

**ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY**

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Adopted July 27, 1988, by the Board of Trustees of Rowan Public Library; Revised April 26, 2023,  
August 23, 2023.

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## ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

# MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

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Adopted July 27, 1988 by the Board of Trustees of Rowan Public Library; Revised April 26, 2023, August 23, 2023.

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### **Rowan Public Library Mission Statement**

Inspiring the spirit of exploration and the power of imagination, promoting the joy of reading, and supporting the lifelong pursuit of knowledge for all people.

### **Section 1. Purpose of the Materials Selection Policy**

Rowan Public Library aims to provide to the residents of Rowan County ready availability to those library materials and services that meet their educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs, and to be an access point to needed information. Rowan Public Library also aims to serve as an archive for local historical and genealogical resources and to provide access to these resources.

The provision of materials in support of the library's mission is an essential function of the library. The selection of materials is a prime activity within the library and is based on the needs and requests of the community it serves.

### **Section 2. Objectives of the Materials Selection Policy**

In keeping with the mission statement of Rowan Public Library, the objectives of this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Ensure that the library purchases, within budgetary limitations, the best materials of both permanent and current interest in a variety of subjects
2. To guide the librarians of Rowan Public Library in the selection of materials
3. To make available to the public the criteria on which selections are made
4. To provide library materials most wanted by the greatest number of people
5. To provide a well-balanced collection for all subject areas
6. To provide an archive for local history and genealogical resources

### **Section 3. Responsibility for Material Selection**

The Library Director operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Board of Trustees in delegating the responsibility for the selection of materials to the professional staff of the library. Selection areas are broadly assigned by the library director as follows:



*Section 3. Responsibility for Material Selection continued:*

1. Responsibility for the selection of juvenile materials lies with the Youth Services Supervisor.
2. Responsibility for the selection of young adult materials lies with the Young Adult Librarian.
3. Responsibility for the selection of adult materials lies with the Adult Services Supervisor.
4. Responsibility for the selection of materials for the Edith M. Clark History Room lies with the History Room Supervisor.

Any librarian assigned responsibility for a collection may delegate selection of materials for sections of the collection to qualified subordinate staff members. The library director has the authority to change collection assignments at any time.

The professional staff operates within their areas of expertise in service to adults, young adults, and children. Suggestions from other staff members and the public are welcome. The final authority for the determination of policy to guide the selection of library materials is vested in the Board of Trustees by the Board of Commissioners of Rowan County.

**Section 4. Intellectual Freedom**

The Rowan Public Library consciously supports and is supported by the American Library Association's "Freedom to Read", "Library Bill of Rights", and "Freedom to View" documents (Appendices A-C) and its interpretations thereof (Appendices D-G). These documents affirm that free and convenient access to ideas, information, and the creative experience is of vital importance to every citizen.

Rowan Public Library provides materials for all age levels including adults, young adults, and children. Individuals are expected to choose materials for themselves or their children but cannot exercise censorship on others. Parents and legal guardians who wish to limit or restrict the reading of their own children should personally oversee their selections. Neither they nor library staff may restrict the choices of others.

**Section 5. Statement of Concern**

If an individual has concerns about or deems material to be objectionable, they may register concerns and complaints in writing using the "Statement of Concern" form (Appendix H). No materials which have been duly selected shall be removed from the library's collection except upon the recommendation of the library director or upon formal action of the Board of Trustees when a decision of the library director is appealed. Materials of concern will continue to be made available to the public through the completion of the process.



*Section 5. Statement of Concern continued:*

Procedure to notify the library of a concern about an item in its collection:

1. Individuals with concerns about any part of the collection should be offered a copy of the *Materials Selection Policy* to read and offered the opportunity to discuss the matter informally with the librarian responsible for the collection (see Section 3. Responsibility for Material Collection)
2. If the material is still questioned, the individual should be provided a copy of the "Statement of Concern" form (Appendix H).
  - a. The form must be filled out completely.
  - b. The form must be signed by the individual expressing the concern.
  - c. A form must be completed for each item of concern.
3. The completed form is forwarded to the library director.
4. The library director establishes an Advisory Committee which is responsible for reviewing the material in accordance with material selection objectives, considerations for selection, types and formats of materials selected, Intellectual Freedom documents identified in Section 4 above, and material usage.
5. The Advisory Committee provides the library director with their recommendation within thirty (30) days of the date on the completed form.
6. The library director will review the committee's recommendation and reply to the individual in writing. The written response will
  - a. Indicate the library's position and library director's decision,
  - b. Report any action taken or planned, and,
  - c. A copy of the response will be sent to all current Trustees on the Library Board of Trustees.
7. In the event the individual is dissatisfied with the library director's decision, they may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees. Any action taken by the Board of Trustees is final.

