

Harlem Public Library

Harlem, Montana

Collection Management Policy

Revised and Updated 2023

Mission Statement

The Harlem Public Library seeks to provide equitable and inclusive services; a [\relearning](#) environment; and a diverse variety of resources for enjoyment, life-long learning, enrichment, and inspiration.

Purpose of the Policy

The Collection Management Policy guides library staff in establishing goals and priorities in selecting resources and materials, evaluating the collection, and maintaining the collection's currency, relevancy, and usefulness to the library use's. The policy serves to aid the library staff in making the best use of financial resources to meet the needs of the population it serves. This document directs the Library Board of Trustees, library staff, and patrons to abide by the purposes and mission of the Harlem Public Library. It explains the motivation behind selection/deselection decisions if the purpose or quality of the collection comes into question with the public or governing authorities.

Community Profile.

The Harlem Public Library is located in Harlem, Montana. It serves the residents of Blaine County, especially east Blaine County, including the communities of Harlem, Turner, Hogeland, Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, North Harlem Hutterite Colony and Turner Hutterite Colony with a combined population of 5965. A large diversity of cultures exists in the library's service area.

East Blaine County relies mainly on agriculture as its economic base. However, a large number of people are employed on the Fort Belknap Reservation for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Aaniiih Nakoda College, Indian Health Services, and tribal offices. The educational systems and retail businesses are also resources of employment.

User Groups

The Harlem Public. Library user groups include families with young children, especially preschool and elementary age, who use the library to check out reading materials and movies.. to attend programs for children, and to use the children's playspace. Children also use tablets and computers.

Young adults to senior citizens use the library primarily to check out books and movies. Many patrons also use the Internet and free Wi-Fi for research, employment seeking, social media, and entertainment.

Community members who attend the programming at the library are mainly middle-aged to senior citizens, depending on the topic.

Description of Patron Needs

The Harlem Public Library offers a broad spectrum of materials that seeks to address a wide variety of voices and perspectives. There is an extensive adult and young adult fiction collection, including current titles. The nonfiction adult section includes, but is not limited to health and wellness, hobbies and crafts, science topics, religious and inspirational works, history, poetry, and biographies.

The Montana. Collection includes fiction by Montana authors and novels set in Montana, Included in this collection are Montana biographies and a large number of Montana nonfiction titles, including local and state history•.

Because of the large Native American population in the library service area, materials are purchased that focus on native history, culture, and contemporary issues.

The children's collection is a highly used section of the library, especially the picture books and juvenile nonfiction section,

The library does not seek to provide a large reference section, as most research is now Internet-based. It is not financially prudent to spend money on areas that are not used. The library also does not include textbooks or instructional manuals as a rule. The reserve collection is stored in the office at present. Reference and reserve materials may be used only in the library.

The DVD section's use has decreased in recent years due to the availability of streaming services. The library also provides audio books on CD which are not used heavily because of ebook platforms.

The periodical area includes magazines and newspapers for patron use. Magazines may be checked out, newspapers may not. The demand for magazines and newspapers is less because of their digital options.

The library has a small collection of large print titles. Demand for large print books has increased in recent years so this collection will be enlarged.

Patrons may request materials from other libraries through interlibrary loans using OCLC World Share. A three-dollar deposit is required for each request and is returned when the materials are picked up and returned on time.

Connecting with the public is accomplished through the Harlem Public Library website, Facebook, and the weekly column in the local newspaper. The library also informs the public of activities and programs through radio public service announcements and flyers. The library catalog is available

Analytics of website and Facebook usage are collected monthly.

The Harlem Public Library has been a member of the Montana Shared Catalog since 2010. Library materials are cataloged using Workflows and the records are held in the Montana Shared Catalog.

Library patrons who wish to use MontanaLibrary2Go for e-books, audio books, and magazines may do so by downloading the Libby app or logging into [Libbyapp.com](https://libbyapp.com) and using their Harlem Library card number. Monthly analytics are collected on MontanaLibrary2Go usage.

Patrons who can no longer read standard print due to vision loss, physical limitations, or reading difficulties are referred to the Montana Talking Book Library housed at the Montana State Library.

The friendly and knowledgeable staff seeks to meet the varied and diverse needs of our patrons. Free and open access for every person in our service area is guaranteed. The library is handicapped accessible, with a public restroom that includes a baby changing table; a reading room with comfortable seating, a coffee bar, and water cooler; a meeting room that is available for groups, clubs, and organizations to use during or after library hours; and a teen area with a cozy couch near the young adult section. The children's playspace includes puzzles, puppets, wooden blocks and building sets, as well as other toys.

The library has free high-speed Internet and Wi-Fi, with four patron desktop computers, four laptops, and three tablets for in-house use. A wireless printer is available to print from desktops. There are earbuds, headphones, and phone chargers for use in the library. We also have two charging stations. The library has a Smart TV with a computer and camera for use during programs, presentations, and trainings.

The library has five mobile Hotspots, two iPads, and one laptop computer for checking out to registered patrons eighteen years of age or older, in good standing for at least one month. These devices may be checked out for fourteen days.

The library has a color copier/printer, FAX machine, and scanner for public use. Copies are .200 per page; color copies and faxes are \$1.00 per page. People may have materials laminated at \$1.00 per page.

The Harlem News and Blaine County Journal newspapers from 1890-1977 are available online at Newspapers.com on the library computers. The newspapers from 1978-2016 are available on microfilm,

Types of Programming

The library offers programs on a variety of topics to meet the needs and interests of the population. It is the goal to provide free programs that appeal to various age groups and cultures. These programs are offered both in person and virtually.

Children's programming includes Storytime, After School Squad, Lego Club, Summer Reading events and Film. Fridays.

Programs for adults include a weekly Book Club discussion group. The library offers a variety of informational and entertaining programs by local experts. Trainings/workshops are provided on technology when possible. The library seeks to collaborate with other entities such as Humanities Montana, Montana Library Network, Blaine County Extension, public schools, local experts, authors, and organizations.

Patron recommendations and input from surveys are taken into consideration when purchasing materials or planning programs.

General Description of the Collection

The collection currently contains 15,669 items valued at \$264,820.43. The average publication date of the collection is 1996. The main areas of the collection are divided into adult fiction and nonfiction, children's section, young adult titles, Montana Collection, DVDs, audio books on CD, periodicals, reference, and reserves.

Adult Items:

There are 4,255-items in the adult fiction section. This includes general fiction, mystery paperback, romance, science fiction/honor, large print, and westerns. Adult nonfiction, including oversized books, story collection, biographies, and general nonfiction contains 2,566 items. In the CD collection, which contains audio books and some music CDs, there are 190 items.

The Montana Collection contains 756 items including fiction, nonfiction, and biographies.

Children, Juvenile and Young Adult Items:

The children's collection consists of 118 board books, 1,165 easy picture books, 503 early readers and easy chapter books with a total of 1,786 items.

The juvenile section contains 2,062 items: 771 fiction books, 1,183 nonfiction books, and 108 oversized volumes.

The young adult section holds 480 fiction items.

The library has 628 movies on DVD. The reserves and reference sections include 195 items. The library subscribes to 3 newspapers and 26 magazines.

Interlibrary Loan and Cooperative Collection Management

Through interlibrary loan, Harlem Public Library patrons can borrow items that are not in the library's collection from other libraries. Patrons must pay a three-dollar deposit on requested items, which is returned if the items are picked up and returned on time. The patron must be a library cardholder and be in good standing. The Harlem Public Library also loans items upon request to other libraries through interlibrary loan. It is library policy not to loan new items, DVDs, or CDs. Registered users from the Hi-Line sharing group (Havre-Hill County, Blaine County, Big Sandy, Liberty County, and Harlem Public) may use their library card at any of

those libraries if they are in good standing at all the libraries. The Harlem Library owns 22 book club kits which are loaned to other libraries using the ILL system.

