

BRIDGEPORT LIBRARY

Connecticut State Library Urban Libraries Grant Final Report 4/8/2021



Bridgeport Public Library New American Collections

Grant Summary

Purpose.

The purpose of the New American Collections established at each Bridgeport Public Library location is to provide lifelong learning service to new Americans, immigrants, English as a Second Language learners, and a diverse population of city residents who represent many countries and cultures. These collections consist of materials that address specific needs of this population as they navigate their pathways to citizenship, access to educational opportunities, job training and career enhancement. These collections convey that Bridgeport Public Library is a welcoming place to new Americans and immigrants and includes them in within their mission to “connect communities, enable life-long learning, and enrich lives. . .”

Project Activity:

Professional library staff who work in collections development compiled a list of titles that would be the core collection of materials that would be located at each of the Bridgeport Public Library locations: Burroughs-Saden Main Library, North Branch, Black Rock Branch, East Side Branch, and Newfield Branch (under construction). These titles were selected under the guidance of the City Librarian, who has met with leadership in other Connecticut libraries that have their own collections for new Americans and immigrants. Libraries like Stamford Public Library and the Otis Library of Norwich have been very helpful in providing guidance to libraries who wish to increase their outreach to new American and immigrant populations.

A Core List of 27 titles were selected for all five locations. In addition to the Core List, each library was able to spend \$500 to customize their collections. The number of customized items ordered varied by location as follows

Burroughs-Saden Library: 22 titles

North Branch: 17 titles

Black Rock Branch: 23 titles

East Side Branch: 20 titles

Newfield Branch: 22 titles

Since the COVID19 pandemic closed libraries during much of 2020, we have not been able to measure use of the New American Collections as of the writing of this report. The libraries have since opened their doors to limited browsing on March 22, 2021, and North Branch, Black Rock Branch and East Side Branch have their collections in place. (Burroughs-Saden Library, which is under renovation, will reopen on April 26, 2021 and Newfield Library in early summer). We expect that we will be able to document accurate circulation and use of the New American Collections in coming year to two years, as the library safely and gradually reopens its doors to the public.

What I did not anticipate was that the method of ordering books for the library would not facilitate easy record keeping for this project. As a fairly new library director assessing and improving all areas of library operational functions, I have learned which functions of our book ordering and accounting processes require review and improvement.

Summary:

Everyone who participated in this project was enthusiastic about its purpose and the process. Staff tasked with collection development indicate that they have added several new titles from their current budgets for materials that will be added to their New American Collections. We anticipate these collections to be popular as they compliment our services at selected branches for free Notary Public Service, and our newly certified Passport Acceptance Program (expected to begin once the State Departments resumes this service due to COVID19 restrictions.) Photographs of the New American Collections (with the exception of Newfield Branch under construction) at each Bridgeport Public Library Branch follow:

Photographs of some Bridgeport Public Library New American Collections:



Burroughs-Saden Main Library New American Collection



East Side Branch New American Collection



Black Rock Branch New American Collection

Conclusion:

Even with complications caused by COVID19 closures, having New American Collections ready for use at each branch has been an exciting new development. We anticipate these collections and related services to grow in scope and popularity as we continue to reach underserved communities in the City of Bridgeport.

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Title Page Photo Credit: Andre O'Connor