

Resolution on Developing Library Security Policies in keeping with ALA Policy

Whereas the rate of police violence in the United States is far higher than peer nations.
(Picheta, R., & Pettersson, H.);

Whereas that violence disproportionately affects people of color and especially Black people
(ibid);

Whereas the US arrest rates are higher than other nations and those arrests also
disproportionately affect Black people (ibid);

Whereas over-policing and mass incarceration are factors that drive people more deeply into
poverty (DeVuono-Powell et al);

Whereas trauma experiences can become deeply ingrained in individuals' stress responses and
impact their responses to conflict in any context, making 'trauma-informed' practices that take
this impact into account crucial when dealing with vulnerable populations (Benedict);

Whereas using alternative methods like restorative justice and de-escalation tactics to create
personal connections and encourage accountability is highly effective (International Institute for
Restorative Practices);

Whereas there is a growing body of research and guidance exploring how these practices can
be used in libraries (Cooke, Library Freedom Project);

Whereas libraries have successfully used public health experts and social workers to reduce
emergency calls to police (Johnson, Et Al; Malachowski);

Whereas ALA Policy B.8.10 states "it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in supporting
(people experiencing poverty, which include people experiencing homelessness,) so they may
participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and
strategies;

Whereas ALA Policy B.3.2 states "[Libraries] must seek to provide an environment free of
racism, where all are treated with respect and dignity.";

Whereas ALA Policy B.2.4 states "ALA opposes any use of governmental prerogatives that lead
to the intimidation of individuals or groups";

Whereas The American Library Association has called upon its members to support initiatives to
end police violence against Black people, to combat the systemic racism that infects our society,
and to speak out against all attempts to restrict First Amendment rights (2019-2020 ALA
CD#19.9);

Whereas exposing any patrons--especially Black patrons, Indigenous patrons and patrons of color and/or those who are experiencing poverty or homelessness--to police contact may result in loss of their lives or livelihoods, a risk incompatible with the aforementioned ALA policies; and

Whereas libraries can minimize this risk by adopting policies that avoid using police in a punitive role (Cooke, Robinson, Library Freedom Project); now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members

Directs the ALA President to convene a working group representative of different types of libraries, and including other experts as the President deems appropriate, to create guidance on library security policies that is in keeping with the above values and recommendations, takes into account the unique needs of each library type, and incorporates available community resources.

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