and on how we can better meet the information needs of the County.

The collection is selected to offer a variety of choice of formats and levels of information literacy, with the goal of providing life-long learning opportunities for our customers. While we strive to collect in as many subject areas as possible, we are limited by space and budget constraints. Our professional selection staff looks for reviews in publishing journals (for example, *Kirkus*, *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*) as well as through other media outlets, awards lists, and customer demand. Selectors rely on professional reviews and media interest to assist us in the selection of non-fiction, but also in assessing potential interest in and demand for fiction, poetry, and other library materials. Self-published titles or those published with a book packager will be considered but are selected only in rare cases.

Materials in languages other than English are selected in support of a small number of additional languages spoken at home by a large percentage of county residents. These are prioritized by recent Census and demographic data available and as budgets allow. These collections are not intended to offer the full breadth and depth of information offered in the English language collection.

Physical materials which are not owned by the Montgomery County Public Libraries can be borrowed from other library institutions through our interlibrary loan services.

Donations

Donated materials are accepted at Library branches, but the MCPL reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of materials that do not fall within the collection scope. Items with potential resale value not added to the collection will be given to the Friends of the Library Montgomery County for resale. Resale of these materials directly benefits MCPL. Library staff accepting a gift will sign a receipt for the donor testifying to the number of books donated, but not to their value.

Leased Books

In order to provide a current collection and maintain appropriate holds queues for physical items, MCPL participates in a leased book program. For a set fee, we can order large numbers of popular titles and return them once demand subsides. We currently use leased books in two ways: our Lucky Day collection and holdable leased copies.

The Lucky Day collection is a first-come first-serve collection of new, in-demand titles. They cannot be put on hold. Holdable leased titles are ordered in response to large holds queues. The copies are maintained by Collection Management and are used solely to fill holds. Once demand subsides, staff either return them or convert copies to the regular collection as needed.

Information for authors and others submitting work for consideration by MCPL

Our professional selection staff evaluates each published work or media production according to Montgomery County Public Libraries' materials selection guidelines.

Procedures for submitting work for consideration by MCPL for our collection:

- Mail one (1) copy of your work to the following address:

Collection Development
Montgomery County Public Libraries
2 Metropolitan Court, Suite 4
Gaithersburg MD 20878
- Please note this address is not open to the public and drop-offs will not be accepted.
- Collection Management staff will review your title, any relevant reviews, and consider if it fits within the greater scope of MCPL's collection, our budgetary limitations, and check availability from our vendors. Our goal is to keep a balanced collection that supports our community's needs.
- Review copies submitted will not be returned.

Please include with your submission any published reviews about your work that might help to inform the decision of the library selectors.

The Library cannot suggest a specific time at which a final decision will be made regarding the work, but, in general, a selected title would be added to the collection within 90 days of submission. A title that does not appear in our catalog within that timeframe may be assumed to be one that did not meet our needs for the collection. Due to the volume of submissions we receive, MCPL cannot respond to individual inquiries regarding the status of submissions.

Local Authors

For authors who reside, work, or go to school in Montgomery County, you may submit one (1) copy of your publication to be included on the Local Author shelf at one (1) MCPL Branch of your choosing. Duplicate submissions will be discarded. Titles may be submitted to the chosen local MCPL Branch directly.

Collection Maintenance

To ensure the currency and usefulness of collections, materials and usage trends are reviewed on a regular basis. The collection is not archival and is revised continually to meet community needs. Materials are withdrawn for relevance and accuracy of information, physical condition, or lack of use. The Library does not withdraw materials selected for the collection solely because of content objections from library customers or other citizens or groups. Books and other media which have outdated material, but which are of historic importance, are maintained in the collection. Selected Government Depository items are maintained in the collection in accordance with depository retention rules. Materials are placed at branches based on available space and are available to all library users at all branches through our holds process. The use patterns, demographics, local community needs of each library branch are considered in materials allocation. Materials which are withdrawn from the collection may not be held for or given to individual customers or organizations. This includes periodical material which is to be discarded via solid waste recycling. Withdrawn materials with resale value will be sent to the FOLMC bookstores, where they can be purchased by the public in support of MCPL.

The evaluation of the materials already in the library collection is as important to collection management as is the selection of new materials. This evaluation is necessary because library collections are not static, subject areas must be kept current with relevant information, the shelf space available in any library is finite, and new items are being added continually.

The value of an item in a library collection changes over time for several reasons:

- the information provided may no longer be accurate
- the item's physical condition may have deteriorated
- the item may no longer be of interest to library customers

The goals of collection maintenance are:

- Removal of materials that are dated, inaccurate, or damaged
- Improved access to the collection for customers and staff
- Retention of works of historical significance and those works which contribute to a balanced collection
- Reviewing circulation and usage data to determine future collection development needs and strategies

Weeding is an ongoing process in all branches that serves to keep the collections fresh, up-to-date and visible. All items withdrawn from the collection or donated items that have sale potential should go to the FOLMC bookstore for resale. No discarded materials may be given to the public, as they are County property.