

B.2.1.21

(Old 53.1.21)

At the 2014 ALA Annual Conference, upon recommendation by the Council Intellectual Freedom Committee, the ALA Council adopted a revision to title and text of ALA Policy B.2.1.21 Importance of Education to Intellectual Freedom: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*) (now titled Advocating for Intellectual Freedom: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

At the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting, the Policy Monitoring Committee (PMC), noted in its report to Council that interpretations are traditionally represented in the *ALA Policy Manual* by means of an abstract, followed by a reference to the Policy Reference File, where the full text of the Interpretations reside. In these cases the latest date of revisions and the parenthetical statements will be updated to reflect the new revision date, and the new existing text of the abstract.

The following abstract was created by the Committee on Intellectual Freedom for incorporated into the *ALA Manual Policy* as follows:

B.2.1.21 Advocating for Intellectual Freedom (Old Number 53.1.21)

Libraries of all types foster education by promoting the free expression and interchange of ideas, leading to empowered lifelong learners. Libraries use resources, programming, and services to strengthen intellectual and physical access to information and thus build a foundation of intellectual freedom: developing collections (both real and virtual) with multiple perspectives and individual needs of users in mind; providing programming and instructional services framed around equitable access to information and ideas; and teaching information skills and intellectual freedom rights integrated appropriately throughout the spectrum of library programming. Adopted 2009, amended 2014.

(See “Policy Reference File” Advocating for Intellectual Freedom: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*: revised, 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.6_63014 - PDF, 6 pgs).

Formerly titled: Importance of Education to Intellectual Freedom: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*).

2013–2014 ALA CD#19.6_63014_act
2014 ALA Annual Conference

Advocating for Intellectual Freedom
An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Educating the American public, including library staff, on the value of intellectual freedom is fundamental to the mission of libraries of all types. Intellectual freedom is a universal human right that involves both physical and intellectual access to information and ideas. Libraries provide physical access through facilities, resources, and services and foster awareness of intellectual freedom rights within the context of educational programs and instruction in essential information skills.

The universal freedom to express information and ideas is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

The importance of education to the development of intellectual freedom is expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26:

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. . . .
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial, or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

In addition, Article I of the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights* “affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas.” Physical access to information is listed as the first principle:

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.

Article II of the *Library Bill of Rights* emphasizes the importance of fostering intellectual access to information by providing materials that allow users to evaluate content and context and find information representing multiple points of view:

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.

Libraries of all types foster education by promoting the free expression and interchange of ideas, leading to empowered lifelong learners. Libraries use resources, programming, and services to strengthen intellectual and physical access to information and thus build a foundation of intellectual freedom: developing collections (both real and virtual) with multiple perspectives and individual needs of users in mind; providing programming and instructional services framed around equitable access to information and ideas; and teaching of information skills and intellectual freedom rights integrated appropriately throughout the spectrum of library programming.

Through educational programming and instruction in information skills, libraries empower individuals to explore ideas, access and evaluate information, draw meaning from information presented in a variety of formats, develop valid conclusions, and express new ideas. Such education facilitates intellectual access to information and offers a path to a robust appreciation of intellectual freedom rights.

Adopted July 15, 2009 and amended July 1, 2014, by the ALA Council

53.1.21

At the 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting, Boston, MA, upon recommendation by the Council Policy Monitoring Committee, the ALA Council approved the codification of ALA Policy 53.1.21 Importance of Education to Intellectual Freedom, which read:

~~Importance of Education to Intellectual Freedom~~ Libraries of all types foster education by promoting the free expression and interchange of ideas. Libraries use resources, programming, and services to strengthen intellectual and physical access to information and thus build a foundation of intellectual freedom: collections (both real and virtual) are developed with multiple perspectives and individual needs of users in mind; programming and instructional services are framed around equitable access to information and ideas; and teaching of information skills is integrated appropriately throughout the spectrum of library programming and leads to empowered lifelong learners. Through educational programming and instruction in information skills, libraries empower individuals to explore ideas, access and evaluate information, draw meaning from information presented in a variety of formats, develop valid conclusions, and express new ideas. Such education facilitates intellectual access to information and offers a path to intellectual freedom. Adopted 2009. (See Policy Reference File: Importance of Education to Intellectual Freedom: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*: 2008-09 CD#19.6)

NOTE TO READER: The following was taken from the Policy Monitoring Committee Report, 2009-2010 ALA CD#17: "At the 2009 Annual Conference, Council adopted a new interpretation to the *Library Bill of Rights* regarding the importance of education to intellectual freedom. These interpretations are traditionally represented in the Policy manual by means of an abstract, supplied by the originating committee, followed by a reference to the Policy Reference File, where the full text of the Interpretations reside. New interpretations are inserted in the order they are added."

Importance of Education to Intellectual Freedom: **An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights***

Education in support of intellectual freedom is fundamental to the mission of libraries of all types. Intellectual freedom is a universal human right that involves both physical and intellectual access to information and ideas. Libraries provide physical access through facilities, resources, and services. Libraries foster intellectual access through educational programs and instruction in essential information skills.

Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights* “affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas.” Physical access to information is listed as the first principle:

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.

Article II of the *Library Bill of Rights* emphasizes the importance of fostering intellectual access to information by providing materials that allow users to evaluate content and context and find information representing multiple points of view:

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Libraries of all types foster education by promoting the free expression and interchange of ideas. Libraries use resources, programming, and services to strengthen intellectual and physical access to information and thus build a foundation of intellectual freedom: collections (both real and virtual) are developed with multiple perspectives and individual needs of users in mind; programming and instructional services are framed around equitable access to information and ideas; and teaching of information skills is integrated appropriately throughout the spectrum of library programming and leads to empowered lifelong learners.

Through educational programming and instruction in information skills, libraries empower individuals to explore ideas, access and evaluate information, draw meaning from information presented in a variety of formats, develop valid conclusions, and express new ideas. Such education facilitates intellectual access to information and offers a path to intellectual freedom.

Adopted by the ALA Council at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference.