**DURHAM COUNTY LIBRARY PROPOSAL TO THE FOREST AT DUKE**
**APRIL 16, 2020**

**Project Summary**
Durham County Library requests $15,000 to purchase ebooks, e-audio and large print books for the library's digital and large print collections during the fiscal year 2020-2021, which ends June 30, 2021.

**Renewal of Support**
In 2016 and 2017, TFAD graciously awarded the Durham Library Foundation $5,500 each year to help boost Collection Development at Durham County Library.  In 2018 and 2019, TFAD made grants of $5,000 each year to the Durham County Library for large print books and e-audiobooks.  With the support of TFAD, Durham County Library has been able to purchase additional titles, increasing the breadth of our collection, and to order additional copies of titles, shortening the length of time customers must wait for materials.

**Project Rationale**

The library's primary digital collections consist of ebooks and e-audio hosted on Overdrive, RB Digital and hoopla.  All digital collections have seen a significant increase in use, but Overdrive has been especially popular as it offers best sellers and high profile titles.  Demand for ebooks and e-audio had risen significantly in fiscal year 2019, with a total increase of 41% over the prior fiscal year.  Total circulation of digital copies on Overdrive in fiscal year 2019 was 278,413, compared with 197,167 in fiscal year 2018.

Durham County Library, with the rest of the community and the nation, underwent a tremendous shock with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.   The library closed to the public on March 15, 2020 and since that time its physical collections have been unavailable for any new checkouts or holds.  At present, the library's digital collections are the only collections available to patrons.  A newly available online card allowing Durham residents without library cards access to ebooks, e-audio and other online resources has been extremely popular.  200 new users signed up in the first two days it was offered.

The first week the Library was closed due to COVID-19, circulation of all Overdrive collections rose 32% over the prior week.   In the month after the library closed on March 15, over 9,000 Durham County Library patrons checked out 43,000 ebook and e-audio titles and placed almost 25,000 holds.

Even after stay at home orders are lifted and the library reopens, demand for ebooks and e-audio will likely remain high as patrons may be cautious to return to public spaces or, in the case of those who previously had not used these collections, may find they prefer digital materials.   Grant funding from TFAD for ebooks and e-audio will increase access and reduce wait times for both veteran and new users of these formats.

Prior to the closure due to the pandemic, the Library experienced increased circulation of large print books from July 2019 through February 2020 as compared to the same period the previous fiscal year. Large print best sellers attract significant holds queues just as regular editions do, and support for this format from TFAD would enable selection librarians to purchase more titles and copies to support the ongoing interest of the community in large print materials.   While access to large print titles is currently unavailable with the closure of libraries, interest in the collection is expected to remain strong upon reopening.

**Process**
If this grant proposal is funded, the Collection Development staff will:
- identify appropriate titles in each format that will meet the highest demands.
- monitor holds ratios to determine if additional copies are needed for current popular titles.
- in large print books, affix a bookplate to each copy to acknowledge its purchase with grant funds generously provided by The Forest at Duke.
- satisfy reporting requirements from TFAD.

**Outcomes**
Based on outcomes from the purchase of materials with previously awarded funds, the additional monies will allow a greater number of ebooks, e-audio titles and large print books to be added to the collection, increasing options for library users who utilize these collections. The ability to order additional copies of popular titles will alleviate wait times and get ebooks, e-audio and large print books into the hands of these users more quickly.

**Sustainability of Funding for Collection Development**
The closure of libraries and the inaccessibility of physical library collections has put unprecedented demand on the library's digital collections.  With ebooks costing an average of $40 per title and e-audio costing an average of $75 per title, it's easy to see that digital collections are more expensive than print collections.   Further, many ebooks are subject to publishers' licensing restrictions.  All of the big 5 publishers offer only time-limited or circulation-limited licenses for ebooks.  Once a title expires, it must be repurchased to retain access.   The continual pressure to repurchase older popular titles competes with interest in new titles.

While the cost of large print books has remained steady this year, large print books still cost an average of $10-$15 more per copy than regular print editions.

As you are aware, the County provides ongoing support for Library collections, including the purchase of digital collections.  The financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the County's budget, unknown at this time, would make a flat or reduced collection budget seem probable in FY21.

**Reporting**
Durham County Library will provide The Forest at Duke with interim and final reports according to the schedule specified in TFAD's award letter.

**Acknowledgement**
A custom designed gift plate acknowledging the Forest at Duke's support will be affixed to large print books purchased with these grant funds.

**Diversity and Inclusion Statement**
Durham County Library staff choose materials for the library's collection according to the Resources Selection Policy approved by the Library's Board of Trustees.  This policy states, "Recognizing that ours is a free society, the Durham County Library provides access to a collection of materials that is balanced and diverse."  Collection Development staff follow these principles when choosing all materials for the library's collection, and will do so when choosing materials using TFAD grant funds.