

Collection Development Policy

Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) Mission: The citizens of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties will have equal access to information through the efficient, economic, and effective sharing of resources among public libraries and all types of information agencies.

SMRLA affirms the [American Library Association's Bill of Rights](#) and the State of Maryland's Freedom to Read Act. On April 25, 2024, Gov. Wes Moore signed the Freedom to Read Act into law, establishing the state standards for libraries for the operation of each library that receives funding from the state. The standards articulate the following:

1. *Library materials, services, and resources exist and shall be provided for in the interest, information, and enlightenment of all persons the library serves.*
2. *A library shall not exclude material from its catalog because of the origin, background, or views of a person who created the material;*
3. *A library shall not prohibit or remove material from its catalog because of partisan, ideological or religious disapproval.*

Additionally, the Freedom to Read Act prohibits a library board of trustees or other governing body of a library from dismissing, suspending, disciplining, demoting, reassigning, transferring or other retaliating against an employee for performing their job duties consistent with these standards or for acting in a manner consistent with this policy.

SMRLA's library materials collection is developed and managed in cooperation with our public library partners in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties.

General Selection Criteria

All Marylanders have the freedom to read. It is the authority of SMRLA to provide adequate library services to satisfy the diverse needs of our users. SMRLA's staff, in collaboration with our public library partners in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties, will identify materials that meet our users' needs. SMRLA staff, in collaboration with our public library partners, curate and develop collections that provide access to the widest array of books and other materials that support learning.

SMRLA's selection and acquisition choices are made in terms of the following standards:

- Popularity as demonstrated by the attention of critics, reviewers, media and the public
- Suitability of format for library use and content
- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
- Importance as a document of the times
- Relation to the library's existing collection and other material available on the subject
- Authority, reputation, or qualifications of the author, artist, publisher, or producer
- Organization and ease of use; clarity, accuracy, and logic of presentation

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- Cost and availability
- Currency of information
- Representation of an important movement, genre, trend, or national culture
- Artistic presentation and experimentation
- Contemporary materials representing various points of views, which are of current interest and possible future significance, including materials that reflect current conditions, trends, and controversies

Professional Collection

SMRLA maintains a collection of print materials to support the professional needs of Southern Maryland's library workers. The professional collection is designed to provide information of interest for all levels of library workers. Other criteria that are considered include:

- Current professional trends as identified in literature published by library and related organizations including, but not limited to, the American Library Association
- Materials requested by our public library partners
- The qualifications and expertise of the author

SMRLA's Learning & Development Facilitator manages the professional collection. Library workers in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties are welcome to submit suggestions for purchase to the Learning & Development Facilitator.

Maryland Documents

SMRLA links the [Maryland State Publications Depository & Distribution Program](#) to our online catalog.

This resource is provided by The Maryland State Library Resource Center / Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Electronic Collections

SMRLA supports our public library partners by purchasing subscriptions to electronic collections (such as ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, etc) and by providing access to the titles on the Collection of Southern Maryland's Online Services (COSMOS). Additionally, SMRLA may provide funding to acquire individual titles for electronic collections. Electronic collections are intended to provide equitable access to library materials for customers that may be unable to visit branch locations in person and to supplement print collections.

Gale Ebooks

SMRLA purchases access to Gale Ebooks for Southern Maryland's public libraries. Gale Ebooks offers access to electronic resource books on a variety of topics. The titles available are selected by a team consisting of public library staff and SMRLA staff. The titles available are reviewed and updated annually.

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Maryland's Digital eLibrary Consortium (Overdrive, Libby)

Maryland's Digital eLibrary Consortium is a collaboration among most of Maryland's public libraries offering access to audiobooks, ebooks, and digital magazines. SMRLA contributes funding so that the libraries in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties can work together to provide an economic and wide-reaching collection of materials for our customers. Other participating libraries across the state contribute to the selection of materials available on Overdrive/Libby as well.

Bookflix (Scholastic)

Bookflix® is a digital literacy resource that pairs more than 120 animated stories from Weston Woods with a best-selling nonfiction ebook from Scholastic on a similar subject. The fiction and nonfiction pairings are designed to strengthen early literacy skills while exposing young learners to real world concepts.

Databases

SMRLA purchases databases, which are defined as an electronic collection of records containing either full-text documents (text, video, music), citations, or abstracts of articles (or chapters in books) that are curated and maintained by a third party. Databases can be interdisciplinary (spanning several disciplines) or subject-specific. A complete list of our online resources may be found [here](#). Library customers will typically need to authenticate their access to these resources using their library card number, their PIN, and/or by establishing an online account specific to the resource. Links to selected resources may be available in COSMOS.

A team consisting of public library workers in Southern Maryland and SMRLA staff select databases of local interest to the community. This team meets at least annually to review current offerings and to make decisions regarding retention.

Many factors are considered when purchasing databases, including but not limited to: price; cost per use; need for the content; the interface of the resource; uniqueness of the content; and alignment with public library goals.

Additionally, SMRLA makes available the research databases provided by the Maryland State Library Resource Center. Information about these resources can be found [here](#).

Retention

SMRLA's collections are developed with the specific needs of public library workers and public library customers of Southern Maryland in mind. We build collections that can meet the information needs of a diverse and growing population. We acknowledge that some of our materials may cover controversial topics. These materials are selected in accordance with the criteria outlined in this policy to support SMRLA's mission.

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Trained library staff regularly review all our collections to ensure the most current and relevant resources are available. Some of the factors that we use to assess our collections include: publishing date; frequency of circulation; community interest; and availability of newer or more valid materials.

Reconsideration

Public library customers who are residents of Calvert, Charles, or St. Mary's counties shall reach out to Calvert Library, Charles County Public Library, or St. Mary's County Library with library collection questions or requests for reconsideration of materials. Information about each library's collection develop policy and materials reconsideration process are available at the following links:

- [Calvert Library Materials Reconsideration Procedure](#)
- [Charles County Public Library Recocounsideration of Library Materials Policy](#)
- [St. Mary's County Library Materials Selection Policy](#)

SMRLA's mission broadly charges our organization with providing access to information resources for Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. SMRLA's various collections are available to all; however, it is not expected that all our collection will appeal to everyone.

Customers who are a Calvert, Charles, or St. Mary's County library card holder, resident, and or library staff member who are interested in the withdrawal or reclassification of materials are invited to submit our [Materials Reconsideration Form](#) to:

Southern Maryland Regional Library Association

ATTN: Ashley Teagle, CEO

P.O. Box 459

Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

ateagle@smrla.org

Library material that is under review due to an objection will remain available for use until the review process has concluded.

Within 15 business days, SMRLA's CEO will convene a committee consisting of professional library staff from Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties to review the request and to prepare a written response. If the request is determined to affect material owned by one of our partner libraries, their reconsideration process will be followed. Our partner library's collection development policies and materials reconsideration procedures are available here:

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- [Calvert Library Materials Reconsideration Procedure](#)
- [Charles County Public Library Collection Development Policy](#)
- [St. Mary's County Library Materials Selection Policy](#)

If the customer is not satisfied with the response provided by the committee, a written appeal may be submitted within 10 business days to SMRLA's Board of Trustees:

Southern Maryland Regional Library Association

ATTN: Board of Trustees Chairperson

P.O. Box 459

Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

regionalboard@smrla.org

The Board will invite the customer to appeal at the next Board meeting unless previously scheduled special guests and/or urgent library business does not allow for additional agenda items. If that is the case, the Board will provide time on the agenda during the next available month.

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