



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: Community Collections
Program Category: Customer Service

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Program Overview

The Community Collections initiative at Henrico County Public Library (HCPL) repurposes withdrawn library material and donations to encourage juvenile literacy by providing books to children in community hubs outside the library. In three years, HCPL has partnered with five different Henrico County agencies to provide over 2000 books in 12 locations across the county. The locations include waiting rooms in Social Services and the Health Department, libraries in two Juvenile Detention centers, and Henrico Mental Health & Developmental Services' Connect after school and summer programs. The materials selected for Community Collections are used books that have been donated to the library or withdrawn from the library's collection. HCPL staff work with partner agencies to provide age- and culturally-appropriate material and coordinate installation. Community Collections encourage literacy by providing free books to children in the community, extend the life of books by finding them new homes after their time in the library has ended, and help the library engage interdepartmentally with partner agencies to share resources.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Libraries have finite shelf space, so older books that have seen usage wane are withdrawn from the library collection to make room for new books. Part of libraries' mission is to connect readers with books. Installing books in community hubs outside the library helps connect people to reading material who may not be able to visit the library. An example of such a location is service provider waiting rooms, which may need reading material to help occupy children waiting with their caregivers for appointments. Kids in after school/summer programs similarly may need something to read, after their homework is finished or in between other activities. Residents of Juvenile Detention centers are also in need of reading material. However, book purchasing is not central to the work of some of these service providers. Keeping available reading material fresh can be difficult for detention centers or other youth service providers. The Community Collections

initiative is one way HCPL is answering the question of how to make best use of withdrawn material, while increasing access to reading material for young people, encouraging child literacy, and helping other County departments address their needs for youth reading material. By providing Community Collections, the library is extending the life of the withdrawn books, keeping partners' collections stocked in a cost-effective manner, connecting kids with books, and promoting reading.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The Community Collections initiative is an innovative way to repurpose library materials and encourage childhood literacy. By placing books into Community Collections, HCPL is extending the lives of thousands of books and enriching the lives of children in the community. Community Collections help the library meet young people where they are, because kids can't always visit a library building, and in so doing the library can promote equitable access to literacy skill-building for youth. Providing books in this way is helpful to caregivers and service providers supervising young people waiting for appointments or with other open time. These collections reduce the need for service providers to purchase their own reading material for programs and facilities. The program also solves a problem that many libraries face, which is how to divert reading material from recycling and extend reading life. The program fosters inter-agency collaboration and breaks down silos. Community Collections make positive connections between and across people and government, and efficiently reuse existing municipal assets to meet unaddressed needs. These could and should be easily replicated in municipalities across the state.

How Program Was Carried Out

The life cycle of a library book varies, but each one follows the same general path. New books are received with enthusiasm and are checked out by library patrons. Over time, some books

become worn, some are lost, and others lose popularity and interest fades. Shelf space is finite and it is impossible to keep every book purchased forever, therefore some books are withdrawn from the library's collection to make room for the influx of new books. At HCPL, these books are first offered to local Henrico County Public School librarians for school collections. Like most libraries, HCPL is always looking for ways to help withdrawn books reach new audiences and divert them from recycling bins whenever possible.

Inspired by a workshop at the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services conference in 2018, the Library Outreach Division Head, Matt Phillips, began discussing with Library Administration, an initiative that would funnel withdrawn and donated books to places where children could benefit from more book availability. They decided that partnering with other departments within Henrico County government was the best way to start this initiative. Within a few months, an opportunity arose: staff from Henrico Juvenile Detention and Library Administration discussed the possibility of a more robust partnership. During subsequent discussions, the newly partnered agencies decided to provide library reading material to the residents of both juvenile detention facilities serving Henrico County—Henrico County Juvenile Detention Home, and James River Juvenile Detention. Library Outreach staff received withdrawn books from library locations throughout the county, and prepared them for the Community Collection by removing any stickers or RFID tags. Staff also placed specially ordered bookplate-like stickers on the front pages of the book that say "Compliments of Henrico County Public Library." These stickers serve to describe the origins of the reading material as well as providing a promotional opportunity for the library. The first batch of Community Collection materials was delivered to Juvenile Detention in July 2019. Since that time, this program has provided over 600 books to residents of the two Henrico Juvenile Detention facilities.

Also during summer 2019, Outreach staff began discussions with the Connect program of Henrico Mental Health & Developmental Services' Prevention Services team. Connect is an after school and summer program available to children in four subsidized apartment complexes in Henrico County. Connect program leaders were happy to start working with Library Outreach staff to provide more books to the many children they serve. Since the first delivery of books in August 2019, over 400 books have found new homes at Connect sites.

A casual conversation led to placement of a Community Collection in Henrico Department of Social Services waiting rooms. An Outreach staff member was visiting a friend in the Department of Social Services office and noticed children in the waiting room. During the visit, he mentioned that he may be able to provide some books for their waiting room if they were interested. A few days later, he received an enthusiastic "yes." A few weeks after that, in January 2020, the initial books for their Community Collection were delivered. Since then, over 450 books have been added to the Community Collection in both the East and West locations of the Department of Social Services.

Not long after the initial delivery of books to the Department of Social Services, an Outreach staff member met a nurse with the Henrico Health Department at a meeting of the Henrico Partnership for Family and Community Engagement. During their conversation, he mentioned the recent partnership with DSS and asked if the Health Department would be interested in a similar arrangement. Two years later, over 450 books have been provided to the Eastern and Western Health Department locations.

Financing and Staffing

So far, HCPL has spent \$814.98 on Community Collections. This expense is for a “Compliments of Henrico County Public Library” sticker that is added to each book and serves as a marketing opportunity for the library. The cost of the program is mainly staff time. Boxes of withdrawn/donated material are sent to the Outreach office, and each box is examined for books that are worthy of inclusion in a Community Collection. Processing books for a community collection requires staff time as well, which involves removing library stickers and other library markings before they are delivered to Community Collection partners. Community collections are delivered by existing library courier staff and installed collaboratively with the partner agencies who help to determine placement and storage.

Program Results

Over the last three years, the Community Collections program has proven immensely popular and has grown rapidly and dramatically in scope and scale. Community Collections began as an idea for a partnership with one County agency into a regular part of the library’s process for extending the life of withdrawn and donated books. It has become a program that touches the lives of thousands of youth each year. Currently, over 2000 books have been added into Community Collections. The program now counts five different County departments as partners, and Community Collections have been installed in 12 different locations across the County. This program is giving withdrawn books a second chance, is making books available in a cost-effective manner to County departments that need them, and is providing access to reading material for young people and encouraging reading.

Brief Summary

Community Collections at Henrico County Public Library provide library materials to youth in community hubs outside the library. High quality books that have been withdrawn from library shelves after their initial popularity fades, or books that have been donated to the library, are provided to partners like Juvenile Detention centers, after school and summer programs, and service provider waiting rooms in other Henrico County agencies. The program helps library books find new audiences and provides opportunities for young people to access literacy skill-building, while partner agencies receive vetted reading material to share with the youth they serve. Community Collections is a low- to no-cost program that could be easily replicated across the state to help libraries make use of their withdrawn materials and provide wider access to library books for young people. This innovative program has grown over the past three years to impact the lives of thousands of youth and has already repurposed over 2000 books. It fosters stronger interagency partnerships and helps the library achieve its mission outside library walls.