MONMOUTH COUNTY LIBRARY
Collection Development and Management Policy

Monmouth County Library's mission is to support the lifelong pursuit of knowledge through reading and learning. We aim to help patrons of all ages meet their educational, recreational, and cultural needs through our extensive collections, information resources, and electronic content resources.

Policy Statement
To ensure that the Monmouth County Library's collection is balanced, current, and reflective of community interests, this policy outlines the underlying philosophies behind the selection and acquisition of materials. This policy serves as a guideline for active collection, maintenance, and provides a framework for responding to changing community needs.

General Principles
The Monmouth County Library System's collection development is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, the education and enlightenment of the people of the community, and the provision of educational, informational, and recreational reading, viewing, and listening. Emphasis is placed on popular materials and general information rather than on scholarly and specialized materials.

The service population of the Monmouth County Library comprises a range of culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse individuals from an array of socio-economic backgrounds. As such, the Monmouth County Library actively seeks to acquire materials representing views, authors, subjects, and life experiences that are of interest to people of differing ages, gender identities, ethnicities, lifestyles, and beliefs. Materials will be acquired in a variety of languages and non-standard formats as needed.

The digital collection includes research databases and instructional programs, as well as popular downloadable and streaming eBooks, audiobooks, magazines, and movies. These digital resources are available through the Library's website and app.

NJ Freedom to Read
New Jersey's Freedom to Read Act prohibits censorship of library materials and provides certain protections to library workers in collection development and maintenance. It supports the right of individuals to free inquiry and the right to form their own opinions. It acknowledges the training and education that librarians receive to develop and curate collections.

The Library Commission, in consultation with the Library Director, shall have discretion in selecting, purchasing, or acquiring library material for inclusion in the public library. Nothing in this policy or the law shall be construed to require a governing body of a public library to purchase, or otherwise acquire, library material for a public library.

This policy recognizes and acknowledges that:

- Public libraries serve as centers for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas;
- Prohibiting censorship of library materials promotes free expression and free access to idea by residents;
- Library materials shall not be removed from a public library because of the origin, background, or views of the library materials or those contributing to its creation.
- Library materials should be provided for the interest, information, [and] enlightenment of all people and should present diverse points of view in the collection as a whole;
- Librarians are professionally trained to curate and develop collections that provide residents with access to the widest array of library material available to the public; and,
- The Library has a procedure for a librarian to review library materials on an ongoing basis.

Selection Criteria

Materials purchased for the Monmouth County Library's collection are evaluated as complete works and not based on any one particular passage. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection solely because it represents a particular aspect of life, frankness of expression, or because it is controversial. Similarly, no work will be removed from the collection solely because an individual or group finds it to be objectionable, so long as the work meets the standard of this policy statement. The inclusion or non-inclusion of any particular work is based on the considerations described in this policy statement and does not amount to an act of endorsement by the Library of any particular viewpoint or position. Sources for selection of works to be included in the Monmouth County Library's collection include, but are not limited to, published recommendations from standard review sources and specialized publications, publisher/vendor catalogs, advertisements and availability, professional and trade bibliographies, and customer requests/recommendations with accompanying community demand. In the case of digital subscription services, direct selection of materials is not always available to the Library.

The primary goal of collection development is to provide the best possible collection with the financial resources available. Library materials are chosen based on selection criteria such as predicted demand and interest, reputation of the publisher and author, historical significance, and cost. The item's contribution to the diversity or depth of a collection, such as providing differing viewpoints, is also considered.

Materials are selected by trained staff and take into consideration:

- **Relevance:** How the materials align with the library's mission and the needs of its users.
- **Quality:** Consider literary merit, technical quality, and the author's and publisher's authority.
- **Audience Appropriateness:** Ensure materials are suitable for the intended age group and reading level.
- **Format:** Consider the format of materials (print, digital, etc.) and their accessibility.
- **Cost:** Balance quality and cost when making purchasing decisions.
- **Timeliness:** Ensure the content is current and whether there are more recent materials available on the same subject.
- **Availability:** Consider whether similar materials are available elsewhere – are the materials available through interlibrary loan?
- **Community Needs:** Materials should address the current and anticipated community needs.
- **Space Constraints:** May impact the scope and depth of the collection.

Additional criteria for digital resources:

- **Ease of Use**
- **Licensing and System requirements** (hardware, software, networking, storage)
- **Assessment of content quality and cost** as compared to other available formats
- **Accessibility**

The Monmouth County Library is aware of the purposes and resources of other libraries in the State and shall not unnecessarily duplicate functions and materials.

Children's Materials
Monmouth County Library understands that materials acquired for the youth must be regarded with special care due to the developmental needs of children and their readiness to master sensitive topics and/or content. In response, the Monmouth County Library asserts that the responsibility of a child's use of materials, as well as content appropriateness, lies with the parent or guardian.

Young Adult Materials
Monmouth County Library maintains a collection of materials for young adults (grades 6-12) that considers the developmental needs of teens and involves their readiness to master sensitive topics and/or content. In response, the Monmouth County Library asserts that the responsibility of a young adult's use of materials as well as content appropriateness, lies with the parent or guardian.

Patron Recommendations
Monmouth County Library service district residents may suggest items for purchase. Requests will be reviewed by designated library staff in consultation with the selection criteria as outlined in this policy. Residents can also request items that the Library does not own by completing the Library's Interlibrary Loan Request form available at branch reference desks. Interlibrary loans are governed by the Monmouth County Library's Interlibrary Loan Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Patron suggestions are subject to the same selection criteria as all other materials and are not automatically added to the collection.

Gifts and Donations
The Monmouth County Library may accept gifts and donations at select locations with the explicit understanding that the library, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to display, store, sell, or otherwise dispose of all gifts and contributions of tangible property. Those materials that do not meet the library's objectives and materials selection criteria may be refused. The Library does not appraise donated items.

Excluded Items
The Monmouth County Library does not generally purchase materials in outdated formats, textbooks or academic titles, or obscure titles with limited circulation.

Disposition of Materials
The ultimate responsibility for material selection rests with the Library Director who operates within the policies determined by the Monmouth County Library Commission. Day-to-day implementation of the Collection Development and Management Policy and management of the collection is assigned to Library staff.

A librarian must review library material within a public library on an ongoing basis. Criteria for ongoing review must include, but is not limited to the:

- Library's material relevance;
- Condition of the library material;
- Availability of duplicates;
- Availability of more recent material; and
- Continued demand for the library material.

A regular review of materials is essential to maintaining the quality of the Monmouth County Library System's collection. Materials in the collection are managed through an assessment and evaluation process to ensure the collection remains up-to-date, balanced and attractive. Professional staff with collection management responsibility will evaluate materials for possible withdrawal using the following criteria:

- Physical condition
- Number of copies available
- Accuracy and currency of information
- Availability of duplicates
- Availability of more recent material
- Availability elsewhere
- Continued demand for the material
- Enduring value
- Local interest or specific community relevance
- Space limitations

Reason for Policy

The purpose of the policy is to provide standards for the curation of library material; establish criteria for removal of existing library material or library material selected for inclusion in the public library; and protect against attempts to censor library material.

The Monmouth County Library is committed to the principle that the constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and press are enjoyed by all. To this end, the Library strives to offer a collection that represents the needs of our diverse communities. Inclusion of items in the collection does not imply endorsement of any theory or statement contained in those materials and resources.

While every Monmouth County Library service district resident may not agree with the viewpoints offered in some Library material, the Library has a responsibility to provide a balanced collection with access to material reflecting diverse ideas through which opposing sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored, provided that the material meets the outlined selection criteria. The balanced nature of the collection is reflected in the diversity of materials, not in the equality of numbers. Residents are free to choose what they like from the collection and to reject what they do not like, but not to restrict the freedom of others to make the same choice.

The selection of materials for adults is not constrained by possible exposure to children or teenagers.

Statements Endorsed by the Library

The Monmouth County Library System endorses the following statements:

- American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement
- American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights Statement
- American Library Association's Freedom to View Statement

Definitions

- **Censorship.** Means to block, suppress, or remove library material based on disagreement with a viewpoint, idea, or concept, or solely because an individual finds certain content offensive, but does not include limiting or restricting access to any library material deemed developmentally inappropriate for certain age groups.
- **Diverse and inclusive material.** Means material that reflects any protected class as enumerated in the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L. 1945, c 169 (c.10:5-1 et seq); material produced by an author who is a member of a protected class as enumerated in the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L. 1945, c 169 (c.10:5-1 et seq); and material that contains the author's points of view concerning contemporary problems and issues, whether international, national, or local.
- **Governing body.** Means a board of trustees, a director or other chief administrative officer, a county library commission, or the board of county commissioners of a public library
- **An individual with a vested interest.** Any resident who is served by the public library, or residents in a county or municipality where the library is situated.
- **Library material.** Means any material, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books; magazines; reference books; supplementary titles; multimedia and digital material; software and instructional material, belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a public library.

Responsibilities

Library Commission – Establishes, reviews, and updates policy. May serve as the governing body.

Library Director – Coordinates implementation of policy, trains staff, approves purchases, and serves as first responder for patron complaints. May serve as the governing body.

Assistant Library Director - Oversees collection management and acquisitions staff and serves as point of contact with booksellers and content vendors.

Collection Development Librarian(s) – Selects materials for the library collection that help to achieve the library's mission and follow the collection development policy as assigned. Manages the withdrawal of materials from the collection according to the library's criteria (see Procedures).

Review Committee Request for Reconsideration – Reviews challenged materials, deliberates, and makes recommendation(s) to the governing body.