

# Dorchester County Library Collection Development Policy

The Library selects and delivers library resources in a variety of formats to support its stated mission and meet the informational, recreational, and educational needs of the community.

1. **Responsibility for Selection.** The responsibility for the selection of library material is delegated by the Library Board to the Library Director, and, under his/her direction, to the professional staff whose education, training, and experience qualify them for this activity. Patron suggestions are welcomed and given serious consideration, while following selection criteria. Final purchasing decisions are made by Library Administration.
2. **Selection Principles.** The Selection Policy of Dorchester County Library is based on the following principles:
  - a. Materials are selected to provide a balanced collection that reflects the interests and needs of the community, supports the Library's mission, and fits within the budget and space constraints of the Library System.
  - b. The Library upholds the principles of the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" and "Freedom to Read Statement" (Appendix F).
  - c. The Library staff does NOT serve *in loco parentis*. Only the parent(s) may restrict their children, and only their own children, from access to library materials. Responsibility for the materials that children read, listen to, or view rests with their parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s). This responsibility is affirmed by the parent/guardian when he/she signs the registration form and library card giving permission for the child to borrow materials from the Library.
  - d. The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility, and responsiveness to changing needs of the citizens of Dorchester County. Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular passage(s).

### 3. Purchasing Criteria.

The following criteria are used when purchasing materials:

- a. relevance to community needs and interests,
- b. suitability of subject, style, and reading level to the intended audience,
- c. authenticity,
- d. insight into human and social conditions,
- e. importance as a document of the times,

- f. appropriateness and effectiveness of medium and content,
  - g. reputation and significance of author,
  - h. professional and staff reviews,
  - i. relationship to existing materials in print and electronic collections on the same subject,
  - j. availability and accessibility of the same material in the service area or the consortium,
  - k. ease of use to the Library, storage, and maintenance, and
  - l. cost and availability.
- 4. Evaluation, Weeding, and Collection Maintenance.** The collection of the Dorchester County Library is maintained through systematic inventory, evaluation, removal, and replacement of outdated, outmoded, and worn materials. Library Branches will be completely inventoried on a schedule established by the Library Director.

**a. Weeding Criteria.** Materials are withdrawn from the collection for the following reasons:

- (1) missing from the collection,
- (2) poor physical condition,
- (3) has outlived usefulness either being out-of-date or no longer requested by patrons,
- (4) unnecessary duplication,
- (5) cooperative agreements with other libraries and the ability for patrons to use other libraries in the area, and/or
- (6) availability of an item from other libraries through a union catalog if the library is part of a consortium.

Materials no longer in demand will be reviewed using the same criteria as new titles when considering their usefulness and appropriateness. If a subject is not heavily in demand and content is still up-to-date, the material may be retained until a more suitable item is available.

**b. Guidelines for Collection Weeding.** Resources used to provide guidelines for collection weeding will include but are not limited to titles such as:

- (1) The Crew Method: Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding for Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries (Texas State Library and Archives Commission) [manual available on Dorchester County Library intranet page]
- (2) Non-Fiction Guidelines for Smaller Public Libraries
- (3) Public Library Catalog
- (4) Fiction Catalog
- (5) Children's Catalog

While the criteria and resources listed are to be used as guides for weeding, they are not intended to act as a substitute for professional judgment and common sense.

**5. Challenged Materials Policy.** Library Patrons wishing reconsideration of Library materials should:

- a. Complete a **Patron Request for Reconsideration of Materials** (Appendix D).
- b. Submit the request at the patron's home Branch.
- c. The Request for Reconsideration will be reviewed by the appropriate Department Head who will send it to the Library Director, along with any available published reviews of the material in question.
- d. After the review is completed, the patron will be contacted by the Library Director who will seek to resolve the question.
- e. If the Library Director is unsuccessful in resolving the issue to the patron's satisfaction, the patron will be referred to the Chairman of the Library Board.

**6. Gifts and Donations.**

Materials or money gifted or donated to the Dorchester County Library will be accepted or refused in accordance with the following criteria:

- a. Donations of books, non-print material, or money for the purchase of these materials are accepted with the understanding that any items not deemed useful additions may be disposed of at the Library's discretion, are not returnable, and will be retained or purchased according to the Library's Collection Development Policy.
- b. Gifts/donations of art prints or objects may be received without qualification, to be used or disposed of as the Library Board judges appropriate.
- c. Gifts/donations for \$1,000.00 or more may be accepted for uses specified by the donating party and agreed to by the Library Director on behalf of the Library Board.
- d. Funds from unrestricted gifts/donations may be used by the Library Director in support of any capital acquisition or operational activity of the Library System.

- e. Donors may request a receipt for donated materials. Assigning monetary value for gifts is the responsibility of the donor. See **Gift/Donation Agreement Receipt** (Appendix G).
- f. The Library Director on behalf of the Library Board will acknowledge the receipt of all monetary gifts/donations in the form of a letter of appreciation to the individual or organization making the donation.