

Talbot County Free Library Collection Development Policy

1. General Statement of Philosophy

Purpose

The purpose of the Talbot County Free Library Collection Development Policy is to inform the public about the principles of collection development and to guide library staff in their work.

The Collection Development Policy supports the [Mission Statement](#)¹ and the [Strategic Plan](#)² of the Talbot County Free Library, which are posted on the library's website.

2. Materials Selection Policy

The library's Board of Trustees adopts the following as the library's policy regarding the selection of all library materials.

It is the objective of the Talbot County Free Library to select, organize, and make freely and easily accessible to all the people of our community, books and other materials that will aid them in their pursuit of education, information, recreation, and the creative use of leisure time. The library actively seeks to stimulate and expand the reading and cultural interests of children, teens, and adults. It serves as a resource for the continuing education of all members of our community.

The children's and teen collections specifically, are intended to provide easy access to a wide variety of materials produced and marketed for young people. Library staff use professional judgment to assign materials to these areas based on factors like reading levels, available formats, publisher and vendor age recommendations, professional reviews, awards, and local school curricular considerations. However, it remains the parents' or guardians' responsibility to decide which materials in our collection are appropriate for their own minor children, and to guide their use of library resources accordingly.

It is the library's responsibility to satisfy the diverse needs and interests of our community within the limitations of space and budget. We strive to provide an inclusive selection of materials for all ages, reflecting the wide variety of viewpoints, races, ethnicities, languages, cultures, and life experiences represented in our community and our society at large. We aim to provide access both to materials with which users can relate, and to materials through which they can better understand and empathize with their neighbors.

While the central and branch libraries share many of the same goals and objectives in the development of their collections, and the same criteria for selection and deselection may be applied in both cases, space considerations will necessarily be a more prominent factor in selection and deselection decisions at smaller branches such as St. Michaels. For this reason,

¹ <http://tcfl.org/about/?content=missionstatement>

² <http://tcfl.org/about/?content=strategicplan>

smaller branch collections are treated as popular collections, and concentrate more heavily on materials of local interest, high demand, and frequent usage, as well as materials that support the library's strategic goals. Through these branch collections, we aim to have copies of our most popular items readily available in the community where those resources will be used, while relying on access to collections housed elsewhere for less frequently used resources.

In its selection of books and other materials, the Talbot County Free Library subscribes fully to the principles adopted by the American Library Association in the [Library Bill of Rights](#)³, the [Freedom to Read Statement](#)⁴, and the [Freedom to View Statement](#)⁵ as well as those adopted by the Association for Rural & Small Libraries in the [ARSL Access to Information Statement](#)⁶. The Talbot County Free Library, therefore, incorporates these documents as part of its materials selection policy.

In keeping with these principles, we do not exclude materials from the collection on the basis of the author's or other contributor's race, ethnicity, color, national or ancestral origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or political and religious views, or on the basis of content reflecting these kinds of diversity.

The Library Director is ultimately responsible for the selection of materials and development of the collection in accordance with the policies established by the Board of Trustees. Day to day selection and deselection decisions may be delegated to qualified staff with appropriate education and training.

Library patrons and Talbot County residents wishing to suggest titles for possible inclusion in our collection are encouraged to do so through the online form⁷ on our website designed for that purpose.

3. Criteria for Selection

The library staff uses professional judgment and expertise in making collection development decisions. Anticipated demand, community needs and interests, strengths and weaknesses of the existing collections, physical space limitations, and funding for materials are all considered when selecting materials. Specific criteria for evaluation of materials for the Maryland Room are outlined in the [Maryland Room Collection Development Policy](#)⁸.

Tools and resources for selection decisions include, but are not limited to, reviews from standard review sources, recommended resource lists, professional bibliographies, collection analysis tools, and patron and staff requests and recommendations.

Some factors that may impact selection decisions include the following:

³ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

⁴ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

⁵ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>

⁶ <https://www.arsl.org/> or https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SJx9HGMvgTAcAtacXv1Nc2KBT_RqkofO/view

⁷ <http://tcfl.org/find/?content=suggest>

⁸ <http://tcfl.org/about/policies/MdRmCollectionPolicy.pdf>

- Demand

Does this resource meet anticipated or actual national, regional, and/or local demand?

Prominent publicity campaigns, appearance on bestseller lists, author and/or publisher prominence, vendor sales data, local popularity of comparable books, and patron feedback on the types of materials they seek at the library may be used as indicators of likely demand.

