

SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY RESOURCES SELECTION POLICY

The Board of Trustees of Skokie Public Library has adopted the following resources selection policy to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

The Mission Statement of Skokie Public Library guides the selection of materials as it does the development of services and the allocation of resources:

As a springboard for personal growth and community development, Skokie Public Library promotes discovery, enrichment, and the exchange of ideas through a broad spectrum of materials, technologies, and experiences.

The library supports the individual's right to have access to ideas and information representing all points of view. The Board of Trustees of Skokie Public Library has adopted the American Library Association's LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, THE FREEDOM TO READ and FREEDOM TO VIEW statements, attached herewith.

I. OBJECTIVES

The Skokie Public Library acquires and makes available materials which inform, educate, entertain and enrich persons as individuals and as members of society. Since no library can possibly acquire all print and non-print materials, every library must of necessity employ a policy of selectivity in acquisitions. The library provides, within its financial limitations, a general collection of reliable materials embracing broad areas of knowledge. Included are works of enduring value and timely materials on current issues. Within the framework of these broad objectives, selection is based on community needs, both those expressed and those inferred from study of community demographics and evidence of areas of interest.

Other community resources and area library resources are considered in selecting materials. The library is part of LINKin, a lending partnership that gives cardholders direct access to the collections of multiple other libraries. Patrons may discover and request items on their own, even if a title is owned by Skokie Public Library but currently unavailable. The library also is a member of RAILS (Reaching Across Illinois Library System), a group of academic, school, special and public libraries throughout northern Illinois. Through interlibrary loan agreements, Skokie Public Library cardholders may obtain materials from these libraries as well as those in Chicago, throughout the state of Illinois, and the United States. Other information may be obtained through electronic access of remote databases, including numerous specialized and technical resources. License agreements enable the library to make available a variety of downloadable and streaming digital resources via the library catalog. These resources are available only to Skokie Public Library cardholders.

New formats shall be considered for the circulating collection when, by industry report, national survey results and evidence from local requests, a significant portion of the community population has the necessary technology to make use of the format. Availability of items in the format, the cost per item, and the library's ability to acquire and handle the items will also be factors in determining when a new format will be collected. Similar considerations will influence the decision to delete a format from the library's collections.

Impartiality and judicious selection shall be exercised in all materials acquisition practices. Allocation of the materials budget and the number of items purchased for each area of the collection will be determined by indicators of use, the average cost per item, and objectives for development of the collection as expressed in Skokie Public Library's Resources Selection Policy and Collection Development Plan.

II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Library Trustees. The Director determines the budget, guidelines, and organizational structure for the staff who select resources. The Collection Development Supervisor oversees and coordinates acquisitions and selection. Selectors, with input from other staff, choose appropriate materials for their collection areas, monitor circulation, weed to keep their areas current with need and demand, see that materials are in good physical condition, and spend their budget in a timely and organized manner.

III. METHODS FOR SELECTION

Selection is a discerning and interpretive process, involving: a general knowledge of the subject and its important literature; a familiarity with the materials in the collection; and a recognition of the needs of the community. Materials are judged on the basis of the content and style of the work as a whole, not by selected portions or passages. Among standard criteria applied are: literary merit; enduring value; accuracy; authoritativeness; social significance; importance of subject matter to the collection; soundness of the author's attitude and approach; cost; scarcity of material on the subject and availability elsewhere. Quality and suitability of the format are also considered. Specific considerations for each area of the collection are noted in the Collection Development Plan.

Tools used in selection include professional journals, trade journals, online resources, publishers' promotional materials, and reviews from reputable sources. Purchase suggestions from patrons are welcome and are given serious consideration.

Materials are selected to meet the objectives of public library service. Because the public library serves a community embracing a wide range of ages, ethnic backgrounds, educational levels and interests, the Library may fulfill a number of roles in the community.

The library does not attempt to replace curricula or formal education programs at any level, although a variety of complementary and supplementary resources are provided. Textbooks are may be acquired if they serve the general public by providing information on subjects where little or no material is available in any other form. In selecting materials for the collection, librarians will consider general educational, commercial, cultural and civic enterprises of individuals and organizations within the community.

IV. WEEDING

In order to maintain an up-to-date, useful collection, worn and obsolete materials are continuously weeded. Materials may also be withdrawn if they are little used or superseded by a new edition or better work on the same subject. Depth and breadth of varying degrees are

desirable in various areas of the collection. The Collection Development Plan serves as a guide for weeding and maintaining the collection as well as for the selection of materials.

V. GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Gifts of books and other library materials in good condition are accepted by the library. The library reserves the right to sell or otherwise dispose of gift materials not added to the collection. Select materials, such as those written by local authors, may be added in accordance with the guidelines detailed in the Collection Development Plan.

Gifts of funds are always welcome. Recommendations from the donor on the use of funds are honored in so far as the suggestions are in accord with the Resources Selection Policy.

VI. RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

A singular obligation of the public library is to reflect within its collection differing points of view on controversial or debatable subjects. The Skokie Public Library does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsement of the viewpoint of the author. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

Comments from members of the community about the collection or individual items in the collection frequently provide librarians with useful information about interests or needs that may not be adequately met by the collection. The library welcomes expression of opinion by patrons, but will be governed by this Resources Selection Policy in making additions to or deleting items from the collection.

Patrons who request the reconsideration of library materials may be asked to put their request in writing by completing and signing the form appended to this policy, entitled "Request for Reconsideration of Library Material."

Upon receipt of a formal, written request, the Director will appoint an ad hoc committee from the professional staff including, but not limited to, the selector for the subject area of the item in question and the Collection Development Supervisor. The committee will make a written recommendation to the Director who will then make a decision regarding the disposition of the material. The Director will communicate this decision, and the reasons for it, in writing, to the person who initiated the request for reconsideration at the earliest possible date. The Director will inform the Board of Library Trustees of all requests for reconsideration of library materials and their disposition.

In the event that the person who initiated the request is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, s/he may appeal for a hearing before the Board of Trustees by making a written request to the President of the Board. If a hearing is granted, the individual will be notified when s/he may address the Board. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of presentation and number of speakers at the hearing.

The Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with stated policies and procedures of the Skokie Public Library. On the basis of this determination, the Board may vote to uphold or override the decision of the Director.

Adopted by the Skokie Public Library

Board of Library Trustees 2/21/90, Rev. 5/10/00; 7/10/02; 3/10/04; 3/8/06; 2/13/08; 3/10/10;
3/21/12; 3/19/14; 3/16/16

SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

AUTHOR: _____

TITLE: _____ FORMAT: _____

PUBLISHER: _____ PUBLICATION DATE: _____

Request initiated by: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____

Is this request made on behalf of :

_____ Yourself

_____ Organization _____
(Name of Organization)

Have you read/viewed this title in its entirety? _____

What is your objection to the resource? (Please be specific; i.e. cite pages.) _____

Is there anything positive about the material? _____

Please state the reason for your request _____

Action Requested:

Have you read the Skokie Public Library Resources Selection Policy? _____

Are you aware of the judgment of this material by literary critics or area subject specialists?
(Please provide names of reviewers and citations for reviews, if known)

Can you recommend material of comparable literary quality or another title that would convey the same perspective of the subject treated? _____

Date: _____ Signature of Patron: _____

Date: _____ Received by Staff Member: _____

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 the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting 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 meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.

Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980 by the ALA Council; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996.

Adopted by the Skokie Public Library
Board of Library Trustees 2/21/90
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Reviewed 5/20/98

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.

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.

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Board of Library Trustees 2/21/90
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Reviewed 3/9/2005

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 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 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.

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.

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