

# Fairfax County Public Library

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LOB #98:

## **LIBRARY MATERIALS AND COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT**

### **Purpose**

The Library Materials and Collection Management LOB ensures that all Fairfax County residents have access to books, magazines, newspapers, and electronic resources that can best meet evolving educational, recreational, and informational needs. Library materials are selected, organized, and made accessible in order to anticipate and meet these diverse needs.

### **Description**

The Library Materials and Collection Management LOB is comprised of three discrete programs; Materials Selection, Assistant Branch Managers and Library Pages. The Library's largest operational asset, the collection of library materials, is the foundation of traditional library services and contains over 2.3 million items. The collection (books and other items available to be borrowed from the Library) requires many library staff at varying levels across the organization to keep it available yet secure, topical yet timeless, contemporary yet classical and traditional. Materials regularly move around the County to customers at various branches and requires many checks and balances to ensure its long life and consistent inventory levels.

1. **Materials Selection.** Staff in the Materials Selections program are trained librarians who build and maintain appropriate collections for customers of all ages in multiple formats. New materials are reviewed and selected for purchase while existing materials are monitored and tracked to determine its viability. Using professional level expertise, selectors are tasked with providing materials in complex technical and foreign language genres. Selectors also remove outdated and inaccurate material in accordance with removal guidelines. Policy and guidelines for the maintenance and development of the existing collection are prepared by material selectors who provide guidance to branch staff on how to maintain a fresh, accurate and worthwhile collection. Training in collection policies is provided centrally by library selectors. Also, resident queries and requests for information regarding the collection are fielded by selection staff.

This program is at the Library's Technical Operations Center during regular business hours.

The program is performed by County staff. It has been a provided service since the Fairfax County Library was formally established in 1939.

2. **Assistant Branch Managers.** The overall responsibility for the collection housed at each branch location rests with the Assistant Branch Manager who serves as the branch expert on collection issues. Collection movement within each branch is managed utilizing reports and statistics, such as the holds report (customer requests), transfers report (which contains requests for books from other branches) and reports identifying items that are pulled to check for condition. Assistant Branch Managers liaison with selections staff in Technical Operations regarding suggested purchases and perform priority reporting. Materials selected for review are considered for removal, addition or transfer. Magazine selections are requested based on local customer usage, and displays within branches are prepared to highlight special segments of the collection within branches.

This program is located within the branches during open library hours, including evenings and weekends.

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3. **Library pages.** Library pages are a contingent of exempt library staff employed at library branches throughout the system. Pages are employed specifically to provide support for the collection and perform a variety of collection duties such as accurately sorting and shelving and reshelving materials in a timely fashion, ensuring visibility and availability to customers. Pages also maintain the collection's appearance by removing books in poor condition for review.

This program is located at library branch locations during open library hours.

The program is performed by exempt library staff and volunteers. It has been operational since Fairfax County Public Library opened in 1939.

## Benefits

Library materials help to create an informed and educated citizenry and are free of charge. Libraries support the education and information needs of all County residents, from children to senior citizens including English language learners and home-schooled children. Library books and resources support educational goals via homework help, providing access to further research initiatives and is a unique service that is not replicated in the private sector.

The Library Materials and Collection Management LOB supports the following Vision Elements: Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities, Building Livable Spaces, Connecting People and Places, and Maintaining Healthy Economies.

## Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

## Trends and Challenges

**Trends:** Digital materials are affecting the Library's traditional business model and collections. Changes in the publishing industry have been impactful in recent years. Publishers continue to work with library eBook distributors toward lending models that work for both parties, but there is still no standard model for digital titles. Libraries now need to offer the same item in multiple formats (digital, print, audio, large print) to respond to the various devices and ways customers are reading. However, traditional selection models are no longer useful as materials are not available in every format requested by library customers. Libraries not only have to decide on which format to purchase, but also what proportion of the budget to expend on it. The steadily increasing population, increased number of languages spoken at home and increasing 50+ population also contributes to the demand for a greater variety of materials. The rise in self-published titles and the closing of book stores have resulted in lower print runs of popular titles; orders need to be placed quickly before stock runs out. Many reference and nonfiction print titles are now only available in digital formats, reshaping our library collections and customer expectations.

**Challenges:** As with many County departments, budget reductions have affected staffing levels and materials' expenditures for this LOB, both centrally and in the branches. Also, while the Library has made great strides in directing available balances to materials' expenditures, expenditures for materials have not kept pace with inflationary increases, new pricing models based on new formats, publishing industry volatility, and population growth and increasing diversity.

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## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #98: Library Materials and Collections Management</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$2,639,884	\$2,767,289	\$2,192,461
Operating Expenses	3,543,563	4,524,425	3,318,014
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$6,183,447</b>	<b>\$7,291,714</b>	<b>\$5,510,475</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$500,515	\$500,942	\$500,819
<b>Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund</b>	<b>\$5,682,932</b>	<b>\$6,790,772</b>	<b>\$5,009,656</b>
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	29 / 29	29 / 29	29 / 29
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>29 / 29</b>	<b>29 / 29</b>	<b>29 / 29</b>

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## Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Items Selected per Staff Hour	400	268	336	336	316
Materials Transferred to Increase Percentage of Collection Used	71,387	109,792	155,176	197,500	226,500

Staff in the library's Collection Development Office is responsible for selecting the vast array of items that are added to the library's annual collection. The efficiency with which staff performs this vital function has been part of the library's performance measures for several years. With a materials budget that has been severely constrained since FY 2009, and the number of staff performing this function remaining stable, the number of items selected per staff hour has remained relatively flat over the past several years. In FY 2014 staff efficiency was greatly impacted by a position vacancy that reduced the number of materials selected and therefore the number of items selected per staff hour. In addition, staff time was diverted in order to address inquiries and requests for information from the Library Board of Trustees and the Board of Supervisors. The volume of items selected per staff hour in FY 2015 was 336.

In order to maximize the use of the library's collection, FCPL began 'floating' the collection in May 2013. Floating is a library term that describes materials staying at the library where they are returned instead of moving back to an owning library branch. Floating collections spend less time in delivery which reduces the physical wear and tear on materials and also reduces staff workload in processing delivery items. Materials are available sooner to customers since the materials are spending less time in delivery and are on the shelves faster. Browsing at individual branch collections is enhanced by increasing the availability and diversity of items on the shelves resulting in customer driven collections. Retaining materials returned by local customers enhances the local branch's core collection to reflect the interest of the community and provides opportunities for other community members to see and use these items. Significant reduction in deliveries are realized enabling FCPL to implement a Central Transfer program of low demand items where library materials are transferred to another location and given additional life in the collection. As a result of floating the collection, the volume of materials transferred to increase the percentage of collection used has been steadily climbing. In FY 2015, the library transferred more than 155,000 items throughout the system, enhancing the availability and efficiency of the collection. There are challenges of a floating collection such as managing shortages and overflows of materials at individual locations; space management at individual branch locations to accommodate changing collections; staff concerns that collection knowledge is hindered by ever changing collections; and the transition to system-determined and centrally applied uniform spine labels and location codes, resulting in a consistent look from branch to branch. These challenges are being overcome and the feedback from customers to the floating collection has been positive. It is expected that the volume of Materials Transferred to Increase Percentage of Collection Used will continue to increase over the next several years.