

# Collection Development Policy

Abridged



Revised April 2005

Pasco County Library System  
Collection Development Policy

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## **Purpose of Collection Development Policy**

The Collection Development Policy contains the guidelines for managing the Pasco County Library System's collection of materials. Its purpose is:

- To provide a framework for library staff to continuously evaluate and improve the collection to meet patrons' needs; and
- To inform the public of the philosophy of collection development and the guidelines used by the library.

The Collection Development Policy is a dynamic and flexible document. It is necessary to update and revise this policy at intervals in order to keep in step with patrons' needs and the library system's evolution. At a minimum, this policy will be evaluated and updated each time a new five-year, long-range plan is implemented by the library system.

## **Profile of Pasco County**

Pasco County is located in west central Florida on the Nature Coast and encompasses 20 miles of coastal land along the Gulf of Mexico. It is part of the Tampa Bay Region that includes Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas counties.

Pasco County was created by the Florida Legislature on May 12, 1887, to govern 745 square miles of land. The new county was named in honor of U.S. Senator Samuel Pasco. A referendum held in 1889 named Dade City as the county seat.

There are currently 6 municipalities incorporated in Pasco County: Dade City, Zephyrhills, New Port Richey, Port Richey, San Antonio and St. Leo. However, the majority of Pasco County's population lives outside these cities in the unincorporated portions of the county, placing unique demands on Pasco County to provide a higher level of public services than would traditionally be expected of a county government.

Pasco County is predominately suburban in character with 82.4% owner occupied housing in 2000, although the northeastern part of the county still contains some agricultural and range area. The population estimate for 2003 is 388,906, or a 22.6% increase over the 1990 Census of 281,131. By 2010, the population is estimated to reach 451,900 individuals. The ethnic makeup of Pasco County is:

▪ White	93.7%
▪ Hispanic or Latino	5.7%
▪ Black or African American	2.1%
▪ Asian	0.9%
▪ American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%
▪ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%

The median age of residents has been steadily declining (44.9 years in 2000) as more families with young children are attracted to the area. The age demographics of Pasco County are:

▪ under 5 years	5.3%
▪ 5 to 19 years	16.8%
▪ 20 to 34 years	14.3%
▪ 35 to 64 years	36.8%
▪ 65 and over	26.7%

According to the 2000 Census, 77.6% of the population 25 years or older possesses a high school degree or higher and 13.1% holds a bachelor's degree or higher. Pasco County has a strong tradition of providing excellent educational opportunities with 35 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 9 high schools and 4 vocational schools in 2005 with 58,693 students enrolled. By 2010, the number of K-12 students is expected to reach 67,847. The Pasco-Hernando Community College has multiple campuses

throughout Pasco County and several other community colleges and universities are located within the Tampa Bay Region.

Pasco County continues to be predominantly a retirement-based economy with the largest industries being state and local government, medical services, recreational businesses, retail trade and construction. The largest cardiac care center in the greater Tampa Bay area and the second largest in Florida is located in West Pasco County. The median household income in 2000 was \$32,969 with 10.7% of individuals below poverty level, lower than the national average of 12.4%.

Pasco County enjoys a temperate climate with mild winters making outdoor recreational activities a favorite among residents. Pasco County is home to championship golf courses as well as more than 40 annual festivals, reenactments, rodeos and more. Pasco County also boasts an extensive parks and recreational system providing ballfields, swimming pools and jogging, hiking and cycling trails.

Pasco County is one of the fastest growing counties in Florida. Retirees continue to be attracted to the mild climate and premier medical services available while younger families find southern Pasco County within easy commuting distances to other areas in the Tampa Bay Region. In 2005, Pasco County has 198,461 dwellings. By 2010, the number of dwellings in the county is estimated to reach 222,355.

## **Profile of Pasco County Library System**

The Pasco County Library System (PCLS) was established by county ordinance in 1980. Libraries in Hudson, Holiday and Land O'Lakes were incorporated into the library system. The Hugh Embry Library in Dade City, established in 1904, joined the library system in 1981. Eventually, three additional libraries were built creating a total of one regional library and 6 branches located around the county.

