



Bismarck  
Veterans Memorial  
Public Library

## **Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library Collection Development Policy**

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## **Library Mission**

Collecting, organizing, and providing open access to educational, informational, recreational, and cultural resources.

## **Introduction**

Collection development at the Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library (Library) is founded on the principles of intellectual freedom, diversity, and equal access for all. The Library provides a collection that strives to balance viewpoints across a broad spectrum of opinions and subjects in formats suitable to a variety of learning and recreational interests and skills. The Library uses selection practices that are flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the community.

## **Collection Development Purpose**

This policy guides Library staff and informs the public of the principles that govern collection development and management. It guides staff in designating budgets and making decisions about selection, management, and maintenance of Library materials and resources. The policy also declares the Library's commitment to the principles of free access to ideas and information and to providing collections that reflect a variety of viewpoints.

## **Collection Responsibilities**

Responsibility for the collection is assigned to the Library Director, under the authority of the Library Board of Directors. Securing funds for the collection is included in the Library's annual budget process. The Library Director delegates collection development responsibilities to designated staff who more closely manage the wide range of services related to particular areas of the collection. Designated staff provide continuity for the development and management of the Library's collection. They plan, budget, select, acquire, catalog, process, and manage library materials.

In addition, all staff members:

- Engage in open, continuous communication with patrons and other staff, a partnership to understand and respond to patron needs
- Handle all requests equitably
- Understand and respond to rapidly changing demographics, as well as societal and technological changes
- Recognize that materials of varying complexity and formats are necessary to serve all members of the community
- Balance individual and community needs

Patrons also play a key role in the development of the Library's collection. They may make recommendations and provide feedback via the Library's website or directly to staff.

## **Principles of Selection**

The Library makes available, as the budget allows, a wide range of ideas and viewpoints in a variety of formats in support of an informed citizenry. It supports the individual choice and judgment of library users in seeking information and upholds the freedom of users to read, view, and listen.

It is understood that a major purpose of the Library is to provide current, attractive, and useful materials for every age group, and to provide popular, high-demand items in a timely manner in compliance with the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*, *The Freedom to Read Statement* and *Freedom to View Statement*. (See Appendices 3, 4, and 5.) Over time actual demand for and use of materials will result in expanding collection areas of high demand and adding new formats as they become available.

Decisions to select or retain an item are intended to be based on the merits of each work or information source as it relates to the goals and coverage of the collection. The value of each item is considered in its entirety, not on specific passages or sections of the item itself. Materials are not excluded because of their creators' origin, background or views, or because they represent or express an aspect of life or subject matter that might be viewed as controversial. Inclusion of an item does not constitute endorsement of its content. Selection of materials for adults is intended for mature readers, and will not be restricted by the possibility that children or teenagers may obtain materials which their parents, guardians, or caregivers may consider inappropriate. Likewise, selection of materials for children and teenagers is intended for a wide audience of varying reading levels and maturity levels and will not be restricted by the possibility that some of the materials may be deemed inappropriate for particular children or teenagers by those individuals' parents, guardians, or caregivers.

It is the responsibility of each patron to determine which materials are most appropriate for their needs and consistent with their personal and family values. Responsibility for children's and teenager's use of library collections rests with their parents, guardians, or caregivers as to the suitability of materials on controversial or sensitive topics. Although library users are free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, they may not restrict the freedom of others to access what they choose.

Practical necessity limits the scope of the Library's collections. Many citizens will have needs which require access beyond local and area resources. For this reason, the Library will actively participate in resource sharing via state, regional, and national library consortia.

Consideration is given to the adequate availability of materials for the visually impaired.

## **Criteria for Selection**

Collection development staff members use their training, knowledge, expertise, and professional literature and review sources, along with the following general criteria to select materials for the collection. Decisions about adding materials to the collection are made through the application of these criteria, regardless of whether the materials under consideration are to be purchased or donated. Materials need not meet all of the following criteria in order to be acceptable.

