



ALA Policy Manual Section B: Positions and Public Policy Statements

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ALA Policy Manual

Section B: Positions and Public Policy Statements

Table of Contents

ALA Policy Manual Section B: Positions and Public Policy Statements.....	1
B.1. Core Values, Ethics, and Core Competencies (Old Number 40).....	5
B.1.1 Core Values of Librarianship (Old Number 40.1).....	5
B.1.2 Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians (Old Number 40.2).....	6
B.1.3 Core Competencies of Librarianship (Old Number 40.3).....	7
B.1.4 Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians	10
B.2. Intellectual Freedom (Old Number 53)	12
B.2.1 Library Bill of Rights (Old Number 53.1)	12
B.2.1.1 Challenged Resources	
B.2.1.2 Expurgation of Library Materials	
B.2.1.6 Restricted Access to Library Materials	
B.2.1.7 Labeling Systems	
B.2.1.8 Rating Systems	
B.2.1.9 User -Initiated Exhibits, Displays and Bulletin Boards	
B.2.1.10 Meeting Rooms	
B.2.1.10.1 Politics in American	
Libraries.....	9
B.2.1.11 Library Initiated Programs and Displays as a	
Resource.....	
B.2.1.12 Diverse Collections	
B.2.1.13 Universal Right to Free Expression	
B.2.1.14 U.S. Enterprises Abridgement of Free Speech	
B.2.1.15 Economic Barriers to Information Access	
B.2.1.16 Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity,	
Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation	
B.2.1.17 Privacy	
B.2.1.18 Use of Filtering Software in Libraries	
B.2.1.18.1 Internet Filtering	
B.2.1.19 Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries	
B.2.1.20 Access to Digital Resources and Services	
B.2.1.21 Services to Persons with Disabilities	
B.2.1.25 User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems	
B.2.1.26 Religion in Libraries	
B.2.1.27 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion	
B.2.2 Freedom to View (Old Number 53.2)	42
B.2.3 Freedom to Read (Old Number 53.3)	42
B.2.4 Governmental Intimidation (Old Number 53.4).....	42
B.2.5 Support of Academic Freedom (Old Number 53.5)	42
B.2.6 Shield Laws (Old Number 53.6).....	43
B.2.7 Loyalty Oaths (Old Number 53.7).....	43
B.2.8 Destruction of Libraries (Old Number 53.8).....	43
B.2.9 Libraries: An American Value (Old Number 53.9)	43

B.2.10 Violence in the Media: A Joint Statement (Old Number 53.10)	44
B.2.11 Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Technology and Privacy Principles (Old Number 53.11)	44
B.2.12 Threats to Library Materials Related to Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual Orientation (Old Number 53.12).....	45
B.2.13 Net Neutrality: On Intellectual Freedom Issue	
B.2.14 Visual and Performing Arts in Libraires	
B.3 Diversity	
B.3.1 Policy Objectives	
B.3.1.1 Definition of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	
B.3.2 Combating Racism	
B.4.7 Support of Open Educational Resource	
B.5.4 Nuclear Freeze, the Arms Race and National Security (Old Number 50.11) Error! Bookmark no	
B.5.5 Environmental Issues (Old Number 50.12).....	54
B.5.6 Federal Legislative Policy (Old Number 51)	54
B.6. International Relations (Old Number 58).....	56
B.6.1 Policy Objectives (Old Number 58.1).....	56
B.6.2 Human Rights and Freedom of Expression (Old Number 58.4.1 for heading).....	57
B.6.2.3 ALA and IFLA (Old Number 58.4.1—for policy language))	57
B.6.3 Selection of Consultants to Serve Abroad (Old Number 58.2).....	57
B.6.4 Rights of Librarians and Library Workers to Travel (Old Number 58.5).....	58
B.7. Library Education (Old Number 56).....	58
B.7.1 Graduate Programs in Library and Information Studies (Old Number 56.1).....	58
B.7.2 Affirmative Action (Old Number 56.2)	59
B.7.3 Continuing Education (Old Number 56.3).....	59
B.7.4 Standards of Accreditation in Library Education: Appeals Procedure (Old Number 55.4).....	59
B.8. Services and Responsibilities of Libraries (Old Number 52)	59
B.8.1 Literacy (Old Number 50.6).....	59
B.8.2 Service to Detention Facilities and Jails (Old Number 52.1).....	60
B.8.3 Preservation (Old Number 52.2).....	60
B.8.4 School Library Media Programs (Old Number 52.2.3).....	62
B.8.5 Confidentiality of Library Records (Old Number 52.4).....	62
B.8.6 Library Services for Youth (Old Number 52.5).....	64
B.8.7 Instruction in the Use of Libraries (Old Number 52.6).....	65
B.8.8 Privatization of Publicly Funded Libraries (Old Number 52.7)	65
B.8.9 Disinformation, Media Manipulation and the Destruction of Public Information (Old Number 52.8).....	65
B.8.10 Addressing Poverty, Economic Inequality, and the Responsibilities of Libraries (Old Number 61)	66
B.8.11 The Role of Libraries in Providing E-Government and Emergency Services (Old Number 50.16)	67
B.9 Library Personnel Practices (Old Number 54)	68
B.9.1 Library and Information Studies and Human Resource Utilization: A Statement of Policy (Old Number 54.1).....	68
B.9.2 Librarians: Appropriate Degrees (Old Number 54.2).....	68
B.9.3 Equal Employment Opportunity (Old Number 54.3)	69
B.9.4 Comparable Rewards (Old Number 54.4)	71
B.9.5 Faculty Status of College and University Librarians (Old Number 54.5)	71

B.9.6 Security of Employment for Library Employees (Old Number 54.6)	71
B.9.7 Inclusiveness and Mutual Respect (Old Number 54.7)	72
B.9.8 The Library's Pay Plan (Old Number 54.8)	72
B.9.9 Permanent Part-Time Employment (Old Number 54.9)	72
B.9.10 Equal Opportunity and Salaries (Old Number 54.10)	72
B.9.11 Collective Bargaining (Old Number 54.11)	73
B.9.12 Residency and Citizenship Requirements (Old Number 54.12)	73
B.9.13 Drug Testing (Old Number 54.13)	73
B.9.14 Information and Referral Services (Old Number 54.14)	73
B.9.15 Institutional Support of ALA Members to Attend ALA Conferences (Old Number 54.15)	73
B.9.16 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights (Old Number 54.16)	73
B.9.17 Advertising Salary Ranges (Old Number 54.17)	73
B.9.18 Reproduction of Noncommercial Educational and Scholarly Journals (Old Number 54.18)	74
B.9.19 AIDS Screening (Old Number 54.19)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
B.9.20 Comprehensive Health Care (Old Number 54.20)	74
B.9.21 Workplace Speech (Old Number 54.21)	74
B.10 Research and Statistics (Old Number 57)	75
B.11 Public Relations (Old Number 59)	76
B.11.1 Policy Objectives (Old Number 59.1)	76
B.11.2 Public Information Office Responsibility (Old Number 59.2)	76
B.11.3 National Library Symbol (Old Number 50.13)	76

B.1. Core Values, Ethics, and Core Competencies (Old Number 40)

B.1.1 Core Values of Librarianship (Old Number 40.1)

The foundation of modern librarianship rests on an essential set of core values which define, inform, and guide all professional practice. These values reflect the history and ongoing development of the profession and have been advanced, expanded, and refined by numerous policy statements of the American Library Association. Among these are:

- Access
- Equity
- Intellectual Freedom & Privacy
- Public Good
- Sustainability

The American Library Association's Core Values articulate the profession's principles and highest aspirations. They guide and unite library workers, including staff, volunteers, trustees, advocates, and others who contribute their talents, expertise, and dedication to furthering the library mission.

The Core Values uplift and support other foundational documents, the Library Bill of Rights, the Code of Ethics, and Libraries: An American Value. These foundational documents represent the common ground upon which we can build policies, make decisions, set goals, and prioritize actions to bring equitable library access to all users. The Core Values describe the rights we seek to protect and the ethical guidelines we look to for direction.

Our Core Values are for the people who make libraries work, not the buildings they reside in or the American Library Association itself. They declare a shared set of ideals and professionalism that unites and motivates library workers, volunteers, trustees, and advocates throughout the nation. Adopted, 2024.

(See "Policy Reference File": Core Values Task Force Report: 2024 LLX CD#34)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Core Values Task Force Report: 2019 Midwinter CD#37\)](#)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Core Values Task Force II Report: 2003-04, CD #7.2 - PDF, 5 pgs\)](#)

B.1.2 Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees, and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
4. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.
9. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person, and work to recognize and dismantle system and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocations of resources and spaces.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; January 22, 2008, and June 2021. ([See "Policy Reference File: ALA CD#24.2 ALA Committee on Professional Ethics, Approved at the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference"](#))

B.1.3 Core Competencies of Librarianship (Old Number 40.3)

This document defines the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies. Librarians working in school, academic, public, special, and governmental libraries and in other contexts will need to possess specialized knowledge beyond that specified here.

CONTENTS:

1. Gateway Knowledge
2. Information Resources
3. Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education
4. Management and Administration
5. Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information
6. Reference and User Services
7. Research and Evidence-Based Practice
8. Social Justice
9. Technological Knowledge and Skills

A person graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies should know and, where appropriate, be able to employ:

1. Gateway Knowledge
 - 1A. Employ the ethics, values, and foundational principles of the library profession.
 - 1B. Promote democratic principles and intellectual freedom (including freedom of expression, thought, and conscience).
 - 1C. Consider the history of libraries and librarianship and their role within the context of society.
 - 1D. Recognize the history, preservation, and dissemination of information in all its forms, and its impact on libraries.
 - 1E. Identify current types of libraries (school, public, academic, special, etc.) and closely related information agencies, such as museums, archives, and galleries.
 - 1F. Identify social, public, information, economic, and cultural policies and trends of significance to the library and information profession on the local, regional, national, and international levels.
 - 1G. Understand the legal framework in which libraries operate, including laws relating to copyright and fair use, privacy, freedom of expression, equal rights (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act), open access, and intellectual property.
 - 1H. Effectively advocate for libraries, librarians, other library workers, patrons, and services, especially in terms of marketing, fundraising, and outreach.
 - 1I. Use techniques to identify, codify, and analyze complex problems and create appropriate and collaborative solutions within library environments.
 - 1J. Demonstrate effective verbal and written communication techniques, including electronically via video, live chat, and email.

1K. Hold current certification, degree, and/or licensure requirements of specialized areas of the library profession.

2. Information Resources

2A. Consider the issues related to the lifecycle of recorded knowledge and information, from creation through various stages of use, in relationship to material format and genre.

2B. Apply the concepts, issues, and methods of collection management, which entails the lifecycle of materials from evaluation to long-term preservation and other curative practices (including but not limited to acquisitions, selection, purchasing, processing, storage, and de-selection).

2C. Include emerging formats and genres of information resources and understand how these may intersect with and reflect the diverse and cultural needs of the information communities through the management of collections. Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information

3. Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education

3A. Participate in and lead on-going professional development to better serve their communities.

3B. Recognize the role of the library in continuing education and lifelong learning initiatives.

3C. Employ multiple techniques to accommodate diverse learning preferences to promote lifelong learning.

3D. Understand established and new learning theories, principles of critical and inclusive pedagogy, instructional methods, and learning outcomes assessment; and apply them to educational initiatives in information settings.

4. Management and Administration

4A. Apply the principles of responsible fiduciary planning and oversight.

4B. Apply the principles of effective and just supervisory practices and human resource management, training, and development.

4C. Implement the concepts behind, and methods for, assessment and evaluation of library services and their outcomes.

4D. Develop and support diverse and equitable partnerships, collaborations, networks, and other structures with all stakeholders, consortia, and within communities served.

4E. Employ the concepts behind, issues relating to, and methods of principled, transformational, and change management leadership, in addition to other leadership philosophies.

4F. Effectively plan, manage, implement, and close projects using the concepts of leadership methods.

4G. Participate in strategic communication with colleagues throughout the organization and the community.

5. Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information

5A. Understand the principles, systems, trends, and goals involved in the organization and representation of recorded knowledge and information.

5B. Implement the developmental, descriptive, analytical, and evaluative skills needed to organize recorded knowledge and information.

5C. Maintain the systems of cataloging, collection, metadata, indexing, and classification standards and structures, and implement methods used to apply, create, and discover recorded knowledge and information, and the weaknesses and strengths of these systems.

5D. Recognize the ways that cultural biases impact and influence the collection and description of recorded knowledge and information.

6. Reference and User Services

6A. Employ techniques used to discover, retrieve, evaluate, and synthesize information from diverse sources for use by varying user populations and information environments.

6B. Understand and apply methods and practices necessary to provide consultation, mediation, instruction, and guidance in using recorded knowledge and information for all user populations and information environments. Emphasize problem-solving skills to determine informational needs during the reference interview process.

6C. Apply the RUSA Behavioral Competencies in the ethical practice of reference and user services.

6D. Implement principles, concepts, and techniques for understanding and assessing the information needs of a community and understand the ways the library can assist and collaborate in meeting those needs.

6E. Engage in evaluation and assessment of programs, services, and partnerships, with input from the community being served.

6F. Practice cultural humility while planning, offering, and evaluating library reference and user services.

7. Research and Evidence-Based Practice

7A. Discover, engage with, and synthesize existing research from the field using multidisciplinary approaches to various information issues to align relevant findings to one's own professional development and/or institutional needs.

7B. Recognize the ethical and appropriate application of key research methods, techniques, and designs in the field, including the generation, analysis, evaluation, and presentation of data, and the utilization of research tools.

7C. Understand principles and issues evolving with research, including an awareness of how professional and cultural values may influence each stage of the research lifecycle, the barriers related to access to research, and the tension between research and its application to professional practice.

7D. Understand the importance of engaging in the research foundations and scholarly communications that will enable continued professional growth, knowledge, and sharing.

8. Social Justice

8A. Understand one's own cultural identity including positionality related to power, privilege, and oppression and how that influences the ways they interact with the community and among decision makers.

8B. Recognize, challenge, and change practices, services, and programs that have traditionally replicated dominant systems and marginalized others.

8C. Contribute to an organizational climate that encourages, supports, assesses, and rewards work that promotes social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

8D. Incorporate social justice and inclusion into professional practice through outreach and partnership with diverse groups and communities in order to expand inclusive collections (purchasing, classification, and description), staff, programs, and services.

8E. Equitably distribute library staff, collections, and facility resources among all user communities.

8F. Seek ongoing professional development to raise awareness and develop strategies to address issues of power, privilege, and oppression.

9. Technological Knowledge and Skills

9A. Identify appropriate technologies and uses that support access to and delivery of library services and resources.

9B. Understand and navigate ethical and cultural considerations and impacts on library practices and community members when applying technology to library services and resources.

9C. Conduct regular evaluation of existing and emerging technologies and their impact on library services and resources in terms of accessibility, practicality, sustainability, and effectiveness.

[Adopted as amended by the ALA Council, January 27, 2009, 2008-2009 ALA CD#10-10.1 revised. \(PDF, 6 pgs\)](#)

2022 Core Competences of Librarianship policy was approved and adopted as policy by the ALA [Council](#) on January 28, 2023 during the 2023 LibLearnX Meeting in New Orleans, LA

B.1.4 Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians

Article IV of the ALA's *Code of Ethics* states that library workers "respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders." Copyright¹ is the aspect of intellectual property law that has the most impact on libraries. Copyright, as established by the U.S. Constitution² and the Copyright Act, is a system of rights granted by law combined with limitations on those rights.

Copyright law was established to encourage authors, artists, and others to create and share their works by granting them specific exclusive rights in their works.³ Those rights are limited by certain exceptions like fair use or the term of copyright. These limitations are necessary to ensure a well-functioning copyright law that protects creators' rights while also preserving freedom of information and freedom of expression.

A shared purpose of copyright and libraries is to benefit the public through the creation and dissemination of information and creative works. In pursuit of this goal, copyright law should balance the public's need to access and use informative and creative works with the economic interests of right's holders.

Libraries represent the very best of this balance in U.S. copyright law. Libraries serve the economic purpose of copyright through billions of dollars spent on copyrighted materials for libraries (such as books, journals, motion pictures, art, and music).

