

# **Fort Bend County Libraries**

## **Collection Management Policy**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The policy statements contained herein are established by the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court in order to provide the public a wide range of thoughts, ideas, information, and expressions of the creative imagination. Responsibility for the selection of library materials in Fort Bend County Libraries lies with the Library Director, who is responsible for operating within the policies established by the Commissioners Court.

### **2. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Fort Bend County Libraries (FBCL) is to bring people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives, expand minds, and strengthen our diverse community.

### **3. SELECTING MATERIALS FOR THE COLLECTION**

Library materials and services are selected, organized, and made accessible in order to meet the library needs of the community. Patron interest, both expressed and anticipated, are important factors for the materials and formats that are selected. Materials are also selected to ensure that the collection as a whole contains materials on many different topics, that there is a choice of materials or formats on the subject, and that multiple viewpoints are expressed.

Collection Development staff use a set of criteria to guide selection decision.

General criteria for selection:

- Recommendations of reviews from professional journals or publications of national repute
- Literary, artistic, historical, scientific, or intellectual merit
- Community needs, interests, and demands
- Patron requests gathered through the public website, emails, phone calls, or in-person visits
- Subject and style is suitable for intended audience
- Relation to the existing collection
- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Format options
- Physical design is suitable for library use
- Importance of the item as an artifact
- Historical significance
- Price of material
- Relevance to current trends and events

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- Potential appeal
- Relation to other resources in the community

### **Content criteria for selection:**

- Competence, reputation, and qualifications of author or publisher
- Consideration of the work as a whole
- Currency of information
- Objectivity and clarity
- Comprehensiveness
- Technical quality
- Represents a diverse point of view
- Representative of movements, subjects, genres, or trends of lasting patron interest
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
- Sustained interest or demand
- Usefulness of the information
- Relevance to local history collections
- Provides unique contribution to a field of study

### **Additional considerations for electronic formats:**

- Ease of use
- Available to multiple, concurrent users
- Access to materials in other formats
- Remote access
- Technical and support requirements
- Vendor data privacy practices

### **Patron Role:**

Patrons also play a key role in the development of the Library's collection. They make suggestions and provide feedback via the Library's website or directly to staff.

Parents are responsible for guiding their children's use of library resources since, as the legal guardians, they decide what is appropriate for their children.

## **4. COLLECTIONS**

The Adult collection is comprised of current high-interest materials in a wide range of popular formats: fiction books, nonfiction books, downloadable formats, magazines, newspapers and electronic databases, audiobooks, literacy materials, large-print books, paperback books, and books in several World Languages.

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The Literacy and English as a Second Language collection (LESL) supplements learning related to adult education, literacy, and English-as-a-Second-Language tutoring or classes.

World Language collections support populations in which a significant number of individuals have difficulty speaking or reading English. The Library also purchases dictionaries and grammar instruction in languages where the readership is not large. Collection management of non-English-language collections is reliant upon availability, appropriateness of format, cost-effectiveness, and production quality.

The Young Adult collection is comprised of popular materials for students in grades nine through 12. The collection is mostly fiction, and it is available in print and downloadable formats.

The Middle Grades collections are separately identified to provide a transition from the Youth to the Young Adult and Adult collections. They generally serve -- but are not limited to -- youth in grades six through eight. At FBCL, the emphasis of the Middle Grades collection is on popular browsing materials, on fiction written specifically for adolescents or with adolescent characters, and on nonfiction uniquely of interest to this age group.

Materials for Youth collections are selected by qualified, experienced youth-services librarians who are knowledgeable about youth materials and who interact regularly with youth and their caregivers by assisting them in locating requested information, through fiction and nonfiction resources. Materials in a variety of print and non-print formats are selected for all levels of a youth's understanding and reading ability, with special attention given to stages of emotional, intellectual, and developmental needs. Digital sources, such as online and downloadable books for Youth and Middle Grade collections, must also meet the same criteria as other formats. Educational manipulatives are an integral part of Youth collections. The selection criteria stated throughout the policy also applies to educational manipulatives with an emphasis on safety, appropriateness for targeted age-levels, and suitability for circulation.

### **5. DIGITAL RESOURCES**

Fort Bend County Libraries maintains a website that contains information about the library, provides access to the library's catalog, and links patrons to a wide variety of resources available on the Internet and in specific databases purchased by the library. New digital resources that are under consideration for inclusion to the library website are reviewed by a panel of librarians.

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### **6. GENEALOGY AND LOCAL HISTORY**

The Genealogy and Local History Department collects materials for genealogical research and maintains a collection of historical and descriptive materials about Fort Bend County and the people and events associated with the county. Materials from adjacent counties, the state, and the southeastern United States are also collected. All materials in the collection are non-circulating.

Materials are purchased, or accepted as donations, on the basis of interest, importance to local history and research potential. Included in the collection are: censuses; photographs; surname histories; heraldry; school, courthouse, church, genealogical, and cemetery records; immigrant and land-grant lists; as well as electronic sources, books, and periodicals. Materials donated to the department will remain the property of the department or be disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Archives of the Regional Historical Resource Depository (RHRD) are held by the Genealogy department for Fort Bend County and for five adjacent counties. RHRD is administered by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. These non-current city, county, and other local-government records of historical value are available for public research. State policies govern the use, handling, and preservation of the RHRD collection.

### **7. ADAPTIVE MATERIALS**

Adaptive Materials, provided to accommodate persons with special visual or hearing needs, are also part of the collections. They include large-print books, books in Braille for youth, audio-books on CD, and DVDs. Magnifying and color-enhancing equipment, as well as Kurzweil software that can scan and read printed words, are available to assist the visually-impaired in accessing printed information.

### **8. LAW LIBRARY**

The Fort Bend County Willie Melton Law Library is administered by FBCL. The Law Library maintains a reference (non-circulating) collection of legal materials and electronic resources selected primarily for attorneys and the general public. These legal references are available for all Fort Bend County residents to use in the Law Library. The Law Librarian, under the direction of the Library Director, decides which items are added to the collection. Filing fees from cases filed in the county courts fund the Law Library.

Each of the FBCL libraries provides a self-help collection of legal resources for in-library use and resources that can be borrowed with a FBCL library card. The materials are selected by the Adult Collection Development Coordinator, with the assistance of the Law Librarian.

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### **9. COLLECTION MAINTENANCE**

Physical materials are distributed and maintained in libraries and community-partnership locations throughout Fort Bend County. Electronic formats are maintained on the Library's website or other third-party vendor servers.

The collection is reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis in order to maintain its usefulness, currency, and relevance. Items may be kept, redistributed, repurchased, de-selected, re-catalogued, or preserved for long-term retention.

Staff rely on a set of criteria to guide their decisions to de-select items from the collection:

- Format or physical condition is no longer suitable for library use
- Content is available in multiple formats
- Obsolescence -- information that is no longer timely, accurate, or relevant
- Insufficient use or lack of patron demand
- Little or no relevance to current trends and events
- No long-term or historical significance
- Space limitations
- Sufficient number of copies in the collection
- Easy availability in other collections locally or nationally

Not all criteria are applied to each de-selection decision.

### **10. GIFTS, MEMORIALS, AND DONATIONS**

Fort Bend County Libraries accepts donations that support and further the mission, goals, and objectives of the Library. Donations may be in the form of money or actual materials.

Monetary gifts may be donated in memory of or in honor of a person, or in the name of an organization. Selection of items purchased with such gifts is made by the library staff members, with consideration given to the donor's preferences and FBCL's Collection Management Policy.

Donated materials become the property of the Library upon receipt and will not be returned. The items are considered for addition to the collection in accordance with the selection and evaluative criteria described in the section labeled "Selecting Materials for the Collection." Books and other donated materials that are not added to the collection may be sold by the Friends organizations of Fort Bend County Libraries or disposed of by the organizations. The proceeds from sales are used to purchase library materials and to support library programs and services.

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Instead of sending or leaving actual materials, donors are encouraged to provide the title, the author's name, and the ISBN number for any item that they wish to donate to the library. The items are considered according to the criteria in the section labeled "Selecting Materials for the Collection." A Collection Development Coordinator notifies the donor of the selection decision and if actual copies will be accepted for addition to the collection.

### **11. RESOURCE SHARING**

#### **a. Interlibrary Loan (ILL)**

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission provides support for the interlibrary borrowing and lending of library materials. Users of FBCL can borrow library materials from many other libraries in Texas and the nation. In some instances of requests for rare materials, Fort Bend County Libraries has the discretion to limit use to the George Memorial Library's Genealogy and Local History Department.

#### **b. Resource Sharing between Library Branches**

Fort Bend County Libraries is an integrated library system. Most library materials that are available at one library location are also available to users at other libraries in the system through deliveries that are made between library branches. Fort Bend County Libraries' system delivery allows for the purchase of an appropriate number of copies for the system and, in some instances, eliminates the necessity to purchase a copy of a work for each library location.

All libraries have similar basic collections; however, each library also reflects the interests and needs of the residents in the community, the availability of space in the building, and funding available for purchasing materials.

### **12. COLLECTION REVIEW**

Fort Bend County is a diverse community in which many of the world's religions, ethnic groups, cultures, and ideologies are represented; therefore, a great diversity exists in patrons' choices of library materials. Inclusion of any materials in the collection does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content, viewpoint, implications, or presentation of the materials.

FBCL recognizes an individual's rights to express their opinion concerning materials in the Library's collection.

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- Fort Bend County residents may express their concerns to library staff about any materials. Upon request, library staff will provide a copy of the Collection Management policy to the patron and provide assistance in locating materials of interest to the patron.
- Fort Bend County residents who have further questions about any materials may state their opinion in writing on a comment card provided by the library. The comment card is sent to the appropriate Collection Development coordinator. The coordinator contacts the patron to discuss their concerns.
- If a Fort Bend County resident wishes to continue their inquiry about a specific item, they must submit a completed "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form to Fort Bend County Libraries.

### **13. RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

Anonymous inquiries or objections will not be considered. The Fort Bend County resident must be willing to provide their name and contact information and complete the "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form (See Appendix A). A review committee of five qualified librarians, appointed by a Collection Development Coordinator, will evaluate the item(s) in relation to the Library's mission and selection criteria. Since the entire work must be considered in this process, all parties -- including the individual requesting the reconsideration - must read and review the entire work. During the evaluation period, the material in question remains available to the public.

- The Collection Development Coordinator provides a formal response to the request for reconsideration that states the committee's recommendation regarding the item under review and provides information for contacting the Library Director if further action is required. The Coordinator provides a response to the individual within one (1) month from the submittal of the reconsideration form.
- If the individual is not satisfied with the committee's recommendation, they may request further review of the item(s) in question. The Library Director asks the Library Advisory Board, appointed representatives of the different county precincts, to form a five-person committee of members to review the item(s) in question. The Library Advisory Board Committee reviews the item and makes a recommendation regarding the disposition of the item(s) in question. The Library Advisory Board Committee returns a response to the complainant within three weeks from the date the complaint is given to them for review.

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- If the individual is not satisfied with the Library Advisory Board Committee's recommendation, the matter proceeds to Commissioner's Court for final disposition. All of the background information and copies of the item(s) in question are given to each member of the Court. The Court renders the final decision in the matter; its directives are carried out by the Library Director.