Library Materials Selection Policy

Adopted by the Mobile Public Library Board November 9, 1982 Amended September 12, 1989; January 25, 1993; July 25, 2012; June 26, 2024; November 20, 2024

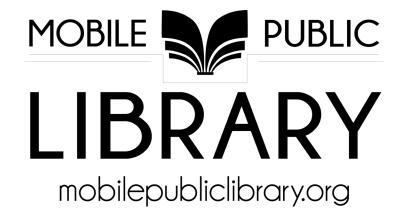




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Purpose of the Library Materials Selection Policy

The purpose of the Library Materials Selection Policy of the Mobile Public Library is to guide the Library staff and to inform the Board and the public about the principles upon which selection is based.

Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for materials selection and acquisition rests with the Director of the Library who operates under this policy as approved by the Board. The Library Director delegates to staff members the authority to interpret and apply the policy in making day-to-day selection The Director and the staff select materials, apply policies, and utilize supporting decisions. processes and procedures with the authority of the Library Board.

Definitions

The words book, work, or materials, as they may occur in this policy have the widest possible meaning; all print and non-print media are potential library materials. Selection refers to the decision that must be made either to add a given book to the collection or to retain one already in the collection. It does not refer to reader guidance.

Objectives of Selection

The primary objective of materials selection is to collect materials of current interest and/or significance and those of permanent value which will be of maximum use to the greatest number of persons in the Mobile Public Library's service area. The Library strives to provide a reliable and diverse collection in support of its mission to fulfill citizens' life-long learning, informational, and recreational needs. The collection should be inclusive, where reasonable and appropriate, giving due consideration to customer demand. In sum, the collection serves to:

- Provide materials for readers and non-readers of all ages.
- Provide materials for a variety of educational levels and reading abilities.
- Provide factual and imaginary works, from popular light reading to the "classic" works of a discipline.
- Provide materials to support a broad range of interests.
- Provide materials which present different points of view, i.e., which provide an acceptable degree of balance within the collection.
- Provide materials in a variety of formats.
- Provide materials of contemporary significance which reflect the changing nature of society.

Support of Intellectual Freedom

The Board of the Mobile Public Library recognizes that censorship is a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject for himself any material which he does not approve of, he cannot exercise this personal right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others to read, view, or listen.

While the Mobile Public Library supports the Library Bill of Rights and other statements regarding intellectual freedom as adopted and published by the American Library Association (See Appendix I), this policy is written with the goal of meeting the State Aid Requirements under the Sections 520-2-2 of the Alabama Administrative Code.

- Staff members selecting materials recognize that some library materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some of the library's clientele. Selection decisions should not be guided by any anticipated approval or disapproval. The merits of the work, its relationship to the total collection and to serving the interests of the community will be the primary considerations.
- Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents and no cataloged book or other material will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft. The use of rare and scholarly items of value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.
- Responsibility for the use of library materials by minors ultimately rests with their parents
 and legal guardians. While every effort will be made to ensure that materials are shelved in
 the appropriate area, the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession
 of minors may still exist and will not be considered a violation of this policy. Neither the
 Library nor library staff act in loco parentis. Parents have sole responsibility for their child's
 reading, listening, and viewing.
- Subject to residency requirements, any minor is entitled to a library card provided a parent or guardian agrees to be financially responsible for materials checked out on that card. Parents or guardians must give permission for minors under the age of 18 to have a library card. Two types are cards are issued to minors. The *Standard* Borrower's Card for Minors under the age of 18 allows the card holder to check out materials in the library's entire collection. The *Restricted* Borrower's Card for Minors under the age of 18 allows check out of materials in the Children's and Youth collections only. (Appendix III)
- The Library's selectors will carefully evaluate works which appear to be primarily sensational, egregiously violent, exploitative, or erotic in nature. In the absence of sufficient information, selection of some materials may be deferred until suitable reviews can be obtained or other factors can be used to make a decision. A work's demonstrated or anticipated popularity may be considered as well as the degree to which it reflects contemporary society or values.

System Concept of Library Materials Selection

The Mobile Public Library operates under a system concept of service. The Main Library serves as the headquarters of the system and the Main and West Regional libraries maintain core collections of materials as well as acquiring less frequently used, or more specialized resources. The Main Library and West Regional core collections support and supplement smaller collections within the system.

The chief function of a branch library is to meet the general needs of the people within the regional community served by the branch library. A customer should be able to visit the branch library nearest him to satisfy his general informational, educational, and cultural needs. If he or she needs information in greater depth, the Main Library or West Regional Library's resources are used.

Working within the guidelines stated above, any branch library may acquire material to satisfy a demand unique to its clientele or to augment the collection in a subject area for which the branch has an abnormally high demand not experienced elsewhere in the system. These materials need not be represented in the core collection of the Main Library or West Regional Library, but they must conform to the selection policies of the library system.

Selection Criteria

Material review sources, demand considerations, and a variety of evaluation criteria are used to

decide whether a work will be added to or retained in the Library's collection. Factors affecting the choice of library materials are the education and experience of the selectors; their knowledge of the community; their knowledge of total library holdings; and, the available library budget.

The Mobile Public Library does not purchase or acquire obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit or otherwise inappropriate materials for children, or youth. In determining what is disqualified as obscene, pornographic, explicit or inappropriate, the most recent case law and definitions will be used. However, it is often difficult to determine precisely what constitutes an obscene work.

Materials will only be considered inappropriate for minors or adults when taken on the whole, they have no literary, scientific, artistic or educational merit. Materials related to religion, history, biology, or human anatomy and serve educational or informational purposes do not fit into this category and are evaluated on their relevance to the library's collection development goals and needs of the patrons.

Every effort is made to shelve materials in their appropriate location, based on age group and classification. Adult materials are housed and displayed in the adult areas, while Children's and Young Adult materials are housed and displayed in their respective areas. Several professional review sources are used to determine correct classification of materials. MPL librarians retain the right to reclassify and change the location of materials to better serve the community.

The Mobile Public Library does not deny service to anyone based on age, race, sex, or creed. Exercising discretion in the location of materials does not constitute a denial of service on the basis of age. Taking age into account when recommending, displaying, or otherwise actively promoting library materials does not constitute a denial of service based on age.

The Mobile Public Library Board entrusts Mobile Public Library's director, managers, and department heads to use their professional expertise and discretion when choosing materials for library displays. The Mobile Public Library displays materials that reflect the broad and varied interests of library customers. Age appropriate displays are created for each specific area of the library to engage the community. All materials recommended, displayed, or otherwise promoted to patrons under the age of 18 are approved within the framework of polices approved by the Mobile Public Library Board.

Review Sources and Selection Tools

Materials are selected on the basis of one or more favorable reviews from standard library and publishing industry journals and other authoritative and useful sources. As a large quantity of nonfiction material on popular subjects is not reviewed each year, non-reviewed titles may be purchased from advertisements or publisher's catalogs. However, this is done only when the author or publisher is well known and has an established record of producing materials of acceptable quality. For ephemeral material such as mass market paperbacks, very limited reviews are available. In order to provide sufficient quantities in this popular format, the majority of titles are purchased without review from publisher's catalogs. Any list of selection tools and review sources will vary over time as publications or websites are replaced or supplemented by new resources.

- Adult Materials Selection Sources: Primary review journals for print and other media include Library Journal, Booklist, Publisher's Weekly, and Kirkus Reviews. For mass market paperbacks either the primary review journals, and/or listings and annotations from *Ingram* Paperback Advance or Baker & Taylor Monthly Forecast are used.
- Children's and Young Adult Materials Selection Sources: Primary review journals for print and other media are School Library Journal, Booklist, Publisher's Weekly, Kirkus

- Reviews, and Horn Book. For children's and young adult paperbacks either the primary review journals and/or listings and annotations from Ingram Paperback Advance are used.
- Audio Visual Materials Selection Sources: In addition to the above listed primary review journals other standard review sources for music compact discs and DVDs are *Video Librarian*, and *Billboard Magazine* (including *Billboard* sales charts for music genres). Websites which aggregate film and television reviews such as imdb.com, metacritic.com, and rottentomatoes.com are also used to access a broad range of critical opinion. For audio books on disc which are not reviewed in primary journals those fiction and nonfiction titles already selected for the book collection may be purchased.
- Other Selection Sources: Review sources and tools which may guide selection include but are not limited to national, major-market, and local newspapers and magazines, publisher's catalogs, and standard bibliographies such as Wilson's Fiction Core Collection, Public Library Collection: Nonfiction, Middle and Junior High Core Collection, and Children's Core Collection.

Considerations of Active or Anticipated User Demand

- The new publications/releases/productions of established authors/artists/producers whose works have been popular with the Library's customers in the past may be added regardless of whether or not they have been favorably reviewed. A work's anticipated popularity, by and of itself, may be considered adequate reason for purchasing the item. In order to meet the demand for bestselling and popular titles, multiple copies are purchased for most libraries in the system. Duplication may also occur if a title is useful in more than one of a library's collections. Titles may be duplicated in both the adult collection and children's and young adult collections, or reference titles may be duplicated in circulating collections.
- Library customers are encouraged to submit requests for titles to be considered for purchase (Purchase Suggestion For Library Materials, Form 17, Appendix V). Such requests are carefully considered and are weighed in relation to the total library program and budget. Any work for which the Library receives five or more purchase suggestions and/or interlibrary loan requests may, in many cases, be added to the collection. These items may be purchased regardless of whether or not they have been reviewed, or if reviewed, have However, before ordering such an item, the Collection been favorably reviewed. Development Manager must have enough information about its contents to reasonably assume that it is appropriate for the Library's collection. In addition, the cost of searching for and assembling additional information about items that have not been reviewed will need to be taken into account. Selection decisions on such works may be deferred until additional information can be acquired without diverting too much time and effort from the selection process for works that more readily meet standard selection criteria. Works that are marginal to the Library's primary collection building efforts may not be added, or only added in limited quantities, when considered in relation to relative demand and budgets. Such items may need to meet a higher level of demand or interest (for example, the number of purchase requests may need to set at ten prior to investing in intensive research about the item).
- Those works which are expected to be popular with a large percentage of the Library's customers or which are expected to be extremely popular with a moderate number of customers are given preference over the scholarly or simply esoteric works which may be of interest to only a few. To meet the limited demand for materials of the latter nature, the Library must rely on the availability of the collections of the local university and college libraries or on interlibrary loan. The Library provides material to suit the interests and

educational needs of in-school children or adults and gives support in major curriculum areas, but school libraries must be relied upon to provide for the more comprehensive requirements of students.

- For those titles which appear on the New York Times Bestsellers Lists for Hardcover Fiction or Non Fiction, demand will take precedence over other selection criteria.
- Original titles on the New York Times Trade Paperback Bestsellers List may also be purchased on the same basis if they sustain their popularity for more than three or four weeks. For any bestselling title selected, the Collection Development Manager must have enough information about the book's contents to reasonably assume that it is appropriate for the Library's collection.

General Evaluation Criteria

- Suitability of physical form for library use
- Suitability of subject, style, and format for the intended age level
- Present and potential relevance to the community's interests and needs
- Maximum appeal and use to the greatest number of people
- Number and nature of requests from the public
- Sustained level of public interest
- Current or historical significance
- Enduring or long-term value of a work
- Contemporary significance; importance as a document of the times
- Insight into human and social conditions
- Relationship to the existing library collection and to other materials on the subject which are available in those collections
- Reputation and significance of the author, illustrator, publisher, or producer
- Skill, competence, and purpose of the author, illustrator, or producer
- Attention of critics, reviewers, and the public, including reviews from standard sources that indicate the quality and value of a work
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content
- Physical limitations of the building
- Commercial availability of the material
- Cost

Specific Criteria for Evaluating Works of Information and Opinion

- Authority
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
- Objectivity
- Accuracy of factual content within the work; clarity and logic of presentation

Representation of challenging, though extreme, or minority point of view

Specific Criteria for Evaluating Works of Imagination

- Representation of important movement, trend or national culture
- Vitality and originality
- Artistic presentation and experimentation
- Sustained level of audience interest
- Effective characterization
- Authenticity of historical or social setting

Additional Criteria for the Evaluation of Audio-Visual Materials

- Technical qualities: the visual effectiveness including photography, editing, special effects and animation techniques; the aural effectiveness including the quality of the sound, the script, the music score, and sound effects
- The overall impact as well as the originality of presentation

Selection Criteria for Special Categories of Materials

Digital Materials

Much like physical materials selection, electronic material selection has the objective to collect materials of current interest with permanent value in order to serve the greatest number of members in our service area. The Library recognizes the changing landscape of electronic book services and aims to keep up with the most current trends and patron demand.

Some electronic services provide a platform model, in which content is selected using the same material review sources and demand considerations that are used in selecting physical items. Unlike purchasing a copy of a physical item, content is not owned, but licensed to the library and will expire over a set number of item circulations or time.

Other electronic services offer a standard set of materials. These services provide a base platform model in which the materials are offered as a collection, rather than curated by Library staff. The benefits of these models are that patrons can borrow the same items simultaneously and never have to wait for an item in a hold "queue." The drawback of these services is that the content provided cannot be curated by the designated collection development staff. Therefore, the Library waives responsibility for information obtained through third-party services.

Gifts

Gifts of books and other library materials are accepted by the library without conditions as to their use, location, rebinding, or disposal. In some cases, materials received as gifts are added even though they would not ordinarily be purchased, but in general the same standards of selection are applied to gifts as to purchase.

The library encourages gifts of money for the purchase of library materials, including memorials. Often such library materials are notable acquisitions which otherwise are impossible to purchase.

Works By Local Authors / Artists / Producers for the Circulating Collection

Because critical reviews are usually not available for books written by local authors or audiovisual materials created by local artists or producers, the Library often waives many of the normal selection

criteria and purchases an item based solely on the author/producer being a local resident. General guidelines for such purchases are as follows:

- A local author/artist/producer is a person living in Mobile County or Baldwin County at the time of selection.
- Works of fiction can be purchased without review or if reviewed, regardless of the quality of the reviews if the Collection Development Manager has enough information to reasonably expect that the work is not obscene.
- A collection of poetry by a single author may be purchased without reviews. Again, the Collection Development Manager must have enough information about the work to reasonably expect that it is not obscene. Anthologies that include a poem or poems by a local author are not purchased. (See the collection development policy statement for the Local History and Genealogy Division for an explanation of how poems from anthologies are handled.)
- A nonfiction work that provides "how to" instructions or other information that could be harmful to the Library's customers if it were inaccurate must be evaluated through reviews or some other source of information that allows the Collection Development Manager to be reasonably assured of the accuracy of the work. Reviews are also required for works dealing with political, religious, or sociological topics so that the authority of the author and the quality of the presentation of what are, often, one person's opinion, interpretations, or beliefs can be determined. Other nonfiction can be purchased without reviews.
- All works must be written/produced on a popular level for the general public. Academic works or specialized works for professionals or technicians are not generally purchased.
- Audiovisual works purchased under this policy are music albums, videos, and audiobooks. Other formats—paintings, prints, sculptures, realia, etc.-are not purchased.
- published/manufactured locally but not written/produced by a local author/artist/producer are not purchased under this policy. They must be evaluated under the Library's normal selection policy. (See the collection development policy statement for the Local History and Genealogy Division for a further discussion of local imprints.)

Request for Review of Library Materials

No selection criteria can be completely satisfactory. However, every attempt will be made to consider all acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, within such bounds. Despite the Library's best efforts, some items acquired for the collection may not adequately meet the criteria and standards outlined above. The Library Director is willing to review individual decisions upon written request.

Any library customer has the right to question the inclusion of any material in the Library's collection. In the event of a concern about a specific book or other library material, the individual should be given the opportunity to discuss the concern with the agency manager. The agency manager will make every effort to listen to and understand the full nature of the customer's objection.

If it is apparent that the customer is philosophically opposed to the specific title, and they are an adult resident of Mobile County, he or she should be given the Request for Review of Library Materials, Form 15 (Appendix IV) along with a copy of the materials selection policy. The customer may wish to read the policy prior to submitting Form 15, so he or she will have a better understanding of the selection process.

The customer is limited to three requests for review in a 12- month period. Materials reviewed and retained are exempt from reconsideration again for a period of three years. The customer agrees to abide by the decision of the Library Board regarding their request. The Library Board takes into consideration, the recommendation of the Library Director. The decision to remove or retain an item in the collection rests with the Library Board.

Collection Maintenance: Evaluation and Review

The collection is continually evaluated in terms of circulation or use, currency, content inclusion, scope and depth of coverage, and popularity.

Replacements

In considering the replacement of library materials withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear, each case is weighed with regard to these factors: number of duplicate copies; existence of adequate coverage of a field; similar material in the collection which is more recent and superior; and demand for the particular title or subject. In the book collection, superseded editions are weeded regularly and replaced with the latest editions. Every effort is made to replace important titles.

Weeding

In order to maintain active, up-to-date and useful collections, library staff, as assigned, will periodically examine library materials in terms of usage, condition, and relevance and accuracy of information.

APPENDIX I

Library Bill of Rights

We affirm 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 that 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.



APPENDIX II

Expenditure of Public Funds to the American Library Association

"The American Library Association (ALA) is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government, and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all". For more information, visit www.ala.org.

The Mobile Public Library Board supports the participation of the staff and library in ALA and the professional development, programs, resources, and services offered by this organization. To remain eligible for state aid, Mobile Public Library Board is required to approve the expenditure of public funds to the American Library Association in and open, public meeting, following advance public notice. AL Adm. Code r.520-2-.2-.03(8)

APPENDIX III

Borrower's Card Application for Age 17 and Younger



Borrower's Card Application for Age 17 and Younger

Parent or guardian, please read Your Mobile Public Library Card, and then complete this application. To establish a library account and receive a borrower's card for your child, please present the application at the checkout desk, along with a valid form of identification showing the child's current home address. Acceptable identification includes a recent bank statement, utility bill, rent receipt, or your driver's license.

Child's name:					
	Last Na	me	First	t Name	Middle Initial
Please mark to in	ndicate the location of	your permanent	address:		
☐Mobile (city) ☐Citronelle ☐Escambia Co. ☐Saraland	☐Mobile Co. (uninced ☐Clarke Co. ☐ ☐Monroe Co. ☐Semmes	orporated areas)	□Baldwin Co. □Conecuh Co. □Mount Vernon □Washington Co.	□Bayou La Batre □Creola □Prichard □Any other location	□Chickasaw □Dauphin Island □Satsuma
Gender of child:	□ male □ female	□ other	Child's birth date:		MM/DD/YYYY
Parent or guardian's name:					
Addresses:	First na	ime	Middle initial	Last	name
1) Email addres	ss for Library Notices:				
2) Mailing addre	ess where you wish to	receive library r	notices – permanent res	sidence street addres	ss or post office box
Street Addres or P. O. Box:	s and Apt. or Lot No.,				
City, State, Zi	p Code (plus 4):				
3) Permanent F	Residence Street Add	ress (If different t	from above)		
Street Addres	s and Apt. or Lot No.:				
City, State, Zi	p Code (plus 4):				
Home Phone:	()		Cell Phone: ()	
	ified by (select one):] Mail	
•	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •			_ Iviali	
I have received an borrower's card. I related to borrowin	am aware that the Library and respo	about borrowing ary does not monit nsibilities. I unde	ying agreement: g privileges. I give permi tor a child's selection of m erstand that borrower card terials. I will promptly no	naterials, and I will ab s are not transferable,	ide by Library rules and that only the child
Sign below for a S	tandard MPL card for	your minor child.	This card provides access	s to the entire collecti	on except R-rated DVDs.
Date:	Sign	ature of Parent or	Guardian:		
☐ Juvenile Items		enile and Young	your minor child which a Adult Items (Ages 0-17) d for school work.		
Date:	Sign	ature of Parent or	Guardian:		
Library Uso: 401	01				Form 2 Pour 44/24



APPENDIX IV – LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

Request For Review of Library Materials

Complete this form to register your objection to an item we have selected for the collection. You must be an adult resident of Mobile County and are limited to three requests for review in a 12-month period. Materials reviewed and retained are exempt from reconsideration again for a period of three years. If your request meets these criteria your comments will be considered by the Library Director and shared with the Library Board. Incomplete forms will not be considered.

Request Date		_	
Type of Material (e.g. book, audio book, DV	VD, music CD)		
Author (for books) or Artist (for music)			
Title			
Publisher/Producer	Cop	pyright Date	
Please indicate with a check, how you becar	ne interested in this mater	ial:	
Selected when browsing. Name the	e library:		
Read or heard about it. Identify the			
Did you read, listen to, or view this item in i	its entirety? (yes or no)		
If no, then which parts did you examine?	<u> </u>		
Please state the nature of your concern. L needed.	ist pages, passages, etc.	and continue on the reverse side, if	
needed.			_
In requesting review of this material, do you	represent an organization	n? (yes or no)	
Organization Name		Website	
Address		Email	
Please let us know how we may contact you	l.		
Your name	Address		
City		Zip	
Phone	Email		
To Be Completed By Library Staff			
Name of Library Manag	ger who spoke with custor	mer:	
Others who spoke with customer about the r	material:		
Was the customer offered the Materials Sele	ection Policy to review? (y	ves or no)	
Form 15 Rev. 6-25-2024			



APPENDIX V

Purchase Suggestion for Library Materials

Title _	
Publis	her/Producer
Public	ration/Release Date
Where	e did you hear of this item?
Thank of this	Library Customer: you for your purchase suggestion. Print your name and address on the reverse card and we'll get back to you soon. Be sure to fill in your Library card er and the Library you use in the blanks below.
Library	Card Number 40181 (required)
Libra ry	(required)
	The Library owns this item. We will notify you when it is ready for pick up.
	We are purchasing this item and will notify you when it is ready for pick up.
	We are unable to locate professional reviews for the evaluation of this item. Please call 340-8594 if you have a review source to suggest to us.
	We are unable to purchase this item through our usual suppliers . Please call 340-8594 if you have any additional information that will help us make this purchase.
	We will not be purchasing this item, as it does not meet our selection criteria. You may request this item through interlibrary loan. Check with the reference staff at any of our libraries or call 208-7084. Interlibrary loans carry a \$2 postage/handling fee.