POLICY # 401 – Materials Selection
Approved by the Board of Trustees 10/22/2026

Policy Statement:

In the public interest, the Ruth Enlow Library materials collection has been designed and developed to allow the citizens of Garrett County to have the broadest possible access to materials. Since the Ruth Enlow Library cannot possibly acquire all available materials, the system must employ a selective acquisitions policy.

Library materials, services and resources exist and should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all persons the Library serves.

Regulations:

The library provides, within its available budget, a general collection of reliable materials embracing broad areas of knowledge. Works of enduring value and timely materials on current issues are both important components of the collection. Materials are purchased in the most appropriate format, based on the needs of the patron.

The Board of Trustees of the Ruth Enlow Library establishes the materials selection policy for the library system based on the library's mission and state legal findings. The Library Director is ultimately responsible for the selection of materials, and factors governing selection include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Popular appeal and demand
- Reviews from professional publications
- Budgetary concerns
- Current relevance
- Relevance to community needs
- Works of enduring value
- Local significance
- Space constraints
- Circulation history of the creator’s previous work or similar titles
- Suitability of physical form for library use

Librarians involved in materials selection have a professional responsibility to select and support the access to materials on all subject areas that meet the needs of the community and to protect the library's collection from the removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice. "It is inevitable

in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group." In a free society, individuals and groups must be free to determine for themselves what they wish to read or view. No group or individual has the right to impose its own concepts of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. The Ruth Enlow Library adheres to the American Library Association's Freedom to Read statement and COMAR 14.38.02.01, the "Freedom to Read Act."

As the Library has a responsibility to the public to provide accurate information and to promote authorship, materials known to be generated by artificial intelligence may not be considered for inclusion.

However, there are occasions when particular materials are not suitable for inclusion in the library's collection (see policy on materials donations), or have become dated or invalid (see policy on weeding).

Materials challenges

All books in the library are not right for all readers, and the Library does not assume parental responsibility for children's reading choices. Public requests for materials and comments on the suitability of materials are welcome and encouraged (see request for reconsideration form, which is not a part of this document).

The Ruth Enlow Library does not exclude material from its catalogue because of the origin, background or views of a person who created the material. The Library does not prohibit or remove material from its catalogue based on partisan or doctrinal, ideological or religious disapproval.

Challenges must identify specific passages that violate collection development policy. Patrons challenging an item must have read or viewed it in its entirety, and provide an exact explanation of their concern. Patrons challenging an item must also provide their name, contact information, Library card number and branch frequented.

Requests for consideration will be referred to the Director, who will consider each request individually and provide a response within ten business days. Questioned books will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.

Appeal may be made to the Board of Trustees, who will consider each with an eye towards maintaining established Library values. Their decision will be considered final.

Books already challenged will not be reheard for a minimum of 5 years.

The Library Board of Trustees may not dismiss, suspend, discipline, demote, reassign, transfer or otherwise retaliate against an employee for performing their job duties consistent with these standards or for acting in a manner consistent with this policy implementing the State standards for libraries.