HEART OF AMERICA LIBRARY

RUGBY, NORTH DAKOTA

OPERATIONAL POLICY

May 8, 1984

Revised August 2006
Revised July 2010
Revised August 2012
Reviewed and revised May 2019
Reviewed and Revised 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	GENERAL OBJECTIVES	3
II.	LIBRARY COLLECTION AND SERVICES	4
	A. Collection and Procurement	4
	B. Gifts, Bequests, Memorials	4
	C. Materials Selection	4
	D. Procedure for Handling Complaints	7
	E. Services for the Public Library	8
III.	USE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY	8
	A. Use Privileges	8
	B. Operating Hours	9
	C. Holidays	9
	D. Lending	10
	E. Equipment Usage	10
	F. Overdue	11
	G. Confidentiality of Library Collection Records	11
IV.	PHYSICAL FACILITIES	12
	A. General Statement	12
	B. Community Room and Exhibit Areas	12
	C. Insurance	13
V.	TRAVEL EXPENSES	13
VI.	DUES	14
VII.	PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	14
VIII.	APPENDIX	15
	A. Release Form for Adult Collection Use	16
	B. Recognition of Library Gift Policy	16
	C. Exhibitor's Agreement	16
	D. Request for Consideration of Library Material	17
	E. Internet Use Policy	18
	F. Community Room Agreement	19
	G. Community Room Policy	20
	H. Library Bill of Rights	21
	I. Freedom to Read Statement	22

OPERATIONAL POLICY

HEART OF AMERICA LIBRARY
RUGBY, NORTH DAKOTA

I. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The chief objective of the Heart of America Library is to provide the community of Rugby and Pierce County and the surrounding area, when possible, with effective public library service and to lead the citizens in anticipating their future needs for library service. The Library can determine a purposeful future by preserving a vigorous approach and choosing according to set criteria its policies and leadership.

A. To assemble, preserve, and administer, in organized collections books and related educational and recreational material possessing cultural, educational, and informational value to promote, through guidance and stimulation, the communication of ideas, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives.

B. To serve the community as a general center of reliable information.

C. To support educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organizations.

D. To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men, and women to continue and broaden their education.

E. To seek continually to identify community needs, to provide programs of service to meet such needs and to cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programs or services to meet community needs.

F. To provide opportunity for recreation using literature, music, media, and other means within the sphere of library activities.

Maximum realization of these objectives can be best obtained through adherence to the following specifics:

A. Service to the public, first, last, and foremost, shown by effort and attitude.

B. Expertly selected books and other materials, including audio visual materials and works of art, chosen for their value in development and enrichment of the individual and their contribution to the general knowledge and educational value to the community.

C. Cooperation with groups and agencies in the community in stimulating educational and cultural activities.

D. Participation in area-wide programs to extend services to those unserved.

E. A high degree of accuracy in records and information.

F. A strong public relations program.

G. Careful observance of professional ethics in relations between board and administration, staff and administration, and staff members among themselves.

H. Continuing reappraisal of the effectiveness of services, collections and physical facilities, exploration of new materials and improvements for better service.

II. LIBRARY COLLECTION AND SERVICES

A. Collection and Procurement

1. The Director shall be responsible for the selection and purchase from the mass of available materials those items which best meet the interests and needs of the community.

2. Each acquisition shall be coded to identify purchase and ownership by the Heart of America Library.

B. Gifts, Bequests, Memorials

1. The Library accepts gifts of suitable materials with the understanding that they will be added to the library collections only when needed and disposed of at the discretion of the Director. The same principles of selection applied to purchases are applied to gifts.

2. Unrestricted gifts of money, land, or property will be gratefully accepted by the Board. Restricted gifts or bequests will be reviewed by the Board before acceptance or rejection.

C. Materials Selection

1. Ultimate responsibility for book selection, as for all library activity, rests on the Director, who operates within the framework of policies and objectives determined by the Board of Trustees. So far as practical, all members of the staff will participate in the selection process because an informed staff contributes to intelligent use of the book collection. All aspects of materials selection will aim at implementing the Library's general objectives.

2. Objectives of Selection

   The primary objective of the Heart of America Library is to provide opportunity and encouragement for people of all ages to educate themselves continuously. It is the duty of the Library to provide a wide range of materials with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.

