

**City of Beverly Hills
Library and Community Services**

Material Selection policy

General Library Objectives

The Beverly Hills Public Library provides free service, on equal terms, to all individuals and groups in the community, both children and adults. The basic objectives of the Library are the provision and preservation of books and audiovisual materials, access to electronic resources and programs which aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information and the creative use of leisure time.

Responsibility for Selection of Materials

The ultimate responsibility for the selection of books and other materials, as for all Library activities, rests with the Director of Library and Community Services, who operates within the framework of policies established by the City Council. The Director must be able to answer to the City Manager and to the public for actual selections made by the staff and therefore must have the right to order or to reject any material.

The task of book selection is divided among the professional staff members who are responsible for particular sections of the collection. The staff uses and checks all recognized periodicals, newspapers, professional journals and online resources as well as calling upon their educational background and professional judgement. The selection of periodicals, audiovisual materials and electronic databases follow comparable procedures.

Criteria for Selection of Materials

The materials for the Library are selected with due regard to the general residential and business community which reflects differences in education, reading ability, interests and needs. In order to fulfill the diverse requirements expected from the Library collection, the overall selection of materials is inclusive rather than exclusive.

The criteria for non-fiction include: timeliness and potential usefulness; the significance and importance of the subject; the accuracy of material; the reputation of the author; the reputation of the publisher; the availability of the book elsewhere; the availability of other information on the subject; the format of the book with respect to durability and the ability to be handled; the price in relation to subject and need; and inclusion in standard bibliographies and indexes.

In fiction no single standard of subject matter or literary quality can be set up. The Library acquires fiction, which can be serious or amusing, realistic or fantastic. The Library's general objective is, as far as possible, to choose well-written books over those that are incompetently written.

In the acquisition of both fiction and non-fiction, suggestions from patrons are welcome and are given serious consideration.

The Library also recognizes its obligations to provide reference and research materials for direct answering of specific questions and for continuing research. Gifts of materials or funds to enrich the Library collection are gratefully accepted. However, the Library reserves the right to refuse any conditions placed upon gifts of materials or funds.

Basis for the Exclusion of Materials

A single library cannot acquire all materials published and must of necessity employ a policy of selectivity in acquisition. Materials are eliminated from consideration on the basis of the criteria outlined above.

The Beverly Hills Public Library strives not to present a particular point of view but to include representative viewpoints, especially on controversial questions or subjects of general concern. This may mean selecting some materials that espouse an unpopular viewpoint or that are written in an extreme or sensational manner. It is not the purpose of the Library to cater to trivial, antisocial, or prurient interests, but no public institution has the right to judge what people may or may not read, hear or look at. The Library recognizes that citizens must form their own opinions and make their own decisions, and is primarily concerned with providing materials that will help them do so intelligently.

The Library places some materials on closed shelves not for the purpose of censorship but to protect the materials because they may be costly, rare, out of print, prone to defacement, or physically unsuited to open shelf use. These books are circulated freely to adults upon request. Materials for children are restricted only in the recognition by the Library that the ultimate supervision of a child's reading or viewing or listening is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

The Library's Right to Choose

The Library will not consider the addition or withdrawal of any material solely because it is approved and sponsored, or disapproved of and objected to, for partisan or doctrinal reasons.

The Library has the right to reject or select books and other materials independently of outside influence.

The Library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, and the statements of the American Library Association concerning Access to Electronic Information, Services and Networks, and the Diversity in Collection Development (attached).

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Library Bill of Rights

American Library Association

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access of ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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 18 June 1948

Amended 2 February 1961, 27 June 1967 and 23 January 1980 by the ALA Council.

Diversity in Collection Development

American Library Association

Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials legally obtainable should be assured to the user and policies should not unjustly exclude materials even if offensive to the librarian or user. Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article 2 of the Library Bill of Rights. A balanced collection reflects diversity of materials, not equality of numbers. Collection development responsibilities include selecting materials in the languages in common use in the community, which the library serves. Collection development and the selection of materials should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures.

Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice, and to select and support the acquisition of materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs and interest of all persons in the community which the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, promotes no causes, furthers no movements, and favors no viewpoints. It only provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question cause, or movement may be explored.

Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks:

An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Introduction

The world is in the midst of an electronic communications revolution. Based on its constitutional, ethical, and historical heritage, American librarianship is uniquely positioned to address the broad range of information issues being raised in this revolution. In particular, librarians address intellectual freedom from a strong ethical base and an abiding commitment to the preservation of the individual's rights.

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. These rights extend to minors as well as adults. Libraries and librarians exist to facilitate the exercise of these rights by selecting, producing, providing access to, identifying, retrieving, organizing, providing instruction in the use of, and preserving recorded expression regardless of the format or technology.

The American Library Association expresses these basic principles of librarianship in its *Code of Ethics* and in the *Library Bill of Rights and its Interpretations*. These serve to guide librarians and library governing bodies in addressing issues of intellectual freedom that arise when the library provides access to electronic information, services, and networks.

Issues arising from the still-developing technology of computer-mediated information generation, distribution, and retrieval need to be approached and regularly reviewed from a context of constitutional principles and ALA policies so that fundamental and traditional tenets of librarianship are not swept away.

Electronic information flows across boundaries and barriers despite attempts by individuals, governments, and private entities to channel or control it. Even so, many people, for reasons of technology, infrastructure, or socio-economic status do not have access to electronic information. In making decisions about how to offer access to electronic information, each library should consider its mission, goals, objectives, cooperative agreements, and the needs of the entire community it serves.

The Rights of Users

All library system and network policies, procedures or regulations relating to electronic resources and services should be scrutinized for potential violation of user rights.

User policies should be developed according to the policies and guidelines established by the American Library Association, including Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations, and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities.

Although electronic systems may include distinct property rights and security concerns, such elements may not be employed as a subterfuge to deny users' access to information. Users have the right to be free of unreasonable limitations or conditions set by libraries, librarians, system administrators, vendors, network service providers, or others. Contracts, agreements, and licenses entered into by libraries on behalf of their users should not violate this right. Users also have a right to information, training and assistance necessary to operate the hardware and software provided by the library.

Users should not be restricted or denied access for expressing or receiving constitutionally protected speech. Users' access should not be changed without due process, including, but not limited to, formal notice and a means of appeal.

Users have both the right of confidentiality and the right of privacy. The library should uphold these rights by policy, procedure, and practice. Users should be advised, however, that because security is technically difficult to achieve, electronic transactions and files could become public. The rights of users who are minors shall in no way be abridged.

Equity of Access

Electronic information, services, and networks provided directly or indirectly by the library should be equally, readily and equitably accessible to all library users. American Library Association policies oppose the charging of user fees for the provision of information services by all libraries and information services that receive their major support from public funds. It should be the goal of all libraries to develop policies concerning access to electronic resources in light of Economic Barriers to Information Access: an Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities.

Information Resources and Access

Providing connections to global information, services, and networks is not the same as selecting and purchasing material for a library collection. Determining the accuracy or authenticity of electronic information may present special problems. Some information accessed electronically may not meet a library's selection or collection development policy. It is, therefore, left to each user to determine what is appropriate. Parents and legal guardians who are concerned about their children's use of electronic resources should provide guidance to their own children.

Libraries and librarians should not deny or limit access to information available via electronic resources because of its allegedly controversial content or because of the librarian's personal beliefs or fear of confrontation. Information retrieved or utilized electronically should be considered constitutionally protected unless determined otherwise by a court with appropriate jurisdiction.

Libraries, acting within their mission and objectives, must support access to information on all subjects that serve the needs or interests of each user, regardless of the user's age or the content of the material. Libraries have an obligation to provide access to government information available in electronic format. Libraries and librarians should not deny access to information solely on the grounds that it is perceived to lack value.

In order to prevent the loss of information, and to preserve the cultural record, libraries may need to expand their selection or collection development policies to ensure preservation, in appropriate formats, of information obtained electronically.

Electronic resources provide unprecedented opportunities to expand the scope of information available to users. Libraries and librarians should provide access to information presenting all points of view. The provision of access does not imply sponsorship or endorsement. These principles pertain to electronic resources no less than they do to the more traditional sources of information in libraries.

Adopted by the ALA Council, 24 January, 1996