

## **Collection Development**

### **Objectives**

The objective of the Joplin Public Library is to select, organize, and make accessible Library materials to meet the expressed and anticipated needs and interests of the diverse public in the Library District. The Library strives to provide the residents of Joplin with a comprehensive collection of materials in a variety of formats.

Materials should be selected and services planned to satisfy residents both as individuals and as members of groups, with concern for all ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities, and levels of education.

The Library has an obligation not only to serve its current users but also to search for materials and methods that will meet the needs of community members who have not traditionally been Library users.

### **Priorities of Selection**

1. Materials to meet informational needs, both expressed and anticipated, of patrons of all ages.
2. Materials to meet the recreational needs of patrons of all ages.
3. Materials to meet the educational needs of pre-school children, out-of-school adults, and all other patrons who are not served by an educational institution.
4. Materials to meet the needs of the business community.
5. Materials to support civic and cultural activities of individuals, groups, and organizations.

### **Selection**

The Library should plan to acquire, within its budgetary limitations, all types of Library materials needed to meet its obligations. Library materials include, but are not limited to, books, pamphlets, documents, periodicals, maps, microforms, audio-visual materials, databases, and artifacts.

Addition of an item to the Library's collection in no way represents an endorsement of any theory, idea, or policy contained in the material.

The responsibility for selection of Library materials is delegated to the Collection Development Librarian and, under their direction, to those members of the staff who are qualified by their education, training, and experience. The judgments of experts, of professionally trained staff members, and of qualified reviewers provide a balance of opinion as the basis for selection. Though a variety of criteria is used for each subject, final decision is based on the value of the material to the Library and its public, regardless of the personal taste of the selectors.

In selecting materials, the librarians will use as many selection and bibliographic management tools as possible, including, but not limited to, Booklist, Publishers Weekly, American Libraries,

Library Journal; Kirkus, School Library Journal, Rotten Tomatoes, and any other useful bibliographic reference works or professional journal.

Librarians will strive to find a review of any item before considering it for purchase; however, because only a portion of all published material is ever reviewed, librarians will also consider purchase of items based on advertisements, author tours, television and radio coverage, and direct mail.

Current in-print publications of lasting value, regardless of format, will be given priority over out-of-print publications. Reprints are considered as current publications.

Holdings of other area libraries will be considered when selecting subject areas for intensive collection or large purchase items.

Demand is a valid factor in materials selection. The number of copies of any title shall be dependent upon demand by patrons and the size of the population served. Materials requested by multiple cardholders will be given additional consideration, regardless of whether the item has been positively reviewed, unless such material is not acceptable under other conditions of the Collection Development policy.

While the Library's collection is available as a supplement to students' primary educational institutions or units, the Library is unable to provide curriculum or textbooks.

Items that can be easily bound will be given priority over those which are unable to withstand the stresses of circulation to the public.

Literature in languages not justified by community needs, religious materials designed to be used for proselytizing, or purely propagandistic literature will not be added to the collection.

The Library is unable to purchase all local authors' works for inclusion in the collection. The Library will accept donations of such works, provided they meet Collection Development guidelines.

Electronic databases extend the collection by providing timely and versatile access to information in electronic format. Typically, the content of an electronic database is not customizable with a subscription granting access to the entirety of its contents. As such, they are evaluated for inclusion in the collection as a whole based on their ability to enhance and supplement the print collection. Subscription to an electronic database does not constitute endorsement of the electronic content patrons may access.

### **Placement of Materials**

Materials will be ordered, received, cataloged, and shelved in the appropriate section.

The age recommendations for each department (i.e., the Children's Department being thirteen years and younger and the Teen Department being eleven years and older) are only recommendations. Parents or legal guardians of minors are solely responsible for supervising or limiting their children's access to Library materials. Materials in all collections are available to all individuals at all times the Library is open. The Library does not stand in place of parents or legal guardians when it comes to access of the Library's collections. It is not the responsibility of the Library, its Board of Trustees, staff, or volunteers to determine which collection minors should use or what item in the collection is suitable for an individual.

### **Selection and Retention of Materials -- Local History Room**

As funds allow, the Library will acquire items of historical or genealogical interest about Missouri, especially southwest Missouri. Secondly, the Library will acquire items of historical or genealogical interest about southeast Kansas, northeast Oklahoma, and the northernmost counties of northwest Arkansas.

The Library is unable to purchase all local authors' works about Joplin and Jasper/Newton Counties for inclusion in the Local History Room. The Library will accept donations of such works, provided they meet Collection Development guidelines.

The Library will give first consideration to shelving items in the Local History Room that are local in interest or that have broad national scope, such as immigration information or census indexes for states.

Items that are rare or fragile or present a risk of theft will be kept in a secure location. Such items may be used only under the supervision of Library staff. Examples of these items include, but are not restricted to, Joplin high school and college yearbooks, old city directories, the Dawes rolls for identifying Native American heritage, and rare books.

The Library will not purchase family name books and will accept only those donations of family name books where the family has a strong local connection.

### **Censorship**

The Library recognizes the pluralistic nature of the community and the varied needs of Joplin citizens. The Library does not promote particular beliefs or views. It provides resources where individuals can examine issues and make their own decisions. The Library affirms the principles of each individual's freedom to read and view.

The Library recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that any given item may be a cause of concern for some Library users. Selection will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection. The collection must contain the various positions expressed on important, complicated, or controversial subjects, including unpopular or unorthodox positions.

The choice of Library materials for personal use is an individual matter; individuals are free to reject materials of which they do not approve. No one has the right to exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of use and/or access by others.

The selection of materials will not be limited by the possibility that such materials may come into the possession of minors. The freedom of access for minors may be restricted only by the child's own parents or legal guardians. Parents or legal guardians of minors are solely responsible for supervising or limiting their children's access to Library materials. The Library does not stand in place of parents or legal guardians when it comes to access to the Library's collections. It is not the responsibility of the Library, its Board of Trustees, staff, or volunteers to determine which collection children should use or what items are suitable for an individual.

Once an item has been purchased, it will not automatically be removed upon request. The Library has established procedures to ensure objective and fair review of questioned materials. Should a patron of the Library take issue with a resource, they are encouraged to contact the Library Director to arrange a time to discuss these concerns. Should that discussion prove unfeasible or fail to address the patron's concerns, they may complete and submit a Comment on Library Resources form (available at the Library). For further details, please see the Comment on Resources policy.

Each item considered for selection must be evaluated on its own merits. Works that depict an aspect of life honestly will not be excluded because of frankness of expression; vivid descriptions of sex or violence; the philosophy, politics, or religion of the author; or any other factor which might be objectionable to some Library users. All materials will be judged as a whole rather than by isolated passages.

## **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.

## **The Freedom to Read Statement**

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

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

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

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

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

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers

and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

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

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.  
Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.
2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.  
Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.  
No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.  
To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet

prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.  
The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information. It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.
7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.  
The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

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

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

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

## **The Freedom to View Statement**

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

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

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

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council