

# Intellectual Freedom & Social Justice: Supporting All of Our Values

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what to expect

# what to expect

- some groundwork

# what to expect

- some groundwork
- dilemmas

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- some groundwork
- dilemmas
- discussion

what are the core values  
of librarianship?

# core values of librarianship

- access
- confidentiality/privacy
- democracy
- diversity
- education and lifelong learning
- intellectual freedom
- the public good
- preservation
- professionalism
- service
- social responsibility
- sustainability

# core values of librarianship

- **access**
- confidentiality/privacy
- **democracy**
- **diversity**
- education and lifelong learning
- **intellectual freedom**
- **the public good**
- preservation
- professionalism
- service
- **social responsibility**
- sustainability



access

# access

All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users.

(ALA Policy Manual B.2.1.14 Economic Barriers to Information Access)

democracy

# democracy

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

(Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights, Economic Barriers to Information Access)

diversity

# diversity

We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve.

(ALA Policy Manual B.3 Diversity, Libraries: An American Value)

intellectual freedom

# intellectual freedom

We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

(ALA Policy Manual B.2 Intellectual Freedom, ALA Code of Ethics, Article II)



the public good

# the public good

ALA reaffirms the following fundamental values of libraries in the context of discussing outsourcing and privatization of library services. These values include that libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies.

(1998-99 CD#24.1, Motion #1)

social responsibility

# social responsibility

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

(ALA Policy Manual A.1.1 Mission Priority Areas, Goals)

dilemmas

dilemma: meeting rooms

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Hearing about problems with Drag Queen Story Hours at other libraries, a board member proposes that no controversial programs be allowed at the library.

What would you say?



# dilemma: meeting rooms

What about language like this?

- *On controversial topics, the District aims to present programs that encourage or assist community dialogue by including a variety of perspectives, or acknowledging other perspectives. While controversy is not avoided, the District does not present programs that are intentionally inflammatory or polarizing in the community.*

# dilemma: meeting rooms

What about language like this?

- *The library will deny meeting space to any group or individual that discriminates on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, handicap, or sexual orientation.*

## dilemma: collection development policies

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What would you say?

# dilemma: collection development policies

What about an approach like this?

- *You could also consider including the ACLU or SPLC's definitions of "hate speech" within your policies, with the qualifier that you reserve the right to not order any content that falls under that purview.*

# dilemma: collection development policies

What about an approach like this?

- *The Anytown Public Library defends and protects the First Amendment rights of each of its users by providing access to the widest possible range of materials, which in some cases may include extreme or unpopular points of view. While individuals are free to personally reject materials of which they do not approve, individuals or groups may not restrict or exercise censorship over anyone else's freedom to read or inquire.*

dilemma: hate speech

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After a contentious event in your library's meeting room, your library director wants to adopt a policy forbidding hate speech in the library.

How would you advise them?

# dilemma: hate speech

## What about language like this?

- *Hate speech is any form of expression through which speakers intend to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a group or a class of persons. Moreover, hate speech stops being just speech and becomes conduct when it targets a particular individual or group, and includes behavior that interferes with a person's ability to use the library. Therefore, hate speech directed at library users, visitors, or staff, both in the physical library and on its social media platforms, is considered a violation of the Library's Rules of Conduct policy and will not be tolerated.*

# dilemma: hate speech

What about language like this?

- *Any behavior that reduces or interferes with others' equitable access to library materials, services, and spaces - including acts of racism or hate speech - will not be tolerated.*

discussion

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# discussion

- what brought you here today?
- how do we make the library a welcoming place?
- where do you draw the line on free expression?
- how would you update the core values of librarianship?

thanks!