



Collection Development Guidelines

Dearborn Public Library

Updated July 11, 2018

Mission Statement

The Dearborn Public Library provides a broad range of effective, courteous quality services and a balanced collection of materials for the educational, informational and recreational needs of the community.

Approved by the Dearborn Library Commission

September 9, 2005

Goal of the Collection Development Guidelines

The Dearborn Public Library strives to fill the informational, recreational, educational and cultural needs of our users. The policies outlined in these guidelines are designed to provide general direction for librarians and inform the public about the selection process. Materials shall not be excluded because of the origin, background or the personal views of the author, as outlined in the attached ALA Bill of Rights.

The purpose of these guidelines set forth here is to inform the public about the principles upon which selections for the Library collection are made. The term “selection” refers to the decision to add, retain or withdraw material. These guidelines apply to all library material in the collection.

General Policies and Procedures of the Collection Development Guidelines

Responsibility

Final responsibility for all material selection lies with the Library Commission. However, the Commission delegates to the Library Director authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections.

Selection

The Library has a professional staff that is responsible for purchasing items in different subject areas. These staff members choose material in a variety of formats based on current library selection criteria. Librarians each have specialized Subject Summary Sheets that give direction on how to purchase items, based on the subject. Librarians select from review sources to justify any purchase. The Library subscribes to *Publisher's Weekly*, *Library Journal*, and other professional journals to aid in selection choices.

The Dearborn Public Library supports the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read and the Freedom to View statements adopted by the American Library Association. All selections, before being purchased or accepted as gifts, are evaluated based on the following criteria and in the context of space and economic restrictions. All items will not necessarily be judged against all criteria but will be judged on those appropriate to each item. These same standards will determine the replacement, duplication, and withdrawal of library materials.

- **The Library will:**
 - Provide a collection that anticipates the needs of potential patrons
 - Consider public demand as expressed through requests, comments or suggestions, and use these to develop the collection
 - Consider the availability of similar or exact materials in other libraries or agencies
 - Consider the need for various subjects and viewpoints
 - Consider the appropriateness to the scope of the collection
- **Selectors will consider these characteristics when selecting:**
 - Popular interest
 - Literary quality

- Reputation, qualification, and significance of author, publisher, producer, or illustrator
- Accuracy, currency, timeliness, objectivity, and validity
- Importance and uniqueness
- Physical quality and effectiveness of format
- Cost, suitability, and availability

The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local, county and state history. It will take a broad view of works by and about Michigan authors as well as general works relating to the State of Michigan and the City of Dearborn. However, the Library is under no obligation to add to its collection everything about Michigan or produced by local authors, printers or publishers with Michigan or Dearborn connections.

The individual branch library shall strive to meet the general needs of most of the people in their immediate neighborhood, taking into consideration the special interests and diverse populations within the community. The Henry Ford Centennial Library shall have collections of greater depth to serve the city with specialized resources needed less frequently or by few people.

Resources not owned by the Dearborn Public Library may be obtained through patron suggestion purchase requests, The Library Network or MELCAT.

Schools ultimately have the responsibility of providing textbooks and curriculum material. Textbooks and curriculum material should be purchased for the collection only when they supply information in areas in which they may be the best--or the only--source of information on the subject. Selectors will avoid purchasing books with a "fill-in-the-blank" format.

Censorship

The Library recognizes that some resources may be deemed controversial and that any given item may offend some library user. The Library does not promote particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given resource equivalent to an endorsement of the viewpoint of the author(s) expressed within. In general, the Library takes the position that the risk of not providing access to information and ideas is greater than the risk of providing it. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval but based on the merits of a work relative to the needs, interests, and demands of the community. Basic to this policy is the Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association (see Appendix).

Responsibility for the reading, listening, and viewing of library resources by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that resources may come into the possession of children, and the Library does not have the right to act in loco parentis (in place of the parent).

Whenever censorship is threatened, from any source or regarding any type of material, nothing shall be removed from the Library until all proper steps for handling such complaints about library material have been completed, or by order of a court.

Request for Reconsideration

If a patron objects to the presence of any type of material in the library, he or she may request reconsideration of the item by filling out a Request for Reconsideration form. These forms are available from staff at the Reference Desk. The Administrative Panel will make the decision about whether to keep the material in the collection. If the patron is not satisfied with the decision, he or she may appeal to the Library Commission. Fair and balanced consideration will be given to all requests.

Specific Rules and Regulations of the Collection Development Guidelines

Dearborn Public Library Local Author Guidelines

Dearborn Public Library welcomes the opportunity to support local literary and creative efforts. Local authors may submit their work for possible inclusion in the collection. Local authors are defined as residents or former residents of Dearborn or Dearborn Heights. Works about Dearborn and/or Dearborn Heights are included in this definition.

If you are a local author and you wish to submit work to the Dearborn Public Library, please see the guidelines on the library's website.

Retention

The same criteria that are used for selection will be used when removing material from the collection. The Dearborn Public Library follows the CREW method of evaluating material for withdrawal. (*CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries.*)

Appendix

The Dearborn Public Library abides by the American Library Association's *Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read*, and *Freedom to View* statements to ensure that our library patrons have access to a broad range of ideas and concepts.

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.

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 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 abridgment of free expression and free access to 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 meetings rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.

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

The Freedom to Read

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.

A Joint Statement by:

- American Library Association
- Association of American Publishers
- American Booksellers Association
- American Civil Liberties Union
- American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
- Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
- Association of American University Presses
- Bureau of Independent Publishers & Distributors
- Children's Book Council
- Freedom of Information Center
- Freedom to Read Foundation
- Magazine Publishers Association
- Motion Picture Association of America
- National Association of College Stores
- National Book Committee
- National Council of Negro Women
- National Council of Teachers of English
- National Library Week Program
- National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A.
- P.E.N. - American Center
- Periodical and Book Association of America

- Sex Information & Education Council of the U.S.
- Women's National Book Association

Subsequently Endorsed by:

- American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
- The Association of American University Presses, Inc.
- The Children's Book Council
- Freedom to Read Foundation
- National Association of College Stores
- National Coalition Against Censorship
- National Council of Teachers of English
- The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

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.

Freedom to View

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 possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to ensure 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 that 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, and 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.

Adopted February 1979

American Film and Video Association