

Subject: Collection Development

Purpose:

To document the professional, objective standards and principles that guide librarians and library staff in selecting material for inclusion in the collection and selecting material for removal from the collection. The policy provides both public awareness and library guidance.

Policy:

The Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library provides materials and services to support the informational, educational and entertainment needs of the citizens of Montgomery and Floyd Counties. The Library strives to have a collection that reflects the diversity of the population it serves.

Selection and purchase of library materials rests with the Library Director who may delegate responsibilities to designated staff members. The Director and library staff will adhere to the accepted professional practices outlined in the Collection Development Policy when making selection decisions. A policy cannot replace the common sense, knowledge of one's community and the judgment of librarians and staff, but it presents goals and indicates boundaries that will assist them in choosing from the vast array of materials available.

The Director will allocate funds to the major collection subdivisions (e.g., adult nonfiction, fiction, youth collection, reference, periodicals, non-print), formats (print, audiovisual, and electronic resources), and library locations. Circulation statistics will be maintained to assist in decision making.

Scope of the Collection

The MFRL's collection is intended to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of the citizens of Montgomery and Floyd Counties. The scope of the collection is sufficiently broad to offer a choice of format, treatment, and level of difficulty so that the library needs of most individuals can be met. The collection is not intended to be archival or for deep research; it is reviewed and revised on a continuous basis to meet contemporary, ongoing needs.

Selection Objectives

The primary objective of selection shall be to collect materials of contemporary value and significance in order to create a broad, well-used browsing collection. We will seek to add material to the collection that will enrich our libraries and maintain an overall balance, as well as provide personal growth, life-long learning and entertainment. The selection policy supports the MFRL Mission Vision, Values and strategic goals detailed in the strategic plan.

Selection Principles

Library materials shall be selected for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all residents of our community. We will not exclude any material because of personal attributes of the writer. To the best of our ability, the library shall provide material presenting all points of view concerning the topics, issues

and problems of our time, international, national and local. Materials of sound factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

The selection of any material for the library's collection does not constitute an endorsement of its contents by the MFRL Board of Trustees or the library or its governmental bodies. The library recognizes that some materials may be controversial, and that any given item may offend someone. Selection decisions are not based on anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the collection and the needs and interests of the community, or some segment of the community.

The responsibility for children using library materials rests solely with their parents or legal guardians. The library will in no way act "in loco parentis," Latin for "in the place of the parent." The selection of materials intended for adults will not be inhibited by the possibility that children may access the materials.

Criteria for Selection

Each item is considered in terms of what it will bring to the collection and the audience for whom it is intended. No single standard can apply to all acquisition decisions. Librarians may select some material primarily for its artistic merit, scholarship, or its value as a human document, while they choose others to satisfy the informational, recreational and entertainment needs of the community. Materials may be selected in hardback, paperback, eBook, audiovisual, and other formats.

General Criteria

1. Suitability of the format for library use
2. Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
3. Present and potential relevance to community needs
4. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the medium to content
5. Importance as a document of the times
6. Relation to the existing collection and to other material on the subject
7. Reputation and/or significance of the author or illustrator
8. Skill, competence and purpose of the author or illustrator
9. Attention of critics, reviewers and the public
10. Availability

Specific Criteria for Evaluation

1. Authority
2. Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
3. Objectivity
4. Clarity, accuracy and logic of presentation
5. Representation of a point of view
6. Availability

Selection Methods

A majority of the library material is selected based on reviews published in professional sources recognized as reliable and authoritative. Because the number of items reviewed is only a small fraction of the number published each year, some items must be chosen on the basis of publisher and vendor recommendations and other review sources.

Suggestions for purchase from MFRL patrons and other community stakeholders provide invaluable information about what our patrons want to see and read. We evaluate the suggestions using the above criteria. A decision will be made and the patron notified within 7 days of our receiving the suggestion. If the item is not added to the collection, the staff will inform the patron about interlibrary loan service and/or other options for access to the material.

De-selection Procedures

De-selection or “weeding” is the practice of systematically examining and evaluating materials in the library’s collection to determine if they continue to fit the stated service roles of the library. This includes materials that are damaged, contain obsolete information, are no longer frequently used, or otherwise do not provide significant value to the collection and community. Decisions may be based on the CREW (Continuous Review Evaluation and Weeding) method, and the professional judgment of designated library staff. The Texas State Library developed the CREW Method in 1976, and revised it 2012 to include electronic resources. It provides guidance in weeding for small and medium-sized libraries through a widely-accepted set of standard practices.

Items withdrawn from the collection will be disposed of in accordance with local law, which permits transfer to the Friends of the Library for sale, gifts to schools or other organizations, and recycling. Material in poor condition that cannot be recycled may be disposed of as trash.

Gifts of Material

The Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library welcomes gifts of new and used books, audio books, DVDs, other media and similar materials. Once donated, items become the property of MFRL. They will be added to the collection in accordance with the collection development policy of the library, or may be given to other libraries and non-profit agencies, sold, traded, or discarded. Items not accepted include but are not limited to magazines, old encyclopedias, textbooks, items in extremely poor condition and Reader's Digest condensed books. The library will acknowledge receipt of donated items but is unable to set fair market or appraisal values. The Library will not provide an itemized list of donated items.

Monetary gifts for the collection are particularly welcome. Funds donated for the collection will be used to purchase items in accordance with the Collection Development Policy. Donors may request special memorial and honorary bookplates and/or family notification. Suggestions for subject areas or other areas of interest are welcome and will be followed to the extent possible.

Large bequests or donations of equipment, real estate, stock, artifacts, works of art, collections, etc., may best be handled by the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Foundation or the Floyd County Library Building Fund, Inc. If donated to the library, the Library Board of Trustees will determine their suitability to the purposes and needs of the library.

Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library welcomes comments and suggestions regarding the continued appropriateness of materials in the collection or programs offered by the library. It is the obligation of any public library to offer differing points of view on any topic. MFRL does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsement of the viewpoint of the author. Library materials shall not be marked or identified to indicate approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

A formal, written request for reconsideration of materials/programs may be submitted to the Library Director. Copies of the "Request for Reconsideration of Materials/Programs" form are available at each branch library or from the administrative office.

For a request for reconsideration to be considered, the "Request for Reconsideration of Materials/Programs" form must be completed in full. The patron submitting the request must hold a valid borrower's card and must be a resident of Floyd or Montgomery County, a student within Floyd or Montgomery County, or an owner of real property within Floyd or Montgomery County.

After consulting with the Reconsideration Committee, the Library Director will respond, in writing (either by email or regular mail) within thirty days of receipt, to the patron's request for reconsideration. The response will indicate the action to be taken and reasons for that action.

The decision of the Library Director may be appealed by writing to the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Board of Trustees. The Board will consider an appeal at their next regularly scheduled Board meeting to which the patron will be invited to share his/her views and concerns. The decision of the Board will be final.

The Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library is not a judicial body. Laws governing obscenity, subversive materials, and other questionable matters are subject to interpretation by the courts. Therefore, no challenged material will be removed solely for the complaint of obscenity or any other category covered by law until after a local court of competent jurisdiction has ruled against the material.

Endorsements by the Library Board of Trustees:

The Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Board of Trustees endorses the following statements of the American Library Association. The statements are contained in Appendix A of the Library’s policy manual.

- Code of Ethics of the ALA (endorsed 11/15/00; 3/18/09; 9/19/2018)
- Freedom to Read (endorsed 11/15/00; 3/18/09; 9/19/2018)
- Freedom to Read (endorsed 11/15/00; 3/18/09; 9/19/2018)
- Freedom to View (endorsed 11/15/00; 4/20/11; 9/19/2018)
- Library Bill of Rights (endorsed 11/15/00; 4/20/11; 9/19/2018)
- Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records (endorsed 11/15/00; 4/20/11; 9/19/2018)
- Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (endorsed 6/18/01; 6/20/11; 9/19/2018)

References:

- Code of Virginia § 18.2-372 et. seq.: Obscenity and related offenses
- MFRL 203: Request for Reconsideration of Materials/Programs
- MFRL 205: Gifts

Approval:

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Board of Trustees
July 18, 2001; September 16, 2009; April 18, 2012; September 19, 2018; Revised June 21, 2023.

June 21, 2023

Date

Tim Thornton, Chair