Libraries serve the "use and access" purpose of copyright by circulating billions of copyrighted items annually. Libraries are thus economic engines of both copyright law and knowledge distribution.

Libraries have both the opportunity and the obligation to work toward that balance when they engage in activities such as acquiring information resources for their communities, curating and preserving cultural heritage, establishing services and programs to enhance access to information, and lending books or other resources.

Copyright law provides a copyright holder with an exclusive legal right to make copies of the work, create derivative works based on the original, distribute the work to the public, and perform or display the work in public. However, copyright law also provides the public the right to make fair use⁴ of the copyrighted work. Additionally, there are restrictions to the exclusive rights of copyright holders, such as the First Sale Doctrine, which allows the public to borrow, loan, sell, or transfer a purchased, particular copy of a work. The public has unlimited use of the work when the copyright term expires.⁵

Copyright law also provides numerous specific exceptions for libraries, archives, and nonprofit educational institutions. Depending on the nature of the institution, these exceptions may include the ability to make copies for users; preserve and make replacement copies of works; create accessible copies for print-disabled users; and perform or display works for educational purposes.

Libraries and their parent institutions have a responsibility to promote and maintain policies and procedures that are consistent with their ethical obligations, their institutional missions, and the law, including copyright law. Such policies and procedures should measure legal risk and respect the rights of both copyright holders and users of copyrighted works. It is the library's responsibility to make sure all of the workers, not just librarians, are familiar with copyright law that affect library services.

Library workers are increasingly critical resources for copyright information in their communities. Consequently, they should be informed about copyright developments and maintain current awareness of all copyright issues. Library workers should develop a solid understanding of the law, its purpose, and the details relevant to library activities. This includes the ability to read, understand, and analyze various copyright scenarios, including fair use and other copyright limitations, using both good judgment and risk mitigation practices.

Library workers should use these skills to identify their rights and the rights of their users. Further, they should be ready to perform outreach surrounding copyright topics and refer users with questions pertaining to copyright to reliable resources. However, library workers should avoid providing legal advice. They may provide information about the law and copyright but should recommend that patrons consult an attorney for legal advice.

Library workers should also be prepared to explain restrictions on patron use of content based on digital licensing agreements. Licensed e-content, including e-books, databases

and video streaming services, may have limitations on use beyond those present in copyright law.

Libraries have a proud history of advocating for the public interest. They recognize that copyright law should not expand the rights of copyright holders without sufficiently considering the benefit to the public interest. When the balance between rights holders and information users needs to be restored, library workers should engage with rights holders and legislators to advocate on behalf of their users and users' rights.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Ethics, 2019 MW ALA CD#24.1 act\)](#)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Ethics, 2013-2014 ALA CD#40.1 63014 act\)](#)

Adopted, 2014, revised MW 2019.

B.2. Intellectual Freedom (Old Number 53)

B.2.1 Library Bill of Rights (Old Number 53.1)

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.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Library Bill of Rights, Article VII, Adopted by the ALA Council, January 29, 2019\)](#)

[Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980, by the ALA Council \(PDF, 1 pg\)](#)

B.2.1.1 Challenged Resources

Libraries: An American Value” states, “We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services.” The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources. Collection development applies to print and media resources or formats in the physical collection. It also applies to digital resources such as databases, e-books and other downloadable and streaming media. Adopted 1971, amended 1990, 2014.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended by the ALA Council, January 29, 2019\)](#)

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.7 63014 act - PDF, 9 pgs\). **Formerly titled:** Challenged Materials: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*\).](#)

B.2.1.2 Expurgation of Library Materials

The act of expurgation denies access to the complete work and the entire spectrum of ideas that the work is intended to express. This is censorship. Expurgation based on the premise that certain portions of a work may be harmful to minors is equally a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Note: At the 2014 Annual Conference, the ALA Council amended the wording in and title to Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*; **now titled:** **Expurgation of Library Resources**. The policy abstract was not revised.

[Adopted 1973, revised 1990, 2008, 2014. \(See “Policy Reference File”: Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, revised, 2013–2014 ALA CD#19.10 63014 - PDF, 7 pgs\)](#)

B.2.1.3 Access to Resources and Services in the School Library

Members of the school community involved in the collection development process employ educational criteria to select resources unfettered by their personal, political, social, or religious views. Students and educators served by the school library have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval. School librarians resist efforts by individuals or groups to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, hear, or access regardless of technology, formats or method of delivery. Adopted 1986, amended 1990, 2000, 2005, 2008, 2014.

[\(See Policy Reference File”: Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, revised, 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.5 - PDF, 15 pgs\). **Formerly entitled:** Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*\).](#)

B.2.1.4 Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors

The American Library Association supports equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users is in violation of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, resources, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, resources, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This applies to minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library-card application or permission slip. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness should be able to obtain a library card regardless of library policies related to chronological age.

School and public libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and resources to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of the communities they serve. Services, resources, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and use of them should be determined on an individual basis. Equitable access to all library resources and services should not be abridged based on chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, legal status, or through restrictive scheduling and use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. A library's failure to acquire materials on the grounds that minors may be able to access those materials diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats.¹ Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.² Libraries and their library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." This includes students and minors, who have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use.³

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As *Libraries: An American Value* states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children’s use of the library and its resources and services.”⁴ Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children’s—and only their children’s—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, resources, or facilities should advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor’s access to materials.⁵

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, Amended by the ALA Council June 25, 2019\).](#)

[Adopted June 30, 1972; amended: AC 1981; AC 1991; AC 2004; AC 2008; and AC2014. \(See Policy Reference File”: Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, revised, 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.4. \(Formerly entitled: Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*; also incorporates content from *Access for Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials*, B.2.1.13 \(old number: 53.1.13\) - PDF, 22 pgs\).](#)

B.2.1.5 Evaluating Library Collections

Libraries continually develop their collections by adding and removing resources to maintain collections of current interest and usefulness to their communities. Libraries should adopt collection development and maintenance policies that include criteria for evaluating materials. Reasons for inclusion or removal of materials may include but are not limited to accuracy, currency, budgetary constraints, relevancy, content, usage, and community interest. The collection-development process is not to be used as a means to remove materials or deny access to resources on the grounds of personal bias or prejudice or because the materials may be viewed as controversial or objectionable. Doing so violates the principles of intellectual freedom and is in opposition to the *Library Bill of Rights*.

Some resources may contain views, opinions, and concepts that were popular or widely held at one time but are now considered outdated, offensive, or harmful. Content creators may also come to be considered offensive or controversial. These resources should be subject to evaluation in accordance with collection-development and collection-maintenance policies. The evaluation criteria and process may vary depending

on the type of library. While weeding is essential to the collection-development process, the controversial nature of an item or its creator should not be the sole reason to remove any item from a library's collection. Rather than removing these resources, libraries should consider ways to educate users and create context for how those views, opinions, and concepts have changed over time.

Failure to select resources merely because they may be potentially controversial is censorship, as is withdrawing resources for the same reason. Library workers should consider the cataloging, classification, and display of resources to ensure that they are discoverable and readily available to the populations they are meant to serve.

The American Library Association opposes censorship from any source, including library workers, faculty, administration, trustees, and elected officials. Libraries have a profound responsibility to encourage and support intellectual freedom by making it possible for the user to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Adopted by the ALA Council, June 25, 2019\).](#)

Adopted 1973, amended 1981, 2008. [\(See "Policy Reference File": Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, revised, 2007-2008 ALA CD#19.5. - PDF, 2 pgs\)](#)

B.2.1.6 Restricted Access to Library Materials

Participation in a democratic society requires unfettered access to current social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, and religious information. Information and ideas available outside the prison are essential to prisoners for a successful transition to freedom. Learning to be free requires access to a wide range of knowledge, and suppression of ideas does not prepare the incarcerated of any age for life in a free society. Even those individuals that a lawful society chooses to imprison permanently deserve access to information, to literature, and to a window on the world. Censorship is a process of exclusion by which authority rejects specific points of view. That material contains unpopular views or even repugnant content does not provide justification for censorship. Unlike censorship, selection is a process of inclusion that involves the search for resources, regardless of format, that represent diversity and a broad spectrum of ideas. The correctional library collection should reflect the needs of its community. Adopted 2010, amended 2014.

[See "Policy Reference File": Prisoners' Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended by the ALA Council, January 29, 2019\)](#)

[\(See Policy Reference File: Prisoners' Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.14 63014 act - PDF, 12 pgs\)](#)

B.2.1.7 Labeling Systems

Labels as viewpoint-neutral directional aids are intended to facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate resources. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the resource. The prejudicial label presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to access.

Adopted 1951, amended 1971, 1981, 1990, 2005, 2009, 2015.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Labeling Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, 2014-2015 ALA CD#19.4\)](#)

B.2.1.8 Rating Systems

Libraries, no matter their size, contain an enormous wealth of viewpoints and are responsible for making those viewpoints available to all. However, libraries do not advocate or endorse the content found in their collections or in resources made accessible through the library. Rating systems are tools or labels devised by individuals or organizations to advise people regarding suitability or content of materials. Rating systems appearing in library catalogs or discovery systems present distinct challenges to intellectual freedom principles.

Creators of rating systems assume that individuals or groups exist who can determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They also assume that individuals want or need direction in making decisions about the materials or resources they use. While the creation and publication of such systems is protected by the First Amendment’s right to free speech, the American Library Association also affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about the information that they consume.

Libraries’ explicit or implicit adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems violates the *Library Bill of Rights* and may be unconstitutional if used to prevent an individual’s access to materials or resources. If enforcement of rating systems is mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law’s applicability to library operations.

Libraries often acquire resources, such as DVDs and video games, that include ratings as part of their publication materials. Library workers should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the rating placed on the original item by the publisher, distributor, or copyright holder could constitute expurgation.¹

Because cataloging standards provide an opportunity for libraries to include ratings in their bibliographic records, many libraries have chosen to do so—some by acceptance of standard records containing such ratings and others by a desire to provide the maximum descriptive information available on a resource. Libraries are not required by cataloging best practices to provide this information. If they choose to do so, for whatever reason, they should cite the source of the rating and indicate that the library does not endorse external rating systems.

The inclusion of ratings in bibliographic records within library catalogs or discovery systems may be interpreted as an endorsement by the library. Therefore, without attribution, inclusion of such ratings is a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

If libraries include information about rating systems on items or records, this information should not be used to restrict access to those materials based on the age of library users. Such a restriction may violate minors' First Amendment rights.²

That libraries do not endorse or advocate for the use of rating systems does not preclude them from answering questions about such systems. It is appropriate to provide access to sources containing information on rating systems in order to meet the specific information-seeking needs of individual users. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

Adopted 1951, amended 1971, 1981, 1990, 2005, 2009, 2015, AC 2019.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, Amended by the ALA Council, June 25, 2019\)](#)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, 2014-2015 ALA CD#19.5\)](#)

B.2.1.9 User-Initiated Exhibits, Displays and Bulletin Boards

Libraries may offer spaces for exhibits, displays, and bulletin boards in physical or digital formats as a benefit for their communities. The use of these spaces should conform to the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*, which states:

- "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." (Article I)
- "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." (Article II)
- "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." (Article VI)

Libraries are not required to make space available to community groups or individuals for exhibits, public displays, notices, pamphlets, or flyers. However, if they do, they should post a permanent notice stating that these spaces are available as a service for the public and are not necessarily reflective of the library's viewpoint.

Libraries should have written policies that are content-neutral (do not pertain to the content of the display or to the identity, beliefs, or affiliations of the sponsors), clearly defined, and applied equally, and that address any time, place, and manner restrictions. Policies should be inclusive rather than exclusive. For example, a policy that the library's space is "open to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable

activities” is an inclusive statement about the limited uses of the space.

Those who object to the content should be able to request a reconsideration, similar to challenging any library resource. Library workers should not censor or remove materials from exhibits, displays, or areas designated for the distribution of information because someone may disagree with the content or with the identity, beliefs, or affiliations of the sponsors.

Adopted 1991, amended 2004, 2014, AC 2019.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: User-Initiated Exhibits, Displays, and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, Amended by the ALA Policy, June 25, 2019\)](#)

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, ALA 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.9 63014 act – PDF 8 pgs.\)](#)

B.2.1.10 Meeting Rooms

Many libraries provide meeting rooms and other spaces designated for use by the public for meetings and other events as a service to their communities. Article VI of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, “Libraries which make ... 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.” Libraries do not advocate for or endorse the viewpoints expressed in meetings by meeting room users, just as they do not endorse the viewpoints of works in their collections. The presence and activities of some groups in public spaces, while constitutionally protected, can cause fear and discomfort in some library users and staff. Libraries should adopt and enforce user behavior policies that protect library users and staff from harassment while maintaining their historic support for the freedom of speech.¹ This interpretation provides general guidelines regarding meeting rooms and other spaces for public gatherings, and it does not constitute legal advice.

Publicly funded libraries are not obligated to provide meeting room space to the public. If libraries choose to do so, such spaces are considered designated public forums², and legal precedent holds that libraries may not exclude any group based on the subject matter to be discussed or the ideas for which the group advocates.^{3,4} However, if a group's actions during a meeting disrupt or harass others in the library, library policies regarding acceptable behavior may apply. If libraries adopt policies that are perceived to restrict potentially controversial groups' access to meeting rooms, they may face legal and financial consequences. Allowing religious groups to use library meeting rooms and spaces does not constitute a breach of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.⁵

Libraries offering meeting rooms and spaces should develop and publish policies governing use after consultation with legal counsel. These policies should properly define time, place, or manner of use; such restrictions should not pertain to the content of a meeting or to the beliefs or affiliations of the sponsors. Policies should be regularly

reviewed by staff and made available to the public in all of the commonly used languages within the community served.

Libraries should write policies in inclusive rather than exclusive terms. A policy that the library's facilities are open "to organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, charitable, advocacy, civic, religious, or political activities" is an inclusive statement of the limited uses of the facilities. For example, if a library allows charities and sports clubs to discuss their activities in library meeting rooms, then the library should not exclude partisan political or religious groups from discussing their activities in the same facilities. If a library opens its meeting rooms to a wide variety of civic organizations, then the library may not deny access to a religious organization.

Written policies may also include limitations on frequency of use and require adherence to the library's behavior policy.⁶ The meeting room policy should also state whether meetings held in library spaces must be open to the public or if the library allows private events. Libraries may choose to offer space for public or private events unless restricted by state or local laws. The same standards and policies should apply to all meeting room uses. Library users should have a process through which they may appeal the denial of meeting room use.

If meeting rooms and spaces are open to the public, libraries should include a section in their policy that addresses fees. Charging fees does not change the status of meeting rooms and spaces as designated public forums. Library governing bodies that decide to charge fees for use of library spaces should consider local and state laws, the ALA's Code of Ethics, and the *Library Bill of Rights*. Charging fees for the use of library meeting rooms or facilities may abridge or deny access for some community members.⁷

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." This applies with equal force to the library's meeting rooms and spaces designated for public use as it does to the library's collections and services.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights- Amended by the ALA Council, January 29, 2019\)](#)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. - PDF, 5 pgs\)](#) Adopted 1991., Revised MW 2019.

B.2.1.10.1 Politics in American Libraries

The Library Bill of Rights specifically states that "all people" and "all points of view" should be included in library materials and information. This includes views on political topics, and libraries' collections should reflect as wide a diversity of views on political topics as possible. In addition, libraries should encourage political discourse as part of civic engagement in forums designated for that purpose. If a library has designated a space for community use, it must make that space available to all community organizations and groups regardless of their views or affiliations, or how unpopular or offensive the views may be to even vocal or influential segments of society.

(See [Policy Reference File: "Politics in American Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. 2016-2017 ALA CD# #19.12 62617 act\)](#) Adopted, June 2017.

B.2.1.11 Library Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for accessing information, education, and recreation. Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves." Library displays increased awareness of programs, resources, and services.

Library-initiated programs include, but are not limited to, lectures, displays, exhibits, community forums, performing and visual arts,¹ participatory workshop, technology programming, creative learning programming, wellness programs, story times, continuing education, fairs and conventions, book clubs, discussion groups, demonstrations, and presentations for social, cultural, educational, or entertainment purposes. Library-initiated programs may take place on-site at the library, off-site at other locations, or online, and may be provided by library workers, volunteers, or partners. Libraries may also choose to promote their programs, services, and resources through displays and digital signs.

Library-initiated programs and displays utilize library worker expertise for community interests, collections, services, facilities, and providing access to information and information resources. They introduce users and potential users to library resources and the library's role as a facilitator of information access. The library may participate in cooperative or joint programs with other agencies, organizations, institutions, or individuals to facilitate information access in the community the library serves.

Libraries should not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and shall ensure they have equitable access to library resources. Library-initiated programs and displays should comply with all applicable laws, including the standards and requirements of The Americans with Disabilities Act and state and local disability accessibility guidelines.² If a program is held in a location not controlled by the library, the library should assure that the space is accessible to all users. If users overflow designated event areas during library events, libraries should secure accessible public spaces (e.g., ramps, pathways, and emergency exit routes) to ensure access and safety for everyone. Reasonable accommodations should also be made to have interpretation or real-time captioning for the deaf or hard of hearing at library-initiated programs when needed or requested by library users.

“Socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented people, not just the mainstream majority, should be able to see themselves reflected in the resources and programs that libraries offer.”³ Libraries should actively seek to include a variety of programming options representing diversity of genres, formats, ideas, and expressions with a multitude of viewpoints and cultural perspectives that reflect the diversity in our communities. Library-initiated programs that cross language and cultural barriers introduce community members to the library’s resources and provide access to information. Libraries serving multilingual or multicultural communities should make efforts to accommodate the information needs of those who speak and read languages other than English, including advertising for such events.

Concerns, questions, or complaints about library-initiated programs and displays are handled according to the same written policy and procedures that govern reconsiderations of other library resources. These policies should apply equally to all people, including, but not limited to, library users, staff, and members of the governing body. The policies should set forth the library’s commitment to free and open access to information and ideas for all users.

Programs should not be canceled because of the ideas or topics of the program, or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, nor should library workers censor or remove displays because someone may disagree with the content. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the program content, or the views expressed by the participants or speakers, any more than the purchase of resources for the library collection or curation of a display constitutes an endorsement of the resources content or its creator’s views. Libraries should vigorously defend the First Amendment right of speakers and participants to express themselves.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.” The right to use a library encompasses all the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries create programs for an intended age group or audience based on educational suitability and audience interest; however, restrictions on participation based solely on the gender, chronological age, or educational level of users violate this right and should be enforced only when not doing so would adversely impact the safety of the participants or interfere with the intended purpose of the program. Parents and guardians may restrict their own children’s access to library programs, but no person or organization can interfere in others’ access and participation. A parent or guardian may discuss their child’s access to and participation in library programs with their child, but may not impose those decisions on others, including other people’s children.

Libraries should not deny access to library-initiated programs if patrons owe the library for overdue fines or other fees. If libraries charge program participants for supplies used, they should make every effort to reduce economic barriers to participation.

Any collection and retention of program participants’ personal information should be on an opt-in basis only. While attendees may need to demonstrate their eligibility to attend the program by showing a library card or student ID, they should not be required to share their personal information in order to attend a library program.

[\(See “Policy Reference File: ALA CD#19.7 Library Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource, Adopted by the ALA Council, June 2019\)](#)

[\(See “Policy Reference File: ALA CD#19.7 Library Initiated Programs and Displays as a Resource, Adopted by the ALA Council, June 2018\)](#)

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource: *An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, 2017-2018 ALA CD#19.7 62617 act-PDF 2 pgs.\)](#)

Adopted 1982, revised 1990, 2000, Adopted AC 2018, revised 2019.

B.2.1.12 Diverse Collections

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “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.” A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring resources to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library’s selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from independent, small, and local producers, as well as those that are self-published

- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.¹

Best practices in collection development assert that resources should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection's diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include, but is not limited to, prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers should not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection-development decisions.²

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended by the ALA Council June 24, 2019.\)](#)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Diversity in Collection Development: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.8 63014 act - PDF, 17\)](#)

Adopted 1982, amended 1990, 2008, 2014, 2019.

B.2.1.13 Universal Right to Free Expression

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize intellectual freedom as a universal human right.¹ This right ensures free access to seek and receive information and expression of ideas from all points of view without restriction for every individual of any age, ability, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other form of identity or status. The *Library Bill of Rights* and *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association* express core values of our profession and affirm the primacy of intellectual freedom for full participation in a just, equitable, and informed society. We acknowledge our professional obligation to actively defend intellectual freedom rights and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of library users. We advocate for intellectual freedom and strive to educate ourselves, library users, the communities we serve, and the broader society about intellectual freedom and related topics, including privacy, information literacy, and inclusion.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Universal Right to Free Expression, Amended, June 25, 2019\)](#)

[Adopted 1989, amended 2014. \(See “Policy Reference File”: The Universal Right to Free Expression: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, ALA CD#19.17 63014 act – PDF, 7 pgs.\)](#)

B.2.1.14 U.S. Enterprises’ Abridgement of Free Speech

In response to multiple high-profile incidents of United States enterprises abridging the free speech rights of people of the United States, apparently to maintain profitable relationships with repressive governments: The ALA

- reaffirms its commitment to free speech and free expression as previously stated in “The Universal Right to Free Expression: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*;
- strongly urges U.S. enterprises that allow for social interaction and comments on online platforms to resist efforts from governments to suppress or restrict the “right to freedom of opinion and expression” as enshrined in Article 19 of [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#);
- urges these same enterprises to address disinformation, as well as targeted harassment or hate speech, in order to protect the honor, dignity, and humanity of users, of their online platforms; and
- recommends library workers and governing bodies inform library users and local media

[\(See “Policy Reference File: Resolution on U.S. Enterprises’ Abridgement of Free Speech, Adopted at the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference\)](#)

B.2.1.15 Economic Barriers to Information Access

The essential mission of a publicly funded library is to provide free, equal, and equitable access to information in all its forms. While the roles, goals, and objectives of publicly supported libraries may differ, they all share this common mission. Just as economic issues may challenge the library's ability to meet its mission, economic barriers may also threaten user access.

Those who work in libraries and serve on their governing bodies sometimes face economic pressures and competition for funding but must remain committed to the library's essential mission. To sustain this mission, the American Library Association has enumerated certain principles of library services in the *Library Bill of Rights* and associated policy statements.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

The American Library Association fundamentally opposes the creation of economic barriers to access services and resources provided by publicly funded libraries, including public, school, and academic libraries. All resources provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of format or method of delivery, should be readily and equitably accessible to all library users.

Imposing any financial barrier may disadvantage users, and libraries of all types—public, school, and academic—should consider eliminating barriers that limit access to library resources and other services.

Libraries should systematically monitor their programs and services for potential barriers to access and strive to eliminate them when they occur. Libraries should design and implement services with care so as not to infringe upon access to or delivery of information and resources for all users. Services should be reevaluated regularly to ensure that the library's essential mission remains uncompromised.

The "[Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity](#)" states that monetary library fines create a barrier to the provision of library and information services.¹ Libraries should examine policies and procedures, particularly those involving fines, fees, or other user charges, and actively move toward eliminating any that may create potential barriers to access or academic achievement. If a library has a policy to charge a user for lost, stolen, or willfully damaged materials or property, it should consider waiving or reducing the cost, at its discretion, based on that user's ability to pay. Likewise, the library should consider a user's ability to pay when it charges a flat annual fee for borrowing privileges to people living outside the tax-support area of the library.

Economic barriers are not limited solely to financial constraints and a user's ability to pay fines or fees. Many policies and procedures may disproportionately harm those having financial difficulties, experiencing homelessness, or those from marginalized communities. These policies may include those related to personal belongings, hygiene requirements, verification of a permanent address, access to an email account or computer. Such policies and procedures effectively abridge or deny access for some members of the community because they reinforce distinctions among users.

Libraries and their governing bodies should look for alternative models and methods of administration that minimize distinctions among users based on their economic status. They should resist imposing user fees to alleviate financial pressures on the library, as those fees may impose a long-term cost to institutional integrity and public confidence in libraries. Likewise, they should not enact policies that cater to the desires of the economically fortunate at the expense of the economically unfortunate.

The American Library Association opposes any legislative or regulatory attempt to impose content restrictions on library resources or to limit user access to resources or services as a condition of funding publicly supported libraries and information services.

Libraries and their governing bodies should carefully examine terms or conditions attached to library funding and should oppose conditions that might limit equal or equitable access to content. This principle applies equally to private gifts or bequests and to public funds. In particular, libraries and their governing bodies have an obligation to reject such restrictions when the effect of the restriction is to limit access to information.

Libraries and their governing bodies should cooperate with efforts to create a community consensus that publicly supported libraries require funding unfettered by conditions that limit equal or equitable access to content. Such a consensus supports the library's mission to provide the free and unrestricted exchange of information and ideas.

[\(See "Policy Reference File: Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended by the ALA Council, June 25, 2019\)](#)

Adopted 1993. [\(See also Policies B.4.2, B.5.2, B.3.1, and B.8.10.1\). \(See "Policy Reference File": Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: 1992-93 CD #26.6.2. - PDF, 2 pgs\)](#)

B.2.1.16 Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation

The American Library Association stringently and unequivocally maintains that libraries and librarians have an obligation to resist efforts that systematically exclude materials dealing with any subject matter, including sex, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. The Association also encourages librarians to proactively support the First Amendment rights of all library users, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

Adopted 1993, amended 2000, 2004, 2008, 2010. ([See "Policy Reference File": Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: revised, 2007-2008 ALA CD#19.2 - PDF, 3 pgs](#))

B.2.1.17 Privacy

All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use.¹ When users recognize or fear that their privacy or confidentiality is compromised, true freedom of inquiry no longer exists.

Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. Federal and state courts have established a First Amendment right to receive information in a publicly funded library.² Further, the courts have upheld the right to privacy based on the U.S. Constitution. Many states provide guarantees of privacy in their constitutions and statute law.³ Numerous decisions in U.S. case law have defined and extended rights to privacy to all.⁴

The right to privacy includes the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others, in person or online. Confidentiality exists when a library is in possession of personally identifiable information about its users and keeps that information private on their behalf.⁵ Article III of the *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association* states that confidentiality extends to "information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted," including, but not limited to, reference questions and interviews, circulation records, digital transactions and queries, as well as records regarding the use of library resources, services, programs, or facilities.

Protecting user privacy and confidentiality has long been an integral part of the mission of libraries. The American Library Association has affirmed a right to privacy since 1939.⁶ Existing ALA policies affirm that confidentiality is crucial to freedom of inquiry. Rights to privacy and confidentiality are explicit in Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* and implicit in its guarantee of free access to library resources for all users.

Rights of Library Users

Lack of privacy and confidentiality has a chilling effect on users' selection, access to, and use of library resources. All users have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use. ALA and its members recognize that children and youth have the same rights to privacy as adults. Library users expect, and in many places have, a legal right to have their personally identifiable information and library-use data protected and kept private and confidential by anyone with access to that

information. Libraries should never enact policies or practices that abridge users' right to privacy regardless of their age, ability, housing status, immigration status, involvement with the criminal justice system, religious affiliation, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other forms of identity or status unless explicitly required by law. Even then, libraries should consult with legal counsel before abridging any user's right to privacy.

Libraries have a responsibility to inform users about policies and practices governing the collection, security, and retention of personally identifiable information and library use data. Additionally, users should have the choice to opt-in to any data collection that is not essential to library operations and the opportunity to opt-out again at any future time. All nonessential data collection should be turned off by default. In all areas of librarianship, best practice leaves users in control of as many choices as possible regarding their privacy. This includes decisions about the selection of, access to, and use of information. Information about options available to users should be prominently displayed, accessible, and understandable for a general audience.

Responsibilities in Libraries

The library profession has a long-standing ethic of facilitating, not monitoring, access to information. Libraries implement this commitment through the adoption of and adherence to library privacy policies that are consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and where appropriate, international law. It is essential that libraries maintain an updated, publicly available privacy policy that states what data is being collected, with whom it is shared, and how long it is kept. Everyone who provides governance, administration, or service in libraries, including volunteers, has a responsibility to maintain an environment respectful and protective of the privacy of all users. It is the library's responsibility to provide ongoing privacy education and training to library workers, governing bodies, and users in order to fulfill this responsibility.

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) Consensus Principles on Users' Digital Privacy in Library, Publisher, and Software-Provider Systems recognizes that[t]he effective management and delivery of library services may require the library user to opt into the provision of personal data in order to access a library resource or receive library services. Users' personal data should only be used for purposes disclosed to them and to which they consent.⁷

Libraries should not monitor, track, or profile an individual's library use beyond operational needs. Data collected for analytical use should be limited to anonymous or aggregated data and not tied to individuals' personal data. Emerging biometric technologies, such as facial recognition, are inconsistent with the mission of facilitating access to library resources free from any unreasonable intrusion or surveillance.

Regardless of the technology used, everyone who collects or accesses personally identifiable information in any format has a legal and ethical obligation to protect confidentiality. Library security practices to safeguard personal information should be up to date and in compliance with state and national standards. Adherence to *NISO Consensus Principles on Users' Digital Privacy in Library, Publisher, and Software-Provider Systems* requires that these practices include: encryption of personal data while they are

at-rest and in-motion; prompt updates of systems and software to address vulnerabilities; systems, procedures, and policies for access control of sensitive data; a procedure for security training for those with access to data; and documented procedures for breach reporting, incident response, and system, software, and network security configuration and auditing.⁸

Libraries should follow purpose-limitation, storage-limitation, and data-minimization principles⁹ when making decisions about collecting and retaining library-use data. In particular, libraries should collect, and store only personally identifiable data required for specific purposes that are disclosed to the users.

Libraries should periodically review their data-collection and retention policies to identify situations in which the reason for collecting user data may no longer apply. Libraries may need to comply with state, institutional, or other governmental record-retention policy in addition to developing their own data-management policies. In addition, libraries should regularly review and update procedures for collecting and maintaining user data to ensure compliance with current industry privacy and security standards.

Libraries should never share users' personally identifiable information with third parties or vendors that provide resources and library services, unless the library obtains explicit permission from the user or if required by law or existing contract. Libraries or their governing institutions should negotiate agreements with vendors that retain library ownership of user data and permit independent auditing of vendor data collection, retention, and access policies and practices. Such agreements should stipulate that user data is confidential and that it may not be used or shared except with the permission of the library. Any vendor that handles user information as part of a library's service should have a publicly available privacy policy that commits to compliance with the *NISO Consensus Principles*. As existing contracts approach expiration, libraries should renegotiate future contracts to include these privacy safeguards.

Law enforcement agencies and officers may request library records and data that they believe contain information that would be helpful to the investigation of criminal activity. Libraries should have a procedure in place for handling law-enforcement requests. Libraries should make such records available only in response to properly executed court orders or legal process. These court orders are issued following a showing of good cause based on specific facts by a court of competent jurisdiction.

The American Library Association affirms that rights of privacy are necessary for intellectual freedom and are fundamental to the ethical practice of librarianship. The rapid pace of information collection and changes in technology means that users' personally identifiable information and library-use data are at increased risk of exposure. The use of new technologies in libraries that rely on the collection, use, sharing, monitoring and/or tracking of user data may come into direct conflict with the *Library Bill of Rights* and librarians' ethical responsibilities. Libraries should consider privacy in the design and delivery of all programs and services, paying careful attention to their own policies and procedures and that of any vendors with whom they work. Privacy is the foundation upon which our libraries were built, and the reason libraries are such a trusted part of every community.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended by the ALA Council, June 24, 2019\).](#)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: 2001-2002 CD#19.6. - PDF, 5 pgs\)](#)

B.2.1.18 Use of Filtering Software in Libraries

The ALA affirms that the use of filtering software by libraries to block access to constitutionally protected speech violates the Library Bill of Rights.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Resolution on the Use of Filtering Software in Libraries, 1996-97 CD #19.4 - PDF, 1 pg\)](#)

B.2.1.18.I Internet Filtering

The negative effects of content filters on Internet access in public libraries and schools are demonstrable and documented. Consequently, the American Library Association cannot recommend filtering. However, the American Library Association recognizes that local libraries and schools often must rely on federal or state funding for computers and internet access. Because adults and, to a lesser degree minors, have First Amendment rights, libraries and schools that choose to use content filters should implement policies and procedures that mitigate the negative effects of filtering to the greatest extent possible. Adopted, 2015.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Committee on Professional Ethics Report: 2014-2015 ALA CD#19.3\)](#)

B.2.1.19 Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries

A service philosophy should be promoted that affords equal access to information for all in the academic community with no discrimination on the basis of race, age, values, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural or ethnic background, physical, sensory, cognitive or learning disability, economic status, religious beliefs, or views. Adopted 2000, amended 2014.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*: 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.11 63014 act - PDF 4 pgs\)](#)

B.2.1.20 Access to Digital Resources and Services

The fundamental mission of libraries is to provide access to information, regardless of content or format, to everyone. Digital resources and services, or resources and services made primarily available online or on digital devices, are integral to libraries' mission in the twenty-first century. Libraries are important points of access to many digital resources and services, including, but not limited to, computers, the Internet, and digital resources and tools. In order to provide access to digital resources and services while upholding the *Library Bill of Rights*, libraries must consider intellectual freedom principles and issues of equity to ensure that access to information is enhanced, not restricted, by digital technology.

Libraries should regularly review issues arising from digital creation, distribution, retrieval, and archiving of information. Any review of these issues should consider users' First Amendment rights, rights to privacy, and the core values of librarianship as expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association*. Many people lack access to or the capability to use or create digital resources effectively. There is a need for places where people can access, use, or create information without impediment. It is the responsibility of libraries to provide access to digital resources and services and to mitigate all barriers, whether they are economic, educational, or political. The provision of access does not imply sponsorship or endorsement by the library. Libraries should resist all attempts by individuals, governments, and private entities to censor or limit access to digital resources or services.

In making decisions about how to offer access to digital resources, services, tools, physical equipment, and networks, each library should consider intellectual freedom principles and issues of equity in the context of its mission, goals, objectives, cooperative agreements, and the needs of the entire community it serves.

The Rights of Users

All library policies, procedures, or regulations relating to digital resources and services should be scrutinized for potential violations of user rights. User policies should be developed according to the policies and guidelines established by the American Library Association.¹

Users' access to digital resources and services should not be restricted or denied for expressing, receiving, creating, or participating in constitutionally protected speech. If access is restricted or denied for behavioral or other reasons, users should be provided due process, including, but not limited to, formal notice and a means of appeal.

Information retrieved, utilized, or created digitally is constitutionally protected unless determined otherwise by a court of competent jurisdiction. These rights extend to minors as well as adults.² Libraries should use technology to enhance, not deny, digital access. Users have the right to be free of unreasonable limitations or conditions set by libraries, librarians, system administrators, vendors, network service providers, or others. Contracts, agreements, and licenses entered by libraries on behalf of their users should not violate this right. Libraries should provide library users with the training and assistance necessary to find, evaluate, use, and create information effectively.

All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use.³ The library should uphold these rights by policy, procedure, and practice in accordance with Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights*. The library should regularly maintain its systems and networks to protect users' rights to privacy and confidentiality. As libraries increasingly provide access to digital resources through third-party vendors, libraries have a responsibility to hold vendors accountable for protecting patrons' privacy.

Equity of Access

The digital environment provides expanding opportunities for everyone to participate in the information society, but individuals may face serious barriers to access. These barriers, often referred to as the digital divide, may include a lack of infrastructure for Internet connectivity, lack of tools (hardware or software), and lack of skills, knowledge, or means necessary to access digital resources.⁴ Libraries should be cognizant of the digital divide and work to minimize it as they provide access to digital resources for their communities.

Digital resources, services, training, and networks provided directly or indirectly by the library should be readily and equitably accessible to all library users. American Library Association policies oppose the charging of user fees for the provision of information services by libraries that receive support from public funds.⁵ Libraries should develop policies concerning access to digital resources. These policies should be consistent with ALA's policies and guidelines. When new digital resources are provided to library users, libraries have an obligation to provide equitable training opportunities to library users and workers in using those new resources. Training should also address privacy and security issues that accompany the use of digital resources and services.

Information Resources and Access

Libraries, acting within their mission and objectives, should support access to information on all subjects that serve the needs or interests of each user, regardless of the user's age or the content of the material. In order to preserve the cultural record and to prevent the loss of information, libraries may need to expand their selection or collection-development policies to ensure preservation, in appropriate formats, of information obtained digitally. Libraries have an obligation to provide access to government information available in digital format.

Providing connections to global information, services, and networks is not the same as selecting and purchasing materials for a library collection. Some information accessed digitally may not meet a library's selection or collection-development policy. It is, therefore, left to each user to determine what is appropriate. Libraries and library workers should not deny or limit access to digital resources because of their allegedly controversial content or because of a library worker's

personal beliefs or fear of confrontation. Furthermore, libraries and library workers should not deny access to digital resources solely on the grounds that they are perceived to lack value.

Parents and legal guardians who are concerned about their children's use of digital resources should provide guidance to their own children.

Publicly funded libraries have a legal obligation to provide access to constitutionally protected information. Federal, state, county, municipal, local, or library governing bodies sometimes require the use of Internet filters or other technological measures that block access to constitutionally protected information, contrary to the *Library Bill of Rights*.⁶ If a library uses a technological measure that blocks access to information, it should be set at the least restrictive level in order to minimize the blocking of constitutionally protected speech.

Adults retain the right to access all constitutionally protected information and to ask for the technological measure to be disabled in a timely and confidential manner. Minors also retain the right to access constitutionally protected information and, at a minimum, have the right to ask the library or librarian to provide access to erroneously blocked information in a timely and confidential manner. In order to ensure user privacy and confidentiality, records of these requests should not contain personally identifiable information. Libraries and librarians have an obligation to inform users of these rights and to provide the means to exercise these rights.⁷

Digital resources and services allow libraries to significantly expand the scope of information available to users. Like all resources and services provided by the library, provision of access to digital resources and services should follow the principles outlined in the *Library Bill of Rights* to ensure equitable access regardless of content or platform.

[\(See "Policy Reference File: Access to Digital Resources and Services: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended by the ALA Council, June 25, 2019\)](#)

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Access to Digital Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Ri ghts: 2008-09 ALA CD #19.5 - PDF, 4 pgs\)](#)

Adopted 1996, amended 2005, 2009, AC 2019.

B.2.1.21 Services to Persons with Disabilities

The American Library Association affirms that people with disabilities are a large and vibrant part of society. Libraries should be fully inclusive of all members of their community and strive to break down barriers to access. Library staff should never presuppose a person's limits based on disability, and a person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of a disability, whether actual or perceived. Libraries should provide equal access to collections, services, programming, and facilities for all library users, and all library resources, including its website and online resources, should be available in formats accessible to people of all ages and abilities. When this is not possible, reasonable accommodations and timely remediation should be employed to provide an equivalent experience to people with disabilities. Libraries should comply with all

applicable laws, including the standards and requirements of the ADA and state or local disability accessibility guidelines.

Libraries should contain a diverse collection that highlights the perspectives of marginalized groups, including the words and depictions of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are to be reflected in the collection not as a single group but as an intersectional part of the community, across age, race, gender, class, and orientation. Libraries should adopt policies to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity to serve as members of the library staff, administrative units, and governing boards. As part of a commitment to free access, library staff should proactively reach out to individuals with disabilities, as well as advocacy and support organizations, to create formal or informal partnerships with them. By working to remove barriers to access, libraries promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities into society. Adopted AC2018.

Adopted 2009, Adopted 2018 ([See "Policy Reference File": Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, 2017-2018 ALA CD#19.8 62617 act, PDF, 4 pgs.](#))

B.2.1.22 Education and Information Literacy

Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. Education and information literacy¹ are fundamental to the mission of libraries of all types and form the foundation of intellectual freedom. Libraries provide access to information and ideas through their facilities, resources, and services. Libraries foster the ability to use those resources through educational programs and instruction.

The value and importance of intellectual freedom and its relationship to education is widely recognized in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" adopted by the United Nations in 1948. These principles align closely with the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*.

The importance of intellectual freedom is expressed in both documents, and the necessity of education to the development of intellectual freedom is specifically discussed in Article 26 of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights":

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.²

The *Library Bill of Rights* “affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas,” making them resources for facilitating education, encouraging curiosity, seeking knowledge, and further expanding the principles of intellectual freedom.

Access to information reflecting a variety of viewpoints is listed as the first principle in Article 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.

Article II of the *Library Bill of Rights* emphasizes the importance of fostering access to information by providing resources that allow users to evaluate content and context, and to find information representing multiple viewpoints:

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 and library workers foster education and lifelong learning by promoting free expression and facilitating the exchange of ideas among users.³ Libraries use resources, programming, and services to strengthen access to information and thus build a foundation of intellectual freedom. In their roles as educators, library workers create an environment that nurtures intellectual freedom in all library resources and services by doing the following:

- developing collections and services representative of multiple perspectives that empower individuals to explore broadly when pursuing their own interests
- providing programming through a variety of formats that accommodates multiple methods of learning and expands opportunities to discover, respond to, and create ideas
- leading instruction framed around information literacy skills and critical thinking
- supporting the development of skills necessary to effectively evaluate the accuracy of content and identify false or misleading information
- advocating for the appreciation of diverse voices and using the library to explore unfamiliar or controversial concepts

Through engaging in these educational services, libraries encourage individuals to explore ideas; discover, access, and evaluate information; draw meaning from information presented in a variety of formats; develop valid conclusions; and express new ideas. By offering these services, libraries facilitate access to information and offer a path to a robust appreciation of intellectual freedom rights and the value of libraries as cornerstones of education in the communities they serve.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Education and Information Literacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights\)](#) Amended by the ALA Council, June 25, 2019

[\(See “Policy Reference File” Advocating for Intellectual Freedom: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: revised, 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.6 63014 - PDF, 6 pgs\). Formerly titled: Importance of Education to Intellectual Freedom: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights\).](#)

B.2.1.23 Minors and Online Activity

The online environment offers opportunities for accessing, creating, and sharing information. The rights of minors to retrieve, create, and interact with information posted on the Internet in schools and libraries are extensions of their First Amendment rights.

Schools and libraries should ensure that they offer opportunities for students to use social media and other online applications constructively in their academic and recreational pursuits. Students can enhance their social, interpersonal, and academic skills with the use of online applications. Some examples include

- creating documents and sharing them online;
- uploading pictures, videos, and visual material;
- engaging in interactive games;
- classifying content and organizing information; and
- participating in online communities.

Online tools may help children and young adults learn about and organize social, civic, recreational, and academic activities. Many sites invite users to establish online identities, join networks, share personal information, and create web content. Library workers curate age- appropriate resources for academic and personal pursuits and teach children and young adults how to be safe online. Parents and guardians play a critical role in preparing their children for participation in online activity by communicating their values and guiding their children’s use of the Internet. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only a parent or guardian has the right and the responsibility to determine what their child—and only their child—accesses online.

The use of social media and online resources poses two compelling intellectual freedom issues for minors: the right to free expression and the right to privacy.

Filters are often used in libraries and educational institutions to restrict access to online content, limiting access to information and social-media platforms beyond what is required by the Children's Internet Protection Act and similar state laws. These restrictions deny minors' rights to free expression online.

Protection of minors' privacy rights online is also paramount. In addition to concerns about the vulnerability of young people who post personally identifiable information online, other threats to minors' privacy cause libraries and educational institutions to restrict and monitor minors' online activities. Perceived safety threats, such as cyberbullying, also lead to restrictive policies. These actions not only deny minors' right to free expression but may also deny their right to privacy.

Prohibiting minors from using social media or participating in online communities prevents youth from engaging in opportunities to learn and develop skills needed for responsible speech online, civil engagement, and personal-privacy protection. Instead, libraries and library workers should educate youth about online activities that are appropriate for their maturity level without blocking access for others. Furthermore, library workers should advocate for implementing privacy-protecting policies and technology in libraries and educational institutions that both empower youth to take personal responsibility for their online privacy and prevent the collection and use of information about minors and their online activities for marketing and for-profit activities.

The First Amendment applies to all forms of speech created by minors and posted online. Restricting access to social media in schools and libraries limits young people's right to free expression and violates the tenets of the *Library Bill of Rights*. Instances of inappropriate use of social media and online applications should be addressed as individual-behavior issues, not as justification for restricting or banning access to such tools. While other safety threats exist beyond schools' and libraries' physical space, these threats should not be a reason for limiting access for minors. Library workers, educators, and administrators have a responsibility to educate themselves about safety threats while continuing to advocate for the intellectual freedom of minors.

As defenders of intellectual freedom and the First Amendment, libraries have a responsibility to offer unrestricted access to online activity in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and to advocate for greater access where it is abridged. Of equal importance is the responsibility to advocate for minors' right to free expression and privacy online while using libraries of all types. In addition, library workers and educators should help young people learn digital citizenship skills that will prepare them to be responsible, effective members of a global society.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Minors and Online Activity: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Adopted by the ALA Council, June 24, 2019\).](#)

[Adopted 2009, amended 2014. \(See "Policy Reference File": Minors and Internet Activity: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.13 63014 act\). Formerly titled: Minors and Internet Interactivity: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights\).](#)

B.2.1.24 Prisoners' Right to Read

Participation in a democratic society requires unfettered access to current social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, and religious information. Information and ideas available outside the prison are essential to prisoners for a successful transition to freedom. Learning to be free requires access to a wide range of knowledge, and suppression of ideas does not prepare the incarcerated of any age for life in a free society. Even those individuals that a lawful society chooses to imprison permanently deserve access to information, to literature, and to a window on the world. Censorship is a process of exclusion by which authority rejects specific points of view. That material contains unpopular views or even repugnant content does not provide justification for censorship. Unlike censorship, selection is a process of inclusion that involves the search for resources, regardless of format, that represent diversity and a broad spectrum of ideas. The correctional library collection should reflect the needs of its community. Adopted 2010, amended 2014.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Prisoners' Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended, January 29, 2019\)](#)

[\(See Policy Reference File: Prisoners' Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights: 2013-2014 ALA CD#19.14 63014 act - PDF, 6 pgs. \)](#)

B.2.1.25 User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems

Libraries offer a variety of information-retrieval systems to provide access to the resources in their collections. Such systems include, but are not limited to, the library catalog, institutional repositories, digital collections, and discovery services.¹ Many of these systems have the ability to include social-media components and knowledge-sharing tools that allow libraries to provide greater opportunities for engagement through user-generated content. The inclusion of this content presents an opportunity for users to engage in conversation with the library and the community, creating shared knowledge and demonstrating the value of libraries as institutions for information and learning.

Discovery systems that offer user-generated-content features may allow users to contribute commentary and reviews, use simple point-and-click rating systems (e.g., one star to five stars), or engage in discussions. To avoid appearance of library endorsement or disapproval, libraries should make efforts to differentiate between user-generated content and library-generated content within discovery systems. When user-generated content has the potential to influence the retrieval function (e.g., content with more stars could appear higher in search results), such features should not be applied by default but presented as a clearly labeled choice for users.

Libraries are not obligated to open discovery systems to user-generated content. A publicly funded library can limit user-generated content to a defined class of users or limit the subject matter of user-generated content as long as any restrictions do not pertain to the views, beliefs, or affiliations of the user.² For example, the library could require that users contributing content to the library's discovery system possess a valid library card or an online account with the library.

If a publicly funded library does choose to allow users to contribute content to the library's discovery system, the commenting system may be considered a limited public forum. Libraries that allow users to contribute content should adopt policies that define the time, place, and manner in which the user contributes the content to the library's discovery system. Any restrictions must be reasonable and cannot be based upon the beliefs or affiliations of the user or the views expressed in the user-generated content.³ Policies should be regularly reviewed with legal counsel, shared with staff, and made available to the public in all of the commonly used languages within the community served.

Libraries should safeguard the privacy of users who contribute content to library discovery systems and should review—and encourage users to review—the user-data-collection policies of any third-party providers involved in managing or storing the user-generated content. User consent should be obtained before any personal data is collected and shared with third-party providers, and libraries should protect all library-use data collected from library users.⁴

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: User-Generated in Library Discovery Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Amended by the ALA Council, June 24, 2019\).](#)

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, 2015-2016 ALA CD#19.2. Adopted January 12, 2016\)](#)

Adopted, January 2016, Amended, June 2019.

B.2.1.26 Religion in Libraries

The First Amendment guarantees the right of individuals to believe and practice their religion or to practice no religion at all and prohibits government from establishing or endorsing a religion or religions. Thus, the freedom of, for and from religion, are similarly guaranteed. The First Amendment also guarantees the corollary right of individuals to receive information on religious topics. Libraries support this right by providing access to diverse religious thought without becoming a proponent of any of them. Adopted AC 2016

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Religion in American Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, 2015-2016 CD #19.9. Adopted June 28, 2016\)](#)

B.2.1.3.1 Support School and Youth Services Librarians Facing Increased Intellectual Freedom Challenges

1. Commits to ongoing support of all children's right to read, their equitable access to diverse books and informational resources, and their right to library services by: a. Reaffirming that the freedom to read supports active citizens of the future and speaks against censorship of youth library books and resources; b. Upholding a parent's right to decide what their own children can read, but not what other children can read as stated in the Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and the Access to Resources and Services in the School Library;
2. Reaffirms their support of school librarians who face challenges and threats of prosecution or job loss by: a. Condemning the intimidation of librarians and library workers in or beyond their place of work; b. Advocating for strict adherence to library collection and reconsideration policies; c. Defending librarians' professional responsibility to ensure their print and digital collections represent a variety of viewpoints that support the diversity of their communities and offer the breadth of history;
3. Solicits anti-censorship position statements, endorsements, and partnerships at various ALA levels with stakeholders including educational organizations that support students' right to read, education unions and school administration groups, parent and student groups, ALA state chapters and organizations which include authors, vendors, publishers, and professional publications to support students' right to read;
4. Commits to widely disseminating talking points for librarians, library workers, administrators, and their supporters in school and public libraries to speak to citizens and community stakeholders emphasizing the importance of following established policies and of inclusive library collections;
5. Encourages ALA members to become more involved with intellectual freedom efforts in ALA, to act as liaison between other ALA groups and IFRT and IFC, to always report challenges to the Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) in support of accurate statistics, to donate to the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund supporting library workers who are

facing financial difficulties for their support of intellectual freedom, and to join the Freedom to Read Foundation

6. Commits to speaking with one voice across the Association

[\(See "Policy Reference File:" Resolution to Support School and Youth Services Librarians Facing Increased Intellectual Freedom Challenges, Adopted, March 10, 2022\)](#)

B.2.2 Freedom to View

The American Library Association endorses Freedom to View, a statement of the American Film and Video Association.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Freedom to View, revised 1990; 1989-90 CD #61.5. - PDF, 2 pgs\)](#)

B.2.3 Freedom to Read

The American Library Association endorses Freedom to Read, a joint statement by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers. Adopted 1953, revised 1972, 1991, 2000, and 2004.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Freedom to Read: 2003-04 ALA CD#19.11 - PDF, 17 pgs\)](#)

B.2.3.1 Linguistic Pluralism

The American Library Association opposes all language laws, legislation, and regulations which restrict the rights of citizens who speak and read languages other than English, and those language laws, legislation, and regulations which abridge pluralism and diversity in library collections and services. The Association works with state associations and other agencies in devising ways to counteract restrictions arising from existing language laws and regulations and encourages and supports the provision of library resources and services in the languages in common use in each community in the United States.

B.2.4 Governmental Intimidation

The American Library Association opposes any use of governmental prerogatives that lead to the intimidation of individuals or groups and discourages them from exercising the right of free expression as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. ALA encourages resistance to such abuse of governmental power and supports those against whom such governmental power has been employed.

B.2.5 Support of Academic Freedom

The American Library Association reaffirms the principles of academic freedom embodied in the American Association of University Professors' "Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure" (1940) and opposes any legislation or codification of documents (e.g. the "Academic Bill of Rights" (ABOR)) that undermine academic or intellectual freedom, chill free speech, and/or otherwise interfere with the academic community's well-established norms and values of scholarship and educational excellence.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Resolution in Support of Academic Freedom 2005-2006 ALA CD 36 - PDF, 9 pgs\).](#)

B.2.6 Shield Laws

The American Library Association supports the enactment by Congress of a broad and effective federal shield law. The Association exhorts its chapters to work vigorously for the enactment of broad and effective shield laws in every state.

B.2.7 Loyalty Oaths

The American Library Association protests conditions of employment predicated on inquiries into library employees’ thoughts, reading matter, associates, or memberships in organizations. The Association also protests compulsory affirmations of allegiance as a condition of employment in libraries and calls on libraries not to impose loyalty tests or oaths as conditions of employment.

B.2.8 Destruction of Libraries

The American Library Association deplores the destruction of libraries, library collections and property, and the disruption of the educational process by that act, whether it be done by individuals or groups of individuals and whether it be in the name of honest dissent, the desire to control or limit thought or ideas, or for any other purpose.

B.2.9 Libraries: An American Value

Libraries in America are cornerstones of the communities they serve. Free access to the books, ideas, resources, and information in America’s libraries is imperative for education, employment, enjoyment, and self-government.

Libraries are a legacy to each generation, offering the heritage of the past and the promise of the future. To ensure that libraries flourish and have the freedom to promote and protect the public good in the 21st century, we believe certain principles must be guaranteed.

To that end, we affirm this contract with the people we serve:

- We defend the constitutional rights of all individuals, including children and teenagers, to use the library’s resources and services;
- We value our nation’s diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve;
- We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children’s use of the library and its resources and services;
- We connect people and ideas by helping each person select and effectively use the library’s resources; We protect each individual’s privacy and confidentiality in the use of library resources and services; We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services;

- We celebrate and preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions and ideas, so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners – informed, literate, educated, and culturally enriched.
- Change is constant, but these principles transcend change and endure in a dynamic technological, social, and political environment.
- By embracing these principles, libraries in the United States can contribute to a future that values and protects freedom of speech in a world that celebrates both our similarities and our differences, respects individuals and their beliefs, and holds all persons truly equal and free.

B.2.10 Violence in the Media: A Joint Statement

The American Library Association endorses Violence in the Media: A Joint Statement, a statement of the Association of American Publishers, Inc.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Violence in the Media: A Joint Statement: 2000-2001 CD #19.3 - PDF, 6 pgs\)](#)

B.2.11 Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Technology and Privacy Principles

All businesses, organizations, libraries, educational institutions, and non-profits that buy, sell, loan, or otherwise make available books and other content to the public utilizing RFID technologies shall:

1. Implement and enforce an up-to-date organizational privacy policy that gives notice and full disclosure as to the use, terms of use, and any change in the terms of use for data collected via new technologies and processes, including RFID.
2. Ensure that no personal information is recorded on RFID tags, which, however, may contain a variety of transactional data.
3. Protect data by reasonable security safeguards against interpretation by an unauthorized third party.
4. Comply with relevant federal, state, and local laws as well as industry best practices and policies.
5. Ensure that the four principles outlined above must be verifiable by an independent audit.

Adopted 2005. [\(See “Policy Reference File”: Resolution on Radio Frequency Identification \(RFID\) Technology and Privacy Principles: 2004-05 CD#19.1 - PDF, 6 pgs\)](#)

B.2.12 Threats to Library Materials Related to Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual Orientation

The American Library Association supports the inclusion in library collections of materials that reflect the diversity of our society, including those related to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. ALA encourages all American Library Association chapters to take active stands against all legislative or other government attempts to proscribe materials related to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression; and encourages all libraries to acquire and make available materials representative of all the people in our society.

Adopted 2005, Amended 2009, 2010. ([See "Policy Reference File": Resolution on Threats to Library Materials Related to Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual Orientation, 2004-2005 ALA CD#57](#))

B.3. Diversity

The American Library Association (ALA) promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the ongoing need to increase awareness of and responsiveness to the diversity of the communities we serve. ALA recognizes the critical need for access to library and information resources, services, and technologies by all people, especially those who may experience language or literacy-related barriers; economic distress; cultural or social isolation; physical or attitudinal barriers; racism; discrimination on the basis of appearance, ethnicity, immigrant status, religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression; or barriers to equal education, employment, and housing.

Libraries can and should play a crucial role in empowering diverse populations for full participation in a democratic society. In order to accomplish this, however, libraries must utilize multivariate resources and strategies. In the library workforce, concrete programs of recruitment, training, development, advancement and promotion are needed in order to increase and retain diverse library personnel who are reflective of the society we serve. Within the American Library Association and in the services and operations of libraries, efforts to include diversity in programs, activities, services, professional literature, products and continuing education must be ongoing and encouraged.

B.3.1 Policy Objectives

The American Library Association will implement these objectives by:

1. Promoting the removal of all barriers to libraries and information services.
2. Promoting the publication, development, and purchase of materials, resources and exhibits that present positive role models from diverse populations.
3. Promoting full funding for existing legislative programs in support of equal education and employment, and exploring alternative funding sources for scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships in order to attract individuals from diverse backgrounds into librarianship.
4. Promoting training opportunities for library personnel that will give them the skills needed to both provide effective services to diverse populations and to raise funds to enhance library services for diverse communities.

5. Promoting the incorporation of programs and services designed for diverse populations into the budgets of all types of libraries, rather than supporting these activities solely from “soft monies” such as private grants or federal monies.
6. Promoting adequate funding of library personnel, resources, facilities and equipment for the provision of equitable library services to diverse populations.
7. Promoting supplemental support for library resources for diverse communities by urging local, state, and federal government, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.
8. Promoting public awareness of the importance of library resources and services among all segments of society, especially in diverse communities.
9. Promoting the creation of output measures through the encouragement of community needs assessment.
10. Promoting the career advancement of diverse personnel by providing increased professional and leadership development opportunities.

[\(See 1.3-A and “Policy Reference File”: Equity at Issue \[1985-1986 CD #30\] adopted by Council June 1986. - PDF, 7 pgs\)](#)

B.3.1.1 DEI Scorecard

The DEI Scorecard for Library and Information Organizations, developed by the ALA Committee on Diversity, is an evaluative tool that centers accountability and transparency in determining organizational effectiveness in diversity, equity, and inclusion in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of people of color. Additionally, the Scorecard includes areas that impact these factors such as training, budgeting, and data practices. The Scorecard is designed to help administrators of information organizations assess their current practices in five core areas to produce actionable data for decision making and enacting a robust and sustainable commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice. The Scorecard is in alignment with ALA’s Core Values of Librarianship and ACRL’s commitment to diversity as outlined in Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries. During the 2021-22 year we have branched out into working groups, but our primary goal is pushing the use of the Equity Scorecard to ensure effective DEI practices in our area. The primary goal of the DEI Scorecard is to ensure effective diversity practices within the field of librarianship. While this field is growing with more diversity, the DEI scorecard centers on ensuring the best practices to create fair and equitable practices to increase diversity. The overall goal of the DEI Scorecard is to ultimately assist with bringing in diverse individuals to assist with expanding the field of librarianship with new thoughts, strategies, techniques, and perspectives that will expand and help the field grow.

[\(See “Policy Reference File: Resolution to use DEI Scorecard as a primary means for ALA’s measures for DEI, ALA CD#14, adopted by Council January 2022\)](#)

B.3.2 Combating Racism

Since 1936, the American Library Association has been actively engaged in combating any and all attitudes, behavior, services or programs which amount to the exclusion or restriction of a targeted group of people based on a designation of race, skin color, ethnic origin or descent.

ALA also recognizes that institutionalized inequities based on race are embedded into our society and are reinforced through social institutions and further perpetuated by policies, practices, behaviors, traditions, and structures. And, since libraries are a microcosm of the larger society and play an important and unique role in the communities they serve, they must seek to provide an environment free of racism, where all are treated with respect and dignity.

B.3.2.1 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) efforts in AASL While Addressing Historical Effects of Racism

1. Acknowledges the American Association of School Librarians' past actions and inactions that have harmed members of the profession;
2. Apologizes to Black school librarian for wrongs committed against them and for AASL's inactions on behalf of segregated school libraries and school library state associations;
3. Apologizes to all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) school librarians for AASL's part in historical racism and segregation in the school librarian profession;
4. Commits to promoting diversity in school librarianship in undergraduate and graduate programs and at school recruitment fairs;
5. Commits to ensuring a diverse and inclusive membership by recruiting, welcoming and encouraging BIPOC school librarians to consider leadership opportunities within ALA and AASL;
6. Commits to apply and prioritizing an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion lens in all aspects of the greater work of AASL and ALA;
7. Commits to sustaining a more diverse and inclusive leadership within ALA an AASL in terms of ethnicity, gender, and ability representation;
8. Communicates and aligns all EDI initiatives throughout AASL, ALA (in response to the newly adopted DEI scorecard,) and the profession;
9. Creates opportunities for collaboration with ALA divisions, ALA chapters, AASL chapter, ALA Roundtables and National Affiliates of Librarians of Color (NALCO) to create a stronger voices of our profession

[\(See "Policy Reference File:" Resolution to Promote Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) efforts in AASL While Addressing Historical Effects of Racism, Adopted by Council March 2022\)](#)

B.3.3 Combating Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination

The American Library Association actively commits its programs and resources to those efforts that combat prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against individuals and groups in the library profession and in library user populations on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, creed, color, religious background, national origin, language of origin or disability. Nothing in the Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination authorizes censoring, expurgation, or restrictive labeling of materials. Actions and programs to raise the awareness of library users to any problem or condition would not be in conflict with the Library Bill of Rights when they are free of any element of advocacy. Both documents respect the rights of all who use libraries to do so freely and without being subjected to pressure or censorship from within the institution.

Furthermore, ALA believes that the struggle against racism, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination is a continuous effort and must extend throughout its membership.

Specifically, the American Library Association and libraries will:

1. Seek to facilitate equitable participation of all people within decision-making processes in the Association and will strive to create an environment where all are welcome and where diversity is a collective goal.
2. Encourage its membership, libraries, vendors and stakeholders to implement anti-racism policies that outline the organization's expectations of its participants, staff and members.
3. Support anti-racism work within the broader society by monitoring, evaluating and advocating for human rights and equity legislation, regulations, policy and practice.

Thus, the American Library Association will endeavor to ensure full representation of all racial groups and have this reflected in its policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in its relations with staff, members, stakeholders, and the community at large, thereby reaffirming its commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and mutual respect for all human beings.

[\(See "Policy Reference File" for full Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination, a revision of the Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness.\)](#)

B.3.4 Native American Themes

ALA and its divisions are encouraged to consult with the American Indian Library Association before using or creating Native American themed illustrations, graphics, programs, or publicity.

B.3.5 Goals for Inclusive and Culturally Competent Library and Information Services

Cultural competency is defined as the acceptance and respect for diversity, continuing self-assessment regarding culture, and the ongoing development of knowledge, resources, and service models that work towards effectively meeting the needs of diverse populations. Cultural competence is critical to the equitable provision of library and information services; therefore, the American Library Association urges library personnel to commit themselves to the following guidelines.

1. To ensure equitable services to every community member or group, training and ongoing education that promote awareness of and sensitivity to diversity must be stressed for all library personnel.
2. Care must be taken to acquire and provide materials that meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of diverse communities.
3. Efforts to identify and eliminate cultural, economic, literacy-related, linguistic, physical, technological, or perceptual barriers that limit access to library and information resources must be prioritized and ongoing.
4. The creation of library services and delivery operations, which will ensure rapid access to information in a manner reflective of the communities they serve.
5. A diverse workforce is essential to the provision of competent library services. A concerted effort must be undertaken to recruit and retain diverse personnel at every level of the library workforce. Opportunities for career advancement must also be available to these individuals.
6. To ensure the development and enhancement of library services to diverse populations, library personnel from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds must be encouraged to take active roles in the American Library Association and other professional library organizations.

B.3.6 Library and Information Studies Education to Meet the Needs of a Diverse Society

The American Library Association, through the Committee on Accreditation, will encourage graduate programs in library and information studies seeking accreditation or re-accreditation to ensure that their student bodies, faculties, and curricular effect the diverse histories and information needs of all people in the United States. Collaboration between these programs and local libraries and community-based organizations serving diverse populations is to be particularly encouraged.

B.3.7 Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Personnel

In order to ensure that libraries are both reflective of and relevant to the communities they serve, the American Library Association encourages and supports recruitment and continuing education initiatives that facilitate the hiring and promotion of a diverse workforce in libraries of all types and at all organizational levels.

B.3.8 Leadership Development and Advancement

The American Library Association encourages libraries and library professional organizations to develop internal and collaborative initiatives that will assist library personnel from diverse backgrounds in identifying and preparing for career advancement and management opportunities. Such continuing education programs and learning modules may promote the development of skills necessary for leadership in 21st century information environments.

1. Libraries will be encouraged to provide information, training, and skill development activities to enhance leadership capabilities for diverse populations in the library profession.
2. ALA will assist in identifying proven leaders willing to participate as mentors to provide feedback, encouragement, and advice regarding continuing education, professional development, and career advancement opportunities for interested members.

3. Opportunities for learning and strengthening leadership skills will be available as workshops and conference programs in all sectors of the Association. Program developers will acknowledge the concerns of diverse populations and take this into consideration when developing these programs, by involving the appropriate representation in program planning and advertising.
4. Diversity initiatives will include leadership development components to prepare the leaders of tomorrow.

B.4. Equity and Access

B.4.1 Equal Rights Amendment Legislation

The American Library Association supports the equality of women both in the profession and in society at large. To this end the Association (a) supports implementation of the national plan of action as amended at the National Women's Conference in Houston in November 1977; (b) supports through employment practices policy the equal treatment of women in the work place; (c) supports the elimination of sex--stereotyping terminology through avoiding the use of such terminology in ALA publications and (e) supports adherence to affirmative action policies through its support of the enforcement of such policies in its library school accreditation standards and guidelines.

B.4.2 Free Access to Information

The American Library Association asserts that the charging of fees and levies for information services, including those services utilizing the latest information technology, is discriminatory in publicly supported institutions providing library and information services.

The American Library Association shall seek to make it possible for library and information service agencies which receive their major support from public funds to provide service to all people without additional fees and to utilize the latest technological developments to insure the best possible access to information, and ALA will actively promote its position on equal access to information.

B.4.3 Bibliographic Data Bases

The American Library Association supports open access to information, including the information contained in online data bases, and encourages data base providers and other organizations to minimize restrictions placed on their members' use of bibliographic records maintained in their online data bases.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": 1984-1985 CD #41 - PDF, 16 pgs\)](#)

B.4.4 Funding for Community Access Cable Programming

Libraries should work cooperatively with other groups in promoting the widest possible access to communications and information, including community access cable casting. The American Library Association, in order to support stable sources of funding for community access channels, endorses the following principles articulated by Open Channel and Publicable, two organizations with knowledge and experience in community access cablecasting:

1. That a portion of cable revenues be designated to provide financial and technical assistance for community access programming.
2. That this support be sufficient to promote genuine access.
3. That this assistance increase as the cable operator's revenue increases.
4. That the specific structures, funding formulas, and monitoring arrangements be left to the local community.

B.4.5 Trade Publishers Discounts

The American Library Association supports the concept of equal discounts on equal volume orders for all buyers.

B.4.6 Electronic Environment

B.4.6.1 Principles for the Networked World

Libraries are crucial to assuring that society benefits from the promises of technology but are increasingly challenged by a number of critical policy debates. There are seven policy areas intrinsic to libraries, technology, and the role that libraries play in connecting people to an increasingly networked world. These specific areas are:

- intellectual freedom, the right to access and express ideas;
- privacy, the freedom to choose the degree to which personal information is made available;
- equitable access to information;
- intellectual property;
- infrastructure, physical and social architectures within the context of the networked world;
- content, including public and government information; and
- information literacy, the ability to access and effectively participate in the networked world.

By establishing a baseline for ongoing policy discussions and decisions, the fundamental public policy requirements needed to support the ability of libraries to serve the public's information needs are well defined.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Principles for the Networked World: 2001-2002 CD 20.2 - PDF, 8 pgs\)](#)

B.4.6.2 Principles for Digitized Content

The accelerating mass digitization of collections in libraries and cultural heritage institutions demands a framework of principles and a body of policy to guide decision-making and to enable values-driven choices. The principles for the digitization of content will provoke a review of American Library Association policies that address the creation, access, use and preservation of digital materials and that require revision, enhancement and creation. This is critical to the advancement of ALA's leadership role in the information society and to the support provided to members. This will also sustain the relevance and impact of libraries and librarians in their communities.

1. Values

Digital collections are as important to libraries as all other types of collections. The policies of the Association apply fully to digital collections, including values such as intellectual freedom, commitment to access, respect for confidentiality and privacy, freedom of information, service for the public good, and professionalism.

Digital content must be given the same consideration as other library materials when conducting collection development, organization and cataloging of works, reference services, and preservation.

Digital content must be provided in various and alternative ways to meet the unique needs and circumstances of all people.

Equitable access to digital library materials is ensured through maximum accessibility, ubiquity, sustainability, and barrier-free access

2. Intellectual Property Rights

Access to and use of digital content that is protected by copyright should be provided in a fair and equitable manner, balancing the rights and privileges of users, creators, and owners. Rights management policies and procedures must promote the advancement and sharing of knowledge, innovation, and creativity.

3. Sustainable Collections

A library's digital collections and associated activities must be sustainable.

Sustainability requires secure and ongoing funding, technology solutions that are appropriate to the longevity of the cultural record, and long-term management capabilities.

4. Collaboration

Collaboration enables the building of collections that support research, scholarship and information needs of diverse communities. Collaboration will require strong organizational support and promotion by library and cultural heritage practitioners, their institutions, and their associations.

5. Advocacy

A library's digital programs and associated activities require ongoing communication for its success. The library and cultural heritage communities must reach out to the public, to government, and to funding institutions with a clear and compelling message regarding the role of digital libraries and collections.

6. *International Scope*

Digital collections increasingly serve an international audience and are part of a global information infrastructure that is not limited by geography. The library and cultural heritage communities must understand the origination of materials in digital collections, respect the ownership of these materials, and be attentive to issues surrounding cultural asset exploitation and repatriation. Digital collections and services must be developed with goals of technical and social interoperability in the international information sphere.

7. *Continuous learning*

Digital collections are developed and sustained by an educated workforce. Members of the library and cultural heritage professions must engage in ongoing learning. They must explore new technology, work with new partners, and reach new audiences.

8. *Preservation*

Digital resources must receive appropriate preservation. Preservation activities require the development of standards, best practices, and sustainable funding models to support long-term commitment to digital resources.

9. *Importance of Standards*

Digital collections must be built upon standards and best practices that maximize their usefulness. Such standards and best practices must serve the broadest community of users, including those with disabilities, support sustainable access and use over time, and provide user functionality that promotes the core library values.

Preference should be given to open standards and non-proprietary technologies that support long-term sustainability.

B.4.7 Support of Open Educational Resource

Open educational resources as defined by UNESCO are teaching, learning and research materials that are in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation, and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions. OER supports equitable access to education by removing financial barriers related to the purchase or rental of required textbooks and other teaching and learning resources. Library workers and organizations have a long history of supporting open scholarship and other aspects of open education through the development of statements and toolkits. Therefore, the ALA

- affirms that open educational resources can be as effective, authoritative, and of academically rigorous quality as traditionally published learning materials,
- encourages library workers to support initiatives that promote the creation, discovery, dissemination, awareness, and preservation of open educational resources, and
- encourages library workers to advocate for initiatives at all levels of government that support open educational resources.

[\(See “Policy Reference File: Resolution in Support of Open Educational Resources”\)](#)

B.5. Libraries and the Public Good

B.5.1 Nominations to the Posts of Librarian of Congress and of Archivist of the United States

The privilege of reviewing nominations made by the President of the United States to the highest government posts in their respective professions is one accorded the major national professional organizations. The American Library Association strongly supports the extension of a similar privilege to ALA, enabling it to review the recommendations and nominations for the positions of Librarian of Congress and of Archivist of the United States whenever new appointments to those posts are under consideration. ("Policy Reference File": July 1975 CD #58, 1986-1987 CD #18 - PDF, 8 pgs)

B.5.2 Financing of Libraries

In order to assist libraries facing severe economic problems resulting from inflation, the American Library Association will engage in a broad media information program to make the public aware of the benefits to be gained through tax support of libraries and will simultaneously explore public financing alternatives for libraries facing financial problems.

B.5.5 Environmental Issues

The American Library Association urges librarians and library governing boards to collect and provide information on the condition of our Earth, its air, ground, water, and living organisms from all available sources. ("Policy Reference File": 1989-1990 CD #48 - PDF, 1 pg)

B.5.6 Federal Legislative Policy

The Federal Government's Role in Library and Information Services **

A democratic society depends on the Federal government's ensuring the right of access for all its citizens to a comprehensive range of knowledge and variety of communications media. Through declaration of policy, by legislation, regulation, and the appropriation of financial support, the Executive Branch and the Congress of the United States have responded to requests for a federal role in support of libraries as vital institutions serving the needs and well-being of individuals and the nation. Thus, while most libraries are regional and local institutions, under local, state, or private control, the Federal government plays an essential role in helping ensure access to resources and services for all.

Open government is vital to a democracy. Federal policy makers must continue to recognize the unique role of libraries, their delivery systems, and their community base in the dissemination of information to the public. The Federal government must continue to assume special responsibility to ensure that information produced or funded by the government is readily accessible to the people through the nation's libraries within the constraints of national security, privacy, efficient decision-making, and costs.

The Federal government must also provide leadership in the development and application of new technologies and services. Federal action stimulates local pilot programs for innovative

services designed for specific user groups, programs that require specialized materials and technology, and education programs for library personnel.

Emerging technologies and advancements in telecommunications are altering the profile of library service. The Federal government initiates and facilitates cooperation, encourages resource sharing among all types of libraries, and establishes standards and practices for development of quality library networks that extend beyond state and national boundaries. The Department of Education through its mandate to assist libraries across the country raises standards of service and develops new programs to benefit library users. The Department not only administers important grant programs to public libraries, elementary and secondary school library media centers, and academic and research libraries, but also provides leadership, technical assistance, and dissemination of information. These functions must continue.

The Federal government also plays a critical role in the compilation and timely dissemination of statistical information, including data about libraries, information essential to long-range planning, and library development.

In an age of international communication and interchange of resources, the Federal government is pivotal in the development of libraries as institutions that transcend national boundaries. International protocols, participation in international organizations, transnational data flow and monetary policies are within the domain of the Federal government and all affect libraries throughout the world. The Federal role complements, without supplanting, the basic responsibilities of state and local governments and institutions to assure quality library and information service.

***The ALA Federal Legislative Policy, the product of an on-going revision, was adopted by Council in January 1993. The entire text, from which the preceding is taken, is available online (PDF - 16 pgs), or may be ordered for free from the ALA Washington Office, 1615 New Hampshire Ave NW, 1st Floor, Washington DC 20009-2520, Phone: 202-628-8410, Toll Free Number: 1-800-941-8478.*

Sections of the ALA Federal Legislative Policy are:

- *The Federal Government's Role in Library and Information Services.*
- *Access to Information: Public Access to Federal Information: Public Access to Federal Information; Depository Libraries; Sale of Government Information; Access to Unpublished and Classified Government Information; Equal Access to Library Services.*
- *Intellectual Freedom.*
- *Federal Policies: Postal Rates and Quality of Postal Service; Statistics; Taxation; Copyright; Preservation of Library Materials.*
- *Federal Programs: Federal Libraries: A National Resource; Library of Congress; Other National Libraries; Federal Libraries; Bibliographic and Reference Services; National Commission on Libraries and Information Science; U.S. Department of Education; National Archives and Records Administration; National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities; Federal Support for State Library Agencies; Federal Aid to Libraries,*

Systems, Education Agencies and Institutions; School Library Media Centers; Technical, Professional and Vocational Institution Libraries; College and Research Libraries; Public Libraries; Youth Services; Services to People in Institutions; Federal Support for Library Facilities.

- *Information Technologies*: National Library and Information Networks; Technical Standards; Telecommunications and Broadcast Media.
- *Education, Research, and Personnel Education*: Education; Research; Personnel.
- *White House Conference on Library and Information Services*.
- *Equal Rights Amendment*.
- *International Programs*: United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); International Exchange of Persons; International Flow of Publications; Florence Agreement; United States Libraries and Information Centers Abroad; International Copyright; International Postal Policy; Economic and Educational Development Programs.
- *Existing Federal Laws Affecting Librarians, Libraries and Their Users*.

B.6. International Relations

B.6.1 Policy Objectives

The ALA Charter states that the Association was formed “for the purpose of promoting library interest throughout the world by exchanging views, reaching conclusions and inducing cooperation in all departments of bibliothecal science and economy.”The commitment in the area of international relations is carried out, in part, through the activities and programs of ALA’s International Relations Office. The American Library Association establishes these objectives and responsibilities for its international relations programs:

1. To encourage the exchange, dissemination, and access to information and the unrestricted flow of library materials in all formats throughout the world (ALA Key Action Area: Equitable Access to Information and Library Services).
2. To promote and support human rights and intellectual freedom worldwide (ALA Key Action Area: Intellectual Freedom; ALA Key Action Area: Diversity)
3. To foster, promote, support and participate in the development of international standards relating to library and information services, including informational tools and technologies (ALA Key Action Area: Transforming Libraries).
4. To promote legislation and treaties that will strengthen library, information and telecommunications services worldwide (ALA Key Action Area: Transforming Libraries).
5. To encourage involvement of librarians, information specialists, and other library personnel in international library activities and in the development of solutions to library service problems that span national boundaries (ALA Key Action Area: Transforming Libraries).
6. To promote the education of librarians, information specialists, and other library personnel in such ways that they are knowledgeable about librarianship in the international context (ALA Key Action Area: Education and Lifelong Learning).

7. To promote public awareness of the importance of the role of librarians, libraries, and information services in national and international development (ALA Key Action Area: Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession).

[\(See "Policy Reference File" for full text, including implementation: 1989-1990 CD #14 - PDF, 30 pgs\)](#)

B.6.2 Human Rights and Freedom of Expression

B.6.2.1 Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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 regardless of frontiers.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": 1990-1991CD#24and CD #76 - PDF, 3 pgs\)](#)

B.6.2.2 Abridgment of the Rights of Freedom of Foreign Nationals

Threats to the freedom of expression of any person become threats to the freedom of all; therefore, ALA adopts as policy the principles of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The Association will address the grievances of foreign nationals where the infringement of their rights of free expression is clearly a matter in which all free people should show concern. Resolutions or other documents attesting to such grievances will be brought to the attention of the Executive Board and Council by the ALA International Relations Committee.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Policy on Abridgment of the Rights of Freedom of Foreign Nationals and Freedom of Expression of Foreign Nationals; Abridgment of Human Rights in South Africa: 1985- 1986 CD #58 - PDF, 19 pgs\)](#)

B.6.2.3 ALA and IFLA

The ALA shall work with other associations and institutions that belong to IFLA to develop positions and programmatic plans of action in support of human rights and freedom of expression. The president or the member officially representing the Association at IFLA conferences shall be directed to support and carry them out; and, in the absence of such specific direction, the president or the member officially representing the Association at IFLA conferences is empowered to vote on new IFLA resolutions related to human rights and freedom. Their votes shall be guided by ALA's adoption of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the good of the Association.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": 1996-1997 CD #18.4 - PDF, 3 pgs\)](#)

B.6.3 Selection of Consultants to Serve Abroad

The American Library Association, serving the public interest, assigns a high priority to the development of libraries, librarianship, and information services throughout the world. ALA

reaffirms its continuing desire to foster international library development in all countries and, in return, hopes to continue to learn from its participation.

In response to requests for assistance from abroad, ALA must be able to recommend librarians and information specialists who are both highly qualified and sensitive to cultural and national differences. ALA will therefore apply its approved guidelines and criteria in recommending, nominating, and selecting international consultants.

[\(See "Policy Reference File" for full text and guidelines and criteria - PDF, 2 pgs\)](#)

B.6.4 Rights of Librarians and Library Workers to Travel

The American Library Association affirms and supports the rights of librarians and library workers in or from the U.S. to travel to all countries in order to attend and participate in conferences, to purchase books and other library materials, to meet and develop working relationships with librarians, to develop gift and exchange programs, to pursue and establish ties with library and other professional associations and libraries, and to conduct educational and professional library-related activities. In addition, ALA affirms and supports the rights of librarians and library workers from outside the U.S. to travel to the U.S. and not be prohibited or impeded by U.S. government policies, to attend and participate in conferences, to purchase books and other library materials, to meet and develop working relationships with librarians and library staff, to develop gift and exchange programs, to pursue and establish ties with library and other professional associations and libraries, and to conduct educational and professional library-related activities.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Resolution on Rights of Librarians and Library Workers to Travel: 2005-2006 ALA CD# 18.2\)](#)

B.7. Library Education

B.7.1 Graduate Programs in Library and Information Studies

The American Library Association supports the provision of library services by professionally qualified personnel who have been educated in graduate programs within institutions of higher education. It is of vital importance that there be professional education available to meet the social needs and goals of library services. Therefore, the American Library Association supports the development and continuance of high quality graduate programs in library and information studies (LIS) of the quality, scope and availability necessary to prepare individuals in the broad profession of information dissemination.

The American Library Association supports education for the preparation of professionals in the field of library and information studies (LIS) as a university program at the master's level. LIS programs are central to a discipline that will continue to concern itself with the development of information literate citizens and to fill a necessary role in the information society of the next century. LIS education is currently challenged by dynamic changes in the society it serves and prepares students for a rapidly growing information profession that can extend well beyond the customarily defined parameters of libraries. It is undergirded by a

growing research base that is diverse and draws upon a broad range of disciplines, and its faculty members are expected to translate their knowledge into improved library and information services.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: 1992-1993CD#13.1- PDF, 4 pgs\)](#)

B.7.2 Affirmative Action

The American Library Association encourages ALA-accredited programs of library and information studies to continue to implement their affirmative action programs in admissions and in employment in the wake of the Bakke case decision by the Supreme Court.

(See “Goals for Inclusive and Culturally Competent Library and Information Services” [B.3.5] , “Standards of Accreditation in Library Education: Appeals Procedure”[B.7.4])

B.7.3 Continuing Education

The American Library Association is committed to a national comprehensive long-range plan for continuing education to improve the quality of library service with appropriate support from ALA funds. Standards for libraries and library education and guidelines for services developed by any ALA unit should include a significant continuing education component where appropriate.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Continuing Education.- PDF, 2 pgs\)](#)

B.7.4 Standards of Accreditation in Library Education: Appeals Procedure

A graduate program in library and information studies may file a written appeal against any accreditation decision, by the Committee on Accreditation, which does not result in accreditation. Details regarding the appeals procedure shall be supplied to all programs participating in the accreditation process.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Executive Board Appeal Procedure - PDF, 31 pgs\)](#)

B.8. Services and Responsibilities of Libraries

B.8.1 Literacy

B.8.1.1 Literacy and State Library Agencies

The American Library Association supports the achievement of national literacy through educational activities utilizing the historical and cultural experience of libraries and librarians.

The American Library Association urges state library agencies to address the problems of illiteracy and give high priority to solutions in their short- and long-range plans for library development and use of federal and state funds.

B.8.1.2 Literacy and the Role of Libraries

The American Library Association reaffirms and supports the principle that lifelong literacy is a basic right for all individuals in our society and is essential to the welfare of the nation. ALA advocates the achievement of national literacy through educational activities utilizing the historical and cultural experiences of libraries and librarians.

ALA confirms that libraries of all types, as appropriate to their mission, have the responsibility to make literacy a high priority in planning and budgeting for library services. As pioneer and equal partners in the national literacy movement, libraries will continue to take a strong leadership role and must join with other literacy providers to urge local, state, federal, and private agencies to promote active development of literacy on a policy level and to support funding of the literacy services in libraries.

B.8.2 Service to Detention Facilities and Jails

The American Library Association encourages public libraries and systems to extend their services to residents of jails and other detention facilities within their taxing areas. ALA instructs its Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies in cooperation with the Public Library Association, The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, and other interested units to design a plan to assist public libraries in extending their services to local jails and detention facilities.

B.8.3 Preservation

B.8.3.1 Definition of Digital Preservation and the Revised Preservation Policy

Digital preservation combines policies, strategies and actions to ensure the accurate rendering of authenticated content over time, regardless of the challenges of media failure and technological change. Digital preservation applies to both born digital and reformatted content.

Publishers and distributors of content in digital form must address the usability and longevity of their electronic works. The Association encourages publishers to provide metadata that will facilitate the life cycle management of works in digital formats and to deposit digital works in repositories that provide for the long-term persistence and usability of digital content. The Association will work with the publishers to develop guidelines on digital preservation to help ensure that such information will not be lost when publishers can no longer retain and disseminate it. The Association encourages research on metadata, software, operating systems, and life cycle management techniques that may affect the preservation of digital works.

ALA affirms that the preservation of library resources protects the public's right to the free flow of information as embodied in the First Amendment to the Constitution and the *Library Bill of Rights*.

The Association supports the preservation of information disseminated and published in all media and formats. The Association affirms that the preservation of information content and information resources are central to libraries and librarianship.

The Association will actively support its divisions and other organizations in developing preservation guidelines and best practices that may serve as catalysts for official national and international standards.

It is the Association's official position that publishers, information distributors and manufacturers have an obligation and responsibility to libraries and to the public to report appropriate information about the usability, durability and longevity of media. The Association strongly urges publishers to use paper and other media that meet standards promulgated by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the International Standards Organization (ISO) for all publications of enduring value. Publishers should include a statement of compliance on the verso of the title page of a book or the masthead or copyright area of a periodical, and in catalogs, advertising, and bibliographic references.

The Association will engage in active education and public relations efforts to develop, promote, and publicize standards for the usability, durability, and longevity of information media; to engage both librarians and information producers in the preservation process; and to produce educational materials devoted to promoting the longevity of information resources. The federal government must provide leadership in developing an expansive and inclusive national preservation policy. The Association urges the federal and state government to take responsibility for the longevity of information that it publishes on paper, in microform, and in digital formats.

The Association, through its ALA Washington Office and its Legislation Agenda, will strongly support the efforts of librarians to increase Federal and state government funding for preservation programs.

The preservation of primary source documents is integral to our right to know about and understand ourselves and the communities in which we live. Libraries have an obligation (a) to inform donors, users, administrators, and local officials about the ephemeral nature of primary source materials, (b) to promote strategies for the proper care, handling, and storage of these materials, and (c) to recommend the use of durable media and methods of documentation.

[\(See "Policy Reference File" 2007-2008 CD#55, Resolution Adopting the Definition of Digital Preservation and the Revised Preservation Policy for the American Library Association.\)](#)

B.8.3.2 Recycled Paper

The American Library Association urges all publishers, including the government, to use recycled paper for publications normally issued on nonpermanent paper and urges librarians to dispose of discarded paper so that it is available for recycling.

B.8.4 School Library Media Programs

B.8.4.1 Instruction in the Role of Libraries in Teacher Education

The American Library Association and the American Association of School Librarians Division recommend instruction in the role of libraries and the use of information resources as an integral part of all teacher education programs.

B.8.4.2 The School Library Media Program

The purpose of the library media program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. Within the program, the school library media specialist serves as an information specialist, teacher, and instructional consultant.

B.8.4.3 School Library Media Programs: Materials Selection Policy Statements

The American Library Association recommends that every school district have a written materials selection policy-formally adopted by the school board that includes criteria and procedures for the selection and reconsideration of resources, following the principles of the Library Bill of Rights. The Association recommends that each school building have its own collection development plan that supplements the district selection policy and provides specific guidelines for developing the school's collection.

B.8.5 Confidentiality of Library Records

B.8.5.1 The Rights of Library Users and the USA PATRIOT Act

The American Library Association opposes any use of governmental power to suppress the free and open exchange of knowledge and information or to intimidate individuals exercising free inquiry. All librarians, library administrators, library governing bodies, and library advocates are encouraged to educate their users, staff, and communities about the process for compliance with the USA Patriot Act and other related measures and about the dangers to individual privacy and the confidentiality of library records resulting from those measures. ([See "Policy Reference File" The USA PATRIOT Act and Related Measures That Infringe on the Rights of Library Users: 2002-2003 CD #20.1 - PDF, 8 pgs](#))

B.8.5.2 Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information about Library Users

The American Library Association strongly recommends that the responsible officers of each library, cooperative system, and consortium in the United States:

1. Formally adopt a policy which specifically recognizes its circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users with specific materials to be confidential.
2. Advise all librarians and library employees that such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power.
3. Resist the issuance or enforcement of any such process, order, or subpoena until such time as a proper showing of good cause has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Policy Concerning Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information About Library Users: 2003-04 CD#19.9 - PDF, 2 pgs\)](#)

B.8.5.2.1. Protect Library User Confidentiality in Self-Service Hold Practices

ALA urges all libraries that implement self-service holds to protect patron identity by adopting practices and procedures that conceal the library user's personally identifiable information in connection with the materials being borrowed; and, urges libraries, librarians, and the responsible bodies of ALA to work with vendors to incorporate applications into integrated library systems that enable libraries to conceal a library user's identity in a cost-effective manner. Adopted AC 2011.

(See "Policy Reference File" Resolution to Protect Library User Confidentiality in Self-Service Hold Practices: 2010-2011 ALA CD#19.3-PDF, 4 pgs.)

B.8.5.3 Immigrants' Rights to Free Public Library Access

The American Library Association in cooperation with REFORMA and other affiliates works to inform and educate public libraries and member constituents about alternate forms of identification that will encourage the use of free public library services by all immigrant populations.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Resolution in Support of Immigrants' Rights to Free Public Library Access. 2004-2005 ALA CD #65 - PDF, 1 pg\)](#)

B.8.5.4 Retention of Library Records

ALA urges all libraries to:

- limit the degree to which personally identifiable information is collected, monitored, disclosed, and distributed;
- avoid creating unnecessary records;
- limit access to personally identifiable information to staff performing authorized functions;
- dispose of library usage records containing personally identifiable information unless they are needed for the efficient and lawful operation of the library, including, but not limited to data-related logs, digital records, vendor-collected data, and system backups;
- ensure that the library work with its organization's information technology unit to ensure that library usage records processed or held by the IT unit are treated in accordance with library records policies;
- ensure that those records that must be retained are secure;
- avoid library practices and procedures that place personally identifiable information on public view;
- assure that vendor agreements guarantee library control of all data and records; and
- conduct an annual privacy audit to ensure that information processing procedures meet privacy requirements by examining how information about library users and employees is collected, stored, shared, used, and destroyed.

ALA also urges all libraries and the library community to:

- adopt or update a privacy policy protecting users' personally identifiable information;
- communicate to library users how their information is used;
- explain the limited circumstances under which personally identifiable information could be disclosed; and
- advocate that record retention laws and regulations limit retention of library usage records containing personally identifiable information to the time needed for efficient operation of the library.

B.8.5.5 Support of Immigrant Rights

ALA strongly supports the protection of each person's civil liberties, regardless of that individual's nationality, residency, or status; and that ALA opposes any legislation that infringes on the rights of anyone in the USA or its territories, citizens or otherwise, to use library resources, programs, and services on national, state, and local levels.

B.8.6 Library Services for Youth

B.8.6.1 Youth Services

The American Library Association recognizes that the future of libraries and of society itself depends upon the preparedness of youth to carry adult responsibilities for business, government, parenthood and other leadership. Children and young adults cannot fulfill their potential or that of society without high quality library opportunities through both public and school libraries. ALA is committed to the support and development of resources and services for children and young adults through both school and public libraries.

B.8.6.2 Sex Education Materials in Libraries

ALA affirms the right of youth to comprehensive, sex-related education, materials, programs, and referral services of the highest quality; affirms the active role of librarians in providing such; and urges librarians and library educators to reexamine existing policies and practices and assume a leadership role in seeing that information is available for children and adolescents, parents, and youth-serving professionals.

B.8.6.3 Selective Service Information in Libraries

Librarians should have available information on the full range of alternatives within and without the military services for those young people who are facing the prospect of conscription.

B.8.7 Instruction in the Use of Libraries

In order to assist individuals in the independent information retrieval process basic to daily living in a democratic society, the American Library Association encourages all libraries to include instruction in the use of libraries as one of the primary goals of service. Libraries of all types share the responsibility to educate users in successful information location, beginning with their childhood years and continuing the education process throughout their years of professional and personal growth.

B.8.8 Privatization of Publicly Funded Libraries

ALA affirms that publicly funded libraries should remain directly accountable to the public they serve. Therefore, the American Library Association opposes the shifting of policy making and management oversight of library services from the public to the private for-profit sector.

B.8.9 Disinformation, Media Manipulation and the Destruction of Public Information

The ALA opposes the use by government of disinformation, media manipulation, the destruction and excision of public information, and other such tactics, and ALA encourages its members to help raise public consciousness regarding the many ways in which disinformation and media manipulation are being used to mislead public opinion in all spheres of life, and encourages librarians to facilitate this awareness with collection development, library programming and public outreach that draws the public's attention to those alternative sources of information dedicated to countering and revealing the disinformation often purveyed by the mainstream media.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Resolution on Disinformation. Media Manipulation and The Destruction of Public Information. 2004-2005 ALA CD #64 - PDF, 6 pgs\)](#)

B.8.10 Addressing Poverty, Economic Inequality, and the Responsibilities of Libraries

The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the need to respond to people experiencing poverty, which include people experiencing homelessness, in the United States. Therefore, it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in supporting these communities, so they may participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to prepare library staff to identify needs and deliver relevant services to people experiencing poverty. In addition, the American Library Association (divisions, offices, and units) should be strengthened to support low-income neighborhoods and people experiencing poverty through programs, services, and resources.

B.8.10.1 Policy Objectives

The American Library Association shall implement these objectives by:

1. Promoting the removal of barriers to libraries and information services, particularly fees, and overdue charges.
2. Promoting the publication, production, purchase, and ready accessibility of print and non-print materials that focus directly on the issues of poverty, that engage people respectfully, and are practical and responsive to low-income library users and their needs.
3. Promoting full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs and services in support of people experiencing poverty and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites.
4. Promoting training opportunities for librarians and library staff to learn effective funding techniques to improve accessibility for library users experiencing poverty.
5. Acknowledging economic equity in funding by promoting the incorporation of programs, services, and resources for people experiencing poverty into regular budgets in all types of libraries, regardless of the availability of “soft money” like private or federal grants to support these programs.
6. Promoting supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations by urging local, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.
7. Promoting increased public awareness through programs, displays, bibliographies, and publicity related to libraries’ responsibilities in addressing economic barriers to service.
8. Promoting the determination of service outcomes through the active support of community needs assessments that directly involve community members who are experiencing poverty.
9. Promoting direct representation and support of community members who are experienced, or advocate for people experiencing poverty on local boards and advisory committees.
10. Promoting library staff training that raises awareness; relates to issues affecting the daily realities of people experiencing poverty; recognizes and addresses attitudinal and other barriers that hinder equal access to library services and resources.

11. Promoting networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups to develop programs and services that are useful and relevant for people experiencing poverty.
12. Promoting the implementation of expanded federal programs that acknowledge and address poverty.
13. Promoting, supporting, and facilitating local community efforts to meet the needs of all community members, especially those experiencing poverty.
14. Acknowledging the disproportionate rate at which poverty affects underserved populations, including but not limited to women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, non-Native English speakers, formerly incarcerated people, and people with disabilities.
15. Encouraging the use of respectful, inclusive and person-first language, such as “community members experiencing poverty.”
16. Encouraging a parity of library services, hours, resources, and facilities between affluent and low-income library neighborhoods.
17. Promoting an attractive and inviting environment in all libraries including low-income neighborhoods.
18. Promoting the development of collections, programs, and services to help bridge the literacy gap for non-English speakers and new readers in all libraries, including low-income neighborhoods.
19. Promoting publications, outreach, and marketing in the native language for Speakers of Other Languages in all libraries, including low-income neighborhoods.
20. Promoting the review of public conduct policies and administrative procedures to ensure they are not creating unintentional barriers to people experiencing poverty.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Library Services to the Poor, Amended by the ALA Council, January 27, 2019\)](#)

B.8.11 The Role of Libraries in Providing E-Government and Emergency Services

The American Library Association urges governments at all levels to acknowledge and support the essential role local libraries play in providing e-government and emergency response/recovery services, and to include libraries in relevant legislative or other policy actions. The American Library Association also encourages continued research documenting library needs and capacity to provide effective e-government and emergency response/recovery services, and help libraries develop best practices and train staff to deliver these essential services.

B.9 Library Personnel Practices

B.9.1 Library and Information Studies and Human Resource Utilization: A Statement of Policy

To meet the goals of library service, both professional and supportive staff are needed in libraries. Thus, the library occupation is much broader than that segment of it which is the library profession, but the library profession has responsibility for defining the training and education required for the preparation of personnel who work in libraries at any level, supportive or professional.

Skills other than those of library and information studies also have an important contribution to make to the achievement of superior library service. There should be equal recognition in both the professional and supportive ranks for those individuals whose expertise contributes to the effective performance of the library.

The title ‘Librarian’ carries with it the connotation of ‘professional’ in the sense that professional tasks are those which require a special background and education.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: ALA Library and Information Studies Education and Human Resource Utilization: A Statement of Policy 2001-2002 CD #3 - PDF, 23 pgs\).](#)

B.9.2 Librarians: Appropriate Degrees

The master’s degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association (or from a master’s level program in library and information studies accredited or recognized by the appropriate national body of another country) is the appropriate professional degree for librarians.

[\(See “Policy Reference File”: Historical Note on the Use of Terminology Pertaining to Degree Programs Accredited by the American Library Association - PDF, 4 pgs\).](#)

B.9.2.1 Academic Librarians

The master’s degree in library and information studies from a library school program accredited by the American Library Association is the appropriate terminal professional degree for academic librarians.

B.9.2.2 School Librarians

The master’s degree in library and information studies from a program accredited by the American Library Association or a master’s degree with a specialty in school librarianship from an ALA/AASL Nationally Recognized program in an educational unit accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation is the appropriate first professional degree for school librarians.

(Adopted July 11, 1988, by ALA Council; revised 2008, MW2013.)

B.9.3 Equal Employment Opportunity

The American Library Association is committed to equality of opportunity for all library employees or applicants for employment, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, individual lifestyle, or national origin: and believes that hiring individuals with disabilities in all types of libraries is consistent with good personnel and management practices.

B.9.3.1 Affirmative Action Plans

Member libraries and library schools with 15 or more staff shall formulate written affirmative action plans and shall submit these plans to HRDR for review.

B.9.3.2 Library Services for People with Disabilities

The American Library Association recognizes that people with disabilities are a large and neglected minority in the community and are severely under-represented in the library profession. Disabilities cause many personal challenges. In addition, many people with disabilities face economic inequity, illiteracy, cultural isolation, and discrimination in education, employment and the broad range of societal activities.

Libraries play a catalytic role in the lives of people with disabilities by facilitating their full participation in society. Libraries should use strategies based upon the principles of universal design to ensure that library policy, resources and services meet the needs of all people.

ALA, through its divisions, offices and units and through collaborations with outside associations and agencies, is dedicated to eradicating inequities and improving attitudes toward services and opportunities for people with disabilities.

For the purposes of this policy, “must” means “mandated by law and/or within ALA’s control” and “should” means “it is strongly recommended that libraries make every effort to . . .” Please see <http://www.ala.org/ascla/asclaissues/libraryservices> for the complete text of the policy, which includes explanatory examples.

1. The Scope of Disability Law. Providing equitable access for persons with disabilities to library facilities and services is required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, applicable state and local statutes, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).
2. Library Services. Libraries must not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and shall ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to library resources. Libraries should include persons with disabilities as participants in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of library services, programs, and facilities.
3. Facilities. The ADA requires that both architectural barriers in existing facilities and communication barriers that are structural in nature be removed as long as such removal is “readily achievable.” (i.e., easily accomplished and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.)

4. Collections. Library materials must be accessible to all patrons including people with disabilities. Materials must be available to individuals with disabilities in a variety of formats and with accommodations, as long as the modified formats and accommodations are “reasonable,” do not “fundamentally alter” the library’s services, and do not place an “undue burden” on the library. Within the framework of the library’s mission and collection policies, public, school, and academic library collections should include materials with accurate and up-to-date information on the spectrum of disabilities, disability issues, and services for people with disabilities, their families, and other concerned persons.
5. Assistive Technology. Well-planned technological solutions and access points, based on the concepts of universal design, are essential for effective use of information and other library services by all people. Libraries should work with people with disabilities, agencies, organizations and vendors to integrate assistive technology into their facilities and services to meet the needs of people with a broad range of disabilities, including learning, mobility, sensory and developmental disabilities. Library staff should be aware of how available technologies address disabilities and know how to assist all users with library technology.
6. Employment. ALA must work with employers in the public and private sectors to recruit people with disabilities into the library profession, first into library schools and then into employment at all levels within the profession. Libraries must provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities unless the library can show that the accommodations would impose an “undue hardship” on its operations. Libraries must also ensure that their policies and procedures are consistent with the ADA and other laws.
7. Library Education, Training and Professional Development. All graduate programs in library and information studies should require students to learn about accessibility issues, assistive technology, the needs of people with disabilities both as users and employees, and laws applicable to the rights of people with disabilities as they impact library services. Libraries should provide training opportunities for all library employees and volunteers in order to sensitize them to issues affecting people with disabilities and to teach effective techniques for providing services for users with disabilities and for working with colleagues with disabilities.
8. ALA Conferences. ALA conferences held at facilities that are “public accommodations” (e.g. hotels and convention centers) must be accessible to participants with disabilities. The association and its staff, members, exhibitors, and hospitality industry agents must consider the needs of conference participants with disabilities in the selection, planning, and layout of all conference facilities, especially meeting rooms and exhibit areas. ALA Conference Services Office and division offices offering conferences must make every effort to provide accessible accommodations as requested by individuals with special needs or alternative accessible arrangements must be made. Conference programs and meetings focusing on the needs of, services to, or of particular interest to people with disabilities should have priority for central meeting locations in the convention/conference center or official conference hotels.
9. ALA Publications and Communications. All ALA publications, including books, journals, and correspondence, must be available in alternative formats including electronic text.

The ALA website must conform to the currently accepted guidelines for accessibility, such as those issued by the World Wide Web Consortium.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Library Services for People with Disabilities Policy, 2000-2001 CD #24 - PDF, 20 pgs\)](#)

B.9.4 Comparable Rewards

The American Library Association supports salary administration which gives reasonable and comparable recognition to positions having administrative, technical, subject, and linguistic requirements. It is recognized that all such specialist competencies can be intellectually vigorous and meet demanding professional operational needs. In administering such a policy, it can be a useful guide that, in major libraries, many non-administrative specialties be assigned to the top classifications as are administrative staff. Whenever possible there should be as many at the top rank with less than 30 percent administrative load as there are at the highest rank carrying over 70 percent administrative load.

B.9.5 Faculty Status of College and University Librarians

The intellectual contributions made by academic librarians to the teaching, research, and service mission of their colleges and universities merit the granting of faculty status. Faculty status for librarians should entail the same rights and responsibilities granted to and required of other members of the faculty.

B.9.6 Security of Employment for Library Employees

Security of employment means that, following the satisfactory completion of a probationary period, the employment of a library employee under permanent appointment* carries with it an institutional commitment to continuous employment. Job competence, in accordance with the aims and objectives of the library, should be the criterion for acceptable performance for a library employee with permanent appointment. Library employees shall not be terminated without adequate cause and then only after being accorded due process.

*Permanent appointment in different types of libraries is variously called tenure, continuous appointment, career service, regular contract, etc.

Employing anyone for successive, limited periods with the intent to avoid the granting of permanent appointment is deemed unethical.

Security of employment, as an elementary right, is guaranteed specifically.

1. Intellectual freedom, defined as freedom to assume the responsibility placed upon a person by a democratic society to educate oneself and to improve one's ability to participate usefully in activities in which one is involved as a citizen of the United States and of the world, and institutional adherence to the Library Bill of Rights.
2. Appointments and promotions based solely on merit without interference from political, economic, religious, or other groups.

3. A sufficient degree of economic security to make employment in the library attractive to men and women of ability.
4. The opportunity for the library employee to work without fear of undue interference or dismissal and freedom from discharge for racial, political, religious, or other unjust reasons.

B.9.7 Inclusiveness and Mutual Respect

The American Library Association values, respects, and welcomes the contributions and participation of all library workers. ALA actively promotes inclusiveness within the Association and communicates images and information about all types of library careers. ALA provides services and developmental opportunities for all library workers.

The American Library Association affirms the importance of inclusiveness and mutual respect as essential for employee productivity, morale, and learning. Library employers that have developed respectful organizational cultures with inclusive language and developmental opportunities for all library workers should be recognized as models for others.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": ALA Policy on Inclusiveness and Mutual Respect, 2004-2005 ALA CD#49 - PDF, 4 pgs\)](#)

B.9.8 The Library's Pay Plan

In order to ensure equal pay for equal work, libraries should have a well-constructed and well-administered pay plan based on systematic analysis and evaluation of jobs in the library.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": The Library's Pay Plan: A Public Policy Statement. - PDF, 4 pgs\)](#)

B.9.9 Permanent Part-Time Employment

The right to earn a living includes a right to part-time employment on a par with full-time employment, including prorated pay and fringe benefits, opportunity for advancement and protection of tenure, access to middle-and upper-level jobs, and exercise of full responsibilities at any level.

ALA shall create more voluntarily chosen upgraded permanent part-time jobs in its own organization and supports similar action on the part of all libraries.

B.9.10 Equal Opportunity and Salaries

The American Library Association supports and works for the achievement of equal salaries and opportunity for employment and promotion for men and women.

The Association fully supports the concept of comparable wages for comparable work that aims at levels of pay for female-oriented occupations equal to those of male-oriented occupations; ALA therefore supports all legal and legislative efforts to achieve wages for library workers commensurate with wages in other occupations with similar qualifications, training, and responsibilities.

ALA particularly supports the efforts of those library workers who have documented, and are legally challenging, the practice of discriminatory salaries, and whose success will benefit all library workers throughout the nation.

B.9.11 Collective Bargaining

The American Library Association recognizes the principle of collective bargaining as one of the methods of conducting labor-management relations used by private and public institutions. The Association affirms the right of eligible library employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers, or to refrain from organizing and bargaining collectively, without fear of reprisal.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Collective Bargaining, Statement of Guidelines. - PDF, 2 pgs\)](#)

B.9.12 Residency and Citizenship Requirements

The American Library Association is opposed to any rule, regulation or practice, imposing as a condition of new or continued employment in any library, a requirement of residence or U.S. citizenship except where a demonstrable danger to national security is involved.

B.9.13 Drug Testing

The American Library Association opposes mandatory drug testing of library employees and advocates employee assistance programs as the best way for library employers to respond to performance deficiencies due to drug use.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": 1987-88 CD #61 - PDF, 1 pg\)](#)

B.9.14 Information and Referral Services

ALA provides, through its offices, divisions, round tables, and committees, information and referral services regarding tenure, status, fair employment practices (including discrimination and sexual harassment), and the principles of intellectual freedom as set forth in policies adopted by Council.

B.9.15 Institutional Support of ALA Members to Attend ALA Conferences

The American Library Association supports the principle of giving preference, in libraries, to members of ALA in providing financial support and administrative leave to attend ALA Conferences. ALA supports encouraging staff in both administrative and nonadministrative positions in libraries to attend the annual ALA Conference.

B.9.16 Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights

The American Library Association supports equal employment opportunity for gay, lesbian, and transgender librarians and library workers. [\(See "Policy Reference File." A Resolution Reaffirming Equal Employment Opportunity for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Librarians and Library Workers, 2010-2011 ALA CD#43\)](#) (See also B.9.3)

B.9.17 Advertising Salary Ranges

Available salary ranges shall be given for positions listed in any placement services provided by ALA and its units. A regional salary guide delineating the latest minimum salary figures

recommended by state library associations shall be made available from any placement services provided by ALA and its units.

All ALA and unit publications printing classified job advertisements shall list the salary ranges established for open positions where available and shall include a regional salary guide delineating the latest minimum salary figures recommended by state library associations for library positions.

B.9.18 Reproduction of Noncommercial Educational and Scholarly Journals

ALA encourages authors writing primarily for purposes of educational advancement and scholarship to reserve for themselves licensing and reproduction rights to their own works in the publishing contracts they sign.

ALA, in cooperation with other educational organizations, urges publishers to adopt and include in their journals or similar publications a notice of a policy for the noncommercial reproduction of their materials for educational and scholarly purposes.

B.9.20 Comprehensive Health Care

ALA recognizes the importance of comprehensive health care for all Americans and its impact on libraries.

ALA encourages that that potential employers specify explicitly in their job announces in ALA publications or website whether they provide domestic partner benefits by means of appending one of the following two phrases; 'Domestic-partner benefits are not offered by this institution' or 'Domestic-partner benefits are offered by this institution.'

ALA urges other publishers and providers to encourage potential employers to specify explicitly in their job announcements whether they provide domestic partner benefits by means of appending one of the following two phrases: 'Domestic-partner benefits are not offered by this institution' or 'Domestic-partner benefits are offered by this institution'.
Adopted 2005. Amended 2010

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Clarification within Job Listings as to the Presence or Absence of Domestic Partner Benefits, ALA CD#35\)](#)

B.9.21 Workplace Speech

Libraries should encourage discussion among library workers, including library administrators, of non-confidential professional and policy matters about the operation of the library and matters of public concern within the framework of applicable laws.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Resolution on Workplace Speech, 2004-2005 ALA CD#38.1 - PDF, 1 pg\)](#)

B.10 Research and Statistics

The American Library Association recognizes the need to continuously build and strengthen the knowledge base upon which library services and the library profession depend. Basic and applied research in the field of library and information studies, as well as research results in related disciplines will, in large measure, shape library and information services and the nature of the library profession in the future. Statistics are a necessary foundation for many kinds of research, as well as for policy and planning. Through its Office for Research and Statistics (ORS), as well as through related groups in its membership units, ALA strives to reach ALA's goals in the areas of research and statistics.

In order to reach these goals:

- ALA defines and identifies priority research areas;
- stimulates and promotes the funding required to conduct research;
- cooperates with library education research programs;
- coordinates with other institutions and associations implementing the profession's research agenda;
- stimulates discussion of research methodologies;
- proposes programs designed to improve the quality, quantity, and impact of research;
- promotes the role, importance, and necessity of research.

In addition, the Association performs and supports research and participates in cooperative research activities related to those research areas and topics identified as Association priorities.

[\(See "Policy Reference File": Research and Statistics Policy Statement: 1993-1994 CD #41 Revised - PDF, 1 pg\)](#)

B.11 Public Relations

B.11.1 Policy Objectives

Through public information programs, and through its publications and membership activities, the ALA seeks to:

- keep the American public aware of libraries,
- encourage greater use of libraries, and
- stimulate citizen support of libraries.

It is ALA's policy to engage in public information programs that are primarily national in scope, that benefit all types of libraries and their constituents, and that, in turn, inspire local or special libraries to engage in promotion and education activities in their own communities.

Through its Public Information Office, ALA will maintain a close relationship with the library press, both national and international, and sustain a steady flow of information about the organization and its activities, as well as major developments affecting the library profession.

Through its Washington Office, ALA seeks to inform and educate the United States legislature and the various federal agencies about events generally, and legislation specifically, which influence library-related activities.

[\(See "Policy Reference File" for full statement. - PDF, 3 pgs\)](#)

B.11.2 Public Information Office Responsibility

The responsibility for implementing national public information programs and for coordinating ALA contact with the national and international media outlets rests with the Public Information Office of the Association with support from other, appropriate ALA and related groups.

B.11.3 National Library Symbol

The American Library Association endorses the symbol recommended by the ALA President's Task Force and promotes its use.