

# **Allegan District Library Collection Development Policy**

## **Mission and Purpose**

The mission of the Allegan District Library is to inspire our community to explore and learn throughout their lifetime by providing access to resources, technology, and welcoming spaces. The vision of the library is a lifetime of learning, growth, and connection. Additionally, the Allegan District Library has seven core values, including: literacy promotion to people of all ages and backgrounds; a welcoming, knowledgeable, and committed team; the balance of adapting to the needs of our community while also preserving our local history; barrier-free open access to all; active community participation and collaboration; and fiscal responsibility, truthfulness, and accountability.

The Allegan District Library selects and makes accessible materials which support our mission, vision, and core values. Additionally, the Allegan District Library follows the guidelines adopted by the American Library Association in the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View Statements.

## **Scope**

Collection development at the Allegan District Library focuses on offering a choice of format, viewpoints, and level of difficulty. Materials for varying levels of education and differing social and religious customs are provided and are included on the open shelves of the collection. The library supports the right of each individual to privately read, listen, and view the full range of published thought and ideas.

Items which may be viewed as controversial or offensive may appropriately be selected if their inclusion will contribute to the balance and effectiveness of the Library collection as a whole.

We endorse the American Library Association's Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements.

## **Objectives**

1. The library assures open access to its holdings for all patrons. We recognize that while individuals are free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, they cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, listen, and view within any guidelines and policies set forth by the library.
2. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing choices of their own minor children. The Library does not stand in the place of parents (*in loco parentis*).
3. We believe that material selection is the key to a good library and requires the best possible professional and critical attention. Materials must be chosen not only for their intrinsic merit, but for their relationship to the collection as a whole and with an awareness of the availability of the materials through interlibrary loan.
4. The library is responsible for providing materials to residents and taxpayers of all ages, backgrounds, and opinions. The library collection taken as a whole will strive to

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be an unbiased and balanced source of information, representing as many viewpoints as possible. Subjects will be covered in sufficient depth and breadth to meet anticipated and expressed individual and community needs.

5. A solid collection of materials should have:
  - a. Up-to-date information on both current and historical topics.
  - b. Entertainment and recreation, including popular and contemporary works as well as those of enduring worth.
  - c. Materials to aid patrons in both formal and self-guided education.
  - d. Materials to promote informed participation in the affairs of contemporary society.
  - e. Materials which encourage and enhance personal and intellectual growth.
  - f. A variety of viewpoints on controversial questions, with a balance of opinion represented whenever available.
  - g. Resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.
  - h. Consideration of the needs of historically oppressed, underrepresented, and underserved groups; specific attention should be paid with an eye towards diversity and inclusion of the collection.

### **Patron Suggestions**

Suggestions from patrons are welcome and provide information about community interests and unmet collection needs of patrons. All suggestions are assessed using the same selection criteria as other items added to the collection. The library provides an Item Request Form for patron suggestions.

### **Exclusions**

If an item is not chosen for the library's collection, it may be excluded because it does not measure up to the library's standards, because the library already has adequate coverage in the subject, or because of budget limitations. Materials may be excluded which may be libelous or promote racial or religious intolerance or hatred.

### **Gifts**

The library accepts gifts of books and materials without commitment as to final disposition. Gift additions must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. Final disposition of gifts lies with the library. Generally, items not added to the collection will be sold by the Library's Friends Committee at the library, offered to other libraries or agencies, or recycled as necessary.

### **Collection Maintenance**

A constant ongoing evaluation of the collection is necessary to identify outdated and damaged items which will be discarded. This is essential to maintain the most economical utilization of space and to maintain the library's reputation for the reliability and accuracy of its materials. Worn, dated, unused, or damaged items will be withdrawn from the collection. The library strives to use environmentally sound practices when disposing of withdrawn items.

## **Requests for Reconsideration**

The Library Director will be available to talk with a patron to determine the reason for their objection to any items in question. If the problem cannot be resolved in this manner, the patron should fill out the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form. The completed form will be forwarded by the Library Director to the Library Board's Facilities Committee within seven days. The Library Director will acknowledge in writing the receipt of the Reconsideration Form and outline the procedure for the patron.

The Facilities Committee will review the questioned material to be sure that all selection criteria were met. The committee will present its opinion and recommendation to the Board of Trustees at the next official meeting. The Board of Trustees will take action on the committee recommendation and will send a letter to the patron stating their decision. The decision of the Board is final. Persons still wishing to express concerns to the Board will be heard during a regular meeting under the agenda item Public Comment.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Facilities Committee every three years.

## **Appendices**

- A.** American Library Association Library Bill of Rights
- B.** American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement
- C.** American Library Association Freedom to View Statement
- D.** Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources Form

## 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 (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>).

## The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association (/)

Association of American Publishers (<http://www.publishers.org/>)

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers for Free Expression (<http://www.bookweb.org/abfe>)

The Association of American University Presses (<http://www.aaupnet.org/>)

The Children's Book Council (<http://www.cbcbooks.org/>)

Freedom to Read Foundation (<http://www.ftfrf.org>)

National Association of College Stores (<http://www.nacs.org/>)

National Coalition Against Censorship (<http://www.ncac.org/>)

National Council of Teachers of English (<http://www.ncte.org/>)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression



## **Freedom to View Statement**

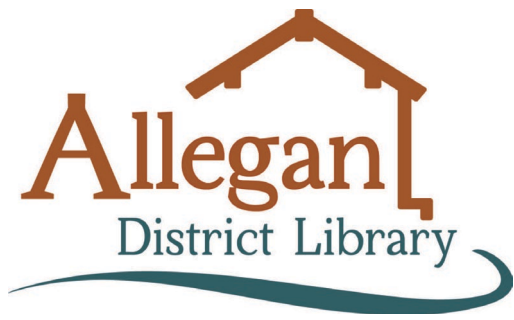
The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

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

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

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

**(/offices/oif)**



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Allegan MI 49010  
269-673-4625  
www.alleganlibrary.org

Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources

Request initiated by \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_\_ Book                      \_\_\_\_\_ Film                      \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Magazine                      \_\_\_\_\_ Audio Recording                      \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper  
\_\_\_\_\_ Library Program  
\_\_\_\_\_ Electronic Information/Database (please specify)

What brought this resource to your attention?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title

\_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you read (listen to, watch) the entire resource? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, what parts?

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you believe is the subject of this resource?

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved: 12-01

What concerns you about this resource?

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Are there resource(s) you would like to suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your recommendations concerning this resource?

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