

Washington County Free Library

Collection Development Policy

General

Collection development refers to the ongoing process of assessing the materials available for purchase or licensing and making the decision, first on their inclusion, and second on their retention or removal. This policy defines the scope of the collection and provides a framework for the continuing development of materials and resources available at the Washington County Free Library (WCFL). This policy is a system-wide policy intended for application in all libraries within the Washington County Free Library System.

Selection Philosophy

The Washington County Free Library selects, maintains, and provides access to information, services, and materials in a variety of formats to fulfill the educational, informational, recreational, and cultural needs of the Washington County community. Since no library can possibly acquire all print and non-print materials, every library must, by necessity, employ a policy of selectivity in its acquisitions.

It is the function of the Washington County Free Library to provide materials for all citizens, inclusive of, but not limited to, age, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, religious or spiritual beliefs, race, ethnicity, disability, or national origin. Providing free access to these materials allows our entire community to explore, learn, create, and connect.

WCFL endeavors to provide a balanced and reliable collection covering a range of opinions across many subject areas; limitations are those of space and budget. A balanced collection provides information in a variety of formats and reflects the diverse interests, ideals, and needs of all segments of the community, and also allows for discovery, exploration and enlightenment. In order to achieve a balanced collection, selectors will exercise open-mindedness and flexibility when evaluating materials for inclusion into the collection. Selection is based upon established library principles.

Labels, such as call numbers or genre designation, will be added only as viewpoint-neutral directional aids. Labels will not be added to materials as a value judgment or to warn of content or themes in an item.

Because items move back and forth between branches, and within the three library systems covered by the Western Maryland Regional Library, all materials will not be available at all branches. Materials that are no longer used in one branch may be reassigned to another.

Statement of Responsibility

The ultimate responsibility for collection development rests with the Executive Director, who operates within the framework of policies established by the Washington County Free Library Board of Trustees. The Executive Director delegates collection development responsibilities to a professional staff with the authority to interpret and apply the Collection Development Policy and provide continuity in collections through an organized structure for budgeting, selecting, acquiring, and managing library materials.

The WCFL Board of Library Trustees, under advisement from the Executive Director, has adopted this Collection Development Policy and has included the following documents:

- The Library Bill of Rights (American Library Association) – see *Addendum A*.
- The Freedom to Read Statement (American Library Association and Association of American Publishers) – see *Addendum B*.
- Freedom To View Statement (American Film and Video Association) – see *Addendum C*.

The Washington County Free Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom and does not endorse particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsement of the viewpoint of the author or content of the item. Choice of library materials and resources for personal use is an individual matter. Any patron is free to reject materials for their own use if that patron does not personally approve of them.

The Washington County Free Library does not stand in loco parentis. Parents and/or legal guardians, not Library staff, are responsible for monitoring their children's use of reading, viewing, and listening material. The freedom of access for a minor to library materials and resources may be restricted by the minor's parent or legal guardian.

If a patron requests that an item be removed from the collection, the material will remain in the collection until all review procedures are followed and an official decision is made (see the *Material Reconsideration Policy*).

Formats

WCFL collects materials in a variety of formats, including print, media, and digital. When choosing a format for a physical item, consideration is given to the condition and durability of the materials used in the item's construction and how the item will hold up over time. Materials which are delicate or require special handling may not be suitable for the collection.

When selecting media and digital materials, the most commonly used format is chosen, with consideration to accessibility. Formats rendered obsolete due to the prevalence of a new format will not be added to the collection.

Selection Goals

1. The goal of collection development is to develop and maintain a collection of relevant, popular, and useful library materials for the residents of Washington County. WCFL acquires, organizes, and makes available materials and resources in a variety of formats which:

- Meet the informational and recreational needs of the community.
- Inspire and cultivate a love of books and reading.
- Support lifelong learning for all ages, abilities, educational levels, and backgrounds.
- Support cultural, recreational, business, and civic activities in the community.
- Contribute to an individual's self-understanding and growth.
- Support workforce development.
- Offer knowledge of, and insight into, a wide range of human and social conditions.
- Present a variety of viewpoints and opinions on a subject.
- Preserve the local history of Washington County and the surrounding area.

2. The collection will include subjects of lasting value, as well as subjects of current local, national, and international interest.

3. Materials may be acquired on the basis of their artistic, historical, literary, or scientific merit, and/or to satisfy the cultural, educational, informational, or recreational interests of the community.

4. The specific aim of the Children's collection is to provide materials and resources in a variety of formats which will anticipate and meet the diversified needs, interests, tastes, and backgrounds of children from infancy through age twelve.

