

Principles of Library Service

§ 1. Libraries serve their communities by developing tailored collections, programs, and services that meet local informational, literary, and recreational needs.

§ 2. Libraries rely on the social license of their communities, requiring accountability and public engagement to address community needs and concerns regarding collections and programs.

§ 3. Libraries uphold intellectual freedom by providing access to diverse viewpoints and challenging topics, ensuring institutional neutrality and refraining from censorship, while serving the public interest without promoting any specific societal vision or excluding opposing perspectives.

§ 4. Libraries promote institutional neutrality by avoiding the imposition of specific values, ensuring equal access for all, applying policies fairly, and respecting users' autonomy.

§ 5. Libraries recognize that the ability to exercise intellectual freedom develops from childhood to adulthood, initially guided by family and community, which leads to different obligations for the library in supporting children and adults.

§ 6. Libraries must organize their collections to assist parents and caregivers with finding age-appropriate content for their children, while school libraries, operating in loco parentis, have a heightened responsibility to select suitable materials. Shelving, labeling, and purchasing decisions are appropriate ways of assisting parents and caregivers in this task.

§ 7. Public and school libraries must uphold their accountability to the public, allowing community members to voice concerns about collections for young readers, while ensuring that no individual or stakeholder group can veto collection decisions, which are the responsibility of the librarian in collaboration with trustees and staff.

§ 8. Libraries must have clear and transparent policies for respectfully addressing user concerns about materials or programs, in alignment with their collection and programming guidelines, as well as community values.

§ 9. Libraries must permit all community members and organizations to use publicly available meeting rooms on an equal basis for legal speech on any issue, ensuring that staff cannot deny access based on personal beliefs while allowing objectors to host counter-events if they so choose, rather than preventing controversial events from occurring. Library directors should uphold free speech policies in response to community pressures.

§ 10. Libraries, as they make programming decisions, should consider not only the relevance of events to traditional library functions and services but also the needs, interests, and values of the community.

§ 11. Libraries should uphold and protect the privacy of their users, ensuring that no one needs worry about their personal information, borrowing records, or Internet browsing history being disclosed to unauthorized individuals.

§ 12. The social license granted to libraries requires them to remain neutral, avoid political or social activism, and ensure they represent the community's diverse interests and maintain public trust.