

Lamar County Library System

III. Materials Selection Policy

The main purpose of the library is to obtain, organize, preserve and make available materials to support the mission statement. With this purpose in mind, the Lamar County Library System's Board of Trustees has adopted the following materials selection policy:

The Library Board and Library Director recognize the importance of basic materials of permanent value as well as timely materials on current issues. In providing materials, the library will purchase the best quality materials for immediate use as funding within the county permits. The format that best suits patron needs will be purchased. While selection is delegated to trained staff, the ultimate responsibility for material selection rests with the Library Director, who operates within those policies set forth by the Board of Trustees. Selection is based on the particular needs and interests of the community. Every library on a limited budget must, of necessity, employ a policy of selectivity in acquiring materials. Materials may be limited on the basis of cost, demand, and availability in other libraries. Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own merit and intended audience. All selections, both purchases and gifts, must meet some of the following criteria:

1. Relation to other materials and existing areas of coverage in order to maintain a well-balanced collection.
2. Accuracy of information
3. Authoritativeness of the work
4. Timeliness or permanence of the work
5. Clear presentation and readability
6. Author's reputation and significance as a writer
7. Appeal to the interests and needs of individuals in the community
8. Suitability of physical form to library use
9. Contemporary significance
10. Technical quality in selection of non-book materials

As requested by patrons, Lamar County Library System attempts to interlibrary loan material if it is a year or more old as most library systems will not lend their new material. Lamar County Library System accepts patron requests to purchase items. The Library reserves the right to reject any request deemed inappropriate to the Library collection.

Lamar County Library System can only afford a small proportion of the thousands of materials published each year. Moreover, the librarians responsible for selection cannot possibly read all of the materials published annually, and in most cases, the library would not be allowed to return to the vendor materials found to be nonessential. Therefore, the librarians responsible for selection depend upon professional reviews appearing in appropriate trade journals. Catalogs which list recognized works can be used to check the library's holdings against such standardized recommendations. The following are typical catalogs used by librarians and which can be borrowed by the library from other systems:

AAAS Science Book List for Children
Children's Catalog
Fiction Catalog
Standard Catalog for Public Libraries

Lamar County Library System also receives catalogs and publisher's flyers from various book publishers, vendors, and library supply houses and makes purchases based on library needs and patron requests.

The following is a presentation of the various types of materials the library shall acquire as well as additional criteria that must be considered.

A. BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT MATERIALS

The content of a work as a whole and without regard to the personal history of the author will be the basis for individual title selection. In no case will any item be included or excluded merely because of the race, nationality, political or religious views of the author. Books and other materials may be excluded on the basis of cost, availability elsewhere, slight demand, and lack of adequate reviews. Serious works of high quality, which deal with a subject, or aspect of life honestly and fairly are not to be excluded on the basis of course or explicit language or frankness of expression. Large print books for adults are purchased by the Lamar County Library System and borrowed on extended loan from the Mississippi Library Commission.

The following criteria for print materials are to be considered:

1. Non-fiction: Accuracy and reliability of information presented, quality of writing, cost, format, amount of material already available on the subject in the library collection, suitability of material to needs within the community, social significance, timeliness and permanence.
2. Reference Materials: Basis of authority, cost, treatment of subject, existing holdings, format, scope and usage.
3. Fiction: Standards are the same of those of non-fiction with representation of all styles and types of writing to provide reading for recreation and leisure of patrons.
4. Children's Collection: Fiction materials that offer adventures in good reading for the growing child, that cultivate an appreciation for both prose and poetry, and that encourages reading as a creative use of leisure time. Children's nonfiction should meet the same criteria as adult non-fiction.
5. Periodicals: A basic collection of popular magazines will be selected to supplement the book collection.

B. NONPRINT MATERIALS

Various types of non-print materials are important as a supplement to the library's book collection. The following criteria will be used in selecting non-book materials;

1. Video and audio: Content, educational value, classic entertainment value, skill and social teaching materials will be bought whenever cost does not prohibit.

2. Electronic formats: Currently the library provides access to the Internet at all four branches. The Internet provides an enormous supplement to the information and entertainment desires in a community; however, the library acknowledges that it has no power to control the content. Each branch will strive to "bookmark" reputable sites so that patrons can feel that the information provided by the librarians is authoritative. Through the MAGNOLIA Project, funded by the Mississippi Legislature beginning in 1997, all libraries have access to thousands of magazines and scholarly journals through the Internet. The librarians are responsible for selection of material will also consider for purchase appropriate, authoritative and reasonably priced CD-ROMs and online databases. Inclusion in consortiums with other libraries or sharing of databases will be considered.

C. WEEDING THE COLLECTION

Due to limited funding the library does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. The Libraries adhere to the CREW method of weeding. The need for replacement is weighed with regard to number of duplicate copies, existing holdings, later and or more authoritative materials, and current demand for the particular subject area or title. To maintain effective library service and provide patrons with the best available collection, the library will systematically remove materials which are no longer useful. The liability of certain materials to mutilation or theft may affect their selection or purchase. The library will use the following discard policy in weeding the collection. Material will be discarded or withdrawn when it is determined to be:

1. Superfluous: Duplicates, unsolicited and unusable gifts, unused, unneeded volumes or sets.
2. In poor condition: Worn, irreparable, missing pages, brittle paper, defaced.
3. Obsolete: Where information is outdated, misleading, inaccurate, or superseded.
4. Unused: No checkout of materials in a three-year period. Shelf space is valuable and books can be borrowed through interlibrary loan as needed.

The aforementioned statements are also true for books and other materials purchased for, or donated in memoriam, to the library. If books and other materials purchased or donated in memoriam are found to be superfluous, in poor condition, obsolete, and/or unused, these items are subject to removal from the collection.

D. CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

The library does not practice censorship. Materials which present all points of view will be selected whenever cost and availability are not factors.

Patrons requesting titles and/or materials not included in the collection are encouraged to request what they want to fill their needs. Selection of materials will not be determined by pressure from any groups or individuals. The library ascribes to all aspects of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (see Appendix, "Library Bill of Rights") as well as to the ALA Council's statement on Freedom to Read (see Appendix, "Freedom to Read.")