

## **Collection Policy**

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:**

Harris County Public Library System enriches lives to strengthen communities.

### **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
  - Availability through contracted vendors
- Selection decisions may be guided by reviews in professional journals, standard bibliographies, popular culture, current events, or customer interest.
- Materials will be provided in other languages on the basis of availability and use within the community.
- 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.
- AI-generated materials are generally excluded from the collection. AI-generated includes, but is not limited to, human-guided and edited AI creations as well as AI-narrated works. Local connections of the creator will not be considered for AI-generated works.
- 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](#).
- 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.

#### **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.

Decisions by the Materials Reconsideration committee will be upheld for two years from the date of response to the citizen. Should a title be requested again for reconsideration within that time, the requesting citizen will receive notice of the committee's original decision.

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-seven 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](#) and [ALA Code of Ethics](#), as well as statements affirming the [Freedom to Read](#) and the [Freedom to View](#).

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