



Collection Development Policy

Purpose of Policy

- To further the stated mission of the library.
- To guide librarians in the selection of materials.
- To inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made.

Mission Statement

The DeWitt Community Library provides free and equal access to information, supports the pursuit of life-long learning, and stimulates the educational and cultural needs for residents of DeWitt and the surrounding areas.

General Collection Development Principles

The DeWitt Community Library is a public forum; a place where ideas and information are freely communicated, where a broad spectrum of opinion and a variety of viewpoints is presented in its collections, displays, programs and services and where all of these reflect both majority and minority cultures, the work of men and women, respect for young and old and the various lifestyles and abilities and diverse aspects of our society. The library strives to present materials representing all sides of an issue in a neutral, unbiased manner. The existence of a particular viewpoint in the collection is an expression of the library's policy of intellectual freedom, not an endorsement of the particular point of view.

The collection will provide individual access to information and materials in various formats to serve a wide variety of needs. The collection will be organized, marked, and maintained to help people easily locate specific materials or simply browse materials on specific subject, genre, format, or author.

The library supports the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements by the American Library Association. (see Appendix). The library will not exclude any material because of the race, nationality, sexual orientation, or the political or religious views of the author/producer. Additionally, items will not be removed from the collection solely due to controversy of any kind about the author. The library will provide the fullest practicable range of material presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our time, international, national, and local. Materials of sound factual authority will not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. Any labeling, sequestering, or alteration of materials because of controversy surrounding an author or the subject matter will not be sanctioned.

The library does not attempt to assume the rightful role of parents in monitoring controlling of curtailing the reading and viewing of library material of children. Parents should be interested and involved in the reading of their children. Selection of materials for the library collection is not restricted by the

possibility that minors may obtain material their parents consider inappropriate. Children have access to the entire collection.

The Library Board of Trustees recognizes that library resources are not unlimited. Selection of materials must be consistent with budget allocations. Resource sharing with other libraries and electronic and other methods of information access are valid and necessary ways of meeting patron needs.

Responsibility for Collection Development

The responsibility for materials selection and the development of the library collection rests with the Director, who works under the authority of the policies determined by the Board of Trustees. Library staff may be involved in the selection process under the Director's supervision. The library welcomes patron requests. Requests will be subject to guidelines outlined in this policy.

General Guidelines for Selection

These general criteria are taken into account for all materials selected for the library. Additional specific criteria are listed when appropriate for different types of materials. All items selected will meet several of the general or specific criteria.

1. Popular appeal of current community interest
2. Quality of production
3. Relationship to materials already in the collections
4. Permanent value, such as a classic work in a given area, a basic reference source, a record of times depicted, etc.
5. Intended audience
6. Price, accuracy and timeliness of materials
7. Balance of viewpoints in the collection
8. Available formats
9. Professional judgement

Sites selected from the Internet and linked to the Library's homepage are subjected to the same selection criteria as other materials.

The library encourages public suggestion of items and subjects to be considered for the collection. Serious consideration will be given to purchasing patron-requested materials when these requests meet collection objectives.

The library collection must be continually evaluated to ensure it meets the needs of the local community. A continuous, thorough withdrawal/de-selection program represents a conscientious effort to keep collections balanced, up-to-date, and suited to the current needs and interests of the community. Guidelines for de-selection ("weeding") are as follows:

- Condition of the material
- Space limitations within the collection
- Usage/popularity
- Availability of newer edition or more relevant item/resource
- Accuracy and relevance

All discarded and donated materials will be saved for the Friends of the DeWitt Community Library. Proceeds from these book sales go to Friends of the DeWitt Community Library, who directly support library activities.

Requests for Reconsideration

Because of the rich diversity of human experience and opinion, it is inevitable that some materials in the library's collection will be objectionable to some people in the community. The library, however, in a very real sense belongs to the whole community – the minority as well as the majority. It has a responsibility to serve that community in all its variety. That responsibility includes providing for the needs and interest that may offend a few or even a great many people.

A great effort is made to provide a balanced collection. The library attempts to represent all sides of controversial issues. In no case does the library take an official stand on any public question. The function of the library is to provide information, not to advocate specific points of view.

The library welcomes comments and criticisms of its collections from patrons who are within the service area of the DeWitt Community Library (City of DeWitt, Rural Clinton County or cities who contract for services with Clinton County Libraries). However, no citizen in a democracy has a right to prevent another from accessing materials or other information resources by destroying or stealing library property or demanding the item's removal from the collection without library board review.

Patrons who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of materials currently owned by the Library are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Director. If the patron is not satisfied by the discussion with the Director or the Director is not available, the patron will be given the Reconsideration of Materials Packet. The packet includes the following:

- DCL's Collection Development Policy
- The Library Bill of Rights
- The "Freedom to Read" statement of the American Library Association
- Business Card for the Director
- "Reconsideration of Library Resources" Form
- Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope (SASE) to return form

This will begin the formal reconsideration process. Anonymous complaints in writing or by other means are not honored. No action will be taken to remove or restrict access to any materials until a final decision has been made by the Library Board of Trustees.

Note: Reconsideration of the same material title will only occur every three years.

(See Appendix for Reconsideration of Materials Form and Procedure)

Provision for Updating the Policy

The library is a growing and dynamic public agency, and the policies and priorities for collection development must be responsive to the changing needs of the patrons. This policy statement will be

reviewed regularly by the Library Board and Director. With the approval of the Library board, this policy statement may be revised as needed.

Final adoption 12/7/93 Revised Mission Statement 12/2/03
Revision adopted 6/4/96 Added Request for Reconsideration 3/7/06
Revision adopted 6/1/99 Revised 8/4/09
Revision adopted 6/4/02 Revised 6/1-/2014(Added section VIII.)
Revisions approved 4/7/2015
Revisions approved 12/10/2018
Logo and library name updated 11/21/2020
Revisions approved 12/2021
Revisions Approved 10/23

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Library BILL of RIGHTS

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.

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Library BILL of RIGHTS

& THE

Freedom to Read S T A T E M E N T

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE



OFFICE FOR
Intellectual Freedom
American Library Association

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ALA
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THE

Freedom to Read STATEMENT

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension.

Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untired voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended

discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

To read the full Freedom to Read Statement, visit ala.org/intellectualfreedom