   To this end, the Board of Trustees reaffirms the objectives of the American Library Association, Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement and recognizes a responsibility to:

   a. Provide materials that will enrich the community, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and educational levels of the citizens served.

b. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.

c. Provide a background of information which will enable citizens to make intelligent judgments in their daily life.

d. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that citizens may develop the practice of critical analysis of all media.

e. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

f. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to ensure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the Library.

3. The Library will maintain an up-to-date array of selection tools such as reviewing services, review publications and catalogs of recommended purchases.

4. Criteria for Selection of Materials

   Need of the community based on knowledge of the Library's objectives and the existing collection are given first consideration.

   Materials for purchase are considered based on:

   a. Permanence and timeliness

   b. Accuracy

   c. Authoritativeness and/or standing and reputations of the author/artist/composer/producer/etc.

   d. Clearness and usability of presentation

   e. Group and individual social significance

   f. Suitability and importance to the whole collection

   g. Format

   h. Price and/or availability of funds

   i. Overall purpose

   j. Importance of subject matter

   k. Readability and popular appeal

5. Procedures for Selection

   In selecting materials for purchase, the Director evaluates the existing collection and consults reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids.

   In specific areas the Director follows these procedures:

   a. Gift materials are judged by basic selection standards used in purchasing material and are accepted or rejected by these standards.

   b. Multiple items of outstanding and much in demand media are purchased as needed.

   c. Worn or missing standard items are replaced periodically if relevant.

   d. Out-of-date or no longer useful materials are withdrawn from the collection under a systematic procedure.

   e. Sets of materials and materials acquired by subscription are examined and are purchased only to fill a definite need.

   f. Duplication of materials available in special (medical, etc.) schools and academic libraries will be avoided whenever possible.

6. The Library will endeavor always to balance special group interests with general demand, to present fairly and truthfully both sides of every controversial subject handled, and to maintain a true balance between its duty to present information on all aspects of public questions and its determination not to allow itself to be used as a propaganda vehicle.

   a. The Library will not maintain a closed shelf collection of materials but will encourage individual and parental discrimination in the choice of materials.

   b. In addition, the Board recognizes the duty of the Library to furnish materials outside the "mainstream of popular output" and to provide in its collection a substantial representation of the critical, provocative and experimental products as well as the classics.

7. All phases of the selection procedure will work toward the establishment of a representative collection of materials of high quality based on the achievement of the services the Library is expected to perform.

8. The Library adopts the policy statement of the American Library Association which includes the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement on book selection and controversial materials. (Copies of the Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement attached.)

D. Procedure for handling complaints regarding materials present or not present in the collection.

The procedure below shall apply to all complaints about materials represented in the collection or not represented in the collection. This procedure is recommended by the Board of Trustees so that the complainant can be assured that his/her complaint receives a fair hearing.

In the MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY OF THE HEART OF AMERICA LIBRARY it states that "final responsibility for selection resides with the Director of the Library." All complaints will be directed to his/her attention. The Board of Trustees, in their adoption of the Materials Selection Policy, The Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement, support the Director in his/her exercise of the selection responsibility. They will hear complaints only if the complainant feels that the policy statement does not support the Director's decision and then only if they feel it necessary to study the decision more closely.

1. Instructions to the Staff

   Should a patron question the place of any material in our collection or question our intentions by failing to place certain material in the collection, you are asked to comply with the following procedure:

   a. Neither defends nor condones the item or the act. React in a manner which indicates your understanding of this person's concern (even though you may disagree with the complaint). The responsibility for selection of materials for the Library has been vested in the Director. Let him/her provide the defense.

   b. Provide the patron with a copy of the form "Request for Reconsideration of Material." Ask that it be completed and signed. Inform the patron that the complaint will be given to the Director and that the patron will receive a response from the Director within one week.

2. Instructions to the Director

   a. Upon receipt of the Request for Reconsideration of Material, examine the complaint, the materials in question, the circumstances involved in the complaint and submit to the patron no later than one (1) week after receipt a response based on your reasons for the selection of the material, the policies of the Library and etc.

   b. Provide the complainant with a copy of the Library's Selection Policy. Inform the patron of their right to an additional hearing on the complaint should he feel that the response of the Director is not supported by the policy statement.

3. Instructions to the Board of Trustees:

   Should the patron feel that the Director's response is not supported by the Materials Selection Policy, it is reasoned that either the policy statement or the Director's interpretation of it are in question, therefore it becomes the Board's obligation to review the matter.

a. Upon receipt of a request for additional review or a hearing from the complainant, the Director is asked to advise the Board of the entire situation. He/she is also asked to recommend action to the Board.

b. If the Board does not wish to hear the complaint, the President of the Board should instruct the Director to advise the complainant of their decision and the basis for the decision.

c. If the Board desires to hear the complaint, the Director is to plan for the complainant to be present for a hearing. The Board will then recommend action to the Director after hearing the complaint.

4. Above all the Board has as its concern the fairness of such a hearing, to protect the rights of all people involved in accordance with community standards.

   Should it be necessary, the Board can ask the Director to inform the Intellectual Freedom Committee of NDLA, the Intellectual Freedom Committee of ALA, the State Librarian, and other concerned persons or groups of the situation, requesting either their opinion, recommendations, or involvement.

E. Services of the Public Library

1. The Library staff will provide guidance and assistance for people to obtain information.

2. The Library will initiate programs to stimulate the use of library materials to fill the needs of people of all ages.

3. The Library will co-operate with civic and community agencies and organizations to help them with program materials.

4. The Library will supplement, but cannot perform the functions of, the school and other libraries which are designed to meet special needs. This Public Library will at all opportunities co-operate with other libraries to strengthen the services and resources of all.

III. USE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

A. Use Privileges

1. Within the Library, the use of all references and collections is free to all.

2. Home use privileges are free to all residents of Pierce County and areas participating by contract or agreement in the Library program.

3. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religion, race, color, sex, national origin, social, economic status, or political status.

4. Non-residents of Pierce County will be charged a yearly fee of $5.00 per family or per individual for use privilege. In the case of obtaining a non-resident library card for Libby use, it is $5 per individual.

5. The use of the Library or its services may be denied temporarily for due cause. Such causes may be failure to return books or to pay service charges or penalties, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons or any other objectionable conduct on library premises.

6. No pets, except for Seeing Eye dogs, will be permitted in the Library.

7. Shoes will be required by all persons using the Library in accordance with the State Law.

8. Mute cellular phone; use headphones with music, games, programs with sound; take phone calls outside.

9. If a child in the sixth (6^{th}) grade and under wishes to have unlimited access to the Adult Library Collection, he/she must have his/her parents sign a release form at the Library in the presence of a library staff member in order to acquire this privilege. The release form states the parent assumes all responsibility for the materials that their child selects to read and that they realize that his/her child will have full access to the adult library collection.

10. A signed approval for computer/internet use is needed for an individual under the age of eighteen (18).

B. Operating Hours

1. The Library shall be open as follows:
   Monday through Wednesday – 10:00 am – 6:00 pm
   Thursday – 10:00 am – 7:00 pm
   Friday – 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
   Saturday – 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

2. The Director may open or close the Library at other times if the occasion warrants.

   Closing – Irregular: In case of a severe blizzard or other unusual circumstance which involves the closing of the schools and other public buildings, it may be expedient to close the library. The decision to do so shall rest with the Director, and it shall be his/her responsibility to have the public announcements made and to notify other members of the staff. Except for the custodian, full-time employees shall be paid as usual when the Library is closed. The Custodian shall be responsible for maintaining heat and minimal care at such times without extra compensation.

C. Holidays

The Library will be closed on the following holidays:

a. The first day of January, which is New Year's Day.
b. The 3^{rd} Monday in February, which is Presidents Day

c. The last Monday in May, which is Memorial Day.
d. The Fourth of July, which is Independence Day.
e. The first Monday in September, which is Labor Day.
f. November 11th, which is Veterans' Day.
g. The fourth Thursday in November, which is Thanksgiving Day.
h. December 25th, which is Christmas Day.
i. Other days as designated by the Library Board:
    1. December 24th, which is Christmas Eve Day.
    2. December 31st, which is New Year's Eve Day.
    3. Good Friday which is the Friday before Easter.

D. Lending

1. All borrowers must be registered in the library's database to check out materials.

2. Materials shall be loaned for periods appropriately established by the Librarian and renewed for the same period at his/her discretion.

3. Reference materials can be loaned for a period appropriately established by a senior staff member on duty.

4. Current newspapers may not be loaned.

5. Reserve requests will be received for all materials. Materials are held on the shelf for three (3) days after the patron is notified.

6. Interlibrary loan – The lending library will pay postage to the patron/library and designate time of usage. Patron will abide by attached instructions and pay return postage at $4.00.

7. Book return – Materials may be placed in book return in front of the building when Library is not open. Only Library Staff have access to locked book return.

E. Equipment Usage

1. Photocopy Machine – located on the main floor of the Library is available to borrowers for copying library and other materials at twenty-five (25) cents per copy. Color copies are sixty (60) cents per copy.

2. Audio-visual equipment is available. The lending period is determined by the Librarian.

3. Fax Machine Services – available to patrons for receiving at ten (10) cents per page or sending at a rate of twenty-five (25) cents per page. The machine to be operated by staff.

4. Computer usage for Internet or Word Processor to be one hour for each patron. Copies printed will be twenty-five (25) cents per page.

F. Overdue

1. The Library patron assumes the responsibility to return library materials borrowed on or before the date the materials are due. If the patron has not returned the material on time, he/she has violated a policy established by the library governing board and is subject to any charges resulting from a violation of that policy.

   The Library has no responsibility on the part of the patron to send an overdue notice. The notice is given because material has not been returned according to established library policy. The patron is responsible for paying established charges resulting from a violation of library policy.

   All library fines shall be 10 cents per day.

   One day grace will be allowed except on research material.

2. Per Librarian discretion, patrons with an unpaid fine of 5.00 dollars or more will have their borrowing privileges suspended until the library materials and all late charges have been accounted for (returned or paid).

3. If a patron comes in to pay a long overdue/lost media, s/he will be charged the cost of the material.

   a. All charges for damaged and lost materials will be made by the Librarian in accordance with an established schedule and individual evaluation.

G. Confidentiality of Library Circulation Records

1. It is the policy of the Library Board to protect, as far as possible, the privacy of any patron who uses the Library and not to make any inquiry into the purposes for which a patron requests information or books. Records which may be required in controlling the use of books either on or off the premises of the library are for the sole purpose of protecting public property and such records are not to be used directly or indirectly to identify the kinds of materials used by individual library patrons, except insofar as the library may be helpful to such patrons in finding what s/he wants. Under no circumstances shall the staff of the library ever answer a third party about what a patron of the library is reading or calling for from the library's collections. Such information is privileged and if divulged would be an invasion of the patron's privacy.

2. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Library Board never to yield any information about its patrons or their reading to any agency of government, whether local, state, or federal without an order from a court of competent jurisdiction. Any costs incurred by the Library in any search through patron records under a court order shall be chargeable to the agency demanding such search.

IV. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

A. General Statement

To achieve the goal of good library service the Board of Trustees accepts the responsibility to see that public library building facilities are provided and maintained which will adequately meet the physical requirements of modern, aggressive library service. Such facilities will offer the community a compelling invitation to enter, read, look, listen, and learn. The building will fit an expanding program of library service.

B. Community Room(s) and Exhibit Areas

1. Use and Reservations

    a. The community room(s) may be used by groups which are nonprofit, educational, or cultural.

    b. Decisions regarding use of the community room(s) will be made at a regularly scheduled Library Board of Trustees meeting. Requests may be granted at the discretion of the Heart of America Library Director.

    c. Groups may schedule regular meetings on an annual basis at the discretion of the Board. “The library will not be responsible for any loss, damage, or theft of any individual’s or group’s materials stored, or left in the Library or Library Community Room(s).”

    d. As the Community Room(s) is provided, the library does not provide personnel to arrange furniture. Anyone using the Community Room(s) is responsible for arranging the furniture and returning the room to its previous arrangement.

    e. Library furniture or equipment other than that furnished in the Community Room(s) is not to be used without the Board’s approval.

    f. NO SMOKING is allowed in the meeting room and other areas of the public library.

    g. Library programs receive first consideration in scheduling all events. Library programs can pre-empt scheduled events.

    h. No admission fee may be charged by any group using the Community Room(s). Charges may possibly be approved, at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, for meetings sponsored by the library or an approved non-profit educational group or institution for classes, institutes, discussion groups, or forums.

    i. The room may not be reserved by commercial organizations. Sales cannot be held in the library other than library sponsored sales.

j. Social activities such as showers, recognition dinners, parties, etc. are not permissible.

k. Use of the Community Room(s) includes use of such facilities, and Library equipment. Each group is responsible for cleaning up after use and for replacement of lost or damaged equipment.

l. The Community Room(s) will be available for a Story Hour session once a week during the school year. Children participating shall be three (3) years old by August 31st or have an adult present.

m. Community Room(s) policies will be posted in the Community Room(s).

2. Exhibits

a. The public library is anxious to provide for the public as many attractive, educational, and cultural exhibits as possible. Use of exhibit space is welcomed.

b. No poster, display, pamphlet, brochure, leaflet, booklet, etc. shall be exhibited or placed in the library for distribution without permission from the Director. If art objects are on display, artists may display a card with the price and artist identification on the back.

c. No political, religious or commercial solicitation is permissible.

d. The Library assumes limited responsibility for the protection from possible damage or theft of any item(s) exhibited. The Library assumes no responsibility for losses exceeding the coverage of the Library's liability policy.

e. The Library does not provide personnel for registration and/or disbursement of exhibits.

C. Insurance

The Heart of America Library Board of Trustees will review all insurance policies annually to have adequate coverage on buildings, contents, worker's compensation, general liability, and personal injury.

V. TRAVEL EXPENSES

A. Expenses incurred by the Library staff members or Library Board members in attending professional meetings, conferences, and conventions for which the Heart of America Library will be responsible for are:

1. Round trip transportation costs as per County regulation.
2. Hotel-motel lodging expenses per County regulation.
3. Conference registration and other fees.
4. Meal allowance as per County regulation.

VI. DUES

The library shall pay state (NDLA) dues for the library. The dues are to include two (2) full-time staff members.

VII. PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

A. Publicity

All publicity concerning the library shall be the responsibility of the Director and the Board of Trustees.

B. Public Relations

The Board recognizes that public relations involve every person who has connections with the Library. The Board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that he or she represents the Library in every public contact.

HEART OF AMERICA LIBRARY

RUGBY, NORTH DAKOTA

APPENDIX

RELEASE FORM FOR
ADULT LIBRARY COLLECTION USE

My child _____age _____has my permission to use the Adult Library Collection. I will assume all responsibility for the materials that my child selects to read and realize that my child will have full access to this collection.

_____ _____
Month Day Year Signature of Parent or Guardian

RECOGNITION OF LIBRARY GIFT POLICY

I understand that the gift materials I give to the Library will be added to the Library collection ONLY if needed and can be disposed of at the discretion of the Director.

Material donated: _____

_____
Signature

_____
Date

EXHIBITOR'S AGREEMENT

In displaying items at the Heart of America Library, I understand that the library assumes limited responsibility for the protection from possible damage or theft of any item(s) exhibited. The Library assumes no responsibility for losses exceeding the coverage of the Library's liability policy.

_____ _____
Date Signature

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Author _____Book _____ Periodical _____ Other _____

Title _____

Publisher or Producer _____

Your Name _____Telephone _____

Address _____ City & State _____Zip _____

As the complainant, do you represent:

Yourself? _____

An Organization? (specify) _____

Another group? (specify) _____

1. To what do you object? (Please be specific. Give page number etc……)

_____

2. What do you feel might be the result of having this material in the library collection?

_____

3. For what age group would you recommend this material? _____
4. Is there anything good about the material? _____
5. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire material _____What parts? _____

_____

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this material by critics? _____
7. What do you believe is the theme or main idea of this material? _____
8. What would you like your library to do about this material? _____

_____

9. In its place, what material would you suggest serving a similar purpose in a better way?

_____

_____

Signature of Complainant

Heart of America Library
Internet/Computer Use Policy

The public library is an important forum where ideas can be explored, freely debated, and accepted or rejected by the individual. A key resource for enabling the library to fulfill this role is the Internet.

The Heart of America Library does not monitor information accessed over the Internet and cannot guarantee the validity or accuracy of information found on the Internet. Library patrons are advised, as with all library materials, to exercise judgment and discrimination when evaluating the usefulness and reliability of material found on the Internet.