PCLS falls under the Public Services Division of the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners. The PCLS Advisory Board works toward the development and implementation of sound programs for the library system and advises and makes recommendations to the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners on policy matters pertaining to PCLS.

In 1999, PCLS and the Zephyrhills Public Library established the Pasco County Library Cooperative as a result of an interlocal agreement between the Pasco County Board of Commissioners and the Zephyrhills City Council. The Cooperative works together to enhance public library services in Pasco County including processing and cataloging items using the same cataloging policies and sharing the same public access catalog.

PCLS serves Pasco County in its entirety. In 2004, the total service population for the library system was 375,318 with 54% having library cards. Total circulation was 1,863,708 or 5.21 circulation per capita.

In 2004, total operating expenses for the library system were \$5,784,399. Total expenses were \$15.41 per capita with collection expenses at \$3.04 per capita. Collection spending was 19.69% of total operating expenses. There were 573,552 volumes in the collection in 2004, or 1.53 volumes per capita.

In 2004, PCLS embarked on a new, exciting period of growth, beginning the expansion of two branch libraries, the Regency Park Library and the Land O'Lakes Library. Additionally, PCLS began the process to migrate to a new integrated library system. The expansions and migration will be completed in 2006. Furthermore, the library's master plan calls for the expansion of the Hugh Embry Library as well as the building of two new libraries, the Trinity Area Regional Library and the Wesley Chapel Branch Library, by 2010.

## **Pasco County Library Cooperative Mission Statement 2000-2005**

The Pasco County Library Cooperative will provide:

- A safe and comfortable environment with a variety of meeting room spaces and youth-friendly areas for children and teens;
- Knowledgeable staff who provide courteous, accurate and timely information and readers advisory services;
- A broad collection of library materials in sufficient quantity and in a variety of formats;
- Shared electronic information via our web site and an adequate number of computer workstations;
- A wide range of high quality lifelong learning and technology training programs

to meet the school, work and personal information needs of all Pasco County residents.

## **Responsibility for Collection Development**

Final authority for materials selection and collection development rests with the Libraries Director. The Director delegates responsibility for materials selection and collection development to the Collection Development Coordinator who carries out these responsibilities in accordance with the Collection Development Policy. The Collection Development Coordinator works with the Assistant Libraries Director for Public Services, Adult Services Coordinator, Youth Services Coordinator, Branch Managers, and Public Service Librarians to develop and maintain the collection.

## **Collection Development Philosophy**

The Pasco County Library System (PCLS) recognizes the basic right of all people to have access to information of all types reflecting the widest possible range of viewpoints, including those that may be unorthodox or unpopular with the majority. The library values Pasco County's diversity and strives to reflect that diversity by providing materials across the spectrum of human thought. Individuals should have the choice to select what books to read and the freedom to make their own decisions about the viewpoints they accept and those they reject.

The Pasco County Library System supports the principles stated in:

- Library Bill of Rights (page 23)
- Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (page 24)
- Freedom to Read Statement (page 25)
- Freedom to View Statement (page 30)
- Libraries: An American Value (page 31)

As a limited public forum where free speech is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment, PCLS recognizes its responsibility to collect a broad array of materials in sufficient quantity and in a variety of formats to meet the school, work and personal information needs of all Pasco County residents. PCLS will not knowingly collect materials that are not protected by the constitution including obscenity, child pornography, libel, slander, speech that presents a clear and present danger and fighting words that present an actual threat of immediate violence. Furthermore, as a good faith effort to avoid materials that could be deemed harmful to minors, PCLS will not collect films rated R for sexuality, NC-17 or X or materials typically found in adult entertainment establishments. See page 32 for more information on the legal framework for collection development.

## **Collection Levels**

### **Level 1: Neighborhood Library**

A small community library is a facility designed to support the leisure and, on a limited basis, the informational, educational and recreational needs of the immediate surrounding community.

Typically special collections are shelved with the rest of the collection. Also, juvenile reference materials are shelved with adult reference materials.

