

Policy # 5000

Flathead County Library System Collection Development and Management Policy

The Collection Development Policy contains the policies relative to the selection, retention, and withdrawal of FCLS library materials.

The purpose of the Collection Development Policy is:

- To document collection management policies and procedures;
- To guide FCLS staff in the selection of library materials;
- To inform the public of the philosophy of collection development and the policies involved; and
- To establish a framework for continuous collection evaluation and improvement.

1. Collection Objective

The Flathead County Library System's collection is developed based upon knowledge of the community, the composition and use of the existing collection, and input from the FCLS Board of Trustees, customers, and staff.

FCLS's primary service commitment is to the people within its service area, including people of every age, education, background, personal philosophy, religious belief, occupation, economic level, ethnic origin and human condition. The collection contains information on a variety of subjects and views, and is organized to provide unrestricted and easy access to customers within the limitations of space and budget.

The Flathead County Library System strives to make the most efficient use of financial resources, to work closely with other area libraries, and to utilize the most appropriate formats to meet the library needs of the people of our community. To that end, the Flathead County Library System is a founding member in the Montana Partner Libraries resource sharing program that allows seamless lending and borrowing between the Flathead County Library System and member libraries across Montana.

All FCLS library materials are intended for public use and, with the exception of selected special or reference collections, all materials are available for unrestricted circulation.

2. Relationship of the Policy to the Strategic Plan

The Flathead County Library System's Collection Development Policy relates to the mission statement and the service responses of the FCLS Plan of Service. A committee of citizens, staff, and FCLS Board of Trustee members developed the mission statement and selected the appropriate service responses. A service response is what FCLS offers to do for the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs.

Mission Statement

The Flathead County Library System provides, to residents of all ages, materials and programs intended to satisfy their recreational reading, viewing, and listening appetites, as well as their interests in cultural and social trends; the means to find, evaluate, and use information in a variety of formats; and a welcome environment in which to meet and interact with others in the community and to participate in public discourse.

Selected Service Responses:

- *Commons* – FCLS helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in the community and to participate in public discourse about community issues. FCLS will provide public space for meeting and gathering that is recognized as inviting, neutral, and safe by all individuals and groups in the community.
- *Current Topics and Titles* – FCLS helps to fulfill community residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences. FCLS will provide current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a wide variety of formats. Staff are knowledgeable of the content of best-selling titles and the style of popular authors and performers and offer expert guidance to the public.
- *Information Literacy* – FCLS helps address the need for skills related to finding, evaluation, and using information effectively. FCLS provides computer classes and training and public Internet access. The Staff is knowledgeable about how people seek information and learn.

Population and demographics: US Census Bureau 2006 & 2007 estimates

Flathead County	86,844
Columbia Falls city	4,676
Kalispell city	19,432
Whitefish city	7,723
Balance of Flathead County	55,013

- Spanning over 5,000 square miles, Flathead County encompasses some of America's most beautiful lands. Over half of Glacier National Park, the waters of Flathead Lake and other lakes, much of the Bob Marshall Wilderness area, vast tracts of national, state, and private forests, and numerous valley farms and orchards all form a spectacular landscape. Flathead County's abundant forest lands, mountain vistas, and recreational opportunities have always been at the center of its economic activity. Until recently, most of this activity has been in the form of direct uses—forest products, tourism, recreation and agriculture. Recently, Flathead's natural resources are spurring economic

development via indirect uses—as a quality of life amenity that draws people, businesses, and investment to the county.

- As the population of the Flathead has grown and aged, income composition has changed. Income from non-labor sources like investment income and transfer payments is growing more rapidly than income from the workplace.
- By nearly every measure, the quality of economic life in the Flathead is improving. Per capita income is steadily rising, median income is recovering after losses in the 80s, poverty is falling after rising in the previous decade and unemployment is at a 30-year low.
- By 2025 Montana is projected to be the fifth oldest state in the country with almost 25 percent of the population 65 years and older.

(Larry Swanson, Center for the Rocky Mountain West)

FCL identifies its primary users as families, retired community members, students, preschoolers, community and public organizations, and the general reader.

3. Collection Responsibility

The Board of Trustees vests responsibility for selection of library materials in the Library Director under guidelines established by the Board. Members of the staff who are qualified by reason of education and/or experience serve on the Collection Management Team and are assigned to assist with the selection of materials.

4. General Collection Description and chronological coverage

The FCL collection contains approximately 227,000 items in a variety of formats. Actively collected are books, DVDs, music CDs, books on CD, magazines, zines, and local newspapers. The collection is directed toward the general public and an effort is made to have the most current information available. In most cases, magazines are retained for the current year plus two previous years. FCL has a local history/Montana special collection and a basic genealogical collection. Older general material is held only if it has a special interest to our customers or if it has historical (to the Flathead or to MT in general) significance or genealogical significance.

5. Collection Philosophy

FCLS endorses the following American Library Association statements:

- [Library Bill of Rights](#) See Appendix A
- [Freedom to Read](#) See Appendix B
- [Freedom to View](#) See Appendix C

FCLS upholds the right of the individual to secure information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others. Materials available present a diversity of viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy.

See the appendices to this document, adopted by the FCLS Board of Trustees, which includes the statements above and [interpretations](#) of the Library Bill of Rights for access to library materials by minors and access to electronic information, services, and networks as well as other Library Bill of Rights interpretations.

6. Selection Criteria

FCLS is a tax-supported public institution. Recognizing that the collection is a tangible resource for our customers, FCL administration fiercely guards the materials budget and has increased the materials budget each of the past four years. The materials budget is sometimes supplemented by grants from local library support organizations and other sources.

The criteria for selection, acquisition, gifts, customer requests, duplication, replacement, automatic shipments, and withdrawal (weeding) are the same for all materials and formats. FCLS selection gives high priority to those materials most wanted by customers in all formats for all ages.

Criteria (an item need not meet all criteria to be selected):

- Customer demand and interest
- Critical reviews
- Presentation and readability
- Reflection of all sides of an issue
- Author's reputation and significance as a writer
- Reputation and standing of the publisher
- Local or national significance
- Availability of the material or information elsewhere
- Quality of the physical format
- Reasonable cost

The collection management team relies on a number of professional tools for assistance in making selections. These may include:

- Booklist
- Library Journal
- Publisher's Weekly
- New York Times Book Review
- VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocate)
- School Library Journal
- Video Librarian
- Audio File
- Publisher and distributor catalogs

Self Published Materials:

In most cases, the library will not purchase or accept as gifts self-published materials that are not reviewed in established review journals.

7. Withdrawal of Materials (removing materials from the collection, commonly referred to as weeding)

Professional staff shall review the collection on an ongoing basis with the goal of maintaining the quality and vitality of FCLS resources. This process of collection management incorporates the use of circulation reports,

database use statistics, and other information for continuous collection evaluation. Worn, damaged, and dated materials shall be weeded from the collection on a regular basis. Materials may also be withdrawn if they are not used or are superseded by a new edition or a more authoritative work on the same subject. Other criteria that may be applied include the changing demands of users, replacement of hard copy with other formats, space, and collection balance. Weeded materials will be disposed of in the manner deemed most appropriate for that item. Methods of disposal may include sale at a FCLS branch, sale by affiliated FCLS support groups, distribution to other libraries or community service organizations, or recycling.

8. Format of materials

FCLS collects materials in print, large print and other formats. Other formats such as videocassettes, DVDs, audio cassettes and CDs, online databases, and electronic books offer a dimension and timeliness to the subject areas they represent which a print collection alone is unable to provide. Criteria are the same for selection of all formats.

9. Special Collections

Because Flathead County is geographically distant from other research facilities, FCLS places importance on maintaining a broad contemporary and retrospective collection of Montana and local materials and those written by area authors. Due to restricted circulation by some libraries and continued strong local interest, FCLS will continue to purchase Montana material in sufficient quantity to provide an enduring collection to support the research and recreational needs of both present and future users at all reading levels. Criteria for inclusion in this collection are assessed periodically.

The Flathead Special Collection is a permanent repository for materials consisting primarily of works concerned with Flathead County, Montana. Materials with no connection to Flathead County may occasionally be included for their protection or preservation. The collection usually retains no more than one copy of any particular work. Professional staff members make the final decision when there is a question about including an item in the special collection.

Since materials in the Flathead Special Collection are intended to provide an ever-available source of information on Flathead County, they are not to be checked out. Patrons may use items from the Flathead Special Collection in any of the Flathead County Library System branches. When a patron requests that an item from the Flathead Special Collection be sent to a FCLS branch, the item will be transported there by the library courier and will remain available at the branch for a limited number of days. Items judged to be irreplaceable or too fragile to transport may be used only at the Main Branch of the Flathead County Library System.

The Flathead Special Collection is reassessed by qualified library staff members periodically, and materials are removed or placed in the circulating collection as appropriate. Repositories elsewhere will be considered for

irreplaceable or rare materials.

10. Gifts:

The Flathead County Library System Board of Trustees welcomes gifts, grants, donation, devises, or bequests of property, real or personal. The Board requires that all such gifts, grants, donations, devises, or bequests be accepted on its behalf by the Library Director in keeping with guidelines established by the Board.

