



## Tom Green County Library Collection Development Policy

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Tom Green County Library Collection Development Policy is to carry out the library's mission of providing tools and resources that will afford each resident of the county the opportunity to succeed in a quest for knowledge, information, and personal enrichment. To this end, the library strives to offer a rich and varied collection of information resources and materials that represent diverse thought and ideology. According to budgetary and space limitations, the library orders and acquires materials of permanent value and current interest that foster intellectual growth and personal development. The Library does not endorse the opinions expressed in these materials. Rather, the Library is fulfilling its responsibility to provide unrestricted access to materials presenting various points of view and belief systems.

**SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS:** When considering the library's collection development policy, "selection" refers to the established procedures and guidelines under which print resources, audio visual material and electronic resources are added to and retained in the collection. Selection in no way relates to the public's use of the library collection. Patrons should exercise their own discretion when determining what books, materials, or other resources in the library's collection they choose to peruse or borrow.

**SELECTION PROCESS:** Selection of materials is carried out by key library staff according to assigned subject areas. Collection development tools such as professional journals, citations and reviews, Core Collections, and trade catalogs are referred to when considering titles for purchase. Patron requests and recommendations for material are encouraged and always considered when selecting material for the library collection. As standard practice, selectors order materials two months in advance of publication date to ensure timely arrival and availability within the library's collection.

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:** Material is evaluated and considered for inclusion in the library collection based on the following:

- Popular interest
- Community interest
- Relevancy
- Permanent value
- Timeliness
- Accuracy
- Local emphasis
- Readability
- Treatment of subject to age of intended audience
- Reputation of author, publisher, producer or illustrator
- Creative, literary or technical quality
- Critical reviews in a variety of journals
- Format and ease of use
- Circulation history as recorded through the automated system
- Cost and availability
- Relationship to existing materials in collection
- Relationship to materials in other area libraries

The library makes special efforts to include works by local authors and/or works that deal with local history. This does not include personal memoirs, family histories and related material offering limited readership potential.

**ELECTRONIC RESOURCES:** As new technologies emerge and new platforms become available, the library endeavors to stay abreast of these innovations and maintain a current electronic resource collection. Downloadable materials continue to grow in popularity and volume. In response to this trend, the library offers a vast collection of audio and eBooks available for download. The library's electronic resources represent reference, nonfiction and fiction material that may be accessed and viewed remotely. Format, relevancy, public interest and cost are primary factors when considering electronic resources for purchase. Availability and purchase of downloadable titles is dictated by publishing houses. The library is not able to purchase all popular titles in downloadable form due to publisher licensing agreements and restrictions.

In addition to popular downloadable materials, the Library licenses a number of research databases and eBooks. Databases offer reference information and materials of general interest through the Library website for use at the library and via remote access.

**CONTROVERSIAL RESOURCES:** In carrying out its mission to provide a diverse collection of information resources and materials representing varied viewpoints and ideologies, the library recognizes the potential for public objection to controversial materials. However, selection and provision of library material will not be made based on anticipated approval or disapproval. The criteria and guidelines defined above guide the selection process. Patrons wishing to make a formal appeal against material in the library collection should refer to the Tom Green County Challenges to Library Materials Policy.

**EVALUATION AND WITHDRAWAL OF LIBRARY MATERIALS:** Collection maintenance is the responsibility of designated staff members. The library collection must offer continued value to the community while staying relevant and uncluttered. In order to achieve this, the collection is evaluated on a regular basis. Material is assessed based on physical condition as well as relevancy, accuracy and timeliness of contents. Deteriorating, damaged and outdated material may be considered for reorder. Careful analysis of the collection identifies shortages in specific subject areas, old editions and outdated content.

Following evaluation of the collection, selectors can make informed decisions regarding the fate of library materials. Withdrawing materials is contingent on the following: physical condition, number of duplicate copies, availability of more current materials in the specific subject area, availability of newer edition, literary quality, popularity or historical value, availability of copies through interlibrary loan, indexing or listing in current collection guides.

The Library should not attempt to acquire textbooks or other curriculum materials related to any particular educational courses in which any of its patrons may be enrolled at any given time. Such textbooks and other like materials are to be selected solely on the basis of their utility to the Library's general reading public and to the extent such a selection is consistent with the Strategic Plan. Titles in the general collection will not be duplicated to satisfy heavy student demand at a particular time. While the Library recognizes its responsibility to provide a broad general collection of materials and resources which would be available to its student patrons and others for their special assignments, special

needs, and supplementary reading, the library is not a “research center library” and should not attempt to be a substitute for the libraries found in the educational institutions in the surrounding areas. Books of a highly technical nature will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the layperson.

Trustees, staff members, and the Library Director are expected to be familiar with the strategic directions and goals presented in the Tom Green County Library Strategic Plan. Materials and resources will be selected in a manner calculated to implement the plan and achieve its goals.

Attachments:

American Library Association Library Bill of Rights

American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement

American Library Association Film and Media Round Table Freedom to View Statement

Request for Reconsideration 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](#).

## 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 than 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.

### **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:

To provide the broadest possible 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.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

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 content.

To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, and 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.

To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom.



TOM GREEN COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM  
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials/Resources Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you represent self? \_\_\_\_ Or an organization? \_\_\_\_  
Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

Book/eBook) \_\_\_\_ Movie \_\_\_\_ Magazine \_\_\_\_ Audio Recording \_\_\_\_ Digital Resource \_\_\_\_ Game  
Newspaper \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

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

Author/Producer: \_\_\_\_\_

What brought this resource to your attention?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What concerns you about the resource?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What action are you requesting for consideration?

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