Fiction and nonfiction collections have a narrower scope than other libraries with emphasis on:

- current popular authors and titles
- basic informational materials
- basic educational materials
- basic recreational materials
- patron requests

Materials are not put in storage. Instead materials are weeded continuously and aggressively.

Small Community Libraries:

- Hugh Embry
- South Holiday

Statistical Information:

- Agency Size: 8,000 square feet minimum
- Collection Capacity: 40,000 – 50,000 items
- Public Service Hours 48 hours per week minimum

## Level 2: Community Library

A medium community library is a facility designed to support the leisure and, on a limited basis, the informational, educational and recreational needs of the immediate surrounding community.

Typically special collections are shelved with the rest of the collection. Also, juvenile reference materials are shelved with adult reference materials unless a separate children's room exists.

Fiction and nonfiction collections have a larger scope than the neighborhood library with emphasis on:

- current popular authors and titles
- basic informational materials
- basic educational information
- basic recreational information
- intermediate materials for high demand topics
- patron requests

Materials are not put in storage. Instead materials are weeded continuously and aggressively.

Medium Community Libraries:

- Centennial Park Branch
- New River Branch

Statistical Information:

- Agency Size: 10,000 square feet
- Collection Capacity: 50,000 – 70,000 items
- Public Service Hours: 48 hours per week minimum

### Level 3: Area Library

A large community library is a facility designed to support the leisure, informational, educational and recreational needs of the immediate surrounding community.

Typically special collections are shelved with the rest of the collection. Also, juvenile reference materials are located in the children's area, separate from the adult reference materials.

Fiction and nonfiction collections have a larger scope than the community library with emphasis on:

- current popular authors and titles
- basic and intermediate informational materials
- basic and intermediate educational materials
- basic and intermediate recreational materials
- patron requests

Materials are not put in storage. Instead materials are weeded continuously and aggressively.

#### Large Community Libraries

- Land O'Lakes Branch
- Regency Park Branch

#### Statistical Information:

- Agency Size: 15, 000 square feet
- Collection Capacity: 70,000 – 90,000
- Public Service Hours: 48 hours per week minimum

#### Level 4: Regional Library

A regional library is a facility designed to support the leisure, informational, educational and recreational needs of the immediate surrounding community and the county in its entirety.

Special collections may be shelved with the rest of the collection or separately. Juvenile reference materials are located in the children's area, separate from the adult reference materials.

Fiction and nonfiction collections have a larger scope than the area library with emphasis on:

- current popular authors and titles
- basic and intermediate informational materials
- basic and intermediate educational materials
- basic and intermediate recreational information
- advanced materials for high demand topics
- patron requests

Materials are not put in storage except historical Florida materials that are out of print. Materials are weeded continuously and aggressively.

- Hudson Regional

Statistical Information:

- Agency Size: 30,000 square feet minimum
- Collection Capacity: 120,000 – 140,000 items
- Public Service Hours: 64 hours per week minimum

## **Special Collections**

### **Adaptive Toy Collection**

Location: The Hudson Library houses a collection of adaptive toys for individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility: The Adaptive Toy Collections consists of circulating items that are shelved separately.

Designation: TOY call number prefix.

### **Classics Collection**

Location: Each branch houses a collection of classic fiction novels in mass market paperback format.

Accessibility: The Classics Collection consists of circulating items that are shelved separately.

Designation: CLASSICS material code.

### **Florida Collection**

Location: Each branch houses a collection of materials about Florida.

Accessibility: The Florida Collection consists of circulating items that may be interfiled or shelved separately and reference items that are shelved with other reference materials.

Designation: FL call number prefix.

### **Genealogy Collection**

Location. Each branch houses materials about genealogy. Reference genealogy materials are located at the Hudson Library.

Accessibility: The Genealogy Collection consists of circulating items that may be interfiled or shelved separately and reference items that may be shelved with other reference materials or separately.

Designation: GEN call number prefix.

### Graphic Novel Collection

Location: Each branch houses a collection of graphic novels for all ages.

Accessibility: The Graphic Novel Collection consists of circulating items that may be interfiled or shelved separately.

Designation: GRAPHIC call number prefix.

### Professional Collection

Location: Each branch houses a collection of professional materials for use by library staff in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

Accessibility: The Professional Collection consists of items for staff use only and is located in the staff workroom.

Designation: None. Materials are not cataloged and do not circulate.

### Spanish Language Collection

Location: Each branch houses materials in Spanish. The largest collection of Spanish language materials is found at the Hugh Embry Branch.

Accessibility: The Spanish Language Collection consists of circulating items that may be interfiled or shelved separately.

Designation: SPA call number prefix.

### Storyhour Collection

Location: Each branch houses a collection of picture books and big books for use during children's programs.

Accessibility: The Storyhour Collection consists of items for in-house use only and is located in the staff workroom.

Designation: None. Materials are not cataloged and do not circulate.

## **Selection Guidelines**

At the broadest level, the library's collection is divided into three sections including:

- the adult collection selected for adults 19 years old and older;
- the young adult collection selected for young adults between the ages of 12 and 18; and
- the juvenile collection selected for children 11 years old and younger.

The following criteria are applicable to items selected for each of the three areas of the collection. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criteria be decisive. Other factors may be taken into consideration, and the importance or weight of one particular criteria may vary from one acquisition to another.

- Accuracy.  
Is the information in the item accurate?
- Authority.  
Who is the author? What expertise does the author have in the subject matter?  
Who is the publisher? What is the reputation of the publisher?
- Community needs and interests.  
Are patrons particularly interested in the novels of certain authors? Are the reading selections of patrons influenced by recommendations heard over the radio, seen on the television or read in newspapers and magazines? Does the item have the potential for being heavily used by library patrons?
- Cost.  
How much does it cost? Are there other comparable items that are less expensive?
- Currency.  
How current is the material? Are there other items that are more current? Would this item duplicate information in another item already in the collection?
- Format.  
What is the quality of the binding and the paper? How readable is the print?
- Impartiality.  
Is the item a balanced treatment of the subject matter? Does the collection include materials with different viewpoints? Are there insufficient materials available for purchase on the same subject?
- Organization.  
How is the item laid out? Can you easily find information in the item? Does it have appropriate access points, indexes and cross-references?

- **Scope.**  
What subject area does the item cover? Is it a broad or specific treatment of the subject?
- **Special Features.**  
Does the item have important illustrations or other features that would make it valuable? If the item is a video or DVD, is it rated R for sexual content, NC-17 or X? Would the item typically be found in an adult entertainment establishment?

Selection criteria for electronic resources additionally include:

- comparison of content with other available items
- ease of access
- ease of use
- hardware requirements
- licensing requirements
- networking capabilities
- patron assistance requirements
- search interface
- staff training

Formats collected include:

- book CDs
- book tapes
- books
- computer software
- DVDs (see page 16 for additional information)
- Ebooks
- electronic resources
- periodicals
- VHS videotapes (see page 16 for additional information)

Tools commonly used to select materials include:

- lists of recommended titles
- magazines
- newspapers
- professional journals
- publishers' catalogs and promotional materials
- reviews
- subject bibliographies
- trade journals

## **DVDs and VHS videotapes**

In July 2000 Pasco County and the Library Advisory Board approved making a video cassette collection available in the county libraries (see page 36). This collection now includes DVDs as well as VHS videotapes. PCLS does not aim to compete with local video stores but to meet the diverse needs of the citizens of Pasco County. PCLS offers a wide variety of material, often not found in local stores, including foreign films and special interest videos, or films that are not feature films, such as exercise, cooking, sport, opera, ballet, documentaries and instructional titles. PCLS does purchase some feature films but limits the quantity to 1 per branch.

## **Weeding**

Weeding is a continuous evaluation of the collection intended to remove items that are no longer useful. Weeding is an essential element of collection development that ensures the library's materials are helpful and accessible. Every library's print collection is limited by the space available to house it and collections should change over time to reflect changes in the community and in the library's goals.

