

VI. Collection Development Policy

A. Statement of Purpose

In keeping with the Mission of the Monroe County Library System, the collection will be selected and maintained to provide materials “within the full scope of recorded human expression.” The Library collection will provide its users a source of life-long learning and entertainment, a forum for the exploration of ideas, a repository for and a point of access to the dreams, aspirations, and visions of humanity. The collection will reflect the diversity of its users, the variety of their interests, and the heritage of their communities.

The Board of Trustees of the Monroe County Library System recognizes that the full range of human ideas must be accessible in a public library, and that this principle is embodied in the First Amendment of the Constitution which protects the free expression of ideas. The Board believes that while anyone is free to select or reject materials for themselves, they cannot restrict the freedom of others to read or inquire. Parents have the primary responsibility to guide and direct the reading of their own minor child. The Library cannot stand “in loco parentis”.

The Library collection will be a broadly based and unbiased source of information. The collection will include as wide a selection as possible, and in as much depth as sufficient to meet anticipated and expressed needs. The Library selects materials in accordance with the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read statements.

B. Placement of Materials

The collection will be organized and maintained to facilitate access, primarily by the Dewey Decimal Classification System, which divides materials by subject.

The Ellis Library & Reference Center serves as the primary resource and reference center for the library system. Materials housed there include information useful for basic research in most fields of knowledge. Small branch collections are not intended for in-depth research or scholarly work. Popular titles and subjects are held in branches as long as there is demand for them.

The Library’s Interlibrary Loan Department serves to locate and borrow materials from public libraries and universities throughout the world, if materials are not available from other MCLS branches or cannot be purchased.

C. Selection Responsibility

Selection is accomplished under the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees and vested in the Director of the Monroe County Library System. The Head of Collection Services oversees the Materials Selection Budget and the purchases of subject

specialists who are qualified by reason of education, training, or job responsibilities.

The Library is responsive to public suggestion of items and subjects to be included in the collection, and actively solicits such suggestions. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Head of Collection Services for consideration.

D. Selection Criteria

Materials are judged on the basis of the content and style of the work as a whole, not by selected portions or passages.

Criteria for adding materials to the collection will include:

- support of collection development objectives
- literary and social value, or importance as a document of the times
- relevance to community needs and interests
- potential and/or known demand for material (bestsellers)
- suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience
- reputation and significance of the author, illustrator, publisher, producer, filmmaker, etc.
- literary, artistic, or technical values
- accuracy of content
- positive reviews in one or more appropriate professional journals
- within limits of budgets for materials
- relationship to existing materials in the collection
- diversity of viewpoint
- local author
- availability in area libraries

E. Selection Tools

Selection tools include professional journals, trade journals, subject bibliographies, publishers' promotional materials, and reviews from reputable sources. Purchase suggestions from patrons are welcome.

F. Standing Orders

Materials that are updated annually or qualify for better discounts may be put on standing order. The majority of these materials are reference books, but travel guides, college guides, talking books, or other items may also be put on standing order.

G. Materials Not Collected

Forms of expression that are unprotected by the First Amendment will not be included in the Library. Abridged talking books are not purchased, although they may be added to the collection if donated.

H. Gifts

Books, videos, and other materials may be donated to the Monroe County Library System, with the exception of textbooks, paperbacks without covers, damaged items,

and magazines. No conditions may be placed on their use by the library system, although every effort is made to abide by the donor's wishes. Some items may be added to the collection, but others may be discarded, returned, sold in a book sale, or offered to educational or other non-profit institutions. Donors may request a receipt estimating the value of the donation.

Cash gifts or memorials are welcome. Letters of thanks are sent to both the donor and the honoree, including titles of the materials purchased with the donation. Bookplates with the donor and honoree's names are placed in the materials.

I. Collection Maintenance

Library staff continuously evaluate materials, replacing or repairing those which are worn or damaged, and withdrawing items no longer current or in demand. Replacement will depend on whether the item is still available and in print, another item might better serve the same purpose, there remains sufficient need to replace the item, newer or revised materials are a better replacement, or if the item has historical value. Withdrawn materials may be discarded, sold in a book sale, or offered to educational or other non-profit institutions.

Materials added to the collection may be removed if the Director finds they do not meet the collection criteria. Materials that have been damaged or altered so they no longer meet the collection criteria may be removed by the Director.

J. Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Board of Trustees recognizes the right of individuals to question materials in the library collection. An individual questioning material in the Library may be referred to designated members of the staff to discuss the matter; unresolved concerns may then be put in writing, signed by the patron, and forwarded to the Director. The statement and the material in question will be reviewed by the Selection Review Committee convened by the Director for this purpose. The Review Committee will determine if the material under consideration meets the criteria of this policy and will make a recommendation to the Director who will prepare a written reply to the individual.

All materials selected under this policy are considered constitutionally protected until such time as they are determined unprotected by judicial action in courts of competent jurisdiction and after all appeals have been exhausted. In the event that an individual charges that a particular item is not protected under the First Amendment of the Constitution, the onus of proof rests with the individual. Material under question will remain in the active collection until such judicial determination is made.

If the Director or the Board of Trustees are concerned that an item is "harmful to minors" as defined in Michigan Act 33 of 1978, MCLA 722.673 et seq, an opinion may be sought from the General Counsel of the Monroe County Library System. If the General Counsel provides an opinion that the item is "harmful to minors" under that statute, the item shall be maintained so persons under eighteen years of age do

not have access to it unless the Board of Trustees adopts a resolution rejecting the opinion of the General Counsel.