General criteria include:

- Patron requests
- Publicity, critiques, and reviews
- Accuracy and timeliness of content
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audiences
- Current and anticipated needs and interests of the public
- Contemporary significance or permanent value

- Contribution of a work to the diversity or breadth of the collection and its relation to other materials on the subject
- Prominence, authority, and/or competence of author, creator, or publisher
- Availability of information elsewhere in the community, area, or region
- Suitability of format to library circulation and use
- Impact on materials budget

Items considered for inclusion in Special Collections, located in the Missouri River Room, should have a special emphasis on Bismarck, North Dakota, and Missouri River Valley history. Donated items will be considered for inclusion when authored or donated by a prominent Bismarck or North Dakota individual with current or historical ties to the region. One-of-a-kind or rare items may be added to Special Collections for the purposes of preservation or permanent retention.

## **Collection Evaluation & Withdrawals**

Designated staff members review and evaluate the collection on an ongoing basis in order to maintain its usefulness, currency, and relevance. As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and may be kept, repurchased, withdrawn, or preserved for long-term retention. Materials withdrawal is an important aspect of collection development. When Library items lose the value for which they were selected, they should be withdrawn so the collection remains vital and useful.

Staff relies on the following set of criteria to guide their decisions to withdraw items from the collection:

- Format or physical condition is no longer suitable for library use
- Content is available in multiple formats
- Obsolescence – information that is no longer timely, accurate, or relevant
- Insufficient use or lack of patron demand
- No long-term or historical significance
- Space limitations
- Sufficient number of copies in the collection
- Easy availability in other collections locally or nationally

Withdrawn items may be reused by providing them to other area libraries or the Friends of the Bismarck Public Library book sale for fundraising purposes, or be recycled at the Library's discretion.

## **Reconsideration of Library Materials**

The Library Board of Directors recognizes the importance of providing a process whereby opinions and/or complaints from the public regarding materials selection can be voiced. Therefore, this procedure has been established to apply to all opinions and/or complaints including: (1) those about materials represented in the collection and, (2) those about materials not represented in the collection.

Individuals may request a selection decision to be reconsidered by submitting a written *Request for Reconsideration of Material* form available at the Circulation Desk, the Information Desk, and on the Library's website. Upon completion, the form may be mailed or delivered electronically to the Library Director. Upon receipt, the Library Director will:

- Examine the material or assign it to a professional staff member to examine it, the issues raised, and the circumstances involved
- Make a decision to remove or retain the material in question
- Respond in writing to the complainant
- Provide the complainant with a copy of this policy

Should the complainant feel that the decision of the Library Director is not supported by the policy, the complainant may request a Library Board of Directors hearing by notifying the Library Director, who will make the necessary arrangements for the Board to meet within a reasonable time. Following the hearing, the decision of the Board will be final.

Above all, the intent of the Library Board of Directors is to promote fairness so as to protect the rights of all persons who are involved.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 6-25-07; amended 3-26-09, 4-28-11, 4-23-2020.



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**Appendix 1**

**Request for Reconsideration of Material**  
Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library

*We appreciate your concerns and welcome your comments.*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Book \_\_\_\_\_ Magazine \_\_\_\_\_ Other Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Representing: \_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_ Organization or Group

Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe what you find objectionable. Please be specific, citing pages, scenes, etc.  
(You may use the back of this form for additional space.)

Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire work? If not, what parts?

What do you feel the Library should do with this work?

\_\_\_\_\_ Review and reevaluate selection \_\_\_\_\_ Other (explain)

Comments:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Library Director, 515 N Fifth Street, Bismarck, ND 58501-4081

Upon receipt of this signed form, the Library Director will examine the material in question, the issues raised and the circumstances involved, make a decision to remove or retain the material in question, and respond in writing to the complainant within two weeks of receipt, if possible.

Should the complainant feel that the decision of the Director is not supported by the policy, the complainant may request a Library Board hearing by notifying the Library Director, who will make the necessary arrangements. Following the hearing, the decision of the Board will be final. Above all, the Library Board has as its concern fairness of such a hearing so as to protect the rights of all persons who are involved.

**Recommendation for Purchase**

Type of Item: Book      DVD      Audiobook      CD      Video Game

Other (Please Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Other identifying information (ISBN, year, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you read about, hear about, or see this material? \_\_\_\_\_

Patron Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Library Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Patron contact (phone or email) \_\_\_\_\_

If material is purchased, would you like us to place it on hold for you?

Yes No



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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.

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.



### 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 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.

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association  
Association of American Publishers

### 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 January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council