5. The specific aim of the Teen collection is to provide materials and resources for young people ages thirteen through nineteen. Recognizing that adolescence is a period of rapid physical, mental, and emotional growth, and taking into account the many levels of maturity and sophistication of this age group, materials and resources are selected which vary in format, content, and reading difficulty.

6. Materials are acquired in accordance with the principles of freedom to read, view, or hear; no Library materials will be excluded based on expressions, including, but not limited to, race, religious or spiritual views, gender, nationality, politics, or social views, or because of the race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, or the political, social, or religious views of the author.

7. Gift materials and donations, with the exception of the Local Voices Collection, are judged using the same standards that apply to purchased materials.

Selection Criteria

There is no single standard which can be applied to all materials included in the Library's collection. Some materials are selected to meet informational and educational needs. Others may be evaluated primarily in terms of their artistic merit or chosen to satisfy patron demand.

Materials are evaluated as a whole rather than on the basis of a particular section or isolated passage. Works which accurately present an aspect of life will not be excluded because of frankness of expression or explicit language.

To build a diversified, user-focused collection which supports the Library's mission, certain criteria are used:

- Demonstrated or anticipated user demand.
- Relevance to community needs.
- Contemporary significance or permanent value.
- Critical views and evaluations of materials in professional library journals or receipt of, or nomination for, major awards or prizes.
- Professional or literary reputation of the author, publisher, or producer.
- Publication date.
- Cost and availability of material.
- Availability of same or similar material in other collections to which the library system can provide access.
- Comprehensiveness, currency, authority, depth of treatment of the subject, and accuracy of content.
- Relation to and relative importance of in comparison with other materials on a subject.
- Diversity and balance of viewpoint.
- Physical durability.
- Availability and suitability of the format for library use and suitability of format to the content and the intended audience.

**An item need not meet all of the above criteria in order to be acceptable.*

Titles may be acquired in multiple formats when appropriate, as space and budgets allow. At times, a digital edition may be deemed more appropriate than the physical edition depending on accessibility, ease of use, and cost-effectiveness.

Space and budgetary limits apply; WCFL has both a finite budget and a finite amount of space and cannot acquire or retain all materials on every subject.

Duplicate copies of certain titles are appropriate in cases of consistently heavy demand and the number of copies acquired will reflect the expected usage. However, duplication should not occur to such a degree that it adversely affects the breadth or scope of the Library's collection.

Patron Suggestions

Patrons wishing to have a title evaluated for purchase may suggest a title in person at any service desk or use the *Purchase Suggestion Form* located on the WCFL's website. In order to make a purchase suggestion, patrons must have an active library card.

The Washington County Free Library also participates in the state of Maryland's Interlibrary Loan service, called Marina, through the State Library Resource Center and titles not added to the collection may be requested through Interlibrary Loan.

Donations

The Washington County Free Library accepts donations of books and other materials with the understanding that they may be used in the collection or disposed of according to the needs of the Library. The material will be evaluated by the same selection criteria standards employed for the purchase of new materials. If the material is deemed not suitable because of condition, duplication, outdated information, or other considerations, WCFL reserves the right to discard, sell, or refer such material to another institution or to the Friends of the Library for resale (all proceeds which benefit the Library directly or indirectly). Donations may or may not be used at the branch library where the donation was received.

Due to space constraints and limited processing resources, WCFL is unable to accept all materials offered to us. Donors who have books that are in good condition that they believe would be appropriate for the WCFL's circulating collections should contact their local branch. Branch managers or department heads will send any items determined to be viable candidates for inclusion in the collection to the Collection Management Department for a final decision. The decision of the Head of Collection Management or the Director of Operations will be final. Generally, the library will not accept donations of textbooks, magazines, or reference works superseded by later editions, unless prior permission is given by the Head of Collection Management.

Due to the volume of donations received, the Library cannot track or return unsolicited items received from publishers or individuals. The Library can supply the donor with a receipt if one is requested at the time of donation, but the Library cannot determine the value of a donation for tax purposes.

Gifts

The Washington County Free Library welcomes gifts of books and other materials that strengthen the Library's collection and/or support the preservation of our local history. Gifts to be added to the regular collection must fall within needed subject categories as determined by Collection Management Department or the Director of Operations (see below for information on books or other materials intended for the Western Maryland Room).

The acceptance of gifts strengthens the relationship between the Library and its communities and provides a way by which a donor can share their intellectual interests with future generations. Gifts will be held to the same collection and evaluation standard as purchased items.

Gifts are accepted with the understanding that they become the property of the Washington County Free Library, and that the Library will make all necessary decisions as to their retention, location, cataloging, and other considerations related to their use and disposition. Donated materials which have been added to the collection will not automatically be replaced if worn-out, damaged, or lost, or if they become obsolete.

