**Getting Your Board On Board:**

**Policy Development with the Library Board**

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**The Importance of Library Policies**

An important role for the Library Board is to ensure that there are a set of policies in place that will guide the library’s director and staff in the operation of the library. Policies bring order, logic and stability to a library’s operation, ensuring that the delivery of library services to the community is done in a fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory manner. The policies also help explain the reasons for procedures and clarify confusing situations for staff and patrons. Policies may not prevent problems, but having policies equips staff with the tools they need to face questions when they arise.

Well-written, board-approved policies, and up-to-date procedures based on those policies, achieve several things:

* They encourage stability and continuity in the library’s operations while reducing ambiguity and confusion about ongoing practice and procedure.
* Inform the community about the library’s intent, goals, and aspirations.
* Give the public a means to evaluate library performance and show that the library is willing to be held accountable for its decisions.
* Dispel unfounded claims of bias or arbitrary selection when the library’s operations are based on policies and procedures that reflect thorough research, sound judgment, and careful planning.
* Serve as evidence of the library’s normal practices, which can be helpful if the library is sued for enforcing reasonable policies.

**Timing**

It is highly recommended that all libraries have policies in place, even if the policy needs review or revision. Developing, adopting, and maintaining your policies should be a high priority for the Library Board every year.

It is also recommended the Board create a schedule for a policy audit every three to five years. It can be especially helpful when current policies may not be collected in a uniform format or where procedural inconsistencies may exist in executing the policies. An audit will help to determine what version of policies are in use, where they are kept, and what procedures are being used to carry them out. Then the most recent versions can be compiled into a single volume with a table of contents. As the board reviews, updates, or adds policies, they can be put into a standard format for consistency and ease-of-use. Be sure to indicate on each policy when it was first adopted, when it was last reviewed, and when the most recent revisions were made.

Additionally, as the library world changes, be on the lookout for additional policies that may need to be added as the library adapts to new technologies and community needs.

**Board Investment in Developing Policies**

Developing library policies isn’t easy. Trustees need to think about the ideas and understand their impact. Policymaking through the Board process, however, can result in a greater consensus about and more cohesive philosophy of service for the library. Encouraging debate and public involvement during this process is vital.

Once the Board officially adopts a policy, all trustees and staff must support it publicly and answer questions about it in a positive manner. Work out differing views before the policy is put into place to avoid future disagreement. More importantly, requiring the Board to become invested in creating a unified philosophy of service and the policies to back it up, ensures they will be invested in and supportive of the policies they created.

**Drafting Tips**

What makes a well-written policy? A few suggestions include:

* Use active voice
* Positive statements, not merely no statements
* Clear, simple language free from library jargon

Additionally, the focus of the policy should be the intent. Before drafting a policy, the Board should look at what the purpose of the policy will be. For example, if the purpose of a policy is to keep the library clean, the policy would not simply provide a blanket prohibition of food and drink. Rather, the policy would prohibit behavior that can causes a mess because it prevents others from enjoying the library.

**Policy Development Steps**

The following basic steps provide for careful development and review of library policies:

1. The Library Director, with staff input, develops recommended policies.
	1. Be open to input from staff – they will have to uphold the policies daily. Take their feedback into consideration. Can their input help to craft the policy so that it can be enforced with the least resistance?
2. The Library Board discusses, revises (if necessary), and approves policies in properly noticed public meetings.
3. The Library Director makes sure staff and public are aware of policies.
4. The Library Board reviews policies on a regular cycle, so all policies are reviewed at least every three years.
	1. Perhaps one or two policies could be reviewed per meeting until all the policies have been reviewed and revised, if necessary.

**Legal Policies**

It is important for policies to be legal. Illegal policies can open the municipality to liability. Below are the **four tests** of a legally defensible policy:

* **Test #1: Policies must comply with current statutes and case law.** For example:
	+ A library policy charging for use of computers in the library would be contrary to Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.52(2), which requires that essential public library services be provided free of charge.
	+ A policy that says the library’s public meeting room cannot be used for religious purposes would be unconstitutional under a Wisconsin Federal District Court decision.
* **Test #2: Policies must be reasonable (and all penalties must be reasonable).** For example:
	+ A library policy that says, “All talking in the library is prohibited, and anyone who talks in the library will permanently lose library use privileges,” is clearly an unreasonable rule with an unreasonably harsh penalty.
* **Test #3: Policies must be clear (not ambiguous or vague).** For example:
	+ A policy that says, “Library use privileges will be revoked if a patron has too many overdue books,” is too vague to be fairly administered.
* **Test #4: Policies must be applied without discrimination.** For example:
	+ If a library charges fines, it cannot give preferential treatment to some individual patrons. If the library sometimes waives fines, that waiver must be available to all patrons on an equal basis—not just to friends of library staff or to politically important people.

If the option is available, and there are unresolved questions or issues, request that Corporate Counsel, the City Attorney, a qualified Board member or an outside attorney review the policy to ensure it is legal. However, this review is not required if the above four tests are followed.

**Policies vs. Procedures**

It is critical that Trustees and library staff understand the differences between policy and procedure.

A **policy** is a generic term used for the policy statement, regulation, procedure, or guideline that applies to a specific issue. **Policy statements** describe ***why*** the library has the policy. **Policy manuals** are a collection of library policy statements.

**Procedures** are written, step-by-step descriptions of ***how*** the staff will carry out the policy.

**Practice** is the way things are done in your library and may or may not align with your policies and/or procedures.

**Procedure Manuals**

In addition to a policy manual that contains the library’s adopted policies, many find it helpful to write up procedure manuals, especially for covering complex activities like the selection, ordering, and processing of new materials. Procedure manuals outline the steps necessary to accomplish various tasks and therefore are especially valuable for new staff. A combined policy and procedure manual can provide an organized, single reference point for library policies and the procedures staff needs to carry them out.

Procedures must conform to the policies approved by the Library Board. While it is true that the Library Board is responsible for adopting policies, the library director’s role is to develop the procedures which carry out the policies.

Policies should be readily available to all library users. If the policy will alter or affect the public's use of the library, consider posting the change prominently or issuing a press release to publicize the change. Posting policies on the library website is also recommended so the public may access them at any time.

After a new policy is established, it is important that the policy also be clearly documented and disseminated to the Library Board and library staff. It is likely a Board member may be approached in public by a patron concerned about a book or program at the library. Board members need to understand that it is not their role to solve the issue at that moment. However, they should be prepared to remain neutral and explain that there is a process for handling complaints or concerns that the patron must follow.

Sample statements for Board members:

* “Thanks for sharing your concern about X with me. I can’t remember off the top of my head who would handle this concern at the library. Can you give me your contact information and I will follow up with you?”
* “Thank you for sharing your concern about X with me. Our very capable library director would be the best person to address this issue. Let me know if I can help connect you to them.”

Sample statements for Library staff:

* “I understand you are concerned about this book/program. Our collection development policy, which was approved by our Board, has guidelines as to how we select materials and programs. My supervisor, X, is available to discuss the policy and our selection of that material with you if you would like.”
* “I understand you are concerned about (homeless people/loud children, etc.) in the library. Our library is for everyone to use regardless of status. However, our Behavior Policy does prohibit disruptive behavior. If there is a specific issue you are having, please let me know and I can try to resolve it.”

**Sample Policies**

Below you will find the top ten recommended policies every library should adopt. The policies below are samples compiled from a variety of different sources and libraries. They have been reviewed and approved by other Library Boards and legal counsel.

The sample policies below are a good starting point; however, depending on the size of your library, you may need to scale up or down depending on your needs. Feel free to copy verbatim or modify as you see fit.

 Additionally, it can be very helpful to review other similarly situated libraries’ policies to compare to your own. This can give you an idea of what issues they address and what considerations your policy might be missing. Factors to take into consideration when looking through policy templates include size of the library and community, community demographics, community culture, municipal support, staff culture and staff coachability.

**Sample Policies**

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# Mission and Goals

The mission of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is to provide quality materials and services which fulfill educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community in an atmosphere that is welcoming, respectful, and businesslike.

The general library goals of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library shall be:

1. To serve all residents of the community and the surrounding region.
2. To acquire and make available to all residents of the above area such books, periodicals, pamphlets, and other services as will address their needs to a) become well informed, b) locate answers to important questions, c) cultivate the imagination and creative expression, d) develop skills for career and vocational advancement, and e) enjoy leisure by means of reading and other media services.
3. To acquire the means to provide the most frequently requested material locally and upon demand.
4. To maintain a program of service which locates information, guides reading, organizes and interprets material for people of various backgrounds, and stimulates thinking and intellectual development in individuals of any age.
5. To strive consistently to discover new methods and improvements for better service for the library's customers.
6. Cooperate with other community agencies and organizations.
7. To review regularly these goals of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library and, if necessary, revise them in the light of new developments.

# Patron Rights & Responsibilities

It is a patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper standards of behavior to protect their individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons. The \_\_\_\_\_ Public Libraries support the rights of individuals to:

* Use the library without discrimination
* Receive friendly, courteous and respectful service
* Have free and equal access to information
* Use the library without a threat of invasion of privacy

## Who May Use the Library

1. The library will serve all residents of the community and the public library system area. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical condition; age; gender; or sexual orientation.
2. The use of the library may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return library materials or to pay fines and fees, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other illegal, disruptive, or objectionable conduct on library premises.

## Unaccompanied Minors:

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library encourages visits by young children, and it is our desire to make this important visit both memorable and enjoyable for the child. However, library staff will not assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children in the library.

Therefore, it is library policy that all children under the age of \_\_\_\_\_ must be accompanied by a parent or designated responsible person while in the library. Also, if the young child is attending a library program, we require the parent/responsible person to remain in the library throughout the program.

## Disruptive children:

Children of all ages are encouraged to use the library for homework, recreational reading, and program attendance. Library staff realizes that the library will be noisier at busy times and that children by nature can cause more commotion. However, children (whether with parents or not) who are being continually disruptive will be given a warning that they must settle down or will be asked to leave the library. If after a second warning the child continues to be disruptive, they will be asked to leave the library. If the child needs to contact a parent, they may do so and then wait with a staff person until the parent arrives.

## Behavior Policy

Patrons of the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Library have the right to use library materials and services without being unduly disturbed or impeded by other library users, and patrons and staff have the right to a secure and congenial environment. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be restricted from the library and from the use of the library facilities. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time, after being instructed to do so by the staff, will be subject to the law.

1. Any behavior that disrupts or hinders public use of the library is prohibited on library property. This includes, but is not limited to, loud or boisterous behavior, verbal or physical harassment, drunkenness, running, and fighting.
2. Seating at library tables, carrels, and chairs is limited to the number of persons for whom the furniture was designed. Sitting on tables is not allowed.
3. Smoking, chewing tobacco, and vaping are not permitted in the library.
4. Food and beverages are not allowed at the computer terminals.
5. Bicycles are not permitted in any library public area or entryway. Bicycles must be parked in a bike rack when available. Roller-skating and skateboarding are not permitted in the library or its entryway. Wagons and strollers may not be left obstructing a corridor, hallway, aisle, entry, or exit.
6. Selling non-library related products or services, or soliciting donations is not permitted in the library.
7. Taking surveys, circulating petitions, distributing leaflets, and other similar activities are permitted in the library only when authorized by the Library Director.
8. Service animals are permitted in the library. All other animals are not permitted except as part of a library-sponsored program. Animals may not be left unattended on library property.
9. Parents or other legal guardians are responsible for the behavior of their minor children on library property.
10. The violation of federal or state laws or local ordinances will not be permitted on library property. Theft, vandalism, and mutilation of library property are criminal offenses and may be prosecuted.
11. Consumption of alcoholic beverages or other drugs is not permitted on library property, except as part of a library-sponsored program authorized by the Library Director.
12. Cell phone use is restricted to lobby areas only.
13. Library telephones are not available for personal calls.
14. Up to two people may use a computer station simultaneously.
15. Sleeping on the library premises is not permitted.
16. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the building.
17. Modifications to library property and space, including moving furniture and shelving, and changing illumination may not be done without the consent of library staff.
18. Personal items left unattended on the library premises may be removed if they appear to be abandoned.
19. Failure to comply with these rules may result in the loss of library use privileges on a temporary or permanent basis.

## Equipment Use Policy

Public computers are available to patrons on a first-come, first-served basis. Instructions for operating hardware are displayed near the computer. There is no charge for use of the computers; however, to ensure the service available to as many patrons as possible, a time limit for usage has been imposed. That time limit is \_\_\_ minutes. Library staff are available for general assistance in using the computer. However, staff are not expected to train patrons in the use of application programs. Tutorial manuals will be provided when available.

A printer is available. Printer paper will cost $ 0.XX per sheet and must be paid for at the conclusion of the session.

A photocopy machine is available to patrons who wish to copy materials at the rate of $ 0.XX per page. Copy machine users are advised that there are restrictions on copyrighted materials. Any violation of copyright is the responsibility of the copy machine user.

A fax machine is available for patrons who wish to send a fax at the rate of $X.00/page and must be paid after the successful transmission of the fax.

## Internet Use Policy

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is providing access to the internet to enhance the information and learning opportunities for the residents of the library's service area. The Board of Trustees has established the Internet Use Policy to ensure appropriate and effective use of this resource.

Access to the internet is available to all patrons; however, this service may be restricted at any time for use not consistent with the guidelines. Parents of minor children must assume responsibility for their children's use of the library's internet service.

Expectations:

Users should be aware that the inappropriate use of electronic information resources can be a violation of local, state, and federal laws and can lead to prosecution. The user will be held responsible for their actions using the internet. Users are expected to abide by the policies below which include generally accepted rules of network etiquette. Unacceptable uses of the service will result in the suspension or revocation of internet use privileges.

Warnings:

The Internet is a decentralized, unmoderated global network; the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library has no control over the content found there. The library will not censor access to material nor protect users from offensive information, and it is not responsible for the availability and accuracy of information found on the internet.

The library cannot assure that data or files downloaded by users are virus-free. The library is not responsible for damages to equipment or data on a user's personal device from the use of data downloaded from the library's internet service.

The use of the internet and e-mail is not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the proper authorities.

Guidelines:

* Users may use the Internet for research and the acquisition of information to address their educational, vocational, cultural, and recreational needs.
* Users may use the Internet for the receipt and transmission of e-mail if they use a free e-mail service which will establish and maintain an account for them; the library is unable to manage e-mail accounts for any organizations or individuals.
* Users will respect and uphold copyright laws and all other applicable laws and regulations; they will not use it for illegal purposes.
* Users will respect the rights and privacy of others by not accessing private files.
* Users agree not to incur any costs for the library through their use of the internet service.
* Users shall not create and/or distribute computer viruses over the internet.
* Users shall not deliberately or willfully cause damage to computer equipment, programs, or parameters.

## Use of Wi-Fi (Wireless Access to the Internet)

The library provides free public access to the internet via a Wi-Fi network. It is expected that patrons who use the internet via the library’s network will do so in a responsible and legal way. The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate use of the library’s Wi-Fi network.

1. The library provides free public access to the internet as an informational, educational and recreational resource. Use of the internet via the library's Wi-Fi network via mobile devices (e.g. laptops, netbooks, iPads, smart phones, etc.) is bound by this policy and the Internet Use Policy.
2. Users must not engage in any illegal activities (e.g. hacking, pirating, downloading illegal materials, etc.) or in any activities inconsistent with this policy and the Internet Use Policy. Wireless users attest that they have read and will adhere to these policies.
3. Printing is not available on the wireless network, but users may save their work to a disk or USB drive and use the library’s public internet computers to print, as available.
4. Users of the wireless network may plug their mobile devices into electrical outlets provided the power cords do not extend into aisles or walkways.
5. Users of laptops, netbooks, and other related devices are expected to be considerate of patrons nearby and are required to use headphones when playing movies, music and games or when any other software program generates sound.
6. Very limited technical support is available through library personnel. The library cannot guarantee that all hardware will work with the wireless connection, and the library is not responsible for any changes users make to their device settings.
7. The library reserves the right to limit the amount of bandwidth in use by any user of the wireless network, particularly if there are multiple users of Wi-Fi at the same time. The library also reserves the right to end wireless sessions of anyone in violation of this policy or the Internet Use Policy.
8. The library shall not have any responsibility or liability for any claims relating to the loss, damage, or interception of any information, data, work product, or other materials viewed, searched, or stored on users’ mobile devices. Anti-virus and security protection are the responsibility of the user.
9. Wireless users should be certain that their laptops and other devices are always secure and should never be left unattended in the library, even for brief periods of time. Theft of such devices is not the responsibility of the library.
10. Patrons should be advised that they use the library’s wireless network at their own risk. The wireless network is not secure, as it is not encrypted using WEP, WPA, etc. Unless additional precautions are taken, any information sent to or from a device could potentially be intercepted by a third party who might be within range and using the appropriate hardware/software.
11. While respecting individual users' right to privacy, the library staff reserves the right to monitor the use of personal computers to ensure compliance with this policy.
12. Violation of any of the above conditions may result in suspension of wireless access as determined by the Library Director.

# Privacy of Library Records and Library Use

## Confidentiality of Library Records

Under Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.30, library records that indicate the identity of any individual who borrows or uses a library’s documents or other materials, resources or services may only be disclosed:

* With written consent of the library user
* By court order
* To the custodial parent or guardian of a child who is under the age of 16 who requests such library records
* To persons acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library
* Under certain circumstances, to other libraries for interlibrary loan purposes

## Confidentiality Statement

The \_\_\_\_\_ Public Library protects the privacy of library records and the confidentiality of library users of services and materials by relevant laws. In addition, the Library Board supports the principle of freedom of inquiry for library users and protects against the unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of library users.

Therefore, the following information will not be disclosed:

* A patron’s name, address, telephone number or e-mail address
* A patron’s borrowing record and its contents
* The number and character of questions asked by a patron
* The frequency or content of a patron’s lawful visits to the library
* The information supplied to a patron

The library’s circulation records, and their contents, will not be released without presentation of a court order unless the cardholder provides written consent to library personnel (Wis. Stats. 43.30).

As specified in Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.30, "records of any library which is in whole or in part supported by public funds, including the records of a public library system, indicating the identity of any individual who borrows or uses the library's documents or other materials, resources or services may not be disclosed except by court order or to persons acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library or library system, to persons authorized by the individual to inspect such records, or to libraries authorized under subs. (2) and (3)."

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library adheres strictly to all sections of this Statute regarding the protection of the confidentiality of its users.

# Collection Development

## Objectives

The purpose of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is to provide all individuals in the community with carefully selected books and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time.

Because of the volume of publishing, as well as the limitations of budget and space, the library must have a selection policy with which to meet community interests and needs. The Collection Development Policy is used by the library director and staff in the selection of materials and serves to acquaint the general public with the principles of selection.

The Library Bill of Rights and The Freedom to Read Statement have been endorsed by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of the policy.

The Collection Development Policy, like all other policies, will be reviewed and/or revised as the need arises.

## Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the library director who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff; however, because the director must be available to answer to the library board and the general public for actual selections made, the director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

## Criteria for Selection

The library director and staff use their training, knowledge, and expertise along with the following general criteria to select materials for the collection:

1. Individual merit of each item
2. Popular appeal/demand
3. Relevance of content to the intended audience
4. Existing library holdings
5. Budget and space limitations

Reviews are a major source of information about new materials. The primary source(s) of reviews is (are) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests from library patrons and books discussed on public media. Materials are judged based on the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

## Interlibrary Loan

Because of limited budget and space, the library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this library's collection.

In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of our patrons, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library agrees to lend its materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan network, and to make an effort to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries across the state.

## Gifts and Donations

The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or dated information the director can dispose of them as they see fit. The same criteria of selection which are applied to purchased materials are applied to gifts. Memorial gifts of books or money are also accepted with suitable bookplates placed in the book. Specific memorial books can be ordered for the library on request of a patron if the request meets the criteria established by the Board. It is desirable for gifts of or for specific titles to be offered after consultation with the library director. Book selection will be made by the director if no specific book is requested. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library encourages and appreciates gifts and donations.

By law, the library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor.

## Weeding

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the library director and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

## Request for Reconsideration

The \_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library assures free access to both physical and virtual programs and materials that reflect diverse community interests and multiple points of view. Library users are free to select or reject materials and programs for themselves. Responsibility for the material read by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Library users may express concerns about library programs and materials in the library collection to staff. Library staff will attempt to resolve concerns as they occur.

If necessary, staff will proceed with a formal request for reconsideration process by giving the concerned individual a Request for Reconsideration Form. Completed Request for Reconsideration Forms are submitted to the Library Director for review. The director will investigate reconsideration requests from individuals who are both \_\_\_\_\_ Public Library cardholders and \_\_\_\_\_ Village/City/County residents.

The Library Director reviews requests for reconsideration, then contacts the individual with a resolution. If the situation remains unresolved, it may be appealed to the Library Board. Library Board decisions are final.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Public Library does not withdraw or restrict access to materials or cancel programs without following the request for reconsideration process.

# Circulation Policy

## Registration

All borrowers must be registered and must have a valid patron card to borrow library materials.

Patrons must fill out an application form to register for a new library card. The following statement will be printed on the registration form for the patron's information and acceptance of compliance with all library rules and policies.

Identification is required. A driver's license is preferred; however, any other official ID or recent non-personal piece of mail may be acceptable.

Applicants under \_\_\_ years of age must have a parent or guardian give their consent on the application form before a new card can be issued. This parental signature is not required for children who are renewing cards.

Materials cannot be checked out until a library card is issued.

All library cards expire after \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years. To renew a library card, patrons must produce identification and must clear all outstanding fines and bills.

## Lost or forgotten cards

If a patron loses their library card, they should notify the library as soon as possible and request a replacement.

All patrons, adult and juvenile, are expected to bring their library cards with them if they intend to check out items. An individual who repeatedly ignores this expectation may be denied the privilege of checking out materials until they present their card at the library.

## Loan periods

1. \_\_\_ weeks for books and audiobooks.
2. \_\_\_\_ weeks for DVDs and videogames.
3. \_\_\_\_ weeks for new books, audiobooks, music CDs, magazines, Library of Things, Chromebooks, Hotspots.
4. Generally, reference books do not circulate. Upon request, some reference materials may be checked out overnight.
5. Interlibrary loans are due the date indicated by the lending library.
6. Books may be renewed if there is not a waiting list for the title.

Cardholders may have a maximum of \_\_\_ items out at one time although some formats may have smaller limits. Library borrowing privileges are withheld when more than $\_\_\_\_ is owed on the account.

The library director may establish the loan period for special collections, materials which are temporarily in great demand, such as for student projects, or materials added to the collection which are in a new or different format, e.g., Library of Things.

## Holds

Holds may be placed by patrons either in person, online or over the phone to reserve materials. Patrons will be notified when the materials are available. There is no charge to the patron for placing a hold or for interlibrary loan services.

## Fines

Items not returned by the due date will incur a daily fine until the item is returned as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Format** | **Fine** | **Maximum Fine** |
| Chromebooks | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| Books  | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| New Books, Library of Things | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| Magazines | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| Pamphlets | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| Audiobooks, Music CDs, Software | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| DVDs | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| Videogames | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| Children's | No fines | $0 |
| Equipment | $0.00 | $00.00 |
| Interlibrary Loan | $0.00 | $00.00 |

## Fees

* Meeting Rooms:
	+ $\_\_\_ for X hours
	+ Non-profit group – Free
* Replacement Library Card - $X.00

## Lost Items

The list price will be charged for all lost items. Refunds will be issued if a paid item is returned with the receipt within one (1) month of payment.

## Damaged materials

If materials are damaged so as to be judged by the library as being unsuitable for the collection, the patron must pay the replacement cost. A notice of these charges will be sent to the borrower. The patron must pay for the replacement cost of damaged items. Identical replacement items may be pre-approved at the discretion of the Library Director.

Additional damages include:

* Audio Kit Bag: $1.00
* Book Jacket: $1.00
* Media Cases: $5.00
* Missing barcode: $1.00
* Other Miscellaneous Damages: Discretion of the Library Director

# Programming Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a range of programs to meet the needs of people of all ages in the community for informational, educational and recreational opportunities and for personal growth and development.

Programming is an integral part of the many services provided for the community by the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Library. Programs raise the library’s profile in the community and have a positive impact on library use. Programs complement other library services by providing an opportunity to highlight collections, promote services and share knowledge and expertise.

Programs allow the library to forge partnerships with a wide variety of groups and individuals and attract both regular and new users of all ages and backgrounds. Programming includes such activities as storytimes, films and activities on no-school days, summer reading programs for children, speakers for young adults, and book or author discussion groups for adults.

Selection of library program topics, speakers, courses, classes, and resource materials will be made by library staff on the basis of the interests and needs of library users and the community. Programs will be provided based on the following guidelines:

1. Programs will be offered free of charge, except for those that serve as library fundraisers.
2. Programs may be targeted to a general audience or be tailored to an age-specific audience.
3. Library programming should not exclude topics, books, speakers, media and other resources because they might be controversial.
4. The library does not conduct programming that is commercial, political or religious in nature.
5. The library does not advocate or endorse the content and viewpoints of presenters and programs.
6. Programs will be provided for all persons regardless of age, race, religion, familial belief, gender or political affiliation.
7. Programs may not solicit for businesses and services. The sale of products at a library program is not allowed, with the exception of writers, performers and artists who may obtain library approval to sell their own works. Activities of the \_\_\_\_ Public Library, Friends of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library, and the City/County/Village are exceptions.
8. Programs may be cancelled for a variety of reasons, including severe weather, cancellation by the presenter, public health emergency or low registration. Cancelled programs are not automatically rescheduled.

# Public Relations Policy

Public relations goals of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library are:

* To promote a good understanding of the library's objectives and services among governing officials, civic leaders, and the general public.
* To promote active participation in the varied services offered by the library to people of all ages.

The Board recognizes that public relations involves every person who has connection with the Library. The Board urges its own members, along with library staff, to realize that they represent the library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.

The director will be expected to make presentations and to participate in community activities to promote library services. A reasonable amount of library time will be allowed for preparation and speaking. Materials to be used by press, radio, or television will be approved by the director.

The Board will establish a marketing budget to cover costs related to printing, publication, supplies, and miscellaneous needs related to the public relations efforts.

## Social Media

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library maintains a Social Media presence to engage with the community, promote library services and events, and share information. Content on Social Media is permanent, retrievable, and public.

Library Responsibilities

No library employee may establish a work-related Social Media Account without the authorization of the Library Director. The Library Director may delegate managers and librarians to administer and provide content for the library’s Social Media accounts. Designated employees are required to read and follow library policies. The Library Director may revoke access to library Social Media accounts at any time.

Use of Social Media sites must be consistent with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies, including record retention requirements. Employees shall not blur or combine their personal Social Media with library Social Media. Employees cannot use library Social Media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or engage in private business activities. Use of Social Media in violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Designated employees are required to:

* Be respectful of individuals, communities and of differing opinions.
* Adhere to each Social Media Site’s Terms of Use and seek to conform to each Provider’s Terms of Use and cultural and behavioral norms.
* Respect copyright, privacy, financial disclosure, and applicable laws.

Designated employees shall be clear as to identity:

* Designated employees should use their actual names, not pseudonyms;
* Designated employees shall not assume privacy and only post information they are authorized to disclose; and
* Designated employees shall use different passwords for different accounts for personal Social Media and the library’s Social Media.

Public Responsibilities

The library’s Social Media is public record. All submitted content to the library’s Social Media is subject to Wisconsin Public Records Law and the library’s Public Records Retention Policy and may be subject to public disclosure.

By submitting comments, photos, posts, or other content on the library’s Social Media pages, patrons give the library the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display, delete, and otherwise use those submissions for any purpose, in any form, on any media.