Collection Responsibilities and Selection Procedures

The Harlem Public Library Board of Trustees has final authority for the determination of policy in the selection and acquisition of library materials. The library director and assistant director are responsible for the selection of materials. The library director purchases materials for the library using a variety of review sources to determine suitability for the collection. A lease agreement with Brodart/McNaughton is used to purchase a portion of the new releases of adult fiction and nonfiction. Customer suggestions are taken into consideration. The library's policy is to purchase, within budget limitations, the materials which satisfy patron needs, using the following criteria:

- Permanence or timely value
- i Clear presentation•and readability
- Social significance.
- Importance of subject matter to collection
- Author's reputation and significance as a writer
- Publisher's reputation
- Fair presentation of both sides of controversial issues
- Avoidance: of What is trivial, deliberately distorted, or offensive.
- Reflection of community standards
- Patron's requests
- Cost

The following resources are used to determine if materials are suitable for the collection:

1. Professional Journals
 - a. *Library Journal*
 - b. *Booldist*
7. Internet
 - a. Amazon
 - b. Brodart/McNaughton
 - c. Good Reads
 - d. Western Writers of America
 - e. Teen. Reads
 - f. American Indians in Children's. Literature
 - g. Bookreporter.com
 - h. The Show Me Librarian
 - i. Programming Librarian
 - j. I Love Libraries
 - k. Orderofbooks.com
1. Pinterest
 - m. Junior Library Guild
 - n. Reading Group Guides.com

- o. Heartthutn: Books by Native American Authors
- p. First Nations — Natives. Read, firstnations.org

- q. American Indian Library Association
- 3. Expert Recommendations
 - a. Webinars
 - b. Workshops and conferences
 - c. Colleagues
- 4. Staff and Patron. Suggestions
- 5. Award Winners
 - a. Newbery Award
 - b. Caldecott Award
 - c. Young Reader's Choice Award
 - d. Pulitzer and Nobel Prizes
 - e. Spur Award

The Harlem Public Library abides by the American Library Association Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement, as well as the Freedom to View Statement. Copies of these are included in the appendix to the policy.

Formats.

The Harlem Public Library collection contains materials in the following formats:

Books- regular and large print: hardback and paperback; oversized and board books

Periodicals-newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, newsletters, and catalogs

Maps

Microfilm

Audio Books

Music CDs

DVDs

Digital materials

Playaways/Wonderbooks

Multiple Copies

The Harlem Public Library rarely purchases multiple copies because of space and funding limitations. Some multiple copies are a result of donations:

Languages

Most of the materials are acquired in English. The library has a small collection of children's books in both English and the Native American languages. In the children's collection there are a small number of titles in both English and Spanish.

Special Collections

The library maintains a collection of the Harlem News/Blaine County Journal newspapers. Editions from 1890-1977 are digitized and may be accessed on Newspapers.com using the library computers. The editions from 1978 — 2015 are available on microfilm. Back issues of the local Blaine County Journal newspapers are kept until they are archived on Microfilm by the Montana Historical Society. Issues are microfilmed as funds and MHS staff time allows,

There are some historically and culturally relevant materials on reserve in the office.

The Harlem Public Library is a member of MontanaLibrary2Go which offers registered users access to free e-books, audio books and magazines. Included in the appendix of this document is the "Montana Library Network Shared E-Resources Collection Development Policy."

Funding for the Collection

The Harlem Public Library receives the majority of its funding from Blaine County's general fund through taxes. Some financial support comes from the State of Montana per capita and Montana State Library federation monies. The library occasionally receives money from individuals and organizations as memorials or donations. This money is placed in a special memorial fund used to purchase selected items for the library. The Friends of the Harlem Public Library is a 501c (3) nonprofit organization that annually fundraiser to purchase items on the library wish list or to support projects. The library applies for grants to assist in attaining materials and equipment.

Collection Maintenance

The Harlem Public Library strives to maintain a collection that is relevant, diverse, and dynamic. The library staff continually reviews and evaluates materials to determine if they meet the goals of the collection policy, the needs of the community, and the library mission statement.

The library collection is inventoried bi-annually. Titles that are missing are replaced if they are determined to be vital to the collection. Funding does not permit all missing items to be replaced,

Local histories are collected. Works written by local authors are selected if they meet the guidelines for inclusion. Rare items and historically and culturally relevant out-of-print materials are kept in the reserve collection.

Back issues of magazines are kept for one year due to lack of storage space. Popular magazines older than one year are then put on sale with two or three copies in a bundle. The Great Falls Tribune and I-lavre Daily News are kept for approximately two months, and then discarded.

The reference collection has been downsized with relevant items moved to circulation to provide better access to patrons. The library recognizes that reference information is available online and this format provides both relevancy and ease of access that cannot be matched by print sources. The reference collection will be updated and weeded every three years.

