



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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PHILOSOPHY

Collection development is the ongoing process of assessing materials for purchase or licensing and making decisions on their inclusion and on their retention. The process also includes the process of weeding items from the collection. Physical and digital collections will be developed to support the library’s mission: The Le Mars Public Library is an essential community resource that encourages the love of reading, the desire for learning and the growth in minds and in the community.

The library makes no attempt to assume the role of parents in monitoring, controlling, or curtailing the reading, listening, or viewing behavior of children. The library does not assume responsibility for the possible misuse of information found in the collections by young readers. Children have access to the entire collection. (see Unattended Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy)

The Le Mars Public Library subscribes to the principles embodied in the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read statement, and Library-Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. These statements are included in this document.

Responsibility for collection development lies with the Library Director and designated staff members.

Adopted by the Library Board on March 6, 2018, March 8, 2021; Oct 10, 2022, May 13, 2024

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SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The primary objective of the public library is to provide free and open access to the ideas and information available on a wide variety of subjects and in various formats. In a democratic society, individuals should feel free to explore all ideas to decide which are meaningful to them. Therefore, the library, within the limits of selection standards, budget and space, chooses materials that represent different views.

Budgetary and space constraints limit every library's ability to purchase material. The Library Director or designee purchases items based upon professional journal reviews, authors or subjects which have widespread demand, patron requests and availability. Consideration is given to materials which may be of interest to a few patrons as well as that of interest to many patrons. The library cannot own every title; therefore, Interlibrary Loan Services (borrowing/lending from/to other libraries) are available.

DONATION OF MATERIALS SEE, GIFT & DONOR POLICY

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

To ensure that the Library's collection is up-to-date and relevant to the community's needs, the need for materials previously added to the collection is reevaluated on a regular basis.

Materials will be withdrawn if they are out-of-date, worn, damaged, duplicated, or no longer being used. Space, the cost of replacement, and the appearance of the collection are also factors. Locally significant materials may be retained.

The library applies the same criteria for evaluating gift/donated items as in the purchase of new materials. Donated items will be withdrawn according to the same guidelines as purchased material. The Library is not required to notify donors of withdrawal or replacement of gift/donated items.

Withdrawn materials may be offered to other tax supported agencies, sold to the Friends of the Library, recycled, or discarded.

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 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.

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.

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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 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.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

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

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

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](#).

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.

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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

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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 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.

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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.

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.

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LIBRARY-INITIATED PROGRAMS AND DISPLAYS AS A RESOURCE: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for accessing information, education, and recreation. Article I of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS states, “Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves.” Library displays increase awareness of programs, resources, and services.

Library-initiated programs include, but are not limited to, lectures, displays, exhibits, community forums, performing and visual arts,¹ participatory workshops, technology programming, creative learning programming, wellness programs, story times, continuing education, fairs and conventions, book clubs, discussion groups, demonstrations, and presentations for social, cultural, educational, or entertainment purposes. Library-initiated programs may take place onsite at the library, off-site at other locations, or online, and may be provided by library workers, volunteers, or partners. Libraries may also choose to promote their programs, services, and resources through displays and digital signs.

Library-initiated programs and displays utilize library worker expertise for community interests, collections, services, facilities, and providing access to information and information resources. They introduce users and potential users to library resources and the library’s role as a facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.

Libraries should not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and shall ensure they have equitable access to library resources. Library-initiated programs and displays should comply with all applicable laws, including the standards and requirements of The Americans with Disabilities Act and state and local disability accessibility guidelines.² If a program is held in a location not controlled by the library, the library should assure that the space is accessible to all users. If users overflow designated event areas during library events, libraries should secure accessible public spaces (e.g., ramps, pathways, and emergency exit routes) to ensure access and safety for everyone. Reasonable accommodations should also be made to have interpretation or real-time captioning for the deaf or hard of hearing at library-initiated programs when needed or requested by library users.

“Socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented people, not just the mainstream majority, should be able to see themselves reflected in the resources and programs that libraries offer.”³ Libraries should actively seek to include a variety of programming options representing diversity of genres, formats, ideas, and expressions with a multitude of viewpoints and cultural perspectives that reflect the diversity in our communities. Library-initiated programs that cross language and cultural barriers introduce community members to the library’s resources and provide access to information. Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities should make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those who speak and read languages other than English, including advertising for such events.

Concerns, questions, or complaints about library-initiated programs and displays are handled according to the same written policy and procedures that govern reconsiderations of other library resources. These policies should apply equally to all people, including, but not limited to, library users, staff, and members of the governing body. The policies should set forth the library’s commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.

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Programs should not be canceled because of the ideas or topics of the program or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, nor should library workers censor or remove displays because someone may disagree with the content. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the program content or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, any more than the purchase of resources for the library collection or curation of a display constitutes an endorsement of the resources content or its creator's views. Libraries should vigorously defend the First Amendment right of speakers and participants to express themselves.

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 right to use a library encompasses all the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries create programs for an intended age group or audience based on educational suitability and audience interest; however, restrictions on participation based solely on the gender, chronological age, or educational level of users violate this right and should be enforced only when not doing so would adversely impact the safety of the participants or interfere with the intended purpose of the program. Parents and guardians may restrict their own children's access to library programs, but no person or organization can interfere in others' access and participation. A parent or guardian may discuss their child's access to and participation in library programs with their child, but may not impose those decisions on others, including other people's children.

Libraries should not deny access to library-initiated programs if patrons owe the library for overdue fines or other fees. If libraries charge program participants for supplies used, they should make every effort to reduce economic barriers to participation.

Any collection and retention of program participants' personal information should be on an opt-in basis only. While attendees may need to demonstrate their eligibility to attend the program by showing a library card or student ID, they should not be required to share their personal information in order to attend a library program.

¹ "Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries: An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS," adopted February 13, 2018, by ALA Council.

² "Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS," adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 2018.

³ "Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS," adopted June 27, 2017, by the ALA Council.

Adopted January 27, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended June 26, 1990; July 12, 2000; June 26, 2018 UNDER PREVIOUS NAME "Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource"; and June 24, 2019.

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STATEMENT OF CONCERN REGARDING LIBRARY RESOURCES

Concerned patrons are encouraged to contact the library director to discuss the issue. If requested, written objections will be taken to the Board of Trustees.

PROCESS:

To submit an objection to the Board of Trustees, pick-up a “Statement of Concern about Library Resources” form at the library’s front desk.

The person filing the form must live in a jurisdiction that provides tax support to the Le Mars Public Library as defined by Iowa Code.

To start the process of reconsideration, submit the completed form to the Library Director. After receiving the completed form, the Library Director will send a written response within 10 days.

If further action is requested, the Library Director will send the completed Statement of Concern to the Library Board of Trustees.

The written concern will be entered into the agenda under Correspondence at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

At the discretion of the Board President or presiding officer, the library board may allow up to 15 minutes of the board meeting for public comment. Each speaker may be allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes to address the board until the allotted time is up. In accordance with Iowa Code 21.3, the Board of Trustees will not act on Correspondence items.

The Board of Trustees may, or may not, place the Statement of Concern on the agenda as an action item for a future Board of Trustees meeting,

The resource named in the Statement of Concern will not be removed from the public during this process.

Please note that library board meetings are conducted in open session and the completed Statement of Concern, will become public information.

If the Board of Trustees reviews a resource named in a Statement of Concern, that resource will not be revisited for the next two years.

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STATEMENT OF CONCERN FORM REGARDING LIBRARY RESOURCES

To submit an objection to the Board of Trustees, pick-up a “Statement of Concern about Library Resources” form at the library’s front desk.