

Galveston County Library System General Policies

Revised: 9/16/1998; 4/17/2002; 10/12/2004; 4/14/2009; 4/11/2012; 4/17/2015; 10/9/2018;
4/9/2019

- I. The Galveston County Library System is an organization of independent public libraries joined together voluntarily to provide quality library services to all residents of Galveston County. The system libraries are represented by a county-wide library Advisory Council consisting of eight members, with one member appointed by the Board of Directors of each member library. The Council's function is to offer advice to the Galveston County Commissioners Court in matters pertaining to county-wide library services and policies, including formulation of the annual county budget which is submitted to the headquarters Library Board of Directors.

- II. Membership in the Galveston County Library System is open to any public library in Galveston which agrees to serve, on an equal basis, and free of charge, all residents of Galveston County, and to honor reciprocal agreements approved by the Commissioners Court. All member libraries must be members of the State Library System. In addition to the minimum standards of the State, the Galveston County Library System requires each member library to provide from local community funds the salary necessary to employ a staff member who works no less than twenty (20) hours per week. This staff member should have a minimum of thirty (30) college semester hours or two (2) years of library experience. A grace period of twelve (12) months will be allowed for meeting the college requirement. To become a member of the county system a library must apply no later than July 1st preceding the budget year in which it wishes to be admitted into the System. It will be added to the System only if the Galveston County Commissioners court approves expansion of the System, and increases its appropriation for services sufficiently to cover the costs incurred by the Headquarters Library in providing to the library making application the same services and benefits as are rendered to all libraries which are already members of the System. Minimum requirements, apart from the Texas State Library System requirements, which must be met before a library can be taken into the System include:
 - a. The local community seeking admission must provide a satisfactory building and adequate money for its maintenance.
 - b. The local community must provide adequate furnishings and equipment for the building.
 - c. The local community must adequately staff the library with paid employees.

- d. Each local member library must as a minimum match with local contributions, on an annual basis, the amount of County funds allotted to that library within three years of the date admitted to the system.
- e. In the event that a member library fails to qualify for its full amount of available County funds in any given year, those not matched by a member library will be used to meet other pressing needs of the Galveston County Library System as may be determined at the time by mutual agreement between the County Librarian and the Galveston County Library System Advisory Council.
- f. Expansion of the System. The Galveston County Library System will not be expanded to include additional member libraries at the expense of the libraries which are already members.

III. Governance. Each of the member libraries operates under its own Board of Directors or City Council which is responsible for securing local funds necessary for the operation of its library, managing and dispensing those funds, hiring, supervising and terminating personnel within its library, and establishing policies and practices for its own library to augment those policies and practices established for the operation of the Galveston County Library System as a whole. It operates in all respects as an independent library. In order for a library to receive the services outlined in Section IV (below) it is necessary for the library to join the Galveston County Library System, voluntarily accepting and abiding by its rules and regulations. Any county, state or federal or other special grant funds which may be obtained by any member library will not affect the disbursement of the county appropriations or any aspect of the system's operational procedures.

IV. Services rendered by the Rosenberg Library, hereafter known as the Headquarters Library, for the members of the Galveston County Library System, under contract with the Galveston County Commissioners Court, will include:

- a. Intra-system loan of all circulating materials. Intra-system loan procedures will be as follows: member libraries may telephone, at their own expense, to any other member library to request the loan of specific materials. If these items are circulating items and are available on the shelves they are sent to the requesting library. No bibliographic verification is performed by any member library on such requests.
- b. Intra-system return of library materials. A patron may return books, magazines, and audio books checked out from any Galveston County Library System library to any library in the system. The materials will be returned to the owning library via the System delivery service or courier service. The library taking materials belonging to another library will include with the materials a slip indicating the name of the library accepting the returned materials and the date the items were returned.

Audio visual materials and damaged books must be returned directly to the owning library. A patron wishing to pay for a lost or damaged piece of material must make this payment directly to the owning library.

- c. Issuing Borrowers Cards. Any resident, employee, or property owner in Galveston County may obtain a library card from any or all of the libraries in the Galveston County Library System. It is the responsibility of each member library to determine if a library card applicant meets the necessary requirements for a borrower's card and to keep any borrower's file they may deem appropriate.
- d. Services to Senior Citizens and member libraries. The Headquarters Library will provide the following services:
 - 1. Delivering deposit collections to all nursing homes, and retirement condominiums where demand exists.
 - 2. Arranging the delivery of special request library materials to those residing in nursing homes and retirement condominiums.
 - 3. Making referrals regarding requests to the appropriate agencies for the elderly.
 - 4. Providing rotating collections of large print materials and audio books to member libraries.
- e. Delivery Service. To facilitate the timely movement of materials, member libraries will contract with the State Library's Courier service for at least the basic level of service. Funds for this service will be included in each library's direct allocation.
- f. Books-By-Mail The Headquarters Library will send books and other materials by mail to any resident of Galveston County who on request can furnish evidence that he or she is unable, for economic or physical reasons, to go to a public library to use its services. Efforts will be made to utilize the FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPED postage-free mailing service, for those who qualify.
- g. Professional consultation. Members of Extension Department of the Headquarters Library and the County Librarian will be available as time allows to assist member libraries if the need arises for consultation.
- h. Accountability. All funds appropriated by the Galveston County Commissioners Court for library services and paid to the Headquarters Library under the contract currently in force between the Headquarters

Library and the County will be deposited to the account of the Headquarters Library and expended in accordance with the terms of that contract and any other agreements reached at the time the annual budget is negotiated. The accounts of the Headquarters Library are annually audited by an independent firm of certified public accountants and a copy of the report furnished to the County Auditor.

- V. Fund allocations to member libraries. All funds appropriated by Galveston County for public library services over and above the costs of items described in section IV will be allocated in the form of credits to the individual member libraries on the basis of population as determined by the Texas State Library & Archives Commission (TSLAC) formula applied for deriving service area. The County Librarian will obtain updated figures from the TSLAC State Data Coordinator prior to setting the budget.
- a. 50% or more of the county funds allocated to each individual member library shall be spent on the purchase of library materials and or circulating electronic media.
 - b. The remaining county funds so allocated to the member library may be expended to cover the costs of, and only of:
 1. Ordering and receiving (including postage), processing, cataloging, transferring, binding and rebinding of books and other materials acquired with county funds. However, the rates chargeable against county funds shall in no instance exceed the rates charged for the same services by the Headquarters Library.
 2. The acquisition by purchase or lease of:
 - Books, audio visual materials and shelving
 - Computer Data Base Subscriptions
 - Periodicals
 - Computer hardware and software and supporting workstation furniture.
 - Pamphlets and other ephemeral materials

Other library materials and services as may from time to time be recommended to the Galveston County Library System Advisory Council by a majority of the Head Librarians of the member libraries, and be approved by the Advisory Council.
 3. Expanding the information resources of Galveston County by helping to defray costs of linking the local individual libraries to automated databases both in the Houston Area Library System

and other information systems which will supply information and/or services not otherwise accessible to Galveston County residents.

4. Automation, computer, and other equipment systems maintenance and supplies including the purchase of subscriptions for wi-fi hot spots.
5. Public and staff development programming not to exceed 25% of the total county funds allocated to a member library.

VI. Expenditures by member libraries. Member libraries may expend their funds by either of the following methods, or a combination of the two.

- a. Centralized ordering through the Headquarters Library.
- b. Purchasing and processing by individual member libraries. County funds spent for library materials not ordered through the Headquarters Library's Processing Center will be paid out against a member library's allocation if, and only if, the following conditions are met:
 1. A dealer's itemized invoice showing author, title, publisher and net price for each item must be furnished to the County Librarian.
 2. Each such invoice must be duly certified as payable by the authorized fiscal agent of the member library.
 3. All materials purchased, processed, and subsequently rebound with County funds are to be marked GALVESTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM, GALVESTON COUNTY TEXAS. The individual library should place its own stamp on the item.
- c. All such materials will remain the permanent property of Galveston County and shall revert to the County in the event a library withdraws from the System or becomes ineligible for continued membership in it. Should the Galveston County Library System be disbanded and not be replaced by an organization of similar purpose recognized by the Galveston County Commissioners Court, all books purchased or processed with Galveston County funds will remain with the library in which they are housed at the time of such disbandment, subject to further order of the Commissioners Court of Galveston County.

VII. Fiscal procedure. Materials purchased through the Headquarters Library Processing Center will be provided to the libraries accompanied by itemized invoices. These invoices, and all other invoices submitted for payment, will be charged against the individual member library's annual allocation. A monthly statement of each member library's account will be furnished to each member library by the Headquarters Library.

- a. All direct allocation invoices presented for payment by member libraries shall be submitted in a timely manner. The deadline for submitting direct allocation invoices shall be on or before the first Friday of September of each year. Only invoices for the current fiscal year will be paid by the Headquarters Library. Those invoices submitted for a prior fiscal year will be returned to the member library.
- b. Member libraries are asked to expend their direct allocation funds proportionally throughout the year. Member libraries are also expected to come within \$100 either way of their direct allocations. Unused funds over \$100 will be used to offset GCLS system expenses. The Headquarters Library will not carryover a balance or an overage of more than \$100 for any member library.

Fee Structure Galveston County Library System

Fines and Charges:

The fines and charges specified herein may be charged system-wide for the category of materials described. There will be no exceptions made in the case of extended loans for teachers, etc.

1. Fines: Fines may be assessed on all materials not returned to a library agency by the due date. No grace period is allowed. The normal checkout period is three weeks. Fines differ for regular and special materials.
 - a. Regular library materials will accrue at a rate of up to \$.10 per day for each day the library is open after the due date. The fine on 14-day materials may accrue up to \$.25 per day. The maximum fine assessed on any of these items may be up to the full cost of the item or \$10.00 whichever is less.
 - b. Special materials include videos and certain other audio visual items, which will accrue at a rate up to a maximum of \$2.00 per day with up to \$10.00 per video maximum and interlibrary loans, which will accrue up to \$1.00 per day with no maximum limit. If ILL's are not picked up, the patron may be charged a non-pick-up or return postage fee on those items.
2. Charges:
 - a. A lost library card may cost \$2.00 per replacement.
 - b. Material replacement will be the list price of the item plus a \$5.00 processing charge for each lost or damaged item. Replacement materials may not be accepted in lieu of payment. No processing fee will be charged to GCLS member libraries for lost intersystem loans.
 - c. A non-resident fee is a maximum of \$50.00 per year (to be set by individual libraries) per individual who does not reside, work, or own taxable property within Galveston County. Reciprocal borrowing agreements may be honored countywide.
3. Blocks:

All borrowers' cards may be blocked from further use when \$5.00 in unpaid fines and/or charges has been accrued. All cards in a family (parents and minor children living in same household) may be blocked when one member of the family incurs \$5.00 in unpaid fines.
4. Refunds:
 - a) Refunds may be made within one year of the date on the borrower's receipt. Refunds may be made only when the lost item is returned in usable condition and the item is accompanied by the borrower's receipt. Processing charges and fines are non-refundable.