

**Collection Development Policy**  
**Osceola Library System**

# About Osceola Library System

The Library District was created by County Ordinance 79-2, adopted March 26, 1979, and serves to provide comprehensive Library services to all County residents. The governing board of the Library District is the Board of County Commissioners. The Board levies the property taxes necessary to operate the Library District, adopts the annual budget, and approves debt issuances. Prior to 1989, the Orange County Library System provided library service to Osceola residents on a contractual basis. On April 1, 1989, the Osceola Library System began operations as an independent organization offering Library service to all residents of Osceola County.

The Osceola Library System currently is composed of five full service branches, one limited hours library and a Lending Station: Hart Memorial Central Library, Buena Ventura Branch Library (BVL), Poinciana Branch Library, Veterans Memorial-St Cloud Branch Library, West Osceola Branch Library (Celebration), Kenansville Library (limited hours) and Chambers Park Mini-McKissick Lending Machine.

## Introduction

### Purpose

The Collection Development Policy is provided as a guide to Library staff for the management of the collection. It will relate the principles upon which the Library makes decisions regarding the acquisition and retention of materials in the collection. To provide a framework for Library staff to evaluate and improve the collection to meet user needs. This is a dynamic and flexible document.

### Goal for Collection Development

In honoring the public trust bestowed upon the Library, we recognize that the collections we build, the access we provide, and the technologies we embrace are essential for the community's productive and creative future. To this end, the Library strives to provide a professional, skilled and service-oriented staff responsive to the information needs of the community.

### To fulfill this Goal:

- We will endeavor to make available the widest possible diversity of information, books and materials.
- We will keep abreast of technological changes that affect the development of the collection.
- We will strive to make all information and materials easily accessible to every individual on an equal basis.

### Standards

The Osceola Library System supports *The Library Bill of Rights*, *The Freedom to Read*, *The Freedom to View*, and the *Labels and Ratings Systems* statement. All are written or endorsed by the American Library Association (ALA). They can be located in the appendices of this manual. These, as well as other statements and policies dealing with intellectual freedom can also be found at the website for the Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) <http://www.ala.org/offices/oif> (See Appendix A).

## **Libraries: An American Value**

Libraries in America are cornerstones of the communities they serve. Free access to the books, ideas, materials, and information in America's libraries is imperative for education, employment, enjoyment, and self-government.

Libraries are a legacy to each generation, offering the heritage of the past and the promise of the future. To ensure that libraries flourish and have the freedom to promote and protect the public good in the 21st century, we believe certain principles must be guaranteed.

To that end, we affirm this contract with the people we serve:

- We defend the constitutional rights of all individuals, including children and teenagers, to use the library's materials and services;
- We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of materials and services to the communities we serve;
- We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its materials and services;
- We connect people and ideas by helping each person select from and effectively use the library's materials;
- We protect each individual's privacy and confidentiality in the use of library materials and services;
- We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library materials and services;
- We celebrate and preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions and ideas, so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners - informed, literate, educated, and culturally enriched.

Change is constant, but these principles transcend change and endure in a dynamic technological, social, and political environment.

By embracing these principles, libraries in the United States can contribute to a future that values and protects freedom of speech in a world that celebrates both our similarities and our differences, respects individuals and their beliefs, and holds all persons truly equal and free.

**Adopted February 3, 1999, by the  
Council of the American Library Association**

## **Responsibility for Collection Development**

The final authority and responsibility for materials selection and collection development rests with Library Contract Manager, Osceola County. Library Contract Manager delegates responsibility for materials selection and collection maintenance to staff employed by LSSI Inc. Selection duties are delegated to staff that, because of their education, training, and/or experience, has the knowledge to select materials. Suggestions for materials from staff members and patrons are encouraged and seriously considered in the selection process.

Library Contract Manager, Osceola County has the authority to:

- Approve or disapprove selection recommendation from staff and public.

- Authority to make final decisions on the withdrawal of materials, replacement orders and any other additions or deletions.
- Authority to review collections in the system, evaluate the contents, and revise this manual as needed
- Authority to initiate projects to withdraw materials as a result of collection evaluations
- Authority to acquire materials in addition to those acquired by staff as the need arises.

## Strategic Plan

Materials are selected to meet recognized objectives of the Library as set by the Strategic Plan 2012-13 through 2015-16.

- Early Literacy: Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write and listen.
- Lifelong Learning: residents will have the materials they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.
- Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure: residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.
- Information Fluency: Residents will know when they need information to resolve an issue or answer a question and will have the skills to search for, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to meet their needs
- Public Internet Access: Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing materials and services available through the Internet.

## Selection Guidelines

- Materials shall include a variety of formats and reading levels.
- Materials shall be evaluated objectively, with open-mindedness and a responsive attitude toward the total community.
- Different viewpoints on controversial issues may be acquired, including viewpoints that may express unpopular or unorthodox positions.
- Responsibility for the use of Library materials by children or minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Decisions on the selection of materials will not be limited by the possibility that these materials may be accessible to children.
- An effort will be made not to needlessly duplicate the functions and materials of other institutions.
- Suggestions from patrons and staff for the addition of items to the Library collection shall be considered if the request conforms to selection criteria. Materials that are expected to be popular with a significant number of the Library's patrons will be given preference over works of interest to only a few patrons.
- Materials shall be added to the Library collection for the purpose of developing and updating subject areas.

## Selection Criteria

While a single standard cannot be applied to each potential selection, materials are judged by specific criteria which include demand, artistic merit, scholarship, or the overall value to the informational needs of the community.

Consideration will be given to materials that may be of interest to a smaller segment of the community, as well as those of interest to larger segments. Popular, “best seller” materials will be acquired as the budget permits, and as they meet other selection criteria.

To build a diversified collection that supports the Library System’s Strategic Plan, the following objective criteria are used:

- Accuracy. Is the information in the item accurate?
- Authority. Who is the author? What expertise does the author have in the subject matter? Who is the publisher, producer, composer, filmmaker, etc.? What significance, reputation or authority do they have?
- Availability of space. Do we have a location to house additional materials?
- Community Needs and Interests. Is there a particular interest in works of certain authors, actors, subjects, etc.? Does the item have potential for heavy use by the community?
- Endurance. What is the value, timeliness, or permanence of the resource?
- Favorable reviews. Do recognized sources such as professional journals, magazines, and newspapers and reading lists consider it good?
- Format. What is the quality of the product? Does it endure use multiple times? Is the format available for purchase?
- Physical Attributes. Does the binding, printing, paper quality, or other any other attributes have endurance for multiple users?
- Popular demand. Does it have “high demand,” items such as those identified from best-seller lists, customer requests or dynamic subject areas?
- Price. How much does it cost? Are there other comparable items that are less expensive?
- Relative importance. In comparison to existing materials of the same subject, do we need additional titles?
- Resource availability. Does our distributor carry the item? Is it self-published, out of print, or a special order? (See Self-published criteria Appendix B) Is Inter-Library Loan an option?
- Subject. Does it have suitability, scope, style and level appropriate for the intended audience? What subject area does the item cover? Is it a broad or specific treatment of the subject? Does it have artistic, literary, historic, social and/or scientific merit?
- Special Features. Is the resource not protected by the constitution including obscenity, child pornography, libel, slander, speech that presents a clear and present danger and fighting words that present an actual threat of immediate violence?

## Formats

Criteria in choosing formats includes ease of access, ease of use, hardware requirements, licensing requirements, networking capabilities, patron assistance requirements, search interface, comparison of content with other available items, and staff training. Books are generally purchased in hardcover editions due to durability. Paperback editions may be purchased in cases where the hardcover is too expensive and/or the title would be used infrequently or content is of a short-lived nature. Some titles are only available as paperbacks. Spiral and binder ring books are avoided whenever possible due to their lack of durability.

- The Library System monitors the development of new formats and, within budgetary and technical limitations, adds them to the collection.
- Library budgetary materials are limited, and only a portion of our purchasing power can go towards the various collection areas. Currently, the vast majority of our patrons continue to prefer traditional formats, so more is spent on this collection.
- Not all books available in print are available in all formats.
- The Osceola Library System generally purchases titles that are newly published or released, as older titles may not be available in all formats.

Formats will include the following collection areas utilizing the most accessible technological medium.

- Audiobooks
- Books
- Electronic Materials
- Movies
- Music
- Periodicals

## Collections

Most Collections (excluding special collections) are divided into three separate age ranges: Adult, Teen, and Juvenile (Children).

### A. Fiction – Adult, Teen, and Juvenile

The primary function of this collection is to satisfy the demand from recreational readers for new titles along with older works of fiction by popular authors. Classic literature, best sellers, critically acclaimed authors, and genre fiction (such as Christian, romance, historical, western, science fiction, and horror) make up the majority of this collection. Various sub-genres reflecting the different types and styles of fiction should be purchased to meet customer demand. Recreational reading, local school, state and other reading lists are also considered.

### B. Nonfiction – Adult, Teen and Juvenile

The nonfiction collection is meant to meet the general information needs of the public. The collection should be encompassing, yet general enough for the layperson. It includes current, high demand, high interest materials covering as wide a subject range as possible. It also supports individuals of all ages pursuing independent learning projects outside formal education such as citizen education, self-improvement, job related development, hobbies, biographies and cultural interests. Materials are usually bought at an introductory or basic level. No emphasis is made to maintain a collection that is

exhaustive in any particular subject area. The Osceola Library System is a common reading, general interest and high demand library and its collection is not intended to replicate a collegiate or research library.

C. Large Print – Adult and Juvenile

The Large Print collection follows the same selection criteria as Fiction and Nonfiction and is intended to accommodate those with impaired sight who need books with larger type.

D. Graphic Novels – Adult, Teen, and Juvenile

A collection of graphic books for the various age groups are purchased and classified as a sub-category of Fiction. This collection is meant as a gateway to engaging reluctant readers and satisfying demand for non-traditional sources of literature.

E. Beginner

The Beginner collection is designed for reader development in young children. This collection is composed of both fiction and non-fiction titles many of which have a developmental leveling system indicated on them for guidance.

F. Easy

The Easy collection includes books for pre-school and early elementary school-aged children. Books in this collection include works with a high interest level, award-winning titles (e.g. Caldecott Medal), picture storybooks, wordless, and concept books that are designed to develop a child's thinking and viewing skills.

G. Board Books

The Board Book collection includes books of a hard board book binding for use with small and very young children. These books are meant for parent-child interaction and a child's first introduction to books.

H. Foreign Language – Adult, Teen, and Juvenile.

The main purpose of this collection is to provide quality Spanish language materials to the Spanish speaking population of Osceola County. A sampling of both fiction and non-fiction materials are bought for the adult and juvenile collections. Emphasis is given to high interest areas, bilingual, and language development.

I. DVDs – Adult and Juvenile

The DVD collections contain titles that are recreational, informational, and instructional in scope. The Library does not purchase NC-17 or X-rated titles. An emphasis is placed on purchasing new titles and titles of lasting cinematic or informational value.

1. Feature Films
2. Nonfiction,
3. Television Series

J. Music – Adult and Juvenile

The music collection consists of a variety of music types including, but not restricted to: classical, rock, jazz, R&B, hip hop, country, blues, religious, opera, soundtracks, new age, world, Latin, holiday and children's. While the Library provides music in a variety of genres, it is not considered an exhaustive collection. Purchase of music is primarily via digital format or databases.

K. Audiobooks – CDs, Adult and Juvenile

Audiobooks are purchased as CDs, and acquired for general popularity and customer request, taking in account availability in the requested format and budget restrictions. Not all requested titles are available in audio or through the Library's preferred vendor. Titles purchased for the audio collection are subject to the same criteria as those of the print collection.

1. Nonfiction

2. Fiction
- L. Periodicals – Adult, Teen and Juvenile

The periodical collection is selected at a branch level, based on community needs and interests. No effort will be made to create a lasting archive of these materials and are subject to an active withdrawal policy based on space and condition. Historical or archival collections of periodicals may be accessed via electronic subscription resources.

  1. Newspapers
  2. Magazines
- M. Electronic Materials – Adult, Teen, and Juvenile

Some of the preceding collections are also available in various online or electronic formats. The Library System monitors the development of new formats and within budgetary and technical limitations adds these to the collection. The electronic materials are selected and evaluated using the same criteria applicable to their physical counterparts.

  1. eAudiobooks
  2. eBooks
  3. Databases
  4. Music Downloads
  5. Video Downloads
  6. Periodicals
  7. Research resources
- N. Special Collections
  1. Reference Collection

The reference collection is designed to allow staff and the general public to answer specific questions of a general nature. It consists of sources which because of their arrangement are not meant to be read or used in their entirety, but are consulted for definite, specific information. These sources include books, periodicals, and online reference sources. Selection of reference materials are made for the informational needs of the general public.
  2. Ray Shanks Law Library

The Ray Shanks Law Library is a legal reference and research collection for the general public. It is located in the Hart Memorial Central Library. The collection contains self-help legal books, legal forms, case law, statutes, codes and other multi-volume legal works. Materials may be print or online. Library staff does not give legal advice or take responsibility for misuse or understanding of the law by users. It is the solely the user's responsibility to determine if the provided information is pertinent or applicable to their needs.
  3. Microforms

This collection consists of Microfilm and Microfiche containing primarily the local historical newspapers and genealogy resources.
  4. Lending Station (Chamber's Park Mini-McKissick)

The Mini-McKissick a vending machine style library kiosk that is placed in an area of underserved population. The collection contained maybe tailored to the population where it is placed. This is a separate collection which does not float nor fulfill customer holds due to the nature of the vending machine and its remote location.

## Floating Collection

The Osceola Library System utilizes a floating collection model, excluding only the special collections. The premise behind floating collections is to keep materials where they are checked in, whether because they've been brought in as a customer hold, or returned in the book drop. Returned materials are shelved at the return branch. Budgets are helped by reduced deliveries and keeping collections routinely refreshed with a constant rotation of materials based on patron use. Materials go where they are most needed and wanted. The local branch collection tailors itself to fit its community by creating a collection that is user driven. Original resource selection is determined by the Collection Development Policy, but the housing of the materials is determined by customer usage utilizing holds, returns and requests for purchase.

## Hold

A hold is an item requested by a patron to be held or transported to another branch of the Library System for check out. If an item is listed in the collection, excluding special collections, a holds request may be placed on the item and, when the item is available, sent to the customer's preferred location.

If a requested item cannot be located at the first location, each subsequent branch will be searched for available copies to fill the hold. If the item cannot be located at any branch, staff may elect to have an item that is comparable (e.g. a paperback edition vs. a hardback edition) sent to fill the hold request.

## Deselection

Deselection is a continuous evaluation of the collection intended to remove items that no longer meet the Collection Development Policy. Deselection is an essential element of collection development that ensures the Library's materials are helpful, in good condition, accessible and up to date.

Deselection entails withdrawing from the collection damaged, outdated, and worn materials that are no longer useful, valid, in good condition or used by patrons as established by statistics.

A continuous program of deselection represents a conscientious effort to keep the collection vital, useful, and representative of the present needs of the community.

Removal of outdated, worn or damaged items makes the collection both visually attractive and more inviting to users.

The Library reserves the right to deselect any materials that qualify under this policy, including Donations and Memorial materials.

Deselected materials maybe disposed of by way of donation to Friends of the Library, provided to another community partner or nonprofit organization, sold at auction, utilize for Library programming or (in the case of items damaged by mold or posing other health concerns) disposed of.

[Weeding Library Collections: A Selected Annotated Bibliography for Library Collection Evaluation](#)

## Replacements

The Library does not automatically replace all materials that have been deselected, lost or damaged. Replacement is judged using these factors:

- Adequate coverage of the subject area
- Currency of the information.
- Demand for a specific title.
- Budget in relation to newer purchases.

## Archiving

In general there is no attempt to preserve the bulk of the collection; old editions are withdrawn following the collection in accordance with the Deselection part of the Collection Development Policy.

Certain materials of long-term or local historical value and/or usefulness may be preserved through binding, microforms, or digitization.

## Donations

Donations of money and/or materials are gratefully accepted with the understanding that donated items become the property of the Library and the Library may make whatever use of the items it feels appropriate, materials may or may not be added to the collection. Donated materials become the property of the Library and will not be returned to the donor. Materials that are not added may be disposed of at the discretion of the Library. Items are evaluated on the same basis as purchased materials and may be:

- Donated to the Friends of the Library book sale
- Added to the Library's collection
- Utilized in conjunction with crafting or decorations
- Donated to another community partner organization
- Disposed of at the discretion of the Library

Memorial materials may be added to the collection in memory or in honor of a specified individual or group by making a monetary donation. A special bookplate will be attached to the item if desired.

Donations of materials to the Library are tax deductible to the full extent of the law and may be acknowledged for tax purposes. The Library is not able to place a monetary value on donations, but upon request, the Library will provide a written receipt of donations.

Patrons desiring the Library to purchase materials may submit a Request for Purchase. The Library attempts to purchase all Requests for Purchase that meet the Collection Development Policy and are available via our preferred vendors.

## Requesting Materials

Public input is encouraged and appreciated, but all suggestions are subject to the Collection Development Policy. The Library provides multiple methods of public input through the following links and policies.

## [Request for Purchase](#)

### **Request for Purchase Guidelines**

- Requests should be titles published in the preceding 12 months, have a high usage potential or fill a series/subject gap.
- Fall within the specified collection guidelines and criteria.
- Be of any of the formats listed in the Collection Development Policy.
- Not already owned by the Library System.

## [Inter Library Loan](#)

### **ILL Guidelines**

- Patrons may have up to three (3) active ILLs at one time; this includes requested, ordered, on-hold, and checked out.
- If more than three (3) ILLs are submitted, the Library selects which titles to order.
- Patrons with blocked Library accounts are not eligible to use this service.
- Requested titles that cannot be located in WorldCat will not be requested.
- Unfilled requests may be resubmitted a second time after 90 days.
- Patrons are responsible for all fees charged by the lending institution. All fees for lost, damage, etc. (if incurred) will be charged to the customer's Osceola Library account.
- Renewals are at the discretion of the lending institution. Patrons must call the Library to request the renewal a minimum of 48 hours before the due date.

Materials matching any of the following criteria are not available via ILL:

- High-demand/best-seller titles.
- Titles published in the preceding 12 months.
- Periodicals or journals.
- Audio-visual resources.
- Additional restrictions may be applied by the lending institution.

## [Library Email and Comment Form](#)

### **Library Email and Comment Form**

If a member of the community would like to contact the Library System, they may do so via the Library 's email address or via Comment Forms found on the web site.

## **Reconsideration of Materials**

The Library recognizes the right of an individual to request reconsideration of materials in the collection.

The Osceola Library System supports *The Library Bill of Rights*, *The Freedom to Read*, *The Freedom to View*, and the *Labels and Ratings Systems statement* in the materials selection process. The Library acquires materials representing various points of view. Works are not excluded because of language, text, or illustrations if they meet the criteria stated in this manual (See Appendix A).

The choice of library materials by patrons is an individual matter. While an individual may reject materials for him/herself, an individual cannot exercise censorship to restrict access of materials by others. The Library System does not remove materials because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

When a request for reconsideration of library materials is made, library staff will supply a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form.

The complete form should be sent to the Library Director who will consult with the Library Contract Manager for decision. The decision may result in maintaining the current status, changing the resource's holding location (example: teen to adult collection), or the withdrawing of the resource from the collection. The individual will then be informed of the decision.

If the individual does not feel that the decision reached is satisfactory, the individual may request in writing to present his/her case to the Library Advisory Board.

Upon receipt of the request, an open, public meeting of the Library Advisory Board will hear the individual's case. The Library Advisory Board will reach a decision based on a majority vote. The individual and all parties concerned will receive the result of the decision and the Board's decision is final.

## Appendix A

### American Library Association Policies

#### 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.

- I. Books and other library materials 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.
- II. 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.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries that 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.

*Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.*

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#).

The Osceola Library System also subscribes to the following Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights:

#### **Access for Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Library collections of nonprint materials raise a number of intellectual freedom issues, especially regarding minors. Article V of the [Library Bill of Rights](#) states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

The American Library Association's principles protect minors' access to sound, images, data, games, software, and other content in all formats such as tapes, CDs, DVDs, music CDs, computer games, software, databases, and other emerging technologies. ALA's [Free Access to Libraries for Minors](#): An *Interpretation* of the Library Bill of Rights states:

. . . The "right to use a library" includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library materials, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

. . . [P]arents—and only parents—have the right and responsibility to restrict access of their children—and only their children—to library materials. Parents who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children. Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child.

Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library materials regardless of content, approach, format, or amount of detail. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

Policies that set minimum age limits for access to any nonprint materials or information technology, with or without parental permission, abridge library use for minors. Age limits based on the cost of the materials are also unacceptable. Librarians, when dealing with minors, should apply the same standards to circulation of nonprint materials as are applied to books and other print materials except when directly and specifically prohibited by law.

Recognizing that librarians cannot act *in loco parentis*, ALA acknowledges and supports the exercise by parents of their responsibility to guide their own children's reading and viewing. Libraries should provide published reviews and/or reference works that contain information about the content, subject matter, and recommended audiences for nonprint materials. These materials will assist parents in guiding their children without implicating the library in censorship.

In some cases, commercial content ratings, such as the [Motion Picture Association of America](#) (MPAA) movie ratings, might appear on the packaging or promotional materials provided by producers or distributors. However, marking out or removing this information from materials or packaging constitutes expurgation or censorship.

MPAA movie ratings, [Entertainment Software Rating Board](#) (ESRB) game ratings, and other rating services are private advisory codes and have no legal standing ([Expurgation of Library Materials](#)). For the library to add ratings to nonprint materials if they are not already there is unacceptable. It is also unacceptable to post a list of such ratings with a collection or to use them in circulation policies or other procedures. These uses constitute labeling, "an attempt to prejudice attitudes" ([Labels and Rating Systems](#)), and are forms of censorship. The application of locally generated ratings schemes intended to provide content warnings to library users is also inconsistent with the Library Bill of Rights.

The interests of young people, like those of adults, are not limited by subject, theme, or level of sophistication. Librarians have a responsibility to ensure young people's access to materials and services that reflect diversity of content and format sufficient to meet their needs.

Adopted June 28, 1989, by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 2004. [ISBN 8389-7351-5]

## **Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Expurgating library materials is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library materials by the library, its agents, or its parent institution (if any) when done for the purposes of censorship. Such action stands in violation of Articles I, II, and III of the Library Bill of Rights, which state that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval," and that "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."

The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Expurgation without permission from the rights holder may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

The decision of rights holders to alter or expurgate future versions of a work does not impose a duty on librarians to alter or expurgate earlier versions of a work. Librarians should resist such requests in the interest of historical preservation and opposition to censorship. Furthermore, librarians oppose expurgation of materials available through licensed collections. Expurgation of any library resource imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008. [ISBN 8389-5419-7]

## **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.

2. *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.

3. *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.

4. *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.

5. *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.

6. *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.

7. *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.

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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](#)  
[Association of American Publishers](#)

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

[American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression](#)  
[The Association of American University Presses, Inc.](#)  
[The Children's Book Council](#)  
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)  
[National Association of College Stores](#)  
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)  
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)  
[The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)

## **Freedom to View Statement**

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the [First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States](#). In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

**Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council**

## **Labeling and Rating Systems**

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in materials accessible through the library. The presence of books and other materials in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling and rating systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Labels on library materials may be viewpoint-neutral directional aids designed to save the time of users, or they may be attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to materials. When labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes, it is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the material, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the material, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the material. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Viewpoint-neutral directional aids facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate materials. The materials are housed on open shelves and are equally accessible to all users, who may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

Directional aids can have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling.

Many organizations use rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public regarding the organizations' opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, Web sites, games, or other materials. The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems by a library violates the Library Bill of Rights. When requested, librarians should provide information about rating systems equitably, regardless of viewpoint.

Adopting such systems into law or library policy may be unconstitutional. If labeling or rating systems are mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Libraries sometimes acquire materials that include ratings as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the ratings—if placed there by, or with permission of, the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation (see "Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights"). In addition, the inclusion of ratings on bibliographic records in library catalogs is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Prejudicial labeling and ratings presuppose the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They presuppose that individuals must be directed in

making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about materials they choose to read or view.

*Adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990; January 19, 2005; July 15, 2009.*

## **Appendix B**

### **Donation/Purchase of Self-Published Material**

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE: To establish the requirements for the addition of self-published material to the library collection, and provide guidelines for the acceptance of any and all donated material.

#### II. DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES:

A. Self-Published: The publishing of books and material at the expense of the author instead of a third-party or traditional publisher.

1. Vanity press or vanity publisher - a printer who charges authors a fee for setting up and printing copies of their book. No, or limited, editorial assistance is offered and no promotion or marketing is provided. This type of publisher makes money from the author not the selling of the author's book.
2. Print-On-Demand or POD - a printing method where a copy of the book is not printed until an order is received. Frequently used for self-publishing although many small and university presses use it in order to keep costs of inventory and backlists down.
3. Author Mill - a company that publishes a large number of authors with the hope of selling hundreds of books from each, as opposed to publishing a limited number of authors in hopes of selling thousands of books from each, as commercial publishers do. Authors are not required to make any financial expenditure at all, hidden or otherwise.
4. Blog - similar to a journal; published on the web.
5. Desktop publishing, xerography - books pamphlets and materials made available for sale using a personal computer or locally available copying and binding equipment.

B. Publisher, also known as a commercial or traditional publisher - An organization that acquires material from an author with the intent to sell it for profit. A publisher normally offers editorial services, promotion of the title and a marketing budget. The author is normally paid an advance (money paid before the work is available for sale) and royalties (a percentage of the gross profit paid to the author by the publisher.)

C. Book Review - Literary criticism of a work based on its content, style and merit; published in periodicals.

D. Library personnel - Individuals within libraries responsible for the acquisition of material for their library's collection.

#### III. REQUIREMENTS

A. An author may donate a copy of their self-published item with the understanding that the item becomes the property of the library. The item may be utilized in any manner as set forth in the Donations Policy.

B. All additions to the Library collection must follow the rules and guidelines in the Collection Development Policy.

#### IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Acceptance or rejection of any donated item is left up to the discretion of Library personnel and/or the Library director.

B. Removal of donation from the Library does not require notification to the donor. Materials may be removed or provided to another organization for any of the accepted terms set forth in the Deselection policy.

#### VI. PURCHASING

A. Typically self-published materials will not be purchased due to generally lower quality of the physical products, and lesser editorial standards.

B. Self-published materials may be purchased to fulfill a significant demand. They will not be purchased for a single user.

C. Additional costs are incurred on Self-published materials due to processing and cataloging.