

Collection Development Policy

Approved: May 2025

Next Review: May 2027

I) Objective

The Collection Development Policy of the Lower Providence Community Library [hereinafter the library] will be founded upon the principles espoused in the Mission statement and amplified by the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights"¹, "Freedom to Read"² and "Freedom to View"³.

The library will maintain an adequate collection to support the needs of the Lower Providence Township community.

II) Mission of the Lower Providence Community Library

The Lower Providence Community Library provides the highest quality library service to its patrons of all ages. The materials, programs, and information services and facility meet community needs for education, recreation, and cultural enrichment.

III) Responsibility

The ultimate authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials rests with the Library Director and, under his/her direction, may be delegated to the staff that are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and/or experience.

Responsibility for a minor's use of library materials rests with his/her parents or legal guardians. The library does not label materials as to contents and materials are not sequestered except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

The library purchases materials that support and enrich the needs and interests of students of all ages. However, the library is unable to purchase textbooks for specific educational institutions. It is the expectation of the public library that school libraries will assume the responsibility for the needs of their own students. However, the library will provide materials to supplement the reference, research, and recreational needs of student borrowers of all ages.

IV) Policy of Selection

A. General Selection Criteria

Final selection of adult, young adult and juvenile materials, in all formats, is based on the following criteria. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any one criterion be decisive. The criteria are:

¹ Please see Appendix A

² Please see Appendix B

³ Please see Appendix C

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- Importance of author and/or subject matter to the collection as a whole
- Timeliness or lasting importance of the content to the community
- Reviewed in professional and reputable review sources
- Current and anticipated needs and interests of the community
- Popular demand
- Scope and/or treatment of subject matter
- Authority and credibility of author/artist and/or publisher
- Availability of material on the subject within and outside the district
- Affordability
- Format; suitability of physical or digital form for library users, readability, clarity of print, illustration, quality of sound, quality of image, and ease of use
- Nomination for major literary, film, or music awards
- No attempt is made to purchase the complete works of any author/artist and/or publisher
- Within the limits of space, budget and availability, materials will be chosen to represent a variety of opinions on subjects that may have valid differing points of view

The library reserves the right to exclude purchasing items which do not fall within the parameters of the General Selection Criteria.

Free access to all points of view on public questions will be provided. Because the public library serves many varied groups of people, the interests of one group cannot take precedence over the interests of another. Serious works which present an honest picture of some problem or aspect of life are not necessarily excluded because of frankness. The selection of any material for the collection does not constitute an endorsement of its contents. The library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Decisions are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merit of the work in relation to the collection and to serving the interests of patrons.

The library is opposed to the withdrawal, solely at the request of any individual or group, of materials which have been chosen with the General Selection Criteria. The library will discuss the interpretation of these principles with representatives of such groups. (See attachments.)

B. Electronic Resources / New Technologies

With new technologies developing at a rapid rate electronic formats will be considered with the following criteria in mind:

- patron demand

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- relevance to the existing collection
- permanence of the format
- budgetary and space limitations
- compatibility with available equipment.

In addition to the criteria listed above, the Library will select electronic materials by the following criteria:

- replaces standard printed texts
- provides greater accessibility and currency
- provides new resources of information in an efficient and economical manner
- provides ease of use and access
- demonstrates the ability to be accessed remotely, via passwords or barcodes
- is backed by on-site or immediately available technical support (including updates and training)
- presents no licensing or usage restrictions deeming it unsuitable for library purposes
- allows for usage statistics if deemed necessary or optimal
- is validated by the reputation of vendor, publisher or supplier
- enhances the existing collection

V) Gifts and Memorial/Honor Materials

Donations of books or other library materials, or donations of money for the purchase of library materials, are welcomed. The library, however, accepts gift materials with the explicit understanding that those which are useful to the library collection will be retained in accordance with previously stated selection criteria, and other items will be disposed of in whatever manner the library deems best.

Suggestions of specific titles or subjects are welcomed when memorial donations are given, but the final decision, based on the library collection development criteria, rests with the library. Gifts will be integrated into the general collection.

VI) Appraisals

The library does not appraise or provide evaluations of gift materials for tax deductions or other purposes, but will acknowledge receipt of gift materials in writing if requested by the donor at the time of donation.

VII) Collection Maintenance and De-selection

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The collection is maintained through an ongoing process of collection analysis. Items may be repaired, withdrawn, moved to non-circulating collections, or replaced based upon the following criteria:

- Interests of the community
- Patron demand
- Availability of similar materials in the collection
- Obsolete or inaccurate information
- Availability of more suitable material
- Affordability
- Physical condition and age of item
- Availability at other local libraries
- Multiple copies of materials no longer in great demand
- Replacement of materials is not automatic

The library will not withdraw an item simply because of a patron's or group's request.

VIII) Procedure for the Evaluation of Library Materials

The Board of Trustees of the Lower Providence Community Library endorses the Freedom to Read Statement and its interpretations. Materials selected under the Collection Development Policy are considered protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Public libraries preserve and enhance the people's right to a broader range of ideas than those held by any one individual, librarian, publisher or government. On occasion, there can be diverse opinions by individuals or groups as to what is acceptable or appropriate for the collection. Library collections are not limited to only those ideas and information one person or group believes to be true, good and proper.

The Library's Board of Trustees believes that anyone is free to reject for himself/herself library materials of which he or she does not approve. However, the individual cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, view or hear.

Parents or legal guardians have the responsibility to guide and direct the reading, viewing or listening of their own minor children. The library does not take the place of the parent or guardian.

Resident patrons who initiate comments or complaints will receive copies of the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read, the Freedom to View statements and the Collection Development Policy and the form "Citizen's Opinion Concerning Specific Library Material" (See attachments).

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Once a patron has registered a complaint and received these documents, he or she may fill out a "Citizen's Opinion Concerning Specific Library Material"⁴ form and schedule a meeting with the Library Director to discuss the concerns. If appropriate or if the patron is not satisfied with the action taken, the request will be referred to the Library's Board of Trustees. All Library Board decisions are final.

⁴ Please see Appendix D

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Appendix A

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.

Adopted June 19, 1939.

Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961;

June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980;

inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

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Appendix B

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 untried 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.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of

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weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

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The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, June 30, 2004, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses, Inc.](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)
[The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)

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Appendix C

Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990

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Appendix D

CITIZEN'S OPINION CONCERNING SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL

1. Author: _____
2. Title: _____
3. Publisher (if known): _____
4. Format: ☐ Hardcover ☐ Paperback ☐ CD ☐ CASS ☐ DVD ☐ Electronic ☐ Magazine ☐ Newspaper
☐ Display ☐ Link on Library's website ☐ Other (please specify) _____
5. In what section of the library is the material located? ☐ Adult ☐ Children's ☐ Young Adult
6. How was the item brought to your attention? _____
7. Did you read, view or listen to the entire work? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. What is your objection to the material? Be specific; cite pages:

9. Is there anything positive about the material? _____

10. What, in your opinion, is the theme of the material? _____
11. Do you know what literary critics and reviewers think of this material? ☐ Yes ☐ No
12. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book? _____

13. For what age group would you recommend this material? _____
14. In its place, what material would you recommend that would convey a valuable picture and perspective of the subject treated?

15. What would you like your library to do with this material? _____
16. Are you familiar with the American Library Association Bill of Rights? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed _____ Print or type Name _____

Phone # _____ Address _____

Organization or Group Represented If Any _____

Address Completed form to: Library Director
Lower Providence Community Library
50 Parklane Drive
Eagleville, PA 19403