

Core Values Task Force II Report

The foundation of modern librarianship rests on an essential set of core values which define, inform, and guide our 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
- Confidentiality/Privacy
- Democracy
- Diversity
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Preservation
- The Public Good
- Professionalism
- Service
- Social Responsibility

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to express our values more eloquently than ALA already has in the Freedom to Read statement, the Library Bill of Rights, the ALA Mission Statement, Libraries: an American Value and other documents. These policies have been carefully thought out, articulated, debated, and approved by the ALA council. They are interpreted, revised or expanded when necessary. Over time, the values embodied in these policies have been embraced by the majority of librarians as the foundations of their practice.

*Adopted by the ALA Council at the 2004 Annual Conf.
Codified by the ALA Council at the 2005 Midwinter Mtg.*

Excerpts from ALA Policy

Following are some representative excerpts from ALA policy expressing the values listed above. These selections are direct quotes from the ALA Policy Manual. Please note that many of these statements express the interrelationship of these values.

A more extensive index of ALA policies compiled by CVTFII is available on the ALA web site.

ACCESS

All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users. *ALA Policy Manual 53.1.14 (Free Access to Information)*

CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY

Protecting user privacy and confidentiality is necessary for intellectual freedom and fundamental to the ethics and practice of librarianship. *ALA Policy Manual 53.1.16 (Library Bill of Rights)*

DEMOCRACY

A democracy presupposes an informed citizenry. The First Amendment mandates the right of all persons to free expression, and the corollary right to receive the constitutionally protected expression of others. The publicly supported library provides free and equal access to information for all people of the community the library serves. *Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights, Economic Barriers to Information Access*

DIVERSITY

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. *ALA Policy Manual 53.8 (Libraries: An American Value)*

EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ALA promotes the creation, maintenance, and enhancement of a learning society, encouraging its members to work with educators, government officials, and organizations in coalitions to initiate and support comprehensive efforts to ensure that school, public, academic, and special libraries in every community cooperate to provide lifelong learning services to all. *ALA Policy Manual 1.1 (Mission, Priority Areas, Goals)*

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources. *ALA Policy Manual, 54.16 (ALA Code of Ethics, Article II)*

THE PUBLIC GOOD

ALA reaffirms the following fundamental values of libraries in the context of discussing outsourcing and privatization of library services. These values include that libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies. *1998-99 CD#24.1, Motion #1*

PRESERVATION

The Association supports the preservation of information published in all media and formats. The association affirms that the preservation of information resources is central to libraries and librarianship. *ALA Policy Manual 52.2.1 (Preservation Policy)*

PROFESSIONALISM

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. *ALA Policy Manual 56.1 (Graduate Programs in Library Education)*

SERVICE

We provide the highest level of service to all library users ...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. *ALA Policy Manual 54.16 (Statement of Professional Ethics)*

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ALA recognizes its broad social responsibilities. The broad social responsibilities of the American Library Association are defined in terms of the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem; and the willingness of ALA to take a position on current critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service set forth in the position statement. *ALA Policy Manual, 1.1 (Mission, Priority Areas, Goals)*

Core Values Taskforce Roster

Patricia Glass Schuman, Chair
Neal-Schuman Publishers
Past-President, ALA
Past-Treasurer ALA

Betty J. Blackman (former Director, California State University, Dominguez Hills)
Past-Executive Board Member
Past California Chapter councilor

Michael A. Golrick
City Librarian
Bridgeport Public Library
Executive Board Member

Christine Lind Hage
Clinton Macomb Public Library
Past-President, Public Library Association
PLA Councilor

S. Michael Malinconico
EBSCO Professor
University of Alabama
Past-President, LITA
ALA Councilor

Bernard A. Margolis
President
Boston Public Library
Past Chair, ALA Endowment Trustees
ALA Councilor

Stephen L. Matthews
Foxcroft School
Chair, ALA Council Policy Monitoring Committee
Past member, AASL Board of Directors
Past President, Virginia Library Association
ALA Councilor

Kathleen de la Peña McCook
Distinguished Professor
University of South Florida
School of Library & Information Science
Past-Chair OLOS, OLPR (NOW HRDS), COSWL

Kenton Oliver
Director
Stark County Public Library
Executive Board Member
Incoming Chair, Intellectual Freedom Committee

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Melissa J. Riley
Reference Librarian
West Portal Branch
San Francisco Public Library

Sally Gardner Reed
Executive Director, Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA)
Past Executive Board Member
Incoming Chair, Public Awareness Committee and ALA Membership Committee

Mark Rosenzweig
Reference Center for Marxist Studies
SRRT Action Council
ALA COUNCILOR

Mary R. Somerville
Library Consultant and former director Miami-Dade Public Library
Past President, ALSC
Past President, ALA

Carla J. Stoffle
Dean of Libraries
University of Arizona Library
Past President, ACRL
Past Treasurer, ALA

Maureen Sullivan
Library Consultant
Past President, ACRL
Past President, LAMA

Michael B. Wessells
Regional Library Manager
Timberland Regional Library
Hoquiam Branch
ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee Representative
Former Chair of IFRT

Lois Winkel
School Library Consultant
Member CVTF 1

Mark D. Winston
Asst Professor
Rutgers University
School of Communication Information & Library Studies
College & Research Libraries Editorial Board
Jury Chair, Doctoral Student Research Forum of LRRT