

Subject Heading: **BOOK AND NONBOOK SELECTION**

RE: **MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

Approved: July 28, 1981; Revised: February 25, 1982; Revised: June 10, 1999;
Revised: February 21, 2013

Minutes Page: 436, 458, 1658

Policy Statement

The Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees and the Harford County Public Library uphold the following principles of service:

Provide open, non-judgmental access to collections and services without regard to ethnicity, citizenship, national origin, age, gender, educational level, economic status, religion, disability, or any other protected class, qualification, or condition.

Promote and provide free access to 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 upon which a democratic society depends.

Materials selected for the library collection are intended to meet the cultural, informational, educational, and entertainment needs of the citizens of Harford County. The primary objective of selection is to acquire materials of both contemporary significance and permanent value. The 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.

Criteria for Selection

Each item selected or donated, regardless of format, is evaluated in accordance with established [library procedures](#). Since no library can feasibly acquire all print and non-print materials, every library must of necessity employ a policy of selectivity in acquisitions. Selection decisions are made on the basis of staff member judgment, expertise and knowledge of what is already in the collection, and by evaluating reviews and other selection tools and criteria. Library customers [may request](#) that materials be re-evaluated for placement or reconsidered for inclusion in the library collection.

The criteria employed in the selection process are intended to be inclusive, rather than exclusive, and are deliberately flexible. While all relevant factors are considered in the selection process, some may be given more weight than others in any specific selection decision.

Continued

The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of the citizens of Harford County. These changing needs 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, in fact, later be purchased.

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. Additionally, duplication of titles is essential in meeting the public demand for best-sellers and other heavily used materials. Donations, memorials, and gifts of material to the library will be accepted subject to this same selection criteria. The selection of websites and on-line information, as set forth in the Harford County Public Library Internet Policy, shall be consistent with the goals and principles of this Materials Selection Policy.

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.

Freedom to Read and Parental Responsibility

The Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees and the Harford County Public Library believe 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.

Louise A. LeTendre, Chairperson
Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees