

Mississippi County Library System Collection Development Policy

Purpose:

This policy is maintained to guide the Mississippi County Library System (MCLS) library personnel in the management of the system's varied collections and inform the public of the principles on which the system makes decisions regarding maintenance and use of the collection. The philosophy of all collection development decisions is to be proactive in meeting anticipated requests by the citizenry and to offer opportunity and encouragement in their efforts to:

- pursue life-long education
- examine all sides of an issue
- keep abreast of new ideas
- become informed citizens of the community, the nation, and the world
- improve occupational performance
- practice recreational reading
- discover and develop creative abilities

I. Selection of Materials

The System Board delegates to the System Director the authority and responsibility for selection and management of all materials within the framework of this policy. Actual selection and management activities are shared among trained system personnel that shall discharge this obligation consistent with this policy and established procedures. Selection will be made in harmony with principles established by the American Library Association in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View Statements (Appendix) and within the scope of current law as established by the State of Arkansas. Any materials so selected shall be held to be selected by the System Board.

Numerous MCLS personnel are involved with the selection materials with most selections made by the System's branch managers, the Assistant Director, and Director. Branch managers focus on fiction targeted at all ages. The Assistant Director focuses on reviewed fiction titles intended for young adult and children's audiences. The Director focuses on reviewed non-fiction for all ages.

Recommendations from patrons (which are proactively encouraged and welcomed) and selections of MCLS personnel for purchase are routed through the System Director. All patron requests are considered, but not all may be purchased if the anticipated demand is low or the work has no long-term value, or materials do not meet standards outlined in this policy.

The following general criteria will be used for selection of materials although an item does not have to meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criterion be decisive:

1. Community interests and impact
2. Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience
3. Effectiveness, sustainability, and support of medium/format
4. Reputation and/or significance of the author, publisher or producer
5. Opinions offered in professional reviews and other literature
6. Current depth of coverage already provided in the collection (balance)
7. Limitations of funds available
8. Local author or illustrator
9. Local content, themes, or setting
10. Popularity of author/genre/subject/series with library patrons
11. Literary and artistic merit
12. Accuracy of content
13. Currency and obsolescence of content
14. Obscenity as defined by the laws of the State of Arkansas and by the United States Supreme Court

Due to high pricing and to promote extended, personal use of such, textbooks are seldom purchased by the MCLS. However, donated textbooks copywritten within the past several years may be added to the collections.

II. Special Collections

The MCLS maintains two special collections at the Blytheville location.

The Arkansas Room Collection – This collection focuses on resources covering the issues, geography, history, etc. of the local region and the State of Arkansas. Items are rarely withdrawn from this collection based on usage. The distinctive content of the resources drives toward preservation as opposed to withdrawal. These items do not circulate out of the Blytheville facility.

The Cold War Collection – This collection focuses on resources which chronicle “The Cold War” – the history of the world as related to the polarized tension and events which were precipitated worldwide by contrasting political and philosophical ideologies as led by the United States on one part and the Soviet Union on the other. The “soft” dates of this chronology are here recognized as 1945 to 1991.

This collection is developed because of a supportive partnership established with The National Cold War Center and documented in a memorandum of understanding with the Center. The items in this collection may be moved to the National Cold War Center and managed by its staff as the Center's facilities and personnel are developed and grow.

The Cold War Collection will be shelved in a designated area of the Blytheville facility, and its items will be available for circulation unless otherwise noted.

III. Purchasing Materials

The bulk of materials will be purchased through wholesale vendors whose pricing offers significant discounts. Purchases directly from publishers will be made if an item is unavailable through the primary wholesaler or if the book can be acquired more expeditiously through the publisher. Purchases may be made at retail outlets based on delayed availability elsewhere or current, discounted pricing.

The MCLS may utilize standing order plans for the automatic acquisition of certain authors and genres that are popular with the System's readers. In some cases, such as with best selling authors, multiple copies may be obtained to address immediate heavy demand following publishers' release dates. In other cases, formats such as large print, titles may be acquired based on genres such as westerns or Christian fiction. Yet other genre-based standing orders may be maintained with review or recommendation-based entities such as the Junior Library Guild.

Each item acquired will be cataloged to identify the date and cost/value of the item and marked to show ownership by the MCLS.

IV. Gifts and Donations

All gifts are subject to the evaluation criteria stated for the selection of materials. Donors are informed that any gifts or donations of materials may or may not be added to the collection. Donations become the exclusive property of the MCLS. Some donated items will be placed in the ongoing book sale. Some popular children's titles may be re-gifted to child patrons. Along with certain deselected or "weeded" materials, donations may be forwarded to assisted living centers, shelters, or correctional facilities. Other items may go to recycling centers.

Donations are subject to the same deselection criteria as other materials in the collection.

System personnel are not qualified to assign monetary value to donations although a statement citing how many items and of what type were donated can be offered upon request.

V. Formats

The System's collections will include materials in a variety of formats which meet the needs of the community including physical and digital/electronic materials. Some traditional formats such as books, will continue to have their place, but electronic formats will also have emphasis. As technology evolves, services like downloadable ebooks/audiobooks/periodicals and various streaming formats will be developed as well.

Furthermore, as library programming and services continue to evolve with the interests of communities, numerous non-traditional collections will be explored and developed, especially to support science, technology, engineering, arts, and math education (STEAM) and hobby/handicraft pursuits. Such collections may offer items such as baking pans, board games and card games, hobby/crafting tools and kits, seeds and spices, science kits, etc.

VI. Reconsideration of Materials

As a tax-supported entity, the MCLS welcomes suggestions and comments about its collection. Some of the materials may be offensive to individuals or groups because of individual perceptions of profanity, social, economic, and political ideas, religious viewpoints, and the background of the author, or the kind of information provided. The MCLS does not approve nor endorse any particular viewpoint or belief represented in its collection.

The System's role is to provide materials which allow individuals to freely examine issues and make their own decisions. It is the responsibility of each individual, or parent/guardian to limit their use of materials which are congruent with their individual tastes.

As the Supreme Court of the United States has consistently ruled concerning the Freedom of Speech offered within the 1st Amendment, while a person may reject materials for themselves and their dependents, they may not restrict access to the materials by others. Both the projection of ideas/thought and access to ideas/thought have been affirmed by the judicial branch of the federal government.

Patrons having concerns regarding the appropriateness of the items in the System's collections shall seek to resolve the concern as prescribed by Arkansas law as follows...

1. The concerned person shall meet with the MCLS Director to discuss the matter. At this meeting the MCLS Director will provide a copy of this Collection Development Policy as well as a copy of the "Reconsideration of System Resources" form (Appendix).
2. If the matter cannot be resolved between the concerned person and the MCLS Director, the concerned person may submit a completed "Reconsideration of System Resources" form.
 - a. Following receipt of the form, the MCLS Director shall establish and chair a committee of five (including him/herself) MCLS personnel of varying points of view to review the concern and resource(s) in question.
 - b. The MCLS Personnel Committee shall analyze the matter and determine whether the item should be removed or be addressed by other action within 20 business days of the committee's establishment. The decision of the committee shall be summarized in writing and the written statement shall be given to the concerned person either in person or by certified mail as soon as the decision has been made.
 - c. During the 20 business days of deliberation, the resource(s) of concern will be withheld from public circulation to make it available to the committee as it addresses the matter.
 - d. The resources will be accessible to the public according to the committee's determination as soon as possible following the closing of the window of appeal as outlined in V3 (below).
3. If the concerned person desires to appeal the decision of the MCLS Personnel Committee, they must do so within five working days of receipt of the written decision of the committee.
 - a. A written appeal to the Mississippi County Judge must be made by the concerned person.
 - b. Upon receipt of the appeal, the County Judge shall request and receive a copy of the "Reconsideration of System Resources" form, the written statement of the MCLS Personnel Committee, and the resource(s) at issue.
 - c. The County Judge shall make the items cited in V3b (above) available to the Quorum Court within 15 days of the MCLS Personnel Committee's decision.

- d. The Quorum Court shall make a decision on the appeal within 30 days of receiving the information as cited in V3c (above). The decision of the Quorum Court is final.

****** All meetings of the MCLS Personnel Committee and the Quorum Court are deemed public and follow standard public meeting postings, processes, and information accessibility laws.

Items made available through the Arkansas Digital Library Consortium (the “Libby” application) fall under the Collection Development Policy of the consortium and not the MCLS.

VII. Analysis and Deselection

The collections need continuous evaluation in order to be sure that the MCLS is providing materials in a timely manner and to meet patrons’ current interests and needs. Also, facilities have limited capacity to hold physical resources.

Therefore, the MCLS removes or “weeds” items from the collections in an on-going basis. Some of the factors that will be considered when choosing items for withdrawal in all formats are as follows:

1. A non-fiction item more than 10 years old, unless it is a work of classic thought or contains timeless information, may be removed from the shelves regardless of condition or use.
2. Works that have become unappealing due to aging, damage or wear will be removed; if repair cannot improve the condition, they may be replaced with a newer edition or a similar work on the subject.
3. Any work, regardless of age or condition, that contains information or illustrations that are dated or misleading because of lack of congruity with newer research (especially in the fields of medicine and law) may be removed. Works that have been superseded by a newer edition containing updated information may be removed and, if deemed necessary, replaced by the newer edition.
4. Fictional works which have no lasting value, as well as non-fictional works containing trivial or irrelevant information, such as popular diet books, political commentary or pop culture biographies, will be discarded if they have not circulated in the last three years.
5. Duplicate copies of titles, purchased due to high demand, will be discarded once popularity has waned.

6. If crucial components of materials from an item such as a kit, game, puzzle, construction set, etc. are missing and not available for replacement from the publisher/manufacturer, then that item will be removed from the collection.
7. Items written or created by local people may be kept longer than other items with the same being true for items offering content relating to regional history or cultural significance.

VIII. Repair/Replacement of Materials

New materials will be protected with appropriate coverings and reinforced according to standard library practice. All public service personnel will be watchful of materials in need of repair and place those materials in the appropriate workflow.

At least one employee will be trained in basic book-repair procedures and able to make simple book repairs such as torn or loose pages, loose covers, damaged cover corners, loose or broken hinges, worn spines and frayed spine edges. Before discarding any still-current but worn materials, an evaluation will be made as to the feasibility of on-premises repair. In some cases the MCLS will purchase a replacement.

Responsibilities for patron-linked lost or damaged items is addressed within MCLS circulation policy.

**"Weeding" is the perpetual, necessary process of withdrawing items from the System's collections to make room for new resources.

This policy was approved by the MCLS Library Board July 16, 2024

Evaluation Form for Objectionable Item

All fields/questions must be completed/answered for the objection to be administered. Please keep in mind that when submitted, this document becomes public record and falls under legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act which allows the general public to access your concern.

Title/Name of Item _____

Format of Item: Print Book _____ Ebook _____ DVD _____ Audiobook _____ Other _____

Author of Item _____ Publisher _____ Pub. date _____

Person initiating request _____

Date of request _____ Library Card# _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

1. To which part of the work do you object? Please be specific, including page numbers or time mark where appropriate. Give an explanation for your objection.

2. Did you read/view the entire work? _____ * If not, what pages or sections did you review?

3. Have you read the MCLS Collection Development Policy? _____

4. What critical reviews of this work have you read? _____

5. What do you believe is the purpose of this work/item? _____

6. What would you prefer the library do about this work/item while maintaining freedom of speech and freedom of religion as provided by the federal Constitution?

7. What work/item do you recommend to address the same topic/theme in a better or more appropriate manner?

Signature _____

