

## **La Crosse County Library Material Resource Selection Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to set broad guidelines for the selection of library materials that correspond to the Library's mission and identified roles, and has been adopted by the Library Board. It is also used to inform the public and staff about the principles upon which selections are made.

### **1. Definitions**

Selection refers to the decision to add, retain, or withdraw resources in the library's collection. Library resources include all items regardless of format, including electronic databases and subscriptions. Access is the availability of resources in a variety of formats for user of all ages and abilities.

### **2. Goal of Material Selection**

The goal of selection is to provide resources that meet the identified needs and demands of the customers in the library's service area, both now and in the future, are at varying levels of difficulty, with the diversity of appeal and presentation of different points of view, and are in accordance with the library's mission statement. (*Appendix A*)

### **3. Responsibility of Selection**

Final responsibility for the selection of all resources rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the La Crosse County Library Board. The Library Director shall delegate resource selection duties to staff with professional education and training in the principles and practices of materials selection. Both the general public and staff members may recommend resources for consideration.

### **4. Criteria for Selection**

The library supports intellectual freedom and has adopted the following statements as policy : The American Library Association (ALA) *Freedom to Read Statement*, the ALA-endorsed *Freedom to View Statement*, and the *ALA Library Bill of Rights*. (*Appendix B*).

Each type of resource, regardless of format, must be considered in terms of its own merit and the audience for whom it is intended. No single standard can be applied in all cases. Some resources may be judged primarily in terms of artistic merit, scholarship, or value to humanity; others are selected to satisfy the literary, informational, recreational, or educational interests of the community.

The selection of an item does not imply the library's endorsement or the opinions expressed by its creator, nor does the failure to purchase an item imply library disapproval of those opinions.

All library staff has a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in developing collections. Efforts will be made to provide items representing a variety of interests, viewpoints and interpretations.

Reviews in professionally recognized resources are a primary source for selection, but not the exclusive source. Other sources will include, but not be limited to, standard bibliographies, books lists by recognized authorities, the advice of competent people in specific subject areas, and the judgment of the professional staff will also be used.

The library keeps its collections vital and useful by retaining or replacing essential items, and by removing, on a systematic and continuous basis, those works that are worn, outdated, of little historical significance, or no longer in demand.

Final selection of resources may be influenced by many factors, including, but not limited to budgetary considerations, physical limitations of a library building, suitability of the format, availability of specialized materials in other regional libraries and availability of material through Interlibrary Loan.

## **5. Gifts**

Gifts shall meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. The library retains unconditional ownership of all donations and makes the final decision on acceptance, use or disposition. The appraisal of the gift for tax purposes is the responsibility of the donor. All material donations must be screened by assigned selectors before items are formally accepted.

When the library receives a cash gift for the purchase of materials, whether as a memorial or for any other purpose, the general nature or subject area of the materials to be purchased will be based upon the wishes of the donor. The assigned library staff in accordance with the needs and selection policies of the library, however, will make the actual selection of specific items.

Special collections and memorial collections maybe shelved as separate collections, or integrated into the general collection at the librarian's discretion. The form of material or gift identification will be a gift plate.

## **6. Self-Published Materials**

The Library receives numerous requests from local authors to add their books which they have self-published, or published at their own expense. Although this type of publishing is experiencing rapid growth, these books often do not meet the requirements outlined in this policy to be candidates for the permanent collection. They typically have not been reviewed in standard published sources, and may not meet the criteria that the Library normally sets for inclusion in its collections.

The Library wishes to support local authors while maintaining the standards needed in its permanent collections. Self-published books must meet the criteria in the aforementioned policy just like media from mainstream publishers.

Due to staffing and time constraints, Selectors are not able to meet with individual authors. Donated copies of materials may be left with Library Staff and will be directed to the appropriate collection selector.

The library cannot acknowledge receipt of work, or of a final decision. If the work is accepted, it can be expected that it will be in the library catalog within approximately 120 days. Acceptance of a copy of work for the collection does not guarantee that additional copies will be purchased. If more copies are pursued, they may not be purchased directly from the author. The library prefers to purchase materials through our established vendors such as Baker & Taylor and Ingram to maximize discounts.

If self-published work is not accepted, the donated copy will be repurposed according to the Library's gift policy as outlined.

## **7. Special Collections**

Consideration for collections of non-print or non-audio materials will be carefully reviewed. Collection space, packaging and processing, viability of regional delivery, maintenance and sustainability factors will all need to meet very specific space and budgetary criteria. The Library Board retains the ultimate approval for including and supporting special collections.

## **8. Reconsideration Procedure**

Requests for Reconsideration forms will be made available at all County Library facilities. The process for reconsideration of action whether it is for removal or for the addition of materials will begin with the Library Director reviewing the reconsideration form. Anonymous submissions will not be considered valid requests for reconsideration. (*Appendix C*)

All decisions will be based on the library's materials selection policy as well as supporting materials including reviews, publication notices and collection needs, the Library Director will review the material in question. If the Library Director maintains that the original action of placement into the collection or a decision not to purchase was appropriate, the Library Director will respond in writing to the complainant.

Should the complainant wish to pursue the issue with the Library Board, they will be invited to speak publicly at the next calendar Library Board Meeting in defense of their complaint. The Library Board reserves the right to postpone action for further consideration for 30 days. The formal action taken by the Library Board will be final.

*Adopted August 2012, Revised June 2016; August 2020*

## **Appendix A Mission Statement**

The mission of the La Crosse County Library is to Inspire, Enrich and Educate while Serving the Community.

Revised by the La Crosse County Library Board, December 2020

## **Appendix B ALA Freedoms**

### **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.

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

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

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, 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**

## **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.

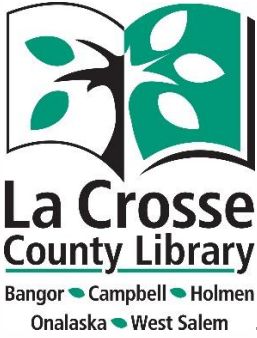
IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

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.

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Adopted June 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; amended June 28, 1967; amended January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996.



### Request for Reconsideration

The Trustees of La Crosse County Library have established this procedure for gathering input about particular library resources. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the Library Director

La Crosse County Library  
121 W Legion St  
Holmen, WI 54636

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent self? \_\_\_\_ Or an organization? \_\_\_\_  
Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource on which you are commenting:  
\_\_\_\_ Book (e-book) \_\_\_\_ Movie \_\_\_\_ Magazine \_\_\_\_ Audio Recording  
\_\_\_\_ Digital Resource \_\_\_\_ Game \_\_\_\_ Newspaper \_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_ Display \_\_\_\_ Other

Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Author/Producer/Location \_\_\_\_\_

2. What brought this resource to your attention?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What concerns you about the resource?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What other resource(s) would you suggest of equal or better quality which could convey a valuable picture or perspective of this subject matter?  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Request for Reconsideration**  
**A guide to La Crosse County Library's policies regarding**  
**Reconsideration of Resources**

Requests for Reconsideration forms will be made available at all County Library facilities. The procedure for reconsideration of action, whether it is for removal or for the addition of resources, will begin with the Library Director reviewing the completed reconsideration form. The form may then be designated to the appropriate librarian. Anonymous submissions will not be considered valid requests for reconsideration.

Decisions will be based upon:

- La Crosse County Library's current policies
- Supporting materials (including reviews, publication notices, collection and display needs)
- Programming goals.

If the designated staff maintains that the original action was appropriate, a response will be issued in writing to the complainant. At that time the Library Board will be given notice of the complaint and a copy of the response.

This policy includes (but is not limited to) requests about the following resources:

- Item placement into the collection
- A decision not to purchase an item
- Display creation
- Library programs

Should the complainant wish to pursue the issue with the Library Board, they will be invited to speak publicly at the next calendar Library Board Meeting in defense of their complaint. The Library Board reserves the right to postpone action for further consideration for 30 days. The formal action taken by the Library Board will be final.