Monetary gifts, grants, donations, and bequests shall be placed in FCLS Fund 7055 to be used for their intended purpose. If a monetary gift, donation, or bequest is substantial, and if the intended purpose allows such transfer, the FCLS Board of Trustees may consider transferring it to the Flathead County Library Foundation for investment and management in keeping with the intent of the donor.

While all gifts are appreciated, some might not be appropriate for FCLS. Donors of such gifts may be referred to a more appropriate recipient.

The FCLS Board of Trustees welcomes the generosity and thoughtfulness of the community in supplementing the FCLS collection through gifts and memorial donations. Gifts are accepted with the understanding that they will be handled or distributed through balancing the best interests of the library system with the intent of the donor.

Donors of books and other materials shall be apprised in writing of the processes that will be followed in evaluating their possible suitability for inclusion in the collection. This evaluation may include the subject matter, age, condition, whether it duplicates existing materials, and other criteria as determined by FCLS.

Gifts may be designated by a bookplate or other appropriate identification.

Donors may request that memorial and other donated materials suitable for addition to the collection be housed in a particular FCLS Branch. Although located in a particular branch, all FCLS materials are shared by the entire FCLS and will be made available to all borrowers, including participants in the Montana Partners Library Network.

The criteria for materials selection also apply in the acceptance of gifts and donations of books and other materials. The collection development team will decide whether gifts should be added to the collection and to which collection the materials will be added. Once a gift is accepted by FCLS, it becomes the property of FCLS, to be used or disposed of in accordance with the policies established by the Board of Trustees. FCLS will provide the donor a receipt, upon request, but will not appraise the value of the materials.

11. Memorials

The Flathead County Library System welcomes memorials and other tributes.

A memorial is created when money or material is donated to add books or other materials to the collection, usually in memory or honor of an individual or group. Donors of funds for the purchase of such memorials or tributes are encouraged to provide some guidance in the selection of a suitable item or items by specifying an appropriate broad subject area. While taking under advisement the donor request, FCLS reserves the right to the final decisions regarding all materials.

FCLS will not return unsolicited materials, nor will FCLS be responsible for payment of costs incurred when unsolicited materials are sent. Unsolicited materials will be added to the collection or distributed according to FCLS policy.

12. Holds ratio

Customers may reserve or place holds on materials at any FCLS branch, from a FCLS computer, or via the Internet from a remote computer. FCLS maintains a 4:1 hold ratio for books (if the FCLS owns one copy of a book and there are five FCLS holds placed on it, another copy may be purchased to meet the demand); 5:1 ratio for audio recordings and a 10:1 ratio for DVDs. In some instances, copies from other Partner Libraries are included in calculating the holds ratio. The high holds ratio for DVDs is justified by the shorter loan period and quicker turn around time than other materials.

13. Complaints and Censorship

FCLS believes in freedom of information for all, and does not practice censorship. The selection of library materials is predicated on the patron's right to read and similarly, the freedom from censorship by others. Attempting to meet the needs and interests of a diverse population requires a wide range of materials. Inevitably, there will be something in a balanced collection that may be unacceptable or disturbing to someone.

FCLS holds censorship to be a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject books and other materials of which he or she does not approve, he or she may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

Responsibility for materials selected and read by children and adolescents rests with their parent or legal guardians. Selection decisions are not influenced by the possibility that materials may be accessible to minors. Materials are not labeled to show approval or disapproval or to indicate certain philosophies. No items are sequestered except to protect them from damage or theft.

Criticism and comment on material selected for inclusion in or exclusion from the FCLS collection is an essential right of community members and a valuable part of the FCLS's selection process. This provides an opportunity for staff members to reexamine choices and reasoning.

The FCLS Board of Trustees acknowledges that occasional objections to resources will be made despite the care taken and the procedures followed in their selection. The FCLS Board and library staff members are prepared to

defend the principles of freedom to read and freedom of access to information. Objection to particular language or point of view of material cannot be used as justification for the exclusion of materials.

If a verbal complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant will be asked to fill out and return a written and signed **Citizen Comment On Library Materials** Form. This form may be obtained from any FCLS branch. In the absence of a fully completed form there is no formal complaint and no action will be taken. After the library director has received a fully completed written complaint, she/he shall establish a review committee to investigate the complaint. The committee's recommendation is then presented to the FCLS Board of Trustees for a final decision.

D. Policy Implementation, Evaluation and Revision

The Collection Management Policy will be reviewed, evaluated and revised as deemed necessary, but at a minimum, at least every three years, by the Library Director, the Selection Committee and the Board of Trustees. A copy of the updated policy will be sent to the Montana State Library.

Official action taken will be noted for each review.

Adopted and effectively immediately, on this 9th Day of April, 2008 :

Jerry Hanson, Chair
Flathead County Library System Board of Trustees

Kim Crowley, Director
Flathead County Library System