



# RESOURCES SELECTION POLICY

## POLICY

The Board of Trustees of Skokie Public Library has adopted the following Resources Selection Policy to guide staff and inform the public about the principles underlying the library's collection development decisions. This includes selection and retention of physical collections as well as digital products available for purchase or licensing.

The Mission Statement and Core Values of Skokie Public Library provide a framework for this policy.

- Mission: As a springboard for personal growth and community development, Skokie Public Library promotes discovery, enrichment, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas through a broad spectrum of resources and experiences
- Core Values: Community, Collaboration, Compassion, Curiosity

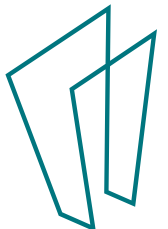
The library supports the principles of intellectual freedom and the individual's right to have access to ideas, information, and perspectives representing multiple points of view. The Board of Trustees of Skokie Public Library has also adopted the following statements from the American Library Association, which are attached and constitute a formal part of this policy:

- LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS
- THE FREEDOM TO READ
- THE FREEDOM TO VIEW
- DIVERSE COLLECTIONS—AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

## I. OBJECTIVES

Skokie Public Library acquires and makes available materials that inform, educate, entertain, and enrich people as individuals and as members of society. The library provides, within its budgetary and spatial limitations, a general collection embracing broad areas of knowledge and featuring materials and resources that represent a diversity of voices and interests. Library collections support a wide audience, including the needs of children, teens, seniors, and readers of languages other than English. The goal of providing and maintaining a diverse and equitable collection will be considered during all aspects of collection development.

Information may also be obtained through remote databases, including numerous specialized and technical resources. License agreements enable the library to provide a variety of downloadable and streaming digital resources to Skokie Public Library cardholders. Additional



physical materials are available to patrons throughout the community via the library's Bookmobile.

Allocation of the materials budget and the number of items purchased for each area of the collection will be determined by indicators of use, cost, and community needs. New formats are evaluated for inclusion based on the availability of technology and suitability for loaning. The library attempts to collect materials on a wide range of subjects but may be unable to meet every need. Through interlibrary loan and consortial agreements, Skokie Public Library cardholders may request items from other public, academic, and special libraries throughout North America.

## II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Trustees. The Director determines the budget, guidelines, and organizational structure for the staff who select resources. The Access Services Manager and Collection Development Supervisor oversee and coordinate acquisitions and selection. Designated staff are responsible for specific areas of the collection, choosing titles, monitoring circulation, keeping areas current, and spending the budget in a timely and organized manner as determined by the library's Collection Development Plan, which is informed by the Resources Selection Policy and provides detailed guidelines on the scope and maintenance of each collection area.

## III. METHODS FOR SELECTION

Staff select and evaluate materials using a variety of criteria. All criteria need not be met for acquisition and can vary based on individual titles, formats, languages, and age levels. The criteria include:

- Community demand and relevance
- Cost and space constraints
- Timeliness of topic and attention by critics, reviewers, and media
- Diversity of viewpoints and representation of traditionally marginalized groups
- Authority, accuracy, and accessibility of content
- Social and cultural significance
- Suitability to the intended audience
- Durability of format
- Ownership and demand at nearby public libraries
- Availability from reliable library vendors and distributors

Tools used in selection include professional and book trade journals, media reviews, publisher promotional materials, bestseller lists, and online resources. Multiple copies of a title may be purchased based on anticipated or demonstrated demand or to meet programming needs. Purchase suggestions from patrons for newly released items also are welcomed and considered using the same selection criteria detailed above. If an item suggested by a Skokie Public Library cardholder is not purchased, we will attempt to obtain the item through interlibrary loan whenever possible.

Materials are selected to meet the objectives of public library service and, with the exception



of materials related to Skokie history, are not archival in nature. Textbooks and scholarly materials may be acquired if they serve the general public by providing information on subjects where little or no material is available in other forms. However, materials of a highly specialized, academic, or technical nature typically are excluded from the collection.

Databases and downloadable and streaming media play an important role in the library's collection. In addition to standard criteria used in selecting other formats, special criteria for electronic formats include ease of use, technology requirements, and availability of remote access. Certain electronic products feature content that is leased or purchased as a whole, while other platforms allow for staff to select specific titles.

#### IV. WEEDING

In order to maintain an up-to-date and useful collection, any worn, damaged, outdated, and/or obsolete materials are continuously withdrawn in the process known as weeding. Materials may also be weeded if they are little used, are duplicate copies, or have been superseded by a new edition or updated work on the same subject. Materials in poor condition may be replaced using the same criteria as that for original selection. When possible, withdrawn materials in good condition are placed in the library's Used Book Nook, donated to community partners, or passed along to charitable organizations and used booksellers involved in literacy initiatives. Materials in poor condition and/or those not accepted by partners may be recycled or discarded.

