



The Charleston County Public Library is committed to curating a collection that reflects our community by representing diverse viewpoints, experiences, beliefs, and values. The library upholds the principles of intellectual freedom, defined by the American Library Association as “the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction.”¹ The library opposes the suppression of ideas.

Inclusion in the library collection does not imply endorsement. Rather, the library’s role is to be a neutral source of information for all who seek it. The library “recognizes that materials selected for the collection may be controversial and that any given item may offend some individuals.”² We further recognize that sometimes some library users may believe that certain items in the collection should be reevaluated. We have assembled this packet to inform and guide individuals in those circumstances.

The packet contains the following resources:

- Library Bill of Rights;
- Freedom to Read Statement;
- Freedom to View Statement;
- Charleston County Public Library Collection Development Policy; and
- Request for Reconsideration form.

If, after reviewing this information—and reading or viewing the entire work—a Charleston County resident or property owner believes there is justification to initiate a formal request for reconsideration, they may complete the enclosed Request for Reconsideration form and return it in person, by mail, or by email. (We expect the user to read or view the entire work before requesting a reconsideration because passages taken out of context often seem less, or not at all, objectionable when considered in the context of the work as a whole; and because it is possible to form inaccurate impressions of a work’s theme, mood, language, etc., when passages are taken out of context.) Please complete the form legibly and in its entirety.

Upon receipt of the form, the library will begin the reconsideration process by convening a committee of staff, including subject matter experts, chaired by the Deputy Director, Operations. Users should be aware that this process takes time: to read or view the work, to locate and review supplemental material, to meet, to consider, to reach a decision. Depending on the number of copies in the collection, committee members may have to share, wait for holds to be filled, or wait for additional copies to be purchased if necessary. Items being reconsidered will remain in circulation during the process.

The committee will:

- examine the form to understand the user’s objection;
- read or view the entire work;
- read critical reviews from professional journals and other authoritative sources;
- consider author interviews, press coverage, awards, and other supplemental material if available;
- meet to discuss their findings in relation to the Collection Development Policy and the reconsideration guidelines therein; and
- make a recommendation to the Executive Director, who has final authority over the library collection.

The Executive Director will make a determination, and the Deputy Director, Operations will relay that decision in a letter to the user. The Executive Director’s decision is final.

¹ <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship/faq>

² Charleston County Public Library Collection Development Policy, page 2



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](#).



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.

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



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



CHARLESTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

Charleston County Public Library connects our diverse community to information, fosters lifelong learning and enriches lives.

GENERAL COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

To achieve the goals outlined in the library's mission statement, the library must take a careful, systematic approach to building collections that meet the needs of all the residents of Charleston County. It is fiscally and operationally impossible to include all possible titles and formats in the library's collections. The library will make decisions as to what specific titles and formats will be added to each specific library collection based on these collection development levels:

1. **LIMITED**
Print, audio-visual, and electronic materials selected at the Limited level offer the casual library user a brief introduction to the category or subject, its most important authors and artists, or the most current data. These collections are often dominated by recent bestselling titles. No concerted effort is made to provide an inclusive overview or historical perspective. These collections are browser oriented, demand driven, and restricted by space and budget limitations.
2. **BASIC**
Print, audio-visual, and electronic materials selected at the Basic level effectively introduce and define the category or subject to library users. Materials will include major reference works and bibliographies, historical surveys, original works by significant writers and artists, and websites and databases providing comprehensive information and statistics. These collections will respond to the needs of our community's secondary and post-secondary students and fulfill the information and entertainment demands of the average library user.
3. **RESEARCH**
Print, audio-visual, and electronic materials selected at the Research level support independent research in categories or subjects of well-defined local importance. Materials will include the complete works of significant writers and artists, selections from secondary writers and artists, a wide selection of commentaries from a variety of points of view, academic and professional journals and reference works, and websites and databases of professional publishers and societies, governmental agencies, and educational organizations. Original source material will be acquired as needed. These collections represent a major commitment of library resources and become long term community and regional source centers.

Collections at the library's small and community branches will consist of materials defined by the Limited level. Collections at the library's regional branches will consist of Limited level materials plus Basic level materials in some well-defined categories and subjects. The Main Library's collections will consist of all materials at the Basic level in almost all subjects and categories. The Main Library will also collect materials at the Research level in some well-defined categories and subjects.

BASIC CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The Charleston County Public Library acquires print, audio-visual, and electronic materials of both permanent value and current interest in all subject areas and for all age and reading levels. The library recognizes and respects the cultural diversity of the many communities it serves, and selects materials that will meet the interests and needs of



those varied communities. The following general criteria are used in adding specific materials to the library's collections, either purchased with library funds or gifts"

1. Timelines and/or popularity of a subject or title
2. Reputation of author, artist, publisher, or producer
3. Local interest
4. Relationship and importance to the collection
5. Critical reviews and publicity
6. professional review journals
7. local media reviews and publicity
8. regional, national & international awards
9. standard bibliographies
10. recognized websites and databases
11. Availability of materials on the subject
12. Provision of alternative viewpoints
13. Purchase price
14. Accessibility to materials elsewhere in the area
15. User suggestions and requests
16. Suitability of format to library purposes

Each of these criteria may not and need not be used to evaluate each item but are applied as general guidelines for consideration of all materials, regardless of format. The Charleston County Public Library recognizes that materials selected for the collection may be controversial and that any given item may offend some individuals.