Procedure to appeal a *Statement of Concern* decision to the Board of Trustees:

1. The individual whose signature is on the form submits a written request through the library director to appear before the Library Board of Trustees. The written request must include:
  - a. The topic, purpose, and necessary background information to understand the issue;
  - b. An explanation of how the library director's decision does not comply with the library's *Materials Selection Policy*; and,
  - c. Specify what action they wish the Board of Trustees to take, if any.
2. This written request must be received by the Library Director no later than seven (7) calendar days before the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting in order for it to be placed on the meeting agenda. Board of Trustee meeting dates are posted on the primary public bulletin board at each library branch and on the library's website.
3. The library director will confirm the Board of Trustees meeting date, time, and location with the submitter and place the appeal on the meeting agenda under 'new business'.



## **Section 6. Considerations for Selection**

In selecting materials, the staff uses professional knowledge, training, and judgment, based on authoritative reviews and standard sources. The staff must work within the constraints of budget and space. The considerations for selection apply to materials of all types and formats for all age levels including adults, young adults, and children.

The considerations for individual title selection include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Present and potential relevance of the subject matter to the collection
2. Public demand
3. Reader interest
4. Contemporary significance
5. Permanent value
6. Authoritativeness
7. Availability or scarcity of material on the subject
8. Format and appearance
9. Accuracy in presenting factual information)
10. Age of potential users
11. Research value (Applies to local history and genealogy collection only)
12. Sound or visual quality (Applies to audiovisuals only)

## **Section 7. Types and Formats of Materials Selected**

The Rowan Public Library serves the total population of Rowan County, including ten municipalities and all rural sections of the County. The variety and scope of materials required by such a diverse population for information, relaxation, stimulation, and education are as broad as the community itself. The library strives to be responsive to the needs of this ever-changing community.

In selecting and maintaining materials the staff recognizes that Rowan Public Library does not attempt to have comprehensive or all-inclusive collections in any subject area. Except for the Edith M. Clark History Room's history and genealogy collections, the library does not serve as a repository of materials.

The scope of Rowan Public Library collections is fundamentally popular and light research materials. The scope of the Edith M. Clark History Room is fundamentally a very extensive collection of research level primary and secondary resources to support local history and southeast genealogical research.

The library does not attempt to furnish materials needed for formal courses of study offered by elementary and secondary schools and by institutions of higher learning. The public library has materials for self-study but is not primarily designed to furnish materials required for academic study.



*Section 7. Types and Formats of Materials Selected continued:*

Types of materials selected include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Fiction	6. Directories
2. Non-fiction	7. Sound recordings
3. Reference	8. Computer Software
4. Periodicals	9. Videos
5. Maps	

Formats of materials selected include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Paper
2. DVD
3. Digital / Electronic
  - a. eBooks
  - b. eAudiobooks
  - c. eResources
  - d. Streaming video
  - e. ePeriodicals
  - f. online/remote access databases

Due to the unique nature of local history and genealogy resources, types and formats of materials selected for the Edith M. Clark History Room include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Vertical files	8. Compact Disks
2. Pamphlets	9. Flash Drives
3. Filmstrips	10. Portable Hard Drives
4. Microfilm / microfiche	11. Realia
5. Slides	12. Scrapbooks
6. Cassettes	13. Yearbooks from educational institutions
7. Videocassettes	located in Rowan County

**Section 8. Relationships to Other Libraries and Agencies**

Rowan Public Library cooperates with other libraries and community agencies and organizations to meet the information needs of the county. To avoid unnecessary duplication of materials, one factor in selection is a consideration of the kinds of materials available to the public through other institutions. The library does not usually acquire the specialized materials owned by the college and professional libraries in the county.

The library participates in an interlibrary loan service by which materials are obtained from other libraries. This provides a means of sharing resources with libraries in the community, state, and throughout the United States. Interlibrary loan is relied upon to fill requests for specialized and esoteric materials. Generally excluded from this service are current bestsellers, inexpensive paperbacks, and children's books. Interlibrary loan requests are forwarded to the appropriate selector first for purchase consideration.



## **Section 9. Donations**

Rowan Public Library accepts donations of printed materials, manuscripts, and objects. Donated items immediately become county property. The library reserves the right to make final disposition of donations which may include adding them to the collection, recycling, or disposal after critical evaluation. The library cannot accept donations upon which there are conditions or restrictions placed by the donor. Responsibility for monetary appraisal of donations rests solely with the donor (see Appendix I, Donation Acknowledgement Letter).

The library does not accept donations of the following:

1. Encyclopedias
2. Compact Discs (CDs)
3. Periodicals / Newspapers
4. Textbooks
5. VHS tapes

Donations not chosen for inclusion in library collections are made available to the Friends of Rowan Public Library to sell. All proceeds from the sale of donated materials are used to support Rowan Public Library in accordance with that organization's bylaws.

## **Section 10. Collection Maintenance & Weeding**

1. The library has an obligation to ensure materials are located at the right branch, in the right collection, and in correct order on the shelf as specified in each item's catalog record. Shelf reading is to be done continuously to meet this objective.
2. The library has an obligation to maintain the appearance of materials and prolong their physical lifespan by utilizing proper processing and repair techniques which includes but is not limited to consistent application of call number labels and the use of protective covers, binding tape, and acid free manuscript boxes and folders. To help meet this objective, processing materials for public use should be performed before materials are circulated and returned materials are checked for damage and sent to Technical Services for repair.
3. Duplication or need for multiple copies of materials is based on a combination of demand, intrinsic or historical value, and perceived need in the community.
4. The library has an obligation to maintain an up-to-date collection which reflects the reading and research interests of the community. Materials also have a physical lifespan and age may render them no longer useable. Systematic withdrawal of materials (weeding) which are no longer useful in maintaining an active, accurate collection is necessary. Library materials are withdrawn based on, but not limited to, the following reasons:
  1. Irreparable damage
  2. Obsolescence
  3. Insufficient use
  4. Space available for housing materials
  5. Duplications



*Section 10. Collection Maintenance & Weeding continued:*

5. Purchasing an identical replacement of a withdrawn item is based on the lack of adequate coverage of the item's subject matter within the existing collection and the demand for the specific material withdrawn.
6. Items of a classic nature in poor physical condition but not available for replacement can be designated for rebinding. Rebinding is at the discretion of the History Room Supervisor.

**Weeding**

Weeding is the systematic withdrawal of damaged or obsolete materials from the library's collection. Guidelines for withdrawing materials are set forth in the document "Weeding Library Materials: Guidelines" (Appendix J). These guidelines are used by all library staff. Changes to the guidelines must be approved by the library director.

At the June 17, 2019, regular meeting of the Rowan County Board of Commissioners, commissioners authorized the Friends of Rowan Public Library to sell withdrawn library materials to the public.<sup>i</sup> All proceeds from the Friends' sale of withdrawn materials are used to support Rowan Public Library in accordance with that organization's bylaws.

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<sup>i</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Rowan County Board of Commissioners." Rowan County Board of Commissioners, 17 June 2019, Rowan County, North Carolina.



## 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.

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 (<http://www.publishers.org/>)

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers for Free Expression (<http://www.bookweb.org/abfe>)

The Association of American University Presses (<http://www.aaupnet.org/>)

The Children's Book Council (<http://www.cbcbooks.org/>)

Freedom to Read Foundation (<http://www.ftrf.org>)

National Association of College Stores (<http://www.nacs.org/>)

National Coalition Against Censorship (<http://www.ncac.org/>)

National Council of Teachers of English (<http://www.ncte.org/>)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

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## Library Bill of Rights

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

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

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>).

## 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

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### Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: "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." A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library's selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all of the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection's diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights* (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/servicespeopledisabilities>)," adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title "Services to Persons with Disabilities"; amended June 26, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *ALA Code of Ethics*, Article VII, adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name "Diversity in Collection Development"*; and June 24, 2019.

