

Collection Policy

Harris County Public Library

The Harris County Public Library Collection Policy serves to guide librarians and inform the public regarding the principles on which library materials are selected and maintained.

Our Mission:

The mission of the Harris County Public Library System is to provide information and resources to enrich lives and strengthen communities through innovative services within and beyond our walls.

We do this by:

- Providing free and open access to materials and services without qualification.
- Creating an environment where customers may seek information on any and all topics without judgment.
- Designing a collection of print, audio-visual and electronic resources materials intended to meet the needs of a large and highly diverse population. These comprise of, but are not limited to, the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational needs of the citizens of Harris County.

The Library does not serve *in loco parentis*. It is the parent and/or legal guardian who may restrict their children, and only their own children, from access to library materials. Responsibility for children's reading rests with their parent(s) and or legal guardian(s). Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

How We Select Materials:

- All items added to the collection are evaluated by the professional staff in order to ensure that the Library's collection is dynamic and evolving to reflect the needs and interests of the community.
- Factors which may be considered are:
 - Value to the existing collection
 - Balance of viewpoints
 - Timeliness
 - Accuracy of information
 - Literary and/or artistic merit
 - Format
 - Durability
 - Cost
- Selection decisions may be guided by reviews in professional journals, standard bibliographies, popular culture, current events, or customer interest.
- The choices made to develop the collection are not necessarily a reflection of the opinions or values of the selectors, the director, or Commissioners' Court.
- Through [Interlibrary Loan](#) and reciprocal borrowing with surrounding library systems, the Library participates in resource sharing to avoid unnecessary duplication of materials.
- Esoteric or very technical works, and materials available elsewhere to special interest groups, are generally excluded from the collection.

- Local authors interested in submitting their works for addition into the library collection may do so by following the steps outlined in the [Author Submission Policy](#).
- HCPL is not able to accept donations of used books to be added to our collection. Patrons wishing to donate books to the library may look for more information in our [Donation Policy](#).

Reconsideration of Materials:

Given the necessity of including information on a broad range of topics, it is expected that there may be materials in the collection that are regarded as controversial by some members of the community. Harris County residents wishing to comment on such library materials may complete the [Request for Reconsideration of Materials Form](#), available at every branch and online. Concerned citizens should have read titles submitted for reconsideration in their entirety. Should a resident find multiple titles of concern, they must submit one form per title. All requests are reviewed by the Materials Reconsideration committee and a member of the executive leadership team.

Should an author or author's estate release a statement requesting their title or series be removed from circulation, the library material in question will be pulled from circulation for review by the Collection Development staff. If the material no longer serves the Harris County community, it will be removed in accordance with the Deselection Policy.

Publisher decisions to cease the publication of materials do not require automatic reconsideration or review.

Collection Maintenance:

Harris County Public Library maintains a floating collection that is distributed across twenty-six branch libraries and various community partnerships. The collection is reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis in order to maintain its condition, accuracy, and timeliness. Items may be kept, redistributed, repurchased, withdrawn, or recataloged in accordance with the [Deselection Policy](#). The Library Director is the final authority for the selection, retention, and withdrawal of materials. Authority is delegated to the professional staff of the Collection Development department to interpret and implement this policy.

References:

The above Policy supports the democratic principles set forth in the [First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States](#).

Harris County Public Library supports the individual's right to access ideas and information representing all points of view. The Library has adopted the [Library Bill of Rights](#), [ALA Code of Ethics](#), as well as statements affirming the [Freedom to Read](#) and the [Freedom to View](#).

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