When libraries do not weed regularly or consistently patrons have trouble finding interesting and relevant materials. Removing outdated or worn out items makes the collection more visually attractive and more inviting to users. Patrons trust the library to supply information that is easy to find and up-to-date.

Items that are removed from the collection must:

1. meet the weeding guidelines in the Crew Method (see page 50); or
2. no longer meet the selection criteria found in the Collection Development Policy.

## **Donations**

Donations of books or other library materials are accepted with the understanding that donated items become the property of the library and the library may make whatever use of the items it feels appropriate. Items are evaluated on the same basis as purchased materials and may be:

- added to the library's collection;
- donated to the Friends of the Library book sale to benefit the library; or
- disposed of at the discretion of the library.

The library does not accept donations with any terms or conditions attached or give donations special handling or processing.

Library materials may be added to the collection in memory or in honor of a specified individual or group by making a monetary donation to the Friends of the Library. A special bookplate will be attached to the item if desired by the donor.

Donations of books or other library materials are tax deductible to the full extent of the law and may be acknowledged for tax purposes.

## Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.  
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,  
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,  
by the ALA Council.

## **Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Expurgating library materials is a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agent, or its parent institution (if any). By such expurgation, the library is in effect denying access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work intended to express. Such action stands in violation of Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the *Library Bill of Rights*, which state that “Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation,” that “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval,” and that “Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.”

The act of expurgation has serious implications. It involves a determination that it is necessary to restrict access to the complete work. This is censorship. When a work is expurgated, under the assumption that certain portions of that work would be harmful to minors, the situation is no less serious.

Expurgation of any books or other library resources imposes a restriction, without regard to the rights and desires of all library users, by limiting access to ideas and information.

Further, expurgation without written permission from the holder of the copyright on the material may violate the copyright provisions of the United States Code.

Adopted February 2, 1973; amended July 1, 1981; amended January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.

## 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens 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 citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

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 need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

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 or unpopular with 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 with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it 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 the citizen. 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.*

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.

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 citizens the fullest of their support.

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

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

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

A Joint Statement by:

**American Library Association and  
Association of American Publishers**

Subsequently Endorsed by:

- **American Association of University Professors**
- **American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression**
- **American Society of Journalists and Authors**
- **American Society of Newspaper Editors**
- **Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith**
- **Association of American University Presses**

- **Center for Democracy & Technology**
- **The Children's Book Council**
- **The Electronic Frontier Foundation**
- **Feminists for Free Expression**
- **Freedom to Read Foundation**
- **International Reading Association**
- **The Media Institute**
- **National Coalition Against Censorship**
- **National PTA**
- **Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**
- **PEN American Center**
- **People for the American Way**
- **Student Press Law Center**
- **The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression**

## **Freedom to View Statement**

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

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

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

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

## **Libraries: An American Value**

Libraries in America are cornerstones of the communities they serve. Free access to the books, ideas, resources, and information in America's libraries is imperative for education, employment, enjoyment, and self-government.

Libraries are a legacy to each generation, offering the heritage of the past and the promise of the future. To ensure that libraries flourish and have the freedom to promote and protect the public good in the 21st century, we believe certain principles must be guaranteed.

To that end, we affirm this contract with the people we serve:

- We defend the constitutional rights of all individuals, including children and teenagers, to use the library's resources and services;
- We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve;
- We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services;
- We connect people and ideas by helping each person select from and effectively use the library's resources;
- We protect each individual's privacy and confidentiality in the use of library resources and services;
- We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services;
- We celebrate and preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions and ideas, so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners - informed, literate, educated, and culturally enriched.

Change is constant, but these principles transcend change and endure in a dynamic technological, social, and political environment.

By embracing these principles, libraries in the United States can contribute to a future that values and protects freedom of speech in a world that celebrates both our similarities and our differences, respects individuals and their beliefs, and holds all persons truly equal and free.

**Adopted by the  
Council of the American Library Association  
February 3, 1999**