#### V. GIFTS AND DONATIONS

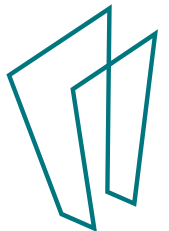
Select materials, such as those written by local authors, may be donated in accordance with the guidelines detailed in this policy and in the library's Finance Policy. Gifts of funds are always welcome. In the case of money donated to purchase library materials, the donor may recommend an age level, broad subject area, and/or format. The library will attempt to honor the donor's wishes if they are consistent with library policies, current needs, and available space. Both donations and materials purchased with donated funds become a part of the library's collection and are subject to the library's normal guidelines for weeding and disposal.

#### VI. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Given the diverse nature of the collection, not all materials are suitable for all patrons, and responsibility for children's or teens' choice and use of resources rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection for the adult collection is not restricted by the possibility that children or teens may access resources their parents or legal guardians may consider inappropriate. The library believes in the freedom of the individual, and the right and obligation of parents or legal guardians to guide, develop, interpret, and maintain their own values in their family.

#### VII. RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

A singular obligation of the public library is to reflect within its collection differing points of view on controversial or debatable subjects. Public libraries own materials that some patrons may find objectionable and also may not carry materials that others find important. The



selection or display of an item does not express or imply endorsement of the viewpoints expressed. Materials are judged on the basis of the content and style of the work as a whole, not by selected portions or passages.

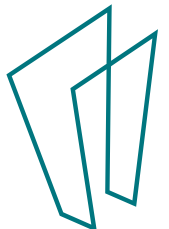
The library encourages interest in its collections and patrons have the opportunity to discuss selection decisions with staff through multiple channels, including online and paper comment forms and conversations with staff. Those who request the reconsideration of library materials may be asked to put their request in writing by completing and signing the form appended to this policy, entitled "Request for Reconsideration of Library Material." Upon receipt of this formal written request, the Director will appoint an ad hoc committee from the professional staff including, but not limited to, the selector for the subject area of the item in question and the Access Services Manager.

The committee will make a written recommendation to the Director, who will then make a decision regarding the reconsideration request. The Director will inform the Board of Library Trustees of all formal requests for reconsideration of library materials. The Director will communicate this decision, and the reasons for it, in writing, to the person who initiated the request for reconsideration and to the Board of Library Trustees at the earliest possible date.

In the event that the person who initiated the request is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, they may appeal for a hearing before the Board of Trustees by making a written request to the President of the Board. If a hearing is granted, the individual will be notified when they may address the Board. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of presentation and number of speakers at the hearing. The Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with stated policies and procedures of the Skokie Public Library. On the basis of this determination, the Board may vote to uphold or override the decision of the Director.

*Adopted by the Skokie Public Library Board of Library Trustees 2/21/90*

*Revised 5/10/00; 7/10/02; 3/10/04; 3/8/06; 2/13/08; 3/10/10; 3/21/12; 3/19/14; 3/16/16; 3/14/18; 3/11/20; 3/16/22*



## 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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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 18, 1948.

Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980 by the ALA Council; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996.

*Adopted by the Skokie Public Library Board of Trustees February 21, 1990.  
Revised July 10, 1996. Reviewed May 20, 1998.*

## THE FREEDOM TO READ

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 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.*

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.

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*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.*

Adopted by the Skokie Public Library  
Board of Library Trustees 2/21/90  
Revised 4/95; 7/10/96  
Reviewed 5/20/98  
Reviewed 3/9/2005

## **FREEDOM TO VIEW**

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 possible 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 and 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.*

Adopted by the Skokie Public Library  
Board of Library Trustees 2/21/90  
Revised 7/10/96

## Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “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.” A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library’s selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all of the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection’s diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user’s right to read, view,

or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights* (<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/servicespeopledisabilities>)," adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title "Services to Persons with Disabilities"; amended June 26, 2018.

<sup>2</sup>*ALA Code of Ethics*, Article VII, adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name* "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 24, 2019.

**SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCE**

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

AUTHOR/PRODUCER: \_\_\_\_\_

FORMAT: \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLISHER: \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLICATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUEST INITIATED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

IS THIS REQUEST MADE ON BEHALF OF:

YOURSELF

ORGANIZATION

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT BROUGHT THIS RESOURCE TO YOUR ATTENTION? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU READ/EXAMINED THE ENTIRE RESOURCE? \_\_\_\_\_

IF NOT, WHAT ELEMENTS DID YOU REVIEW? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT CONCERNS YOU ABOUT THE RESOURCE? (PLEASE BE SPECIFIC; E.G., CITE PAGES.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU READ THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY RESOURCES SELECTION POLICY? \_\_\_\_\_

ARE THERE RESOURCE(S) YOU SUGGEST TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND/OR OTHER VIEWPOINTS ON THIS TOPIC (IF APPLICABLE)?

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WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING THE LIBRARY CONSIDER?

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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE OF PATRON: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ RECEIVED BY STAFF MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_