As applied under this policy and under Act 33 of 1978, MLCA 722.673 et seq, “harmful to minors” means sexually explicit material which meets all of the following criteria:

1. Considered as a whole, it appeals to the prurient interest of minors as determined by contemporary local community standards.
2. It is patently offensive to contemporary local community standards of adults as to what is suitable for minors.
3. Considered as a whole, it lacks serious literary, artistic, political, educational, and scientific value for minors.

Interpretation of the above criteria shall be in accordance with the relevant state and federal court decisions.

K. Material Categories

1. Reference

This collection includes encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, atlases, indexes, directories, and bibliographies, although any item may be designated reference if it must be consistently available. Some titles are included in both the circulating and reference collections. Materials are kept current and updated, although some older items may be retained for historical or research purposes. Online databases and some CD products are also purchased for reference use. Reference materials do not circulate.

2. Adult Non-Fiction

This collection includes materials of topical and continuing interest, for the purpose of information, education, self-help, and entertainment. All significant points of view on current and historical questions and controversies, including legal, constitutional, political, economic, medical, ethical, religious, social, and other aspects are collected. Inclusion of material representing a particular belief, opinion, or point of view does not constitute endorsement by the Library. Unusually expensive items and those with an extremely limited focus are not normally acquired. Materials to support local academic curriculums are purchased, with the exception of textbooks. Pamphlet files are maintained at several branches, with a large state travel file at the Ellis Library & Reference Center.

3. Adult Fiction

This collection reflects the diverse interests, tastes, and reading abilities of the community. All genres, including science fiction, westerns, romance, and mysteries are collected. Popular titles such as bestsellers are purchased in quantity to meet demand.

4. Large Print

Patron interest and availability of materials has created a large print collection of primarily fiction titles with soft, light covers. The majority of these titles are also in the general collection. A separate collection of large print titles is rotated to numerous senior centers in the county.

5. Children's Non-Fiction

This collection covers similar areas and topics as found in Adult Non-Fiction, albeit at more basic reading levels and depths. Children's materials are cataloged as E Non-Fiction to serve children from birth through the third grade, and as J Non-Fiction to serve children from third grade and older. Materials are included for adults involved with children such as parents, teachers, and children's literature students. A children's reference collection is also maintained.

6. Children's Fiction

a. Easies

This collection is intended for children from preschool to grades two or three (interest level may wane before reading level), for sharing and reading aloud. Beginner reading primers are included in this collection. Replacement and duplication of titles is often necessary as children read and re-read favorite books.

b. Juvenile

Juvenile fiction is selected primarily for children in third grade and older. Adaptations and abridgements are purchased only when they are faithful to the intent of the original.

c. Young Adult

This collection is intended for adolescents, and contains more mature themes and content.

7. Special Collections

a. Government Documents

The Monroe County Library System is a selective federal and one hundred percent state depository of government documents. These items are housed at the Ellis Library & Reference Center. Selection of materials is based on use and interest to the general public, and includes directories of government agencies, census publications, U.S. Code and the Code of Federal regulations, and several magazines. All government documents are available to the public either on regular loan, special loan, or for reference use in the library. The depository follows the Michigan Plan for withdrawal of federal documents on a monthly schedule. Items held for withdrawal will be available for one month past the requested withdrawal date.

b. Custer Collection

This collection specializes in the life and times of General George Armstrong

Custer. A major component of the collection was purchased from Dr. Lawrence A. Frost in 1977, and continues to grow through additional acquisitions on the Civil War, Indians, and the Custer story. Materials are housed at the Ellis Library & Reference Center and are available for use by appointment only. These items do not circulate.

c. Michigan Collection

This collection includes material on the history, description, and development of the State of Michigan. Works of local authors are also collected.

d. Monroe Collection

This collection includes material on the history, description, and development of Monroe County. All branch libraries include some local history, with larger collections at Ellis, Dorsch, Bedford and Summerfield-Petersburg.

e. Genealogy

Genealogical material relating to Monroe County is collected, including indexes to births, deaths, marriages, wills, and land records. The largest collection is housed at the Ellis Library & Reference Center. A wide range of other areas is collected, with special emphasis on Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and French-Canadian. Basic genealogical research guides are available in both the circulating and Genealogy collections.

f. Art for Loan

A circulating art collection is maintained, comprised of award-winning entries from local art shows.

8. Periodicals

This collection supplements and complements the book collection, is more timely and more frequently updated, and focuses on publications that provide current information on a variety of popular and practical research topics such as health, business, hobbies and crafts, consumer product evaluations, and arts and entertainment. Most materials circulate, with the exception of the most recent issue of a title. Newspapers and microforms do not circulate.

9. Media

a. Videos

A diversified collection in DVD format is available, including award-winners, foreign films, entertainment, informational, how-to, and children's titles. Items are intended for home use and other private showings which do not constitute public performances.

b. Books/Nonprint Format

A collection of books in several digital forms are available including books on CD, audiobooks and ebooks. Titles include popular fiction and non-fiction, including language, history and biographies. Primarily unabridged titles are

purchased.

c. Music CDs

A diversified collection in CD format is available encompassing genres that include popular, classical, religious, holiday, sound effects and radio shows.

d. Kits

This collection is comprised of mixed media (print + media) packaged as a set. The adult collection is primarily non-fiction and includes language courses. The children's collection contains a core of classic children's literature in read-a-long CD and book format.

10. Internet Resources

The Library maintains a website which includes available databases and links to reference sites, homework helpers, and others. Each resource is evaluated for content, quality, accuracy, usefulness, and relevancy within the scope of the collection. Resources may be removed if outdated, content has changed significantly and no longer falls within the guidelines of the collection policy, or has been superseded by a more appropriate site.

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