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## Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

Libraries continually develop their collections by adding and removing resources to maintain collections of current interest and usefulness to their communities. Libraries should adopt collection development and maintenance policies that include criteria for evaluating materials. Reasons for inclusion or removal of materials may include but are not limited to accuracy, currency, budgetary constraints, relevancy, content, usage, and community interest. The collection-development process is not to be used as a means to remove materials or deny access to resources on the grounds of personal bias or prejudice or because the materials may be viewed as controversial or objectionable. Doing so violates the principles of intellectual freedom and is in opposition to the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Some resources may contain views, opinions, and concepts that were popular or widely held at one time but are now considered outdated, offensive, or harmful. Content creators may also come to be considered offensive or controversial. These resources should be subject to evaluation in accordance with collection-development and collection-maintenance policies. The evaluation criteria and process may vary depending on the type of library. While weeding is essential to the collection-development process, the controversial nature of an item or its creator should not be the sole reason to remove any item from a library's collection. Rather than removing these resources, libraries should consider ways to educate users and create context for how those views, opinions, and concepts have changed over time.

Failure to select resources merely because they may be potentially controversial is censorship, as is withdrawing resources for the same reason. Library workers should consider the cataloging,

classification, and display of resources to ensure that they are discoverable and readily available to the populations they are meant to serve.

The American Library Association opposes censorship from any source, including library workers, faculty, administration, trustees, and elected officials. Libraries have a profound responsibility to encourage and support intellectual freedom by making it possible for the user to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; June 2, 2008. Adopted Annual Conference 2019.

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## Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

"Libraries: An American Value" states, "We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services."<sup>1</sup> The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources. Collection development applies to library materials and resources in all formats, programs, and services.

Article I of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* states, "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." Article II further declares, "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

Freedom of expression, although it can be offensive to some, is protected by the Constitution of the United States. The "Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*" states:

Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers should not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection-development decisions.<sup>2</sup>

This applies with equal force to library resources and services provided to students and minors.<sup>3</sup>

The Supreme Court has held that the Constitution requires a procedure designed to critically examine all challenged expression before it can be suppressed.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, libraries should develop a procedure by which the governing body examines concerns and challenges about library resources. This procedure should be open, transparent, and conform to all applicable open meeting and public records laws.

Challenged resources should remain in the collection, and access to the resources remain unrestricted during the review process. Resources that meet the criteria for selection and inclusion within the collection as outlined in the institution's collections policy should not be removed. Procedures to review challenges to library resources should not be used to suppress constitutionally protected expression.

Any attempt, be it legal or extralegal, to regulate or suppress resources in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged. Attempts to remove or suppress materials by library staff or members of the library's governing body that are not regulated or sanctioned by law are considered "extralegal." Examples include actions that circumvent library policy, or actions taken by elected officials or governing board members outside the established legal process for making legislative or board decisions. Actions taken by library governing bodies during official sessions or meetings pursuant to the library's collection development policy, or litigation undertaken in courts of law with jurisdiction over the library and the library's governing body, and actions taken by legislative bodies are considered a "legal process."

Content filtering is not equivalent to collection development. Content filtering is exclusive, not inclusive, and cannot effectively curate content or mediate access to resources available on the internet. Filtering should be addressed in an institution's policy on acceptable use of the internet. Acceptable use policies should

reflect the *Library Bill of Rights* and "Internet Filtering: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*," and be approved by the appropriate governing authority.

<sup>1</sup> "Libraries: An American Value (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/americanvalue>)," adopted February 3, 1999, by the ALA Council.

<sup>2</sup> "Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights* (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/diversecollections>)," adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 under previous name "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 25, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> "Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights* (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/minors>)," adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 under previous name "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> *Bantam Books, Inc. v. Sullivan*, 372 U.S. 58 (1963).

Adopted June 25, 1971, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; January 28, 2009; July 1, 2014; and January 29, 2019.

*The quoted language in this interpretation from "Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" (adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 under previous name "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 25, 2019) was updated to reflect the June 2019 revision. This change was voted on by the Intellectual Freedom Committee.*

#### See also

- "Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries (<http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit>)," ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2018.

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### Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association supports equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users is in violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This includes minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library card application or permission slip. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness should be able to obtain a library card regardless of library policies related to chronological age.