The Heart of America Library assumes neither responsibility nor liability for any debt incurred by users from for-pay services available through the Internet. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the individual user to adhere to all local, state, and federal laws and regulations pertinent to use activities (i.e., sexual harassment, obscenity, copyright, etc.). Because the Heart of America Library monitors are visible to other library patrons and staff, Internet users must be aware of the sensitivities of others. The Heart of America Library staff has the discretionary power to terminate a user's access to the Internet.

Users must have rudimentary knowledge of how to use the Internet. Though the Heart of America Library staff will provide classes, when possible, library staff cannot help each patron learn the equipment.

Computer usage is limited to one hour per day per patron or up to the discretion of the Library Staff. Computers may be booked up to 24 hours in advance.

I have read the Heart of America Library policy on the Internet and agree to the conditions of use. This agreement is in effect until revoked by the user, or the parent in the case of a minor.

_____ _____
Signature of User Date

Print Name: _____ Phone #: _____

PARENTS: Do not sign this registration if you do not wish your child to have unsupervised access to the Internet or computer usage.

_____ _____
If the applicant is under 18, parent or guardian must sign in the presence of library staff. Date

HEART OF AMERICA LIBRARY

COMMUNITY ROOM(S) AGREEMENT

Users agree to observe the following regulations:

1. Use of the Community Room(s) includes use of such facilities, and equipment. The organization is responsible for cleaning up after use and for replacement of lost or damaged equipment.

2. Upon leaving the organization will turn off all lights in the meeting room and the restrooms.

3. It will be the responsibility of the person in charge of the meeting to see that all the people are out of the building.

4. A responsible member of the organization must sign the register provided. Any donation to the library will be appreciated.

ORGANIZATIONS FAILING TO MEET THESE CONDITIONS WILL FORFEIT THE PRIVILEGE OF FUTURE USE OF THE MEETING ROOM.

RELEASE: In consideration for the library permitting the organization to use the library's community room(s) for the purpose of conducting a meeting of the organization and its members, or for other permitted purposes, it is hereby agreed that the organization on its own behalf and that of its members releases, relinquishes and waives any and all claims against the City of Rugby, Pierce County and the Heart of America Library for liability, loss or damage whether past or future arising from the use by the organization of the Community Room(s) and the premises adjacent to the community room(s).

I HAVE READ THE COMMUNITY ROOM(S) AGREEMENT AND ATTACHED POLICY AND AGREE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROVISIONS CONTAINED THEREIN.

Dated at Rugby, North Dakota, this _____day of _____20____

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

_____

By _____

Title _____

HEART OF AMERICA LIBRARY

_____

Library Personnel

HEART OF AMERICA LIBRARY

COMMUNITY ROOM(S) POLICY

Use and Reservations:

a. The Community Room(s) may be used by groups which are non-profit educational or cultural.

b. Requests must be made before the Heart of America Library Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled Board meeting. A responsible member of the organization must sign the agreement provided.

c. Groups may schedule regular meetings on an annual basis at the discretion of the Board. “The library will not be responsible for any loss, damage or theft of any individual’s or groups materials stored or left in the library or library community room(s).”

d. As the Community Room(s) or library equipment is provided, the library does not provide personnel to arrange furniture or operate the equipment. Anyone using the Community Room(s) or the equipment is responsible for arranging the furniture and providing their own operator to run the equipment.

e. Library furniture or equipment other than that furnished in the community room(s) is not to be used without the Director’s approval.

f. This library is a NON-SMOKING facility.

g. Library programs receive first consideration in scheduling all events. Library programs can pre-empt scheduled events.

h. No admission fee may be charged by any group using the Community Room(s). Charges may possibly be approved for meetings sponsored by the library or an approved non-profit educational group or institution for classes, institutes, discussion groups or forums.

i. The room may not be reserved by commercial organizations. Sales cannot be held in the library other than library sponsored sales.

j. Social activities such as showers, recognition dinners, parties, etc. are not permissible.

k. Use of the Community Room(s) includes use of such facilities. Each group is responsible for cleaning up after use and for the replacement of lost or damaged equipment.

l. The Library does not provide personnel for registration and/or disbursement of exhibits.

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. Library 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.

Adopted June 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; amended June 28, 1967; amended January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996.

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights at https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations

THE FREEDOM TO READ

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

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

Heart of America Library, Board of Trustees, July 2010