CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 7

MEETING DATE: Thursday, September 24, 2009

AGENDA ITEM #: 12 B

ITEM: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- None
Centralized Selection

Collection development staff, with a handful of planners supporting this work, will be given the task of selecting materials for the entire county.

Positive Impacts

- Patrons see new books much faster (estimated time savings: 30 days).
- Big picture thinking might result in greater breadth of collections
- Reduces labor time on selection
- Compels community library staff to use developed methods for communicating subject needs and reporting trends of local demand.
- Despite small Collection Development staff, they would be able to immediately respond to complaints and work with vendors when problems arise.
- Flexible; can be performed using either community library or floating funds
- Because selectors are dedicated to collection development, all libraries will receive materials that have been carefully selected (i.e. not quickly determined due to lack of time, focus or interest)
- Process requires all community libraries to create and update community profiles to help selectors make selection decisions - this process fosters dialog & may actually increase attention to specific community needs
- Statistical tools to analyze collections are tested and available.

Challenges

- A very small collection development staff.
- Collection Development staff may not have necessary subject expertise
- Requires public services staff willing to regularly communicate community needs to Collection Development staff.
- With small Collection Development staff, contingencies would have to be built into ordering process (to ensure that orders are placed) to account for vacation, sick leave, extended absences, etc.
- Reasonable and consistent guidelines need to be established relating to Friends/Foundation monies how these are spent, and by whom.
- Use of fund codes to select presents a huge time requirement for Acquisitions staff if this process is not performed with floating collections
- If not done as floating collections, planners must expend a large amount of time determining which library needs each item.
Vendor Selection

Vendor staff will be given the task of selecting materials for the entire county.

Positive Impacts

- Very quick receipt of materials, as no need for staff to read reviews and make selections (estimated time savings: 45 days)
- Patrons would see materials that library staff might not have ever considered purchasing
- Would free up labor time to perform outreach and programming

Challenges

- There is an additional cost for this service (about 7% cost increase from vendor).
- Vendor accountability, i.e. to meet specific community needs
- Selections might be motivated by vendor needs rather than the community’s (such as vendor need to rid shelves of inventory)
- Would need to develop a method to order replacement materials
- Reliance on vendor accounting that is often difficult to interpret
- Would require the development of strict contract and would demand a huge amount of time and energy to oversee and regulate.
- May be politically untenable
- Would require complete alteration of fund code allocation process
Expanding Floating Collections

No matter which general collection development approach we take, expansion of floating collections presents clear benefits and difficulties. Incorporating growth of floating collections into any methods we follow will magnify some benefits and compound some challenges. Currently, about 15% of materials we order are treated as iFloats. The Collection Development Committee, in its discussion about current selection practices, also examined them under a possible expansion of floating collections. The below data reflects this discussion and assumes that all newly ordered fiction materials float.

Labor Costs

Current processes (but making fiction iFloats): $287,280
Selected by Planners: $190,800
Centralized Selection: $103,800
Vendor Selection: $108,600

Key Benefits: Using floating collections greatly simplifies the ordering process. It allows for a huge reduction of fund codes, and demands much less time determining and selecting a specific community library for each item. Instead, it allows patron use to help determine community collection character. Selectors simply select a quantity for each item based upon their understanding of overall community demand. In fact, current practices for bestsellers allow patrons to place holds on floating materials prior to the determination of the number we will order and we use this information to determine how many copies of each title to order. Floating collections would allow us to universalize a practice that empowers patrons and helps us match community demand more accurately than individual community library selection.

Key Challenges: Floating collections present some challenges, including how to develop best practices for weeding, redistributing and developing collection spaces that can be easily altered due to materials moving from site to site regularly. Furthermore, some staff members may associate floating collections with lack of concern for specific community needs.

Positive Impacts

- Patrons regularly experience refreshed collections at each community library.
- Greatly simplifies selection process, allowing one person to do the work of many.
- Fund code reduction allows ordering to take place much more efficiently. Selection time is, minimally, reduced by 50%, from four to two weeks.
- Fund code reduction exponentially reduces staff time spent on fiscal tracking over the course of the year. For example, in place of twenty-five distinct JPB funds to keep track of at twenty-five sites, there could be one single fund, overseen by the planner with the support of the Collection Development Manager.
• Reduces phenomenon of selectors stereotyping community library collection needs, thus allowing for potentially greater breadth of materials at each library.