Special terms or conditions requested by the donor should be discussed with the Head of Collection Management before the gift is accepted. Once a gift is transferred to the Library, no part of it will be returned. It is the responsibility of the Head of Collection Management or their designee to review donations and make selection decisions based on the collection development philosophies and policies of the Library and of the subject area involved.

The Washinton County Free Library cannot assess the value of gifts made to the Library. Valuation should be determined by the donor; however, a general receipt may be requested.

Donors are granted the same right to access and use materials they have gifted as other members of the public (i.e., materials may be accessed after they have been processed, during normal business hours, and in accordance with WCFL's rules and regulations).

Prospective donors of rare books, personal papers, photographs, artifacts, or other items of historical importance will be referred to the Head of Information Services, who will evaluate the appropriateness of the gift for addition to the Western Maryland Room. Special terms or conditions requested by the donor should be discussed with the Head of information Services before the gift is accepted; the Director of Public Services will make the final determination. Once a gift is transferred to the library, no part of it will be returned and the donor will be granted the same right to access and use materials they have donated as other members of the public.

Suitable as Gifts:

1. Current within the last three years.
2. Items that have the potential for receiving high use.
3. Items that are in good physical condition.
4. Items of historical value, especially local or state historical material not owned by area libraries.
5. Items that possess prestigious, rare, unique characteristics.
6. Matches the criteria for inclusion into the collection within the existing Collection Development Policy
7. Items that duplicate items WCFL already owns, if:
 - There is high demand for the item.
 - It is an updated edition or in better physical condition.
 - WCFL's copy is found to be missing.

Not Suitable as Gifts:

1. Items in poor physical condition (e.g., stained, marked, mold or mildew damaged, mutilated, disfigured, bumped, scared, bridled, and underlined pages).

2. Items that are part of a series, with the exception that it would complete an existing series within the collection.
3. Items which are lacking any reviews or are poorly reviewed in professional reviewing sources or are duplicates of items the Library already owns in sufficient quantity.
4. Superseded editions, textbooks, magazines, or magazine subscriptions.
5. eBooks or downloadable audiobooks.
6. Materials more appropriate for a different type of library (e.g., academic, school, or special)
7. Items which are similar to titles found in the already existing collection that add no additional value to the collection.
8. Outdated materials, especially in the disciplines where the most current, recent, and accurate information is crucial.
9. Pamphlets, especially if brief (less than fifty pages), without any extraordinary value or added enhancement to the collection

Memorial Donations

Monetary donations may be made to WCFL to support the purchase of library materials. Such gifts may be in the memory of an individual, in which case a memorial book plate is added. Collection development selection criteria also apply in these cases. The donor may specify the general type of material that would be appropriate, the amount of the contribution, and persons to be notified of the donation, but not specific titles.

An acknowledgement letter recognizing the donor will be sent to the donor by the Head of Collection Management. Each item will have a gift plate indicating the donor and the individual in whose memory or honor the item was purchased.

Local Voices Collection

To support and showcase the creativity of the local community, the Washington County Free Library has established the Local Voices Collection. Local writers, musicians, and filmmakers may donate their self-published or independently-published books, CDs, and DVDs for inclusion in the Local Voices Collection.

The following guidelines apply:

- Authors/creators must live, work, or own property in Western Maryland (Washington, Garrett, or Allegany Counties) and have a library card from WCFL, the Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County, or the Allegany County Library System.
- Adult or young adult books or media will be accepted.
- Authors/creators will donate one copy of their work to the Library. This can be a book, CD, or DVD. The Library cannot currently accept donated electronic books or digital files for inclusion in the circulating collection.

- Item must be bound, published, or professionally produced, within the last five years. (i.e. self-published or print-on-demand is fine, but photocopied-and-stapled is not). Spiral or comb bindings are not acceptable. CDs and DVDs must have printed labels, not hand-written.)
- Because these materials are not typically reviewed in sources used by Library selectors, and to provide access to as broad a range of voices as possible, WCFL is not applying the Collection Development Policy criteria for these materials. Furthermore, the Library makes no comment, distinction, or endorsement of the quality, content, or opinions expressed in any work in this collection.
- The library may add donated books to the Local Voices Collection but does not purchase titles for this collection.
- Materials added to the Local Voices Collection are at the discretion of the Washington County Free Library. The decision of the Director of Operations will be final.
- Donations become the property of WCFL. The work will be held in the Local Voices Collection for at least three years. Items that are damaged or become excessively worn before the three years are up may be withdrawn at any time. In this case, the author will be given the chance to donate an additional copy as a replacement.
- After three years, the work may be withdrawn according to guidelines laid out in the Collection Development Policy, based on circulation and/or condition. The Library bears no responsibility to notify the author/creator if the work is withdrawn after three years or to return the item to the author/creator.
- If a work falls within WCFL's Collection Development Policy criteria, the Library reserves the right to move the work to the permanent collection and/or purchase additional copies.

