



## **MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

It is in the public interest for libraries to make available the widest possible diversity of views and expressions. Freedom is meaningless if it is accorded only to the accepted and inoffensive. The freedom to read, hear and view is essential to our democracy. The library will therefore build and maintain a large well-balanced collection of print and non-print materials that reflects a range of viewpoints on a variety of subjects. The Board of Trustees of the VWPLD believes that censorship is a purely individual matter and declares that, while individuals are free to reject materials for themselves, they do not have the right to restrict another's freedom to read, hear, or view. The board also believes that it is the responsibility of parents to monitor and supervise their own children's choice of library materials.

### **General Criteria for Selection**

The selection of materials will be governed by the Mission Statement.

**Library Board Responsibilities** : The responsibility for the policy governing the inclusion of materials in the library collection rests with the board of trustees. The board endorses the American Library Association's "Freedom to Read" statement, the "Library Bill of Rights," and the "Freedom to View" statement. (Attached at the end of this policy). The board delegates the actual task of selection to the library director and to those professional staff members knowledgeable in each of the various subject areas who choose materials that support the Mission Statement adopted by the board.

**Library Staff Responsibilities** : In accordance with Illinois library law, overall responsibility for collection development, including selection, ordering, maintaining and weeding of all library materials shall be delegated to the library director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the board. Under the library director's direction, members of the professional staff who are qualified by education and training may participate in selection and weeding of library materials.

All members of the staff, library trustees, and patrons may recommend titles for purchase. All requests are given serious consideration. An attempt will be made to borrow through interlibrary loan any requested item which is out of print or which the library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

The collection is designed to meet the needs of the residents of the library district. It is the duty of the staff to acquire materials which meet these needs, even though the materials may present views contrary to the personal beliefs of staff members, library trustees, community organizations or individuals. No employee may be disciplined or dismissed for the selection of library materials when the selection is made in good faith and in accordance with this written Materials Selection Policy. ( 75 ICS 5/4-7.2.)

**Parameters of the Collection** : To meet the needs of the community, the library must build and maintain a diverse and balanced collection of quality materials, including items of temporary significance and permanent value. Because the library serves a public with a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading skills, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity. All formats will be considered when selecting materials.



**Standards for Selection** : VWPLD policy directs that the selection of books and/or other library materials shall be made on the basis of their value to interest, enlighten, and inform all residents of the library district. No library material shall be excluded because of the race, nationality, political or social views of the creator.

**Selection of materials is influenced by their:**

- Significance, both current and historical, and permanent value to the existing collection
- Input garnered from critical reviews and selection sources
- Cost
- Reputation and qualifications of the creator, publisher or producer
- Timeliness or currency of subject matter
- Suitability of subject and presentation for intended audience
- Quality of format, including technical quality and durability
- Patron demand
- Hardware and software requirements
- Ease of use (user friendliness, searchability, connectivity)
- Availability

**Selection Tools** : Because it is impossible for librarians to examine all items being considered for purchase, they depend on reliable selection aids and standard sources, including, but not limited to, book review journals, standard bibliographies, and best-seller lists.

**Censorship** : Although it is occasionally necessary to restrict access to certain materials to prevent theft or mutilation, VWPL will not segregate materials on the basis of controversial subject matter. Material shall not be removed from the library collection solely because the ideas and/or topics presented may be objectionable to an individual patron or group of patrons. The library does not endorse opinions contained in its collection. Patrons are free to enjoy, dislike, or ignore any item in the collection. However, no one is free to restrict another's use of library materials. Once an item has been accepted under the Materials Selection Policy, it will not be removed at the request of those who disagree with its inclusion into the collection unless it can be proved that the retention of the item would be in violation of this policy.

**Reconsideration of Library Materials** : Patrons with complaints about library materials shall be referred to the adult services librarian or to the children's librarian, depending on the level of the material. Should this discussion not resolve the problem, the individual should be referred to the library director to discuss the material. After discussion with the library director, patrons who wish to pursue questions about reconsideration of materials in the collection must then prepare a formal written complaint by completing the Library Material Reconsideration Form. The board shall be notified of the receipt of all such completed forms. Upon receipt of a completed form, the library director and the professional staff will review the material and make a decision regarding action to be taken. The library director shall promptly, by written notification, inform the individual who has raised the question and the board of the decision which has been made.



In the event that the decision made by the library director and the professional staff is not satisfactory to the individual, the individual has the right to present the complaint to the board. This shall be accomplished by written request to the president of the board, asking that the matter be placed on the agenda of a regular board meeting. The president of the board shall then schedule this within a reasonable period of time, and shall provide written notice to the requester of the date and time of the meeting at which the board will consider the matter. The board shall review the matter in question and base the final decision concerning action to be taken on the criteria for selection and maintenance of the collection as defined in its official Materials Selection Policy. The item will remain available to patrons during the reconsideration process. The person who has raised the question shall receive written notification of the action taken by the board. The decision on reconsideration of a specific item from the board is final and will remain in effect for three years.

**Gifts** : VWPLD gratefully accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be considered for addition to the collection in accordance with the Materials Selection Policy. Collections of books and other materials that necessitate special housing or otherwise cannot be integrated into the general collection are not usually accepted. The library reserves the right to sell or otherwise dispose of gift materials not added to the collection; for example, it may donate the items to the VWPLD Friends of Warner Library for sale. VWPLD accepts and encourages gifts of money. Recommendations from the donor are honored insofar as the suggestions are in accord with the “Materials Selection Policy.” Conditions attached to gifts of money are subject to approval by the library board of trustees.

**Sale and Disposition of Library Materials** : The collection of the VWPLD will be evaluated as an ongoing process in order to find areas that need strengthening, as well as to identify materials that will be withdrawn. VWPLD’s holdings are continuously evaluated by the professional staff in order to maintain a useful collection that meets the needs of the community. Outdated and unused materials are withdrawn. Items are discarded if there are more duplicate copies than needed or if the material is in poor condition or in obsolete formats. Lost or missing items may be replaced if they are deemed to be of further use to the collection. Books and non-print materials from the library's collection or from gifted materials may be discarded, sold, or with the approval of the library board of trustees, given to local philanthropic, educational, cultural, governmental, or other not-for-profit organizations. Any other personal property having an individual value of less than \$100 may, at the discretion of the library director, be discarded, traded in for new equipment, or be made available for sale. In the case of individual surplus items having current value of \$100 or more, the board may authorize trade-in of such items on new equipment or sale of such items in accordance with the provisions of Illinois library law. Materials withdrawn from the library’s circulating collection may be donated to the Friends of Warner Library for sale, with the proceeds directly benefiting the library. Withdrawn items may also be placed in one of the Little Free Libraries the library maintains throughout the district.

**Textbooks** : Textbooks will not be acquired except as such materials serve the general public.

### **Archive and Special Collections**



**Purpose and Scope of Vespasian Warner Public Library's Special Collections** : The purpose of special collections is to preserve materials that document the history of Illinois, DeWitt County, the cities and towns in the VWPLD (Clinton, Wapella, DeWitt, Hallsville, Midland City, Lane, Clintonia, Kenney), and Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant. We also collect some rare books. These materials are available to researchers and the general public; we do require our patrons to fill out registration forms. The library holds these materials in trust for future generations; they can only be examined within the library building in areas designated by staff. Special collections' area of interest is the history of Illinois, specifically the history of DeWitt County. Subject areas include, but are not limited to the railroad, farming, law (lawyers, the county courthouse, the Eighth Judicial Circuit, etc.), land speculation, early settlers, Weldon Springs, WPA Projects, Revere Ware, and prominent individuals and events. Materials on these subjects will not be declined based on language or period.

The collection houses materials in a variety of formats including, but not limited to, books, pamphlets, posters, diaries, letters, maps, photographs and negatives, postcards, scrapbooks, microfilm, art and prints, videotapes, and artifacts. We do not collect periodicals except under special circumstances.

**Purchases, Gifts, and Loans** : Due to budget constraints, we are not in a position to purchase items for special collections. All items must be donated. Donations will be accepted provided that (a) there is a signed Deed of Gift that legally transfers ownership and intellectual property of the materials to VWPLD, and (b) the donor does not require excessive restrictions of use. We will also need to know and have a record of the provenance of the gift. We do not have the space needed to accept items that are on deposit/loan, unless such an arrangement is approved by the library director. The only exception is the temporary loan of items for an exhibition.

**Discarding Materials** : VWPLD reserves the right to dispose of any materials inappropriate to our collections. Options include returning materials to donors or offering collections to other institutions (when feasible). The donor's preference should be noted on the Deed of Gift.

**Right of Refusal** : Due to space constraints, we have the right to refuse any item offered to us. Donations may be refused for the following reasons.

- The donation does not fit the scope of our collection.
- The donation is too large, and we would not have the necessary space to house it.
- The donation is in a condition that might harm other materials in the collection. This could mean the gift is dirty, moldy, or odorous.
- The donation is not appropriate for an archive or special collection.



## **AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION 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.

*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](#)

[Retrieved from [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org) on September 3, 2014]

## **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.



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

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## **FREEDOM TO VIEW**

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 ensure the constitutional guarantees 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.

[Retrieved from [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org) on September 3, 2014]

### Form I—Complaint About Library Material

Material: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint Represents: \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \_\_\_\_\_ Organization

Reason for Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Took Form II: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Date Form II Returned: \_\_\_\_\_



## Form II—Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher or Distributor: \_\_\_\_\_

Request Initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Request represents \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

List Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you read or viewed the entire work? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, what parts?

2. To what in the material do you object? Please be specific: cite pages or sections.

3. What good or valuable features do you find in the material?

4. What do you believe is the theme of this work?

5. What do you feel might be the result of reading or viewing this material?

Have you read any reviews of this material? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, specify:

Do you think this material would be more appropriate for a different age group? \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain:

What would you like the library to do about this material?



Can you recommend other material that would convey as valuable a picture and/or perspective of the subject treated? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please specify:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEED OF GIFT FORM**

I own the materials described below and voluntarily donate them to the Vespasian Warner Public Library District to become its permanent property and to be administered in accordance with established policies. The purpose and intent of this gift is to transfer and assign all rights, title, and interest I possess to these materials to the library. This includes the intellectual property, as well as physical ownership. The VWPLD may use its discretion to dispose of material inappropriate for its collections, unless instructions to return unwanted materials to the donor are stated below.

Description of materials:

Restrictions on the use of and/or access to these materials:

*I/We revoke any and all rights to the physical and intellectual property of these items.\* (\_\_\_\_\_)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature(s) of Donor(s) or Agent(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Library Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*\* Please initial in the parentheses to indicate you have read this statement.*





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