Selections will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the collection as a whole, and to serving the needs of our diverse community of library users. The Library is committed to the principles and ideals contained in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View declarations.

WEEDING

To ensure that the Library's collections of books, electronic media, and other resources meet the current needs of our changing and diverse community, the Library systematically evaluates and removes, or weeds, items from its collections. The following criteria for weeding or transfer to another CCPL branch are used in this continual evaluation process:

1. An item is out of date or includes inaccurate information.
2. An item is damaged and cannot be mended or rebound.
3. Newer editions or formats have been acquired by the Library.
4. Multiple copies of formerly high demand items that are no longer needed.
5. Item is no longer being used at specific community Library.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The Charleston Public Library is committed to utilizing new technologies to achieve our goals of responding to the informational and recreational needs of our community. As digital technologies, electronic databases and the internet have evolved; the Library has evaluated and employed the most appropriate and effective of these new products which are now essential to our reference and information services, replacing many standard print sources. Direct links to free websites, evaluated and vetted by library staff, are accessible from the Library's homepage.



The Library now offers downloadable audio books and will be adding more downloadable print and streaming audio-visual products as those technologies develop. And while the Library's basic selection criteria apply to all these electronic resources, availability of offsite access, at home or work or school, is a critical factor in their selection. Current and new electronic products are regularly evaluated by the Library's Electronic Resources Evaluation Team which consists of public services staff from various Branches and Main Library departments, and is chaired by Collection Development.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

While the ultimate responsibility for the selection of materials rest with the Library Board, it is the responsibility of the Collection Development Department, under the supervision of the Library Director and the Deputy Director, to implement this policy by delegation of authority and duties.

LABELING AND RATING LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Charleston County Public Library is committed to using only viewpoint-neutral labels and direction aids. The library rejects any labels, signage, or rating notations that restrict or discourage access to materials, or implies any doctrinal or moral recommendation.

The use of subjective, value-driven labels, notes, or direction aids violates the Library Bill of Rights.

RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Library users occasionally object to specific items that have been selected for the collection. Persons seeking the reconsideration of library materials are asked to complete [a reconsideration form](#). Completed forms are reviewed by the Library's Reconsideration Committee which consists of public service staff from various branches and Main departments and Collection Development Librarian, and is chaired by the Deputy Director. The Committee reviews the specific item for inclusion in the collection in the context of the Library's overall objectives, the Collection Development Policy as a whole, the basic selection criteria, and the Library Bill of Rights. The chair of the Committee relays the committee's recommendation to the Library Director who has final authority overall all library collections.

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

Library collections in general and the South Carolina Room collection in particular, are at risk because of chemical deterioration of acidic paper and inferior bindings, conditions that are exacerbated by heavy use, mishandling, improper storage, and poor environmental conditions. The Charleston County Public Library is addressing this problem through staff education efforts on proper handling and recognition of book repair needs and conservation of selected items by such methods as containment, restoration, photo duplication, and repair. Preservation and conservation efforts are being coordinated systemwide by specialists assigned to the South Carolina Room.

GIFTS

The Library accepts donations of books, magazines, and audio-visual materials. The Library reserves the right to make final disposition of all gifts. Before being added to the collection, all gift materials must meet the same criteria as materials purchased with public funds. Gifts may be added to the library collection or rejected at the discretion of the library. Rejected gifts may be sent to the Friends of the Charleston County Library for public sale, may be discarded, or may be disposed of in some other way. Gifts are not returned to the donor.



LABELING AND RATING SYSTEMS

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling and rating systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Labels on library materials may be viewpoint-neutral directional aids designed to save the time of users, or they may be attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to materials. When labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes, it is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the material, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the material, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the material. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Viewpoint-neutral directional aids facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate materials. The materials are housed on open shelves and are equally accessible to all users, who may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

Directional aids can have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling.

Many organizations use rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public regarding the organizations' opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, Web sites, games, or other materials. The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems by a library violates the Library Bill of Rights. When requested, librarians should provide information about rating systems equitably, regardless of viewpoint.

Adopting such systems into law or library policy may be unconstitutional. If labeling or rating systems are mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Libraries sometimes acquire resources that include ratings as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the ratings—if placed there by, or with permission of, the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation (see "[Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)"). In addition, the inclusion of ratings on bibliographic records in library catalogs is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Prejudicial labeling and ratings presuppose the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They presuppose that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

Adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June

26, 1990; January 19, 2005; July 15, 2009; updated May 29, 2013 to reflect new Mission Statement.

Reaffirmed by the CCPL Board of Trustees June 2016



CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

TITLE: _____ FORMAT _____

AUTHOR: _____ PUBLISHER: _____

REQUEST INITIATED BY: _____ CCPL LIBRARY CARD # _____

ARE YOU A RESIDENT OR PROPERTY OWNER OF CHARLESTON COUNTY? _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

1. To what in the work do you object? Please include specific citations (e.g., page numbers, etc.).

2. Did you read, view, or hear the entire work?

3. What do you feel might be the result of exposure to this work?

4. What do you believe is the theme of this work?

5. Is there anything good about this work?

6. Are you aware of judgments of this work by literary or other critics?

7. In its place, what work would you recommend to cover this subject?

8. What would you like the library to do about this work?

Signature _____ Date _____

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