Submissions to the Local Voices Collection will be accepted through the *Local Voices Submission Form* located on the Library's website. Once the submission has been approved, submissions may be dropped off or mailed to the Fletcher Branch in Hagerstown, care of the Collection Management Department.

Professional Collection

The Washington County Free Library purchases a small collection of professionally focused materials for library staff. The materials from the Professional Collection are also available for patrons to borrow, although staff requests will be given priority.

Special Collections

WCFL recognizes both the importance of preserving the informational and historical resources unique to Washington County and Western Maryland, and the responsibility of the Library to provide access to these unique resources through its Special Collections, primarily, but not exclusively, housed in the Western Maryland Room at the Fletcher Branch in Hagerstown.

These collections provide access to traditional and non-traditional noncirculating library materials including, but not limited to, a genealogical collection, books, manuscripts, scrapbooks, maps, periodicals, microforms, digital content, vertical files, photographs, pamphlets, and other ephemera that preserve our rich local history and are accessible to all residents and interested parties.

Special conditions may apply to the collection development and management of these collections as determined by the Head of Information Services, the Director of Public Services, and the Head of Collection Management.

Digital and Electronic Resources

Selection of and access to digital and electronic resources are integral to fulfilling the mission and objectives of the Washington County Free Library. WCFL provides a number of web-based electronic and digital resources available via the Library's website, selected using the criteria outlined in this Collection Development Policy. These are considered a part of the Library's collection. However, not all materials and information found via the Internet are part of the collection.

Access to digital materials and the electronic databases may change yearly, depending on budgetary concerns, usage statistics, and other considerations, and digital resources are subject to the same kind of collection maintenance to which physical resources are subject.

Collection Limits

The Washington County Free Library values its relationship with the Washington County Public Schools, however, with the potential exception of materials or databases selected for and paid for by the Barbara Ingram School of the Arts, WCFL does not purchase textbooks, workbooks, or other academically focused works unless they represent the best source of information for the general public. All items must fit in standard library collection space and stand up to normal library wear and tear.

The Washington County Free Library will not remove materials from the collection in response to concerns or decisions made by the Washington County Public Schools to remove items from their collections.

Legal, medical, technical, and academic resources are acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the layperson.

The library may select materials in languages other than English. However, these materials are not meant to be comprehensive, but are a revolving selection of materials for these population groups.

Collection Maintenance

Collection maintenance is a necessary component of collection development. It increases shelf space for new materials, provides a better browsing experience for patrons, allows for the removal of outdated and worn materials, and ensures that the collection continues to meet community needs.

Continuous evaluation is necessary to ensure that WCFL's materials are useful and accessible. Library collections will be reviewed on a consistent basis for accuracy, currency, usage, diversity, and subject area gaps in order to optimize space and available collection development budget and keep the collection responsive to community needs. Items will be regularly withdrawn to keep the collection current, accurate, and appealing based on the following criteria:

- No longer in demand.
- Worn or damaged.
- No longer timely or accurate.
- Superseded by a new edition.
- Excess number of copies in relation to demand.

Collection maintenance will be systematic and continuous and will be done at the same rate that materials are being added to the collection unless a particular part of the collection is being developed. Items will also be assessed in relation to shelf space and the impact of a given item balanced with the contribution of the item to the overall collection.

Withdrawn items that are in good condition may be sold, with proceeds benefiting the Library. Items that are worn or damaged, but still in demand, may be repurchased at the discretion of the Collection Management staff. Requests for replacement copies may be forwarded to the Collection Management Department. However, it is the Library's policy not to automatically replace all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear even if they are still

circulating. The need for replacement will be judged on a case-by-case basis and the decision of the Head of Collection Management or the Director of Operations is final. Certain materials of long-term value and/or usefulness may be preserved through binding, microfilming, or other techniques.

Low use of electronic and digital products or unsustainable price increases may result in their discontinuance.

Addendum A: 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.

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*.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

Addendum B: 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.

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.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

A Joint Statement by:

- American Library Association
- Association of American Publishers
- Subsequently endorsed by:
- American Booksellers for Free Expression
- The Association of American University Presses
- 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

Addendum C: 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

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement>