

**ALTERNATIVES IN PUBLICATION TASK FORCE
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ROUND TABLE
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

GETTING ALTERNATIVE PRESS TITLES INTO LIBRARIES

- Become familiar with what presses are alternative and what they're trying to accomplish. Remember that the independent critical press is made up of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and zines. For starters, use the "Bibliographic and Web Tools for Alternative Publications" guide, <http://www.libr.org/AIP/bibtools.pdf>, to assist you in learning more.
- Subscribe to free online newsletters from alternative presses. These newsletters will often announce new titles and special offers.
- At library conferences and book exhibitions, attend programs with alternative press topics. Stop at alternative press exhibit booths and talk with the exhibitors to learn more.
- Make a commitment to diversify the library's collection more than it currently is.
- In collection development, incorporate book review sources for alternative presses. Use the above guide to help direct you in this.
- When you find a gap in your library's collection, one that might fall under the purview of an alternative press subject area, seek out alternative press titles to help fill the gap.
- Incorporate alternative press literature into the library's collection development policy.
- Recommend that one library staff member be assigned to maintain an awareness of new alternative press titles and make recommendations for the collection.
- Establish an account with a distributor who represents a number of small presses, such as AK Distribution, <http://www.akpress.org>, Small Press Distribution, <http://www.spdbooks.org>, or Consortium Book Sales and Distribution, <http://www.cbsd.com>.
- Add alternative publishers to the library's approval plan(s) subject profiles.
- "Adopt" an alternative press and try to purchase most of its new titles during the year. If possible, place a standing order with them for all their new titles. Alternative presses produce a smaller number of titles per year than larger mainstream presses, so purchases for all titles for one year are more affordable.
- Commit a small percent of the annual book budget, 5 to 10 percent for example, for alternative press titles. These titles frequently cost less than mainstream press titles and the dollars will stretch further. When possible, seek out supplemental funds, for example, the library's Friends group might support the purchase of some titles.
- Personally donate alternative press titles you no longer want to the library and ask that they be considered for the collection.
- Maintain at least one alternative press index for public access to the periodical literature, for example, the Alternative Press Index (in print or online), <http://www.altpress.com>, or ProQuest's Alt-PressWatch (online), <http://www.il.proquest.com/products/pd-product-alt-presswatch.shtml>

PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE PRESSES IN THE LIBRARY

- Create a guide for library users on how to access alternate points of view on a topic, particularly in which databases and bibliographies to use.
- Enhance bibliographic records with alternative subject headings or specify in the notes field that the item is alternative.
- Promote alternative presses as part of the Small Press Month, always in March, with an exhibit of appropriate titles. Go to <http://www.smallpress.org/spm> for more ideas.
 - Organize readings by alternative press authors, especially in relation to Small Press Month.
 - Or, celebrate the First Amendment with a display of alternative press titles.
- Have a book discussion group read an alternative press title. There is a wide variety of titles to choose from and some will likely be of high interest to many readers.
- Just as libraries introduce certain genres of literature to readers through special displays, for example, books of poetry or graphic novels, alternative press titles or authors can also receive a special display.
- Invite an alternative press publisher or publishers to give a talk about independent presses and the mission of their press.
- Invite authors who have written for an alternative press. Readings are excellent ways to introduce new literature and ideas to a community.
- Include a statement on intellectual freedom and collection diversity on the library's website. ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom has a lot of good materials that can be incorporated into such a statement, <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementspolicies.htm>. Scroll to the "Basic Intellectual Freedom Policies" section.
- Seek publicity in local newspapers and radio stations about alternative presses, especially for any local alternative presses. Air a segment about the problems and rewards of running a small alternative press, or the threat to alternative presses and the First Amendment by media consolidation.
- Remember, you can sometimes match local authors with alternative presses. This would provide two reasons to promote the authors and presses in-house.

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