

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Approved by the Des Moines Public Library Board of Trustees
February 15, 2022

I. Mission Statement

To strengthen our community by connecting people with ideas and the tools they need to enrich their lives.

II. Overview/Purpose

The collection is one of the library's chief assets, supporting the organization's mission, vision, and core values. The Collection Development Policy outlines the philosophies that create and shape the Des Moines Public Library's unique collection, the practices that maintain it over time, and the guidelines that help the collection respond to community needs. Through our collections we work to facilitate equitable experiences for engagement, education, and inspiration.

The Des Moines Public Library believes that collections are part of the broader content of what a library provides to its community, which includes experiences, spaces, materials, and collaborations. We seek to respond to our community's needs and interests through this content. The Collection Development Policy ensures that over time, the Des Moines Public Library's collection will remain on course, reflecting the needs of the community, while providing an opportunity to explore cultures, traditions, and ideas not represented in the local community.

The Des Moines Public Library does not promote all of the ideas found in its collections but provides the spaces and opportunities for those ideas based on the principles from the *Library Bill of Rights*, and the American Library Association's statements on *Freedom to Read* and *Freedom to View* (these statements are found at the end of this policy).

III. Responsibility for Collection Development

Staff in a centralized work unit provide continuity for the development and management of the library's collection. The collection development team:

- Monitors the budget
- Compiles statistics to aid in purchasing
- Provides usage reports to branch libraries
- Selects physical and digital items for the collections
- Responds to collection requests from library staff and patrons

Branch staff:

- Collaborate with Collection Development librarians on requests or special projects
- Communicate collection needs they discover during interactions with patrons and other staff
- Evaluate the collection, removing items that are out-of-date or not circulating

Ultimate responsibility for collection development lies with the Director.

IV. Collection Scope

The library's collection is designed to support the cultural, informational, educational, and recreational interests of the residents of Des Moines and Polk County. Materials are selected to meet patron needs and reflect a variety of viewpoints and opinions. To make items accessible to patrons, the collection contains a range of formats, languages, and levels of difficulty. It houses materials of contemporary and local significance. General criteria for consideration are listed below. An item need not meet all criteria in order to be acceptable.

V. Criteria for Selection

- Public demand, including submitted patron requests, interest or need
- Enduring value, literary merit, or local interest
- Prominence, accuracy and authoritativeness of author, creator, or publisher
- Social significance or timeliness
- Cost of the item
- Usage statistics
- Importance of subject matter to the existing collection or scarcity of information on the subject
- Quality and suitability of format

VI. Formats

Librarians make decisions on purchasing print, audiovisual, or digital format based on popularity, common use, and availability. Librarians may cease buying an older format when it becomes cost-prohibitive to keep up with all of them or when a new format renders an old obsolete.

VII. Digital and Streaming Materials

The library also provides access to a variety of digital materials, which may include books, magazines, databases, and streaming video.

This access is primarily provided through third-party vendors and is subject to change based on licensing changes or business decisions made by those vendors outside the library's control. Collection development librarians seek to respond to and anticipate these trends to provide the best possible access to our patrons.

VIII. Memorial and Gifts

- Memorials should be satisfactory to both the donor and the library. It is suggested that materials of continuing interest and usefulness be selected, as most donors would prefer making a gift with some degree of sustainability in the library.
- If titles, topics, or locations are not named in the donation, these decisions will be made by the collection development librarians.
- Checks for memorials should be made payable to the Des Moines Public Library Foundation. The library will assume responsibility for ordering memorial materials.
- These gifts are deductible for income tax purposes. (See Appendix I)
- Donated books and other materials may be added to the collection only if they meet the criteria for selection outlined in this policy. Gift items not used in the collection may be sold for the benefit of the library, donated to other nonprofit organization, or discarded based on condition.
- Books advocating the principles and practices of a specific religious denomination are not purchased but may be accepted as gifts if they otherwise fit within library collection guidelines.
- For more information regarding gifts, see the separate policy, Des Moines Public Library Gift Policy.

IX. Self-Published Materials

Self-published or print-on-demand titles may be added to the collection if the item is:

- Fiction
- Poetry, memoir, or cookbook
- Iowa-related
- Suggested by a patron

The self-publishing guidelines are available on the library's website.

X. Request for Reconsideration of Selections

A patron who objects to specific books or other library materials in the collection is requested to complete the form, *Statement of Concern About Library Resources*, available at information desks at all libraries. The attached Statement of Concern About Library Resources form describes the library's review process.

XI. Collection Maintenance

The library's collection is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that it is timely and relevant to the community's needs. Materials may be withdrawn for one or more of the following reasons as determined by the Collection Development Team:

- No longer relevant to the needs and interests of the community
- Out-of-date or no longer accurate

- Insufficient use
- Badly worn or damaged
- Cost or availability of replacement
- Space limitations
- Sufficient copies in the collection

Locally significant materials may be retained even if some of these factors apply.

Withdrawn items may be recycled, discarded, or sold at public sale. Library staff will not contact patrons regarding items being withdrawn or hold withdrawn items for patrons.

Approved by the Des Moines Public Library Board of Trustees

September 14, 1999

Revised June 15, 2010

Revised September 18, 2012

Revised November 20, 2018

Revised February 15, 2022

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.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

"Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, June 30, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill> (Accessed December 14, 2021)

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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 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 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 individual 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 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.*

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

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
The Children's Book Council
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

"The Freedom to Read Statement", American Library Association, July 26, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement> (Accessed December 14, 2021)

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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 guarantee 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 January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

"Freedom to View Statement", American Library Association, May 29, 2007.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomviewstatement> (Accessed December 14, 2021)

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APPENDIX I

LIBRARY GIFTS - LIVING MEMORIALS

Des Moines Public Library

A thoughtful and rewarding act is the giving of books and other library materials as memorials in honor of a friend or relative. The Board of Trustees of the Des Moines Public Library welcomes memorials and has a policy governing their acceptance and addition to the library's collection.

Donors wishing to honor friends and relatives by a library memorial should contact the Des Moines Public Library Foundation office where the gift will be formally accepted and recommendations for purchase offered if desired.

1. Memorials should be satisfactory to both the donor and the library. It is suggested that materials of continuing interest and usefulness be selected, as most donors would prefer making a gift with some degree of sustainability in the library.
2. Materials accepted as memorials should conform to the library's *Collection Development Policy*. The donor may make a specific request(s) for the use of their contribution, or they may leave the selection entirely to the discretion of the library.
3. Usually, memorial items will be added to the Central Library collection. However, if requested, memorial volumes may be assigned to any of the branch libraries of the system.
4. Checks for memorials should be made payable to the Des Moines Public Library Foundation. The library will assume responsibility for ordering memorial materials. These gifts are deductible for income tax purposes.
5. The Foundation will mail a letter to the family of the deceased informing them of the donation and a thank you letter to the donor.

STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY RESOURCES

Des Moines Public Library | 1000 Grand Avenue | Des Moines, IA 50309

This form must be submitted to the branch head librarian or to the Deputy Director. The material will be reviewed by the Deputy Director who will respond in writing within 30 days of receipt by the library to the person submitting the statement of concern. Decisions regarding the questioned materials may be reviewed by the person submitting the initial statement of concern to the Library Director or the Library Board of Trustees. A written response will be made by the director, within 30 days of receipt of the request, for review to the person submitting the request, or within one to two Board meetings from the date of receipt by the Board of the request, depending on the date of receipt by the Library Board of Trustees, during such public Board meeting.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____

2. What brought this title to your attention?

3. Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as being specific on those matters which concern you. (Use other side if needed.)

Comment:

Optional:

4. What resource(s) do you suggest to provide additional information on this topic?