

GERMANTOWN COMMUNITY LIBRARY

COLLECTION AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The Germantown Community Library (GCL) is a cornerstone of our community that provides services and resources that enrich lives, build connections, and grow the community. The GCL lives this mission by providing a welcoming environment, connecting people with information and resources they need to thrive, and offering opportunities for entertainment and leisure.

The Germantown Community Library selects materials and develops collections in a variety of formats to provide our patrons with a range of informational, recreational, and educational resources. The library will acquire materials reflecting the full diversity of points of view on topics of interest to the public. The collection is developed to meet the needs and interests of residents in the Germantown Community Library service area (Germantown, Richfield & Jackson) and as a resource for the Monarch Library System.

OBJECTIVE

The policy objective is to select, organize, preserve, and make freely available materials that help individuals and groups in the community to:

- Obtain needed information
- Pursue continuing education
- Develop and enhance occupational skills
- Develop creative capacities
- Become more engaged members of the community
- Learn about the cultural heritage of themselves and others
- Use leisure time creatively and enjoyably

MATERIAL SELECTION

To achieve these ends, the library provides materials and services to residents of all ages. It seeks to direct and stimulate life-long learning by offering a carefully selected collection of materials and professional guidance in their use.

Responsibility for the initial selection of library resources rests with the library's professional staff, based on the criteria cited in this policy. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection. The overall responsibility for selection rests with the Library Director operating within the framework of policies determined by the Germantown Community Library Board.

General Criteria

General criteria for selecting library materials are listed below. An item need not meet all the criteria in order to be acceptable.

- Public demand, interest or need
- Contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent value
- Attention of critics and reviewers
- Prominence, authority and/or competence of author, creator or publisher
- Timeliness of material
- Relation to existing collections
- Statement of challenging, original, or alternative point of view

- Authenticity of historical, regional or social setting

American Library Association (ALA) Criteria

In its selection of materials, the Germantown Community Library endorses the '**Library Bill of Rights**' and the '**Freedom to Read Statement**', as adopted by the American Library Association.

Operational Criteria

Selection of materials may be influenced by many factors, including but not limited to the following:

- Budgetary considerations
- Physical limitations of the library building
- Suitability of the format and construction
- Availability of specialized materials in other local libraries
- Availability of material through interlibrary loan
- Need for added materials in particular subject areas
- Accessibility for multiple users of electronic formats
- Special needs of library patrons for materials in accessible formats

Gifts of Materials

The library welcomes gifts of materials, with the understanding that they will be evaluated using the same criteria as those applied to purchased materials. The library reserves the right to dispose of any gifts as it sees fit.

Addition of New Collections

Plans and procedures for the development of specific collections may be written by library staff as needed. These plans may outline selection and acquisition procedures, reviewing tools, and maintenance of the specific collection. All such plans shall be in compliance with and responsive to the philosophy of this policy. Some materials may be placed in collections according to age appropriateness.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

Professional library staff regularly review items in the collection to ensure that they continue to meet patrons' needs. Materials that are worn, obsolete, unused, old editions or unnecessarily duplicated are removed. It is the responsibility of professional staff to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed or lost. Items are not automatically replaced. Decisions are based on need, demand and budget.

MATERIAL, PROGRAM, AND EXHIBIT CHALLENGES

The library will not promote specific beliefs or views, but will provide suitable material to enable the public to make informed decisions. The Library allows patrons to make their own choice as to what they will use based on individual interests or concerns. The Germantown Community Library supports the right of each family to decide which items are appropriate for use by their members. Responsibility for children's use of library materials lies with their parent or guardian.

In its selection of materials, the Germantown Community Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Equity, Diversity Inclusion Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

adopted by the American Library Association. The United States Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on challenged expression before it can be suppressed. Therefore, any request, be it legal or extralegal, to regulate or suppress materials in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not diminished.

Content under reconsideration will remain accessible in the Library until a decision has been made.

To request that material, programs or exhibits be considered for exclusion or removed from the library, a patron must do the following:

1. Be a resident of the Village of Germantown OR a non-librariated area of Washington County. Residents' taxes from these areas pay for the materials held by the library; therefore, only residents of these areas may request that material, programs or exhibits be reconsidered.
2. Hold a current Germantown Community Library card or library card from another library in the Monarch Library System.
3. Have either read the material, or seen/heard the program or art exhibit, in its entirety.
4. Have reviewed the Germantown Community Library Collection Policy and the Library Bill of Rights.
5. Complete the Germantown Community Library 'Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials, Programs or Exhibits' form. Only completed forms will be reviewed by the library. The library does not respond to anonymous phone calls, rumors, or voiced concerns.
6. Individual titles will only be reviewed once every five years, unless substantial content changes have been made.

PROCESS FOR MATERIAL, PROGRAM, AND EXHIBIT CHALLENGES

1. Completed 'Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials, Program or Exhibits' form will be considered by the collection managers. Their recommendation will be sent to the Library Director or designee. The Library Director or designee will notify the patron of the decision.
2. If requested by the patron, the Library Director or designee will forward the challenge to a Review Committee consisting of two members of the Library Board, two community experts, and one staff person as appointed by the Library Director or designee. At the completion of the review, the Library Director, or designee will notify the patron of the committee's decision.
3. If the patron is not satisfied with the response, the patron may submit an appeal to the full Library Board for review. The Library Board will make the final decision regarding the request based on this committee's recommendation. The Library Director or designee will inform the patron of the decision.

No duly selected materials, programs, or exhibits whose appropriateness is challenged shall be removed from the library except upon the recommendation of the review committee, with the concurrence of the Library Director or designee, or upon formal action of the Board when a recommendation of the review committee is appealed to it.

ADOPTED: 3/3/82

REVISED AND ADOPTED: 8/87; 3/89; 4/92; 1/93; 1/94; 2/98; 5/02; 5/06; 5/09; 5/24/23

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF
LIBRARY MATERIALS, PROGRAMS OR EXHIBITS FORM**

Germantown Community Library

(One item per request form)

Date: _____

PATRON INFORMATION (required for consideration)

Please Note: You must be a resident of the Village of Germantown OR a non-librariated area of Washington County and have a current library card at the Germantown Community Library or a library in the Monarch Library System.

Name: _____
(Please print)

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Library Barcode: _____

Do you represent: Self: _____ or Name of Organization: _____

Have you read the Germantown Community Library Collection, Program, and Exhibit Policy? __Yes __No

Have you read the ALA Library Bill of Rights & Freedom to Read Statement? __Yes __No

Which area are you requesting reconsideration of? __ Library Material __Program __Exhibit

MATERIAL INFORMATION (only fill out if requesting reconsideration of library material) (use additional pages if needed)

(Digital/eMaterials are handled at WPLC <https://wplc.info/reconsideration>)

Type of material: _____ (e.g. book, movie, audiobook, music, magazine)

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher/Year of publication: _____

What portion of the material have you reviewed? _____

What portion of the material are you concerned with? (Please be specific, cite pages, selections etc.)

GENERAL INFORMATION (fill out for all types of reconsideration requests) (use additional pages if needed)

What concerns you?

Continued on next page

4. What action are you requesting?

Patron Signature: _____

REVIEW INFORMATION

Collection Manager Decision: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Library Director Decision: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Review Committee Decision: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Library Board Decision: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Response Sent to Patron: Date: _____ Name: _____

American Library Association

Library Bill of Rights

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

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](#).

American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We therefore affirm these propositions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression