

**Dorchester County Public Library**

**Collection Development Policy**

**Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: March 20, 2024**

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## **I. Mission Statement**

The Dorchester County Public Library transforms lives and empowers the community through literacy, information, and collaboration.

## **II. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

The Dorchester County Public Library stands against all acts of racism, hatred, violence, and prejudice. We strive to provide spaces, collections, resources, and services that recognize, value, and embrace the diverse experiences and identities of our communities; including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ability, culture, language, geographic origin, level of education, religion, age, size, and the many more characteristics that make individuals unique. We are committed to creating an inclusive organization and safe environment that encourages people to connect, listen, and learn from each other as we work together to end inequities.

## **III. Policy Purpose**

This policy is designed to provide guidelines for the ongoing maintenance and development of the library's collections. The principles included, along with the American Library Association's *Bill of Rights*, create a framework for this policy regarding the Dorchester County Public Library system.

It is vital that the library maintains a collection that promotes intellectual freedom, supports and enhances civil liberties and community interests, meets the needs and interests of patrons, and provides equal and open access to information. It is a priority for the library to provide resources and programs that will encourage patrons to be lifelong learners and civic members of the community. To best develop collections that are inclusive of the needs and interests of all persons in the community, the library's collection strategies and practices will be responsive, and subject to periodic review. Through regular assessment of collection development, the library aims to cultivate collections that continue to support and honor the diverse communities served, detect exclusion of diverse viewpoints, and help remove potential barriers to access.

## **IV. Library Service Community**

The Dorchester County Public Library consists of two branch locations: Cambridge (Central branch) and Hurlock.

## **V. Library Collections**

The library will provide a wide range of resources in various formats and perspectives for all users.

- Print: books, magazines, and newspapers
- Digital Resources: databases and e-library collections
- Audiovisual Media: DVDs and audiobooks on CD
- Other: Braille books for children, microfilm, Maryland Room historical collection

## **VI. Selection and Acquisition**

Library materials are selected by trained librarians. Librarians utilize professional review resources and consider recommendations from staff and patrons when selecting materials for the collection.

Materials will be finalized and ordered by the Lead Acquisitions Librarian. Electronic resources and services will be reviewed and acquired in consultation with the electronic resources group of the Eastern Shore Library Consortium.

## **VII. Donated Items**

When organizations and individual parties express interest in donating items for the library's circulating collections, trained library staff will review the items by considering the age, condition, and need for the item. Items not accepted for the library's circulating collections will be given to the Friends of the Library Book Sale or other appropriate designations. Unused items are not returned to the donor(s).

The library cannot place a monetary value on gifts, for taxes or any other purpose, but can procure a receipt for the number of items donated at the request of the donor. Monetary gifts are also welcome to support and enhance library collections and programs.

## **VIII. Collection Maintenance and Evaluation**

Library collections, and the policy thereof, will be maintained and updated on a regular basis to be reflective of ongoing trends and needs within the communities served by the library.

### **IX. Deselection**

Ongoing deselection, or “weeding”, of items helps the library maintain a current, accurate, and useful collection for all users. Materials with decreased circulation, outdated information, or damages, are removed from the collection.

### **X. Intellectual Freedom**

According to the American Library Association (ALA): “Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.”

The library supports the freedoms of speech and press, as protected by the U.S. Constitution. To this end, the library strives to create and provide a balanced collection that represents the wants and needs of a diverse community. The library will ensure equality and fair access to all materials in support of intellectual freedom. Inclusion of an item in the collection does not mean that the ideas or views expressed within are supported or endorsed by the library.

Library patrons are welcome to select or reject any materials in the collection, but *not* to restrict the freedom of others to choose materials. Every effort will be made by trained library professionals to place titles in appropriate designations within the library. Parents and guardians are entrusted with the full responsibility to monitor selections made by their child(ren), regardless of a title’s placement within the library’s collections.

### **XI. Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be

excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

*Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.*

*Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.*

## **XII. Reconsideration of Materials**

Patrons who are concerned about the appropriateness of library resources or are unsatisfied with the response from an informal discussion about a title may choose to make a formal request for reconsideration of the work in question. The patron must be a resident of Dorchester County, Maryland, and hold a valid library card in good standing from the Dorchester County Public Library to complete our reconsideration form. Due to the extensive amount of time required for

the review process, an individual may present no more than one title for reconsideration during a one-year period. Forms submitted that contain plagiarized content from *Book Looks*, *RatedBooks*, similar review sites, or the platforms of other organized groups and entities will not be considered valid requests. Materials in question will remain available to the public until the reconsideration process is complete.

Reconsideration forms will be forwarded to the Library Director and Selection Review Committee. The review committee will consist of the Library Director, Assistant Director, library supervisors, and collection development personnel. The decision by the review committee will be sent via letter by the Library Director or Assistant Director within 30 days. Decisions made by the review committee may be appealed in writing within 10 days to the Dorchester County Public Library Board of Trustees. If the Library Board decides to address the appeal at a future Board meeting, the individual will be notified of when and where the meeting will be held. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments. The Board of Trustees will have the final decision on any reconsideration request. The decision of the Board of Trustees will remain in place for each title that has undergone the reconsideration process and cannot be subjected to future reconsiderations from the same or other patrons for a five-year period thereafter.

### **XIII. Policy Revision**

This policy will be reviewed and revised periodically. Revisions will be set forth by library supervisors and approved by the Library Director and the Library Board of Trustees.

**Dorchester County Public Library**  
**Reconsideration Form**

*The trustees of Dorchester County Public Library have established a collection development policy and a procedure for gathering input about resources. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the library director. You must be a Dorchester County, Maryland, resident with a Dorchester County Public Library card in good standing to complete this form. Forms cannot be completed on behalf of a group or organization. An individual may present no more than one title for reconsideration during a one-year period. Any title/item in question will remain available to the public until the reconsideration process is complete. Please see our Collection Development Policy for more details.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Library Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you examined the entire resource? Y/N If not, what portions did you review?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What concerns do you have about the resource? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What action are you requesting the committee consider? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patron Signature \_\_\_\_\_