The library staff will make repairs to materials as needed on sight if possible or sent to the bindery. Items that are not able to be repaired are replaced if the staff feels they meet the selection standards and user demand.

The DVD/CD collections are cleaned and repaired twice per year. Patrons wishing to have personal DVDs or CDs cleaned/repared may request the library to provide this service at a cost of \$1.00 per disk.

Patron and Collection Development

Requests

1. Suggestions or requests for titles by patrons are taken into consideration when purchasing materials for the collection. Not every request can be granted.
2. Patrons are encouraged to access materials using Interlibrary Loan and MontanaLibrary2Go. If the material is deemed appropriate to the collection and has considerable demand, the library will purchase it.

Gifts and Donations

1. The Harlem Public Library accepts gifts and donations and views them as a source of enriching and enlarging the Collection. The library director makes the decision to accept
 - or decline donated items. Donations, memorials, and gifts must fit the following guidelines:
 - ®. Donations of monetary gifts are encouraged. Monetary donations for specific books or materials will be accepted if they meet the standards and criteria of the collection policy. Monetary donations for equipment or services must be approved by the library director and/or library board of trustees; and these requests must be in accordance with library policy and the long-range plan.
 - Memorials will be accepted. If a specific title, type of material, equipment, or furnishing is requested the library will attempt to accommodate the request. If the request does not meet the policies and plans of the library an alternative item will be suggested to the donating individual(s) for their approval.
 - • The library accepts donations of used books and DVDs. Donors must receive permission before donations can be accepted. Donations will be added to the collection if they are in good condition and meet the selection criteria. If the library already owns copies of the donated items, the item in better condition will be kept. Items that cannot be added to the collection are kept for the ongoing used book sale or disposed of. Patrons are made aware of the library procedure when donations are offered. The library does not accept donations of used magazines.
 - D6110175 may request receipt for the number and types of items received. No monetary values will be designated.
 - All memorials and donated items will be kept in the collection until such a time as they meet the requirements for deselection,

Challenges

1. If a patron(s) objects to library materials, they will be asked to complete a Request for Review of Material Form. The form must be fully completed and signed for the objection to be considered. A copy of this form_ is included in the appendix to the policy.
2. The citizen must be a current Harlem Public Library cardholder in good standing and be at least 18 years old.
3. The material under consideration will not be removed during the review process.
4. Reconsideration will not occur if the material has been reconsidered within the last three years.
5. Action will be taken at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Harlem Public Library Board of Trustees when a decision will be made to remove or retain the material in the collection,
6. The board will make the final decision concerning the retention or removal of the material under consideration in accordance with the Collection Management Policy. Notification of the decision will be given to the patron(s) in writing.
7. The Harlem Public Library does not restrict access to material or information in any way. Staff members will not monitor the use of library materials.
8. Registered users under the age of 16 have the right to select their own materials for checkout. If parents/guardians wish to restrict the materials their child checks out the parents/guardians are responsible to accompany their child to the library when they check out materials or to communicate with their child the types of materials they may or may not check out. The library is not responsible for monitoring the types of materials children check Out.
9. The Harlem Public Library abides by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the. United States, and the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement. These are included in the appendix to the policy.

Collection Weeding/Delection

Items that do not meet the goals of the library or that are no longer of use or interest to the library's patrons will be deselected or weeded from the collection. Weeding is necessary for a healthy library for the following reasons:

- To save space.
- To improve access as materials that are organized, and available make it easier for users to find what they need.
- To save money since maintaining unused materials requires staff time and care. To make room for new materials.
- To make the library more aesthetically pleasing and welcoming.
- To enhance the collection for reputability, currency, and diversity.

Guidelines for deselecting items from the collection include the CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding) Manual and weeding guidelines from the Montana State Library. Eight general guidelines are followed:

1. Use or lack of use

2. Physical condition

3. Duplication or redundancy

4. Superseded
5. Age
6. Historical Perspective
7. Inappropriate
8. Mistake

Withdrawn materials are sold in on-going used book sale or disposed of.

Procedures for weeding/deselection of collection:

Adult Fiction: Basic Level (Weeded annually)

The adult fiction section is weeded at least annually to make room for new materials. Titles are deselected based on lack of use and physical condition. The newest acquisitions are placed on the "New. Books" shelf for one to two years when they are then shelved with the general adult fiction. The library attempts to obtain all installments in series if possible.

Deselected titles that were purchased through the Brodart/IVicNaughton Lease program are sent back.

The adult paperback collections include a mystery section, romance section and general fiction such as thrillers. These are weeded as room is needed. New romance paperbacks are purchased as funds allow. No new paperback mysteries or general fiction are purchased unless the title is unavailable in hardback. The library does receive donations that we catalog if the titles fit the scope of the collection policy.

Children's Fiction: Basic Level (Weeded 2023)

The easy picture books are weeded every three years. The criteria for weeding primarily are based on the condition of materials. Juvenile fiction is weeded annually. Graphic novels are shelved with other juvenile fiction and marked with special spine labels. Books that are considered out of date, biased, stereotypical, or no longer of interest are deselected. Classics, perennial favorites, and individual volumes of sets are replaced if possible. Caldecott and Newbery Medal winners are added annually. The library applies for the Pilcrow Foundation Grant to assist with acquisition of titles in this area.

Juvenile Nonfiction: Basic Level (Weeded 2021)

The library has an acceptable collection of nonfiction titles in the juvenile area. It is the focus to acquire appropriate titles to keep this section current and interesting for young readers. Evaluation is done every three years.

Young Adult Fiction: Basic Level (Weeded annually)

The criteria for weeding are age, lack of use, physical condition, and inappropriateness due to bias or stereotyping. The library has a subscription for young adult novels with Junior Library Guild, which ships a new release title monthly. The Young Adult collection is extensive,

Large Print Collection: Minimal Level (Weeded 2021)

The large print collection is small. It is evaluated every three years. The demand for large print items is increasing because many patrons have developed age-related vision issues. The library will focus on increasing this collection as the budget allows. The library has information

available to patrons who wish to use the Montana Talking Book Library services through the Montana State Library.

Reference Collection: Basic Level (Weeded 2021)

Reference items are rarely purchased due to expense and patron use of online sources. These books will be evaluated every three years.

Western: Basic Level (Weeded 2021)

The collection is made up of both hardback and paperback copies. New titles are added regularly. This collection will be evaluated every three years.

Science Fiction: Basic Level (Weeded 2022)

This collection contains science fiction as well as some horror and fantasy titles. This section is not heavily used. It will be evaluated every three years. It is the library's intent to improve this collection through the purchase of recent titles.

Montana Collection: Basic Level (Weeded 2021)

The Montana Collection contains both fiction and nonfiction books. There are a large number of nonfiction titles including Montana history, local history, Native American selections, informational works on geography, travel, flora and fauna, etc. as well as biographical works. The poetry section includes poems by poets from across the state and particularly local poets. The fiction section contains novels written by Montana authors and works with Montana as the setting. The Montana Collection is evaluated every three years mostly for condition and if a work is superseded by more current information. Titles are rarely weeded from this collection. There are some historically and culturally significant titles that are kept on reserve in the library office.

DVDs: Basic Level (Weeded annually or biannually)

The DVD collection is less utilized by patrons than in the past because of other streaming options. The selections are mostly for entertainment, although nonfiction movies and documentaries make up a small portion, including "The Back Roads of Montana" that are sent to the library at no cost. The movies are weeded primarily due to condition issues and lack of use. The discs are cleaned and repaired once or twice annually when deselection takes place. Many DVDs have been donated and added to the collection according to the acquisition policies. Patrons are allowed to check out two movies at a time for one week.

Audio Collection: Basic Level (Weeded 2022)

Audio books are collected in CD format only. Audio book discs are cleaned and repaired once or twice annually. Registered users have access to free audio books through MontanaLibrary2Go. This collection is evaluated every 5 years.

Adult Nonfiction: Basic Level

000 Generalities--Minimal Level

Weeded in. 2021 Evaluated every 5 _yearN

Almanacs are updated annually. Atlases were updated in 2017 and 2019 and are evaluated every 5 years. The library has disposed of encyclopedia sets. It currently subscribes to World Book Online.

100 Philosophy-Basic Level

Weeded in 2021 Evaluated every 5 years.

The library holds an adequate collection of books in this collection. The most popular are self-help and interpersonal communication, as well as life issues. New titles are added when possible.

200 Religion and Mythology-Basic Level Weeded in 2022 Evaluated every 3 years This is an extensive collection with religion being a popular topic. A variety of religions are represented. New titles are added on a regular basis.

300 Social Science-Basic Level

Weeded in 2021 Evaluated every 3 years

This collection is substantial with new titles added regularly.

400 Language-Basic Level

Weeded in 2021 Evaluated every 5 years

This small collection is mainly made up of dictionaries and thesauruses. We have some foreign language dictionaries including German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Native Languages.

500 Natural Sciences-Basic Level

Weeded in 2020 Evaluated every 4 years.

This is a good basic collection. The plant and animal identification books are being updated as the budget allows. Many of the mathematics and general science books are outdated; but there is little demand for these areas. It is the policy to not have textbooks as part of the collection.

600 Applied Sciences-Basic. Level

Weeded in 2023 Evaluated every 2 years.

This collection is very substantial. Because of the need for up-to-date information in the health, wellness, and fitness areas, the library purchases new titles on ..a regular basis. The agricultural area needs updated information. The cookbook collection is very large with a number of titles that deal with current nutritional needs. Books on building projects and repair have been recently purchased. We have a small, but adequate, collection on job seeking. Our parenting collection is updated regularly. The library subscribes to several magazines that supplement this collection.

700 The Arts-Basic Level

Weeded in 2021 Evaluated every 5 years.

The selection of books on crafts, art, and art history are well represented. There are several art books in the oversized section. The library holds Christmas books that deal with decorating and crafts. The collection of quilt books is very large. The library also subscribes to quilting magazines. The sports books need updating and are being replaced as the budget allows. The

books on antiques and photography are current. A large variety of books on hobbies is in this section.

800 Literature-Basic Level

Weeded in 2021 Evaluated every 5 years.

This section includes a large number of poetry books, including humor and cowboy poetry. Books containing well-known works of literature are represented. These are replaced when in poor condition with newer editions.

900 General Geography and History-Basic Level

Weeded in 2021 Evaluated every 3 years.

This collection is extensive. The geography books, especially those of foreign countries, have been weeded and need replacement as appropriate new titles are published and the budget allows. It is the library policy not to purchase travel guides per se. The history collection is very large with a good representation of native American history. This section is updated regularly. The Story Collection is adequate. The collection of biographies is quite large. New biographies are added to the collection on a regular basis.

Collection Priorities and Goals

It is the priority of the Harlem Public Library to maintain a basic level in all areas that are of highest priority to the needs and demands of users. The library strives to provide the best possible collection in accordance with the goals and mission of the library. An important part of maintaining a quality collection is regular evaluation and deselection of materials. A copy of the weeding schedule is included in this document's appendix.

The library seeks to keep up with changing formats as much as possible. Acquisitions are largely dependent on funding. The Harlem Public Library joined MontanaLibrary2Go in 2017. Registered users in good standing may access the digital collection of e-books and audio books using the Libby app on their devices and their library card number.

The top priorities for updating the collection include Large Print, Science Fiction, Adult Sports/Recreation, and Agriculture. Materials added to the collection should be socially and culturally relevant representing and appealing to a diverse group of users.

Policy Review and Revision

The Library Board of Trustees and Director are responsible for reviewing and updating this policy every three years in accordance with Montana Public Library Standards. The policy will be signed and dated at each review/revision.

Appendices

American Library Association:

Library Bill of Rights

Freedom to Read Statement

Freedom to. View Statement

Montana Library Network Shared E-Resources Collection Development Policy

Request for Review of Material Form

Harlem Public Library Weeding Schedule

Implementation

DATE

TITLE

AUTHOR

FORMAT OTHER THAN PRINT?

1. Have you read, listened to, or viewed the entire content of the material?
2. State specific objections you have to the content. Use back if necessary.
3. Have you read the library's Collection Management. Policy?
4. Have you discussed the policy with the Library Director?

By completing this form, your request will be considered according to the established policies and procedures.

Name

Address

Phone

Signature

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

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 inajOrity.*

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 and orient the tastes and standards by which 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 not 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.

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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