Anonymized circulation data and patron hold requests may be used as indicators of ongoing demand, impacting the addition of duplicate copies and/or retention of existing copies.

- Contribution to the Collection

Would adding this resource contribute value to the collection as a whole?

We seek to develop a collection with breadth and depth that balances resources featuring a wide range of perspectives whenever possible. A resource might contribute to the overall collection by filling a gap in subject matter, including more comprehensive coverage, or offering a fresh perspective or updated information on a subject included in the collection. It might expand and freshen the selection within its genre. It might broaden the range and depth of human and social conditions and cultural heritages represented within the collection.

- Quality

Is there reason to believe the resource is of high quality?

Publication by a reputable publisher and/or attention from professional review sources such as *Booklist*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, and *Kirkus* may serve as an indicator that a resource is likely to meet our expectations for quality. Starred and/or positive professional reviews, awards, and recognized literary merit carry even more weight. Particularly, in the case of self-published and less well known works, we may look for evidence of care in editing and presentation of material.

Additional quality considerations for works of information and opinion may include the expertise and/or authority of the author; the comprehensiveness and depth of treatment; the clarity, accuracy, and logic of presentation; and the inclusion of timely and up-to-date information of relevance.

For works of fiction and imagination additional quality considerations may include the representation of a movement, genre, trend, or culture; the work's vitality, originality, artistic presentation, and/or experimentation; effective characterization, setting, and storytelling; and sustained interest.

- Local Relevance

Are there local considerations that support the addition of this resource?

Local considerations may include suggestions and requests by local library patrons, works produced by a local author or featuring our local community, works supporting local school curricula, and local library programs and community partnerships built around or featuring the resource in question. Additionally, relevance to the library's mission, vision, goals, values, and strategic plan, may factor into an item's local relevance.

While context and other selection factors may impact what we consider local enough to be relevant, in general, ties to Talbot County will be given more weight in selection decisions than ties to the wider Eastern Shore, which would likely have more relevance than ties to Maryland in general or to the mid-Atlantic.

- Practical Considerations

Are there factors that could make it impractical to add this resource to the collection?

Important considerations include whether the resource is available in a format suitable for library circulation and popular with our patrons, in languages relevant to our community, from vendors with which our library has an established and ongoing purchasing relationship, and at a price commensurate with the anticipated popularity and/or value added to the collection, relative to other resources competing for limited storage space and funding.

When considering limited funding and space, the availability of a resource or comparable resources to our patrons through alternate sources such as Interlibrary Loan may be taken into consideration.

In the case of resources in other than new condition, the physical condition of the materials will be taken into consideration, in the same way that physical condition can play a role in deselection and withdrawing decisions.

Additionally, some materials and formats may fall outside the scope of our collection, by appealing to a very narrow or technical audience, particularly at a high price point, such as many textbooks and technical manuals.

4. Collection Maintenance

Selecting materials is only one aspect of collection development. Careful attention must be given to an ongoing, systematic analysis of the collection. Discarding items from the collection is as important a routine as the acquisition of new materials. Materials that are inaccurate, outdated, rarely used, or in poor condition detract from the usefulness and quality of the collection, and may be withdrawn from the collection at staff discretion.

In making deselection decisions, we may consider whether the materials in question continue to meet our criteria for selection, as well as referring to [CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern](#)

[Libraries](#)⁹ as a source for best practices or “rules of thumb” regarding withdrawing materials from the collection. The acronym *CREW* stands for **C**ontinuous **R**evision, **E**valuation, and **W**eeding, which represents the intent of the method.

Some factors addressed within the *CREW* method that may be considered when identifying titles to remove from the collection include:

- Years since the latest copyright date,
- Time since the last recorded use or circulation,
- Unnecessary duplication,
- Condition of the materials,
- Expense and availability of replacement copies or alternative resources,
- “MUSTIE” factors (an acronym for six negative factors that can impact an item’s usefulness), including whether the material is:
 - **M = Misleading** (and/or factually inaccurate)
 - **U = Ugly** (worn and beyond mending or rebinding)
 - **S = Superseded** (by a truly new edition or by a much better book on the subject)
 - **T = Trivial** (of no discernible literary or scientific merit; usually of ephemeral interest at some time in the past)
 - **I = Irrelevant** to the needs and interests of the community
 - **E = Elsewhere** (The material or information may be obtained expeditiously elsewhere through interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, or in electronic format.)

Withdrawn materials may be disposed according to staff discretion. Methods may include offering for sale, returning to vendors, giving away, donating elsewhere, recycling, or otherwise discarding. Replacement materials may be purchased based on selection criteria, as needed and available.

5. Materials Available from Other Libraries

Talbot County Free Library is a member of several state and regional resource sharing library consortia. These include public and academic libraries. Materials made available through these consortia include books and other physical media, as well as downloadable ebooks, audiobooks, online resources, and more. Many of these resources are available to our patrons to request or access through the library's catalog and website, through vendor apps, or through Interlibrary Loan. These options allow us to make materials available to our patrons that we may not have in our own collection due to cost, narrow subject of interest, and other factors. However, the selection of these materials is outside of the Talbot County Free Library's control and its collection policy. Concerns about these materials may be brought to the owning organizations or consortia, as appropriate, and according to their policies.

6. Donated Materials

⁹ <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ld/pubs/crew/index.html>

From time to time, the library may accept donations of new or gently used physical materials such as books, audiobooks, DVDs, and magazines. Donations of this sort are accepted on the condition that library staff and volunteers are free to dispose of these materials as they see fit, and without restriction. We may decline to accept donated materials or limit the amount, type, or condition of materials accepted at any time.

Donated materials may be added to the library's collection if they meet the selection criteria outlined in the Collection Development Policy. Items not added to the collection cannot be returned to the donor. They may be offered for sale, given away, donated elsewhere, recycled, or otherwise disposed.

If you wish to claim a tax credit for donations of books and other materials, we can provide a receipt at the time they are donated, acknowledging the number and type of donated items, but we cannot provide an estimated value or appraisal for tax purposes.

Those wishing to donate materials addressing local history and genealogy that may fit the objectives and specific criteria of the Maryland Room Collection as outlined in the [Maryland Room Collection Development Policy](#)¹⁰ should speak with the Maryland Room Librarian about those materials prior to donating, to determine whether those materials fill a need, and how best to proceed with the donation.

7. Local Authors

The Talbot County Free Library encourages the work of local authors, through inclusion in our collection when possible. Authors and creators who live within Talbot County, or whose works are based in Talbot County, are welcome to donate a copy of their materials in physical formats for possible inclusion in the library's collection.

Regional authors writing about or residing in another Eastern Shore county are encouraged to contact that county's library directly about inclusion in their collection. Inclusion in another Eastern Shore library's collection will make the work available to Talbot County patrons as well, through a shared online catalog and reciprocal borrowing privileges. If a regional author wishes to offer a donated copy to the Talbot County Free Library directly, they are welcome to do so. Addition to our collection may be considered according to the selection criteria outlined in our collection development policy.

Whether donating in person or by mail, please include copies of any relevant professional reviews appearing in journals such as *Booklist*, *Kirkus*, *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, or *Publishers Weekly*, as well as a note stating that the donated materials are from a local Talbot County author, Eastern Shore author, or Maryland author, as the case may be.

If a receipt showing the number and type of items donated is needed for tax purposes, please request one in person at the time of donation. The library may not further acknowledge receipt of the work, notify the donor of our final decision regarding the material, or return items that are not added to the collection.

¹⁰ <http://tcfli.org/about/policies/MdRmCollectionPolicy.pdf>

The decision whether to include the donated work in the collection will be based upon the criteria for selection outlined in the library's Collection Development Policy. Items not added to the collection will be handled in the same manner as other donated materials, as described in the Donated Materials section of our Collection Development Policy.

8. Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Local library card holders and residents concerned about the suitability of materials included in the library's collection may choose to complete and submit a [Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form](#)¹¹. Copies of this form are available on the library's website or by request at either branch. The completed form can be addressed to the attention of the Library Director and dropped off at either branch or mailed to 100 West Dover Street, Easton, MD 21601.

Library staff will review requests for reconsideration in the context of the library's Collection Development Policy, and endeavor to do so in a timely manner. Materials will be judged as a whole rather than on isolated passages. The materials in question will not be removed from the library's shelves during the reconsideration process.

The number of items to be reviewed at the request of any one patron or organization within a given timeframe may be limited, at the discretion of the library director, if reviewing all materials would require an excessive amount of staff time or otherwise disrupt library operations.

Once a decision has been made, the director will notify the requesting patron of that decision, using the contact information provided, typically within 30 days of receipt. If dissatisfied that the decision conforms with the library's Collection Development Policy, a patron may appeal to the library's Board of Trustees.

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¹¹ <http://tcfl.org/about/policies/RequestforReconsiderationofLibraryMaterials.pdf>