• Patrons receive recently obtained materials quickly.

• More items in browsing collections because floating items are not returned to “owning libraries.” As a result, the public gets more value for each dollar invested in the purchase of floating materials. At any time there are about 5,500 items in transit between libraries. These materials have a value of over $100,000.

• Reduced staff time handling items to be shipped between libraries.

• Librarians selecting materials gain greater knowledge of entirety of community needs throughout county. Those librarians with knowledge of various communities can better utilize this knowledge to benefit more users.

Challenges

• Library owned materials may require weeding to make space for floating materials. Weeding guidelines should reflect changed collection development practices.

• Requires that substantial funds be allocated from county monies to a central fund or set of funds. It is important that this step not be perceived as a reduction of investment in local community services.

• The potential concentration of multiple copies of some floating materials at some sites. Growth of floating collections means that the Collection Development committee must develop simple, cost-efficient processes to support redistribution of such materials.

• Requires development of rigorous process to ensure that initial distribution of new materials does not lead to an over-concentration of materials at any site.

• Requires development of parallel ordering process by community library staff for use of Friends and Gift funds to purchase materials to be housed at specific community libraries. The time impact of this will vary library by library, as some libraries have substantial Friends funds to spend annually. These libraries would experience less time savings than those with little friends collections support.

• Requires development of means to best communicate to staff the benefits that patrons experience.

• Community Library staff must flexibly alter shelving to reflect ever-changing collection sizes as materials drift from site to site.

• Smaller libraries that have high circulation may encounter space problems, while larger libraries with less use may face depleted shelves.
Addendum 1: Methodology for Estimating Costs

Estimated labor costs are the product of interviews, information derived from articles in professional literature, attendance at trainings, observations of current practices, and the performing of test orders using different methods. These sources also helped us gather information about how changes in practices might enable us to more quickly provide materials to users.

Labor costs are expressed as estimates. Although they should not be considered precise, we believe that the comparative differences are quite accurate.

Information Sources

Interviews (performed from January 2009 through March, 2009):

- Interviews of Collection Development and Technical Services staff from these institutions that have undergone shifts in collection development practices:
  
  San Diego County Library
  Alameda County Library
  Napa County Library

- Interviews with collection planners and selectors
- Discussions with vendors

Professional literature and trainings


- Attendance at Infopeople's "Innovative Approaches to Collection Development in Tough Economic Times" workshop.

Observations of current practices and test orders

- The recent Juvenile Nonfiction Replacement order was placed by a single Collection Development staff-member intermittently over the period of four weeks. In place of reading reviews, making selections, and designating funds for individual titles, over twenty Youth Services Librarians concentrated upon weeding current collections and providing input via collection profiles. This reduced labor time exponentially (from twelve weeks to five, with one person performing it) on these elements of the work and has allowed us to make estimates about centralized selection labor costs.

- Planners for these collection areas currently select floating materials as part of their planning responsibilities:
  - Adult DVDs
  - Juvenile DVDs
  - Adult Audio-books
  - Y.A. Audio-books
  - Adult Music CDs
  - Juvenile Music CDs

Observations of these practices allow us to make labor cost estimates on selection by planners of floating materials.

- Planners for these collection areas select community library materials as part of their planning responsibilities:
  - Large Type materials
  - Adult Spanish language books
  - Juvenile Spanish language books
  - Computer books

Observations of these practices allow us to make labor cost estimates on selection of community library materials.

- Observations of selection list ordering by community library staff.
Collection Development methods: Estimated Labor Costs
Comparing labor costs: not floating to floating

- Current Practices
- Planners Select
- Centralized Selection
- Vendor Selection

Labor Costs

- Not Floating
- Floating
### Addendum 2

#### Current Practices

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#### Planners Select for Community Library Collections

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#### Centralized Selection for Community Library Collections

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### As iFloats

#### Current Practices (with floating all fiction collections)

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**Total**: $287,280.00

#### Planners Select for Community Library Collections

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**Total**: $180,800.00

#### Centralized Selection for Community Library Collections

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**Total**: $103,800.00

#### Vendor Selection

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**Total**: $108,600.00