School and public libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and resources to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and should be determined on an individual basis. Equitable access to all library resources and services should not be abridged based on chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, legal status, or through restrictive scheduling and use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. A library's failure to acquire materials on the grounds that minors may be able to access those materials diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats.<sup>1</sup> Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.<sup>2</sup> Libraries and their library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." This includes students and minors, who have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use.<sup>3</sup>

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "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."<sup>4</sup> Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor's access to materials.<sup>5</sup>

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

<sup>1</sup> *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant's Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011).

<sup>2</sup> *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): "Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors." See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

<sup>3</sup> "Privacy: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights* (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy>)," adopted June 19, 2002, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 2014; and June 24, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> "Libraries: An American Value (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/americanvalue>)," adopted on February 3, 1999, by ALA Council.

<sup>5</sup> "Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights* (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/rating-systems>)," adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"*; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

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# Appendix H

ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

## STATEMENT OF CONCERN

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

Title of material, program, or exhibit:

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Author/Artist/Composure/Presenter:

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Name and contact information of individual completing this form:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an account with Rowan Public Library?  Yes  No

If you are making this request on behalf of a minor, what is your relationship to the minor?

Parent  Legal Guardian  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

This form represents only the concerns of the individual identified above. If you represent a group or organization, please name them: \_\_\_\_\_

Group/Organization Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Your comments will help us understand your concerns. Please fill out as much of the information below as you would like. Typed responses may be stapled to this form.

- 1) What brought material, program, or exhibit to your attention?
  
- 2) Did you read, view, attend, or listen to the entire material, program, or exhibit? Yes  No   
If no, what portions have you read, viewed, attended, or listened to?
  
- 3) What do you find objectionable about the material, program, or exhibit? It would be helpful to us if you could be specific by indicating chapters, page numbers, phrases, images, or ideas that concern you.

*Form continues on next page →*

*Rowan Public Library, Statement of Concern continued:*

4) Are there other materials, programs, or exhibits you might recommend to broaden the scope of library collections, programs, and exhibits covering the topic of your concern? Yes  No

If yes, please share them below:

5) Please feel free to make additional comments or express additional concerns about the material, Program, or exhibit of concern.

Our mission at Rowan Public Library is to have a collection and offer programs and exhibits that meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs and interests of our diverse population. We appreciate your concerns and recommendations that will help us achieve our goal.

Please return this form to: **Melissa J. Oleen**  
**Director, Rowan Public Library**  
**201 West Fisher Street**  
**Salisbury, NC 28144**

*This form may not be altered without the approval of the Rowan Public Library Board of Trustees.  
Revised April 28, 2021; December 7, 2022; April 26, 2023; August 23, 2023.*

# Appendix I

copy



Rowan Public Library  
[www.rowanpubliclibrary.org](http://www.rowanpubliclibrary.org)

## Donation Acknowledgment Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

Donor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Library Supporter,

Thank you for your gift of books, recorded books, and/or other items to Rowan Public Library (RPL). Please retain this letter as a receipt for your donation.

RPL has received the following from you:

Hardcover books  
 Paperback books  
 DVDs  
 Audio formats (CDs and recorded books)  
 Other\*

\*As of July 1, 2019, RPL does not accept VHS tapes, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, or encyclopedias.

Donated items are accepted without condition and immediately become RPL property. They cannot be returned. Donations are sold by the Friends of Rowan Public Library at their Second Saturday Bookshop, the ongoing book sales at each RPL branch, or the annual book sale. All proceeds benefit RPL.

Some donations may be added to the collection in compliance with the *RPL Materials Selection Policy*. If added, they may later be withdrawn per *RPL Weeding Guidelines*.

The Internal Revenue Service prohibits Rowan Public Library from assessing the value of donated items or paying for or arranging the appraisal of donations. Tax related information for donations can be reviewed at IRS.gov. No goods or services were provided by RPL in return for this donation.

Your support of Rowan Public Library is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laurie Lyda  
Library Services Manager

HEADQUARTERS 201 West Fisher Street • Salisbury, NC 28144 • 704-216-8228 • FAX 704-216-8237  
EAST BRANCH P.O. Box 550 • 110 Broad Street • Rockwell, NC 28138-0550 • 704-216-7838 • FAX 704-279-7832  
FRANK L. LADLOCK SOUTH ROWAN REGIONAL LIBRARY 920 Kimball Road • China Grove, NC 28023-9594 • 704-216-7727 • FAX 704-855-2449  
WEST BRANCH P.O. Box 247 • 201 School Street • Cleveland, NC 27013 • 704-216-8290 • FAX 704-216-8293

Equal Opportunity Employer



ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

## GUIDELINES: WEEDING LIBRARY MATERIALS

Established September 12, 1991; Revised April 18, 2023



Weeding is the systematic withdrawal of damaged or obsolete materials from the library's collection. Weeding is necessary to maintain an up-to-date collection which reflects the reading and research interests of the communities served by each library branch. Materials also have a physical lifespan and age may render them no longer useable.

Library materials are withdrawn based on, but not limited to, the following:

- Irreparable damage
- Obsolescence
- Insufficient use
- Space available for housing materials
- Duplications

Weeding is done as a continuous procedure; that is, materials are considered as candidates for withdrawal at any time at which they come to the attention of the selector.

Weeding is a collaborative effort between selectors, branch supervisors, and the Technical Services division. As a local history and genealogy archive, Edith M. Clark History Room has separate weeding guidelines unique to its collections.

Library staff are not permitted to unilaterally weed materials. Materials cannot be weeded or relocated without the knowledge of the selector responsible for the collection.

The following guidelines should be used when weeding collections:

1. All materials in circulating collections should be examined a minimum of every two years.
2. As a general rule, any material which has not circulated in two years is withdrawn. Exceptions to this are classics, items in a series, and non-circulating materials.
2. Excess multiple copies of seldom used titles are withdrawn.
3. Non-fiction works are withdrawn if the subject matter is obsolete or dated.
4. In most instances, new editions of works update and supersede the older edition. In these cases, only the current edition will be retained. Earlier editions of non-circulating reference works with wide popular appeal may be moved to circulating collections.
5. Non-circulating reference works will be retained if they contain information with permanent research value not readily accessible elsewhere.
6. Print periodicals are weeded using *Guidelines: Periodical Holdings*. Weeded periodicals are recycled whenever possible. Per Rowan County policies, periodicals cannot be given away.

8. Physical audiovisual materials are weeded primarily based on physical condition.

9. Weeded materials are taken to Technical Services for final withdrawal processing (deaccession). Technical Services is responsible for keeping the catalog up-to-date and accurately reflecting current holdings.

At the library weeding is done collaboratively between selectors (professional librarians responsible for curating specific areas of the library's collection), branch supervisors (professional librarians responsible for branch facilities and operations), and the Technical Services Supervisor.

**Selectors are responsible** for weeding their assigned collection(s) and working with branch supervisors and the Technical Services Division on weeding projects. This includes, but is not limited to

- Initiating contact with branch supervisors to review collection needs and usage
- Responding timely to branch supervisor requests to weed specific areas of the collection
- Providing clear instructions and follow-up to the library staff assigned by branch supervisors to assist them with weeding
- Following Technical Services deaccession instructions
- Instructing and training assigned weeding staff to follow Technical Services deaccession instructions

**Branch supervisors are responsible** for working with selectors and Technical Services Supervisor to

- Ensure branch collections do not become overcrowded, difficult to maintain, or hard to access by library users
- Provide library materials most wanted by communities in the branch's service area
- Notify selectors when specific branch collections require weeding
- Designate branch staff to assist selectors with weeding and notify selectors of same
- Directing and training staff to follow deaccession instructions provided by Technical Services

**Technical Services Supervisor is responsible** for working collaboratively with selectors and branch supervisors to

- Support them in their efforts to conduct weeding projects efficiently and timely
- Provide up to date deaccession instructions as required by Technical Services operations
- Assist in the provision of weeding supplies and collection reports
- Update information in the catalog related to weeded materials to ensure the catalog is up to date and accurately reflects current holdings.
- Direct and train Technical Services staff to comply with the above

The library director should be directly notified if

- Lack of weeding seriously impacts library operations or staff and library user safety.
- Weeding decisions are not being made according to this document and instead are being made based on personal beliefs, opinions, or preferences in conflict with the *Material Selection Policy*.
- Items are being weeded upon request by the public to intentionally bypass procedures and policies set forth in the library's *Material Selection Policy*.

*Approved by Library Director Melissa J. Oleen, April 18, 2023.*

As of 4/18/2023 11:36 AM/ MJO

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Guidelines: Weeding