While posting to library-sponsored Social Media accounts, patrons may not:

* Post personal attacks, bullying, libel, threats, or use profanity and abusive language.
* Post obscene, sexual, or pornographic content.
* Post solicitations or advertisements of any commercial entity, product, or service other than those which are directly related to Library and community collaborations.
* Post comments that suggest or encourage illegal or lascivious activity and may not violate any federal, state, or local law.
* Post personal or contact information or any private information without consent.
* Post copyrighted or plagiarized materials, not including works used under Fair Use.
* Post unrelated hyperlinks or spam.
* Post information that could compromise the safety of the public or content that promotes discrimination or hate speech.
* Post anything unrelated to the purpose and scope of the account.

The library reserves the right (but is not obligated) to do any of the following:

* Hide from public view any of the prohibited commentary.
* Ban people who are spamming or continuously ignoring the Social Media Policy from the page or group.
* Access, monitor, and read any submission on library-sponsored Social Media accounts.

The library does not guarantee a response to all correspondence on Social Media. Those requesting immediate assistance must follow normal procedures for contacting the library.

The library is not responsible for any damages, losses, liabilities, judgments, costs, or expenses (including attorney’s fees) arising out of a claim by a third party related to any material a member of the public has posted.

Any legal expenses or costs incurred by the library or \_\_\_\_\_\_ Village/City/County related to the enforcement of any part of this policy shall be reimbursed by the person or group against whom the policy is enforced.

Removal of Posts

Some content may be removed due to limited publishing rights of the materials, including but not limited to storytime or contractual agreements with performers.

Content that is in clear violation of the Social Media Policy may be deleted, hidden, or otherwise removed from a library’s Social Media account. If it is determined that a specific user has violated the Social Media Policy, library staff may delete the content, or block or ban the user account to prevent further violations. The duration of the block or ban is determined by the Library Director and is based on the severity of the behavior.

Appeals

For the purposes of this section, pursuant to W[isconsin Statute Section 68.16](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/68/16), the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is specifically electing not to be governed by Chapter 68 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

The Library Director or designee shall notify applicants as quickly as applicable (but no longer than 72 hours) whose posts are deleted or banned and the reasons for such action via Social Media messaging system or email, if available. Within 30 days of the notification, the applicant may appeal the ban or deletion to the Library Director by submitting in writing the basis for the appeal.

Within seven days of receiving the appeal, the Library Director shall review the request and send a written response to the appellant with a decision. The response will also inform the appellant that, if desired, the appeal will be forwarded to the Library Board. The Library Director also has the option to immediately forward the appeal to the Library Board for review.

If a Library Board review is requested, the Board shall consider the appeal at a duly noticed meeting and shall notify the appellant of its decision in written form.

Employee Postings

Library employees are not prohibited from posting on the library’s social media sites during their personal time outside of work. The library recognizes that public employees do not surrender all their First Amendment rights by reason of their employment and that the First Amendment protects a public employee’s right, in certain circumstances, to speak as a citizen addressing matters of public concern. However, when a public employee makes statements pursuant to their official duties, the employee is not speaking as a citizen for First Amendment purposes, and the Constitution does not insulate their communications from potential discipline by the library. Employees must be aware that information they display or comments they make on library Social Medial sites may be viewed by other users as representing official library sponsored information or comments. Therefore, in utilizing Library Social Media Websites, employees must follow the guidelines set forth in the separate employee electronic systems, internet, e-mail, social media policy and guidelines.

# Meeting Room Policy

The library meeting rooms are available for use by educational, cultural, civic and non-profit groups as long as this use does not interfere with the normal functions and regular programs of the library.

Guidelines for Use:

1. Meeting rooms will be made available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use. Meetings are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. Library programming will have priority when scheduling room use.
2. The rooms may be reserved no more than ninety (90) days in advance, and no single group may have more than three (3) meetings reserved at one time. Regular monthly meetings are permitted, but regular daily or weekly meetings are not permitted. Weekly meetings may be approved by the library director if the meetings are in keeping with the mission of the library (tutoring & literacy sessions).
3. Meeting room reservations will be confirmed when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (a signed Meeting Room Use Agreement is completed, or confirmed to be on file, and) is approved by the library during normal business hours.
4. The room shall be used during regular library hours only.
5. (No charge/$\_\_\_\_\_\_ ) will be charged by the library for the use of the meeting rooms.
6. Rooms may be used for:
	1. meetings which are open to the public,
	2. presentations, group discussions, workshops, and other similar functions,
	3. organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, governmental or charitable activities,
	4. individuals (or formal or informal groups) for purposes of studying, researching, planning, employment searches, job interviews, telehealth appointments, and/or court appearances.
7. Rooms may NOT be used for:
	1. any purpose which may interfere with the regular operation of the library,
	2. commercial events (where products, services, or memberships are advertised, solicited, or sold), including educational classes or seminars which charge a fee (library sponsored performers may sell merchandise related to their performance),
	3. purely social events, including company or family parties or receptions,
	4. individuals, businesses, or civic groups to conduct regularly scheduled office hours, classes, workshops, or seminars,
	5. gambling, in any form or any illegal activity.
8. No admission fee, registration fee, nor donations may be sought from meeting attendees, except by local non-profit educational, social service or cultural organizations with the specific permission of the library director.
9. No materials (brochures, flyers, bookmarks, etc.) may be distributed to other patrons using the library without the specific permission of the library director.
10. There shall be no posters, signs, etc. attached to the walls, curtains, windows or any other parts of the library.
11. Users must abide by the library’s behavior policies.
12. The library cannot accept calls or relay messages to persons attending meetings, except in emergencies.
13. The rooms shall be left in a neat, clean, and orderly condition; if not, the responsible group/individual will be given notice that continued offense will result in denied access to the meeting rooms.
14. Users agree to abide by all regulations of the library relating to the use of the facilities and accept responsibility for all damages caused to the building and/or equipment beyond normal wear. Maximum capacity for the meeting room is XXX people.
15. Events or meetings will not be publicized in a manner which suggests library sponsorship or affiliation. Use of the library meeting rooms does not imply endorsement by the library staff or library board of viewpoints presented.
16. The library board and staff do not assume any liability for groups or individuals attending a meeting in the library. The library is not responsible for any equipment, supplies, materials, clothing, or other items brought to the library by any group or individual attending a meeting.
17. The library director has the authority to issue reasonable meeting room rules and to revoke permission for use of meeting rooms if policies and rules are not followed and has authority to interpret minor variations from this policy. Any person or group may appeal the director’s decision to the library board.

Any exceptions to these rules must be authorized by the Board of Trustees of the XXX Public Library.

# Closure Policy

The \_\_\_\_\_ Library Board gives the Library Director, or staff designated by the Library Director, the authority to close the library early, delay opening, or remain closed all day due to inclement weather or other emergency.

Closure is decided on a case-by-case basis. The safety of staff and patrons is the main reason for closure. Factors that contribute to the decision to close include:

* Weather alerts and road conditions
* Area school closings
* Local, county, and state government emergency management announcements

Official Notification

Notice of closure is provided to the County of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the City/Village of \_\_\_\_\_\_, library branch municipal offices, library website, social media, and local media. Every effort is made to post signs on the library doors and update telephone messages. The Library Director, or designated staff, will notify the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Library System of the closure.

Fire

Do not panic, but do not under-estimate the potential danger represented by a fire. At the first indication of smoke or flame, investigate the situation to determine location and extent of the fire. If the fire can obviously be contained and extinguished quickly and safely by staff, proceed to do so. However, if there is any doubt about whether the fire can be controlled, immediately call 911 or the fire department and then clear the building.

The time to think about fires is before they happen. Familiarize yourself with the type, location, and application of the fire extinguisher(s) in the building. Orient all staff and volunteers to this information. If you share a building with another agency and it occasionally initiates fire drills, library staff should respect those training exercises and respond as they would in the case of a real fire.

Health emergencies

Staff members should exercise caution when administering first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff member. Without specialized training it is not advisable for staff to undertake more than keeping the sick or injured patron comfortable and protected from needless disturbance until medical help can be obtained. Since each case is unique, staff members should use their own judgement to do what is prudent and reasonable.

The Rescue Squad/Police (911 if available) should be called immediately in the event of any serious problem. No medication, including aspirin, should ever be dispensed to the public.

Bomb threats

Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask the caller to repeat the message and try to write down every word spoken by the person.

If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, ASK FOR THIS INFORMATION. Pay particular attention to peculiar background noises such as motors running, background music and any other sounds which may indicate where the location from which the call is originating. Listen closely to the voice (male, female), voice quality (calm, excited), accents and speech impediments.

Immediately after the caller hangs up, call the police. Clear the building. The police will handle the actual bomb search.

Snowstorms

The Library will follow the recommendation and actions of the city/village/county between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Closing during other days and hours will be at the discretion of the Library Director.

Public Health Emergency

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is dedicated to the welfare of its community members, employees, facilities, and resources. Also, we are committed to ensuring that the library can continue aspects of its critical business processes during a pandemic and safely resume normal operations as quickly as possible. If there is a community-wide health concern, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the library will follow the guidance of the CDC, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services, and the Village/City/County of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

During a community health crisis, the library may implement any of the following measures, including but not limited to:

* Reduced building capacity
* Mask requirement upon entry
* Social distancing
* Material quarantine periods
* Limited staffing
* Cancelation of programs and events
* Closure of building, with or without curbside service provided

# Donations & Gifts

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for accepting donations and gifts made on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library. This policy applies to monetary and material donations and gifts.

Monetary Donations and Gifts

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library appreciates the ongoing support of the communities it serves and welcomes monetary donations and gifts for the following recipient categories:

* Donations and gifts may be made to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library or a specific branch as memorials, general donations, or for a special program or event. All monetary donations and gifts are accounted for by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library headquarters.
* Donations and gifts may be made to The Friends of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library and received at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library. Distribution of resulting funds to benefit the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is determined by the Friends Board and the Library Director.
* Donations and gifts may be made to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library Foundation and received at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library. Distribution of funds to benefit the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library is determined by the Foundation Board at the request of the Library Director.

Material Donations and Gifts

Donated materials and gifts may be added to the library collection under the same materials management criteria used for purchased items. The library director, or a staff representative, reserves the right to classify, arrange, and make accessible the material in whatever fashion is most in keeping with the library's needs. Donated materials, once added to the collection, will be subject to the library’s Collection Development Policy.

Donated materials may be offered to The Friends of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library for the purpose of selling the items to benefit the library. Funds from sales are intended to supplement library materials and programs, not to replace the budgeting process. Any items unsold by the Friends of the Library may then be donated to another organization or discarded. The Friends, in conjunction with the Library Director, determines what is considered acceptable for their needs.

Disclaimers

The Library Board reserves the right to accept or refuse all donations and gifts. Once an item is accepted by the library, the item becomes the sole property of the library and may be handled in any way the library deems appropriate. The library reserves the right to dispose of any gift without notification to the donor.

Acknowledgements

Donations and gifts will be appropriately acknowledged in a timely manner. Donation receipts are available upon request; however, the library does not provide an appraisal or suggest value for donated materials.

# Volunteers and Friends

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library Board encourages individuals and groups to volunteer their time and efforts in the service of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library. In appreciation of volunteer services, the library acknowledges the need to organize volunteer activities and oversight.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library supplements the efforts of paid library staff to provide quality library collections, services and programs; serves as a method for area residents to become familiar with the library; and creates opportunities for individuals to feel personal satisfaction while performing a valuable service for the community.

A volunteer is a person who performs tasks without wages, benefits, or compensation of any kind. Minor children may only work as volunteers with the consent of a parent or legal guardian.

Volunteers are recognized by the public as representatives of the library and shall be guided by the same work and behavior codes as employees. They work with the status of “at-will” employees. However, the \_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library does not provide workers compensation coverage for volunteers.

Friends’ Group

A library friends’ group is a formal association of people who unite to plan and execute, in conjunction with library goals and the needs of the library director, programs and events to benefit the library. In particular, a friends’ group is often heavily involved in fund-raising for the library and often oversees periodic book sales. Friends groups always serve at the pleasure of the library board which is the only body with legal authority to set policy for the development of the library.

# Form: Request for Reconsideration

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES:

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ZIP\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a resident of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (County/City/Village)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you/your child have a library card with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Public Library? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Book | \_\_\_\_\_\_ Audio-visual Resource | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Magazine |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Library Program | \_\_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Other |

Title:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Author/Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of paper, please address the following questions:

1. What brought this resource to your attention?
2. To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible.
3. Have you read or listened or viewed the entire content? If not, what parts?
4. What do you feel the effect of the material might be?
5. For what age group would you recommend this material?
6. In its place, what material of equal or better quality would you recommend?
7. What do you want the library to do with this material?
8. Additional comments:

# Appendix:

## Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
7. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people’s privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of “age” reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

1. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

1. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

1. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

1. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

1. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

1. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

[American Library Association](https://www.ala.org/)
[Association of American Publishers](http://www.publishers.org/)

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](http://www.bookweb.org/abfe)
[The Association of American University Presses](http://www.aaupnet.org/)
[The Children's Book Council](http://www.cbcbooks.org/)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](http://www.ftrf.org/)
[National Association of College Stores](http://www.nacs.org/)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](http://www.ncac.org/)
[National Council of Teachers of English](http://www.ncte.org/)
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## Core Values of Librarianship

The foundation of modern librarianship rests on an essential set of core values that define, inform, and guide our professional practice. These values reflect the history and ongoing development of the profession and have been advanced, expanded, and refined by numerous policy statements of the American Library Association. Among these are: access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, preservation, the public good, professionalism, service, social responsibility, and sustainability.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to express our values more eloquently than ALA already has in the [Freedom to Read statement](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement), the [Library Bill of Rights](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill), the [ALA Mission Statement](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/), [Libraries: An American Value](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/americanvalue), and other documents. These policies have been carefully thought out, articulated, debated, and approved by the [ALA Council](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council). They are interpreted, revised or expanded when necessary. Over time, the values embodied in these policies have been embraced by the majority of librarians as the foundations of their practice. These selections are direct quotes from the [ALA Policy Manual](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual).

Access

All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users. [ALA Policy Manual](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/53intellfreedom#B.2.1.14) [B.2.1.14 Economic Barriers to Information Access](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/53intellfreedom#B.2.1.15)

Confidentiality/Privacy

Protecting user privacy and confidentiality is necessary for intellectual freedom and fundamental to the ethics and practice of librarianship. [ALA Policy Manual B.2.1.17 Privacy](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/53intellfreedom#B.2.1.17)

Democracy

A democracy presupposes an informed citizenry. The First Amendment mandates the right of all persons to free expression, and the corollary right to receive the constitutionally protected expression of others. The publicly supported library provides free and equal access to information for all people of the community the library serves. [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](http://ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations), [Economic Barriers to Information Access](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/economicbarriers)

Diversity

We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve. [ALA Policy Manual B.3 Diversity](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/3diversity), [Libraries: An American Value](http://ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/americanvalue)

Education and Lifelong Learning

ALA promotes the creation, maintenance, and enhancement of a learning society, encouraging its members to work with educators, government officials, and organizations in coalitions to initiate and support comprehensive efforts to ensure that school, public, academic, and special libraries in every community cooperate to provide lifelong learning services to all. [ALA Policy Manual A.1.1 Introduction](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section1/1mission)

Intellectual Freedom

We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources. [ALA Policy Manual B.2 Intellectual Freedom](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/53intellfreedom), [ALA Code of Ethics, Article II](http://ala.org/tools/ethics)

The Public Good

ALA reaffirms the following fundamental values of libraries in the context of discussing outsourcing and privatization of library services. These values include that libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies. [1998-99 CD#24.1, Motion #1](http://www.ala.org/tools/outsourcing/background)

Preservation

The Association supports the preservation of information published in all media and formats. The association affirms that the preservation of information resources is central to libraries and librarianship. [ALA Policy Manual B.8.3. Preservation](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/52libsvcsandrespon#B.8.3), [Preservation Policy](http://ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/01alaprespolicy)

Professionalism

The American Library Association supports the provision of library services by professionally qualified personnel who have been educated in graduate programs within institutions of higher education. It is of vital importance that there be professional education available to meet the social needs and goals of library services. [ALA Policy Manual B.7.1 Graduate Programs in Library and Information Studies](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/56libeduc#B.7.1)

Service

We provide the highest level of service to all library users. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession. [ALA Code of Ethics](http://ala.org/tools/ethics)

Social Responsibility

ALA recognizes its broad social responsibilities. The broad social responsibilities of the American Library Association are defined in terms of the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem; and the willingness of ALA to take a position on current critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service set forth in the position statement. [ALA Policy Manual A.1.1 Mission Priority Areas, Goals](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section1/1mission)

Sustainability

ALA is supporting the library community by showing its commitment to assisting in the development of sustainable libraries with the addition of sustainability as a core value of librarianship. This consists of practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible and socially equitable. Libraries play an important and unique role in promoting community awareness about resilience, climate change and a sustainable future. They are also leading by example by taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint. [ALA Policy Manual A.1.4 Core Organizational Values](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section1/1mission#A.1.4%20Core%20Organizational%20Values%20(Old%20Number%201.3.1))

Adopted January 2019, by the ALA Council.

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