

FY22 YEAR TO DATE BUDGET REPORT

ORG	OBJ	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	ORIGINAL APPROP	TRANFRS/ADJSMTS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBRANCES	AVAILABLE BUDGET	% USED
0161051	510111	FULL TIME SALARIES	1,663,037	6,181	1,669,218	1,014,622.62	0.00	654,595	60.80
0161051	510112	PART TIME SALARIES	641,476	-442	641,034	403,761.59	0.00	237,272	63.00
0161051	510130	OVERTIME	25,000	0	25,000	16,833.47	0.00	8,167	67.30
0161051	510141	SHIFT DIFFERENTIAL	4,824	0	4,824	2,312.50	0.00	2,512	47.90
0161051	510143	LONGEVITY	29,516	0	29,516	17,047.39	0.00	12,469	57.80
0161051	510190	CLOTHING ALLOWANCE	2,934	442	3,376	3,376.00	0.00	0	100.00
		Total 0161051 LIBRARY - PERS. SVCS.	2,366,787	6,181	2,372,968	1,457,953.57	0.00	915,014	61.40
0161052	520211	ELECTRICITY	143,589	0	143,589	54,467.97	41,532.03	47,589	66.90
0161052	520213	GAS	39,172	0	39,172	2,706.30	21,293.70	15,172	61.30
0161052	520240	OFFICE EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	18,029	0	18,029	11,693.05	1,581.61	4,754	73.60
0161052	520241	BUILDING MAINTENANCE	43,500	0	43,500	31,325.25	6,051.62	6,123	85.90
0161052	520244	COMPUTER MAINTENANCE	92,112	9,575	101,687	70,271.26	26,111.03	5,305	94.80
0161052	530327	REGIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES	76,569	0	76,569	73,765.00	0.00	2,804	96.30
0161052	530342	COMMUNICATIONS - POSTAGE	1,600	0	1,600	1,600.00	0.00	0	100.00
0161052	530383	PROGRAM SERVICES	7,000	0	7,000	4,439.05	997.50	1,563	77.70
0161052	540421	OFFICE SUPPLIES	12,000	0	12,000	4,861.28	3,581.84	3,557	70.40
0161052	540422	PRINTING & FORMS	6,300	0	6,300	3,351.30	1,532.00	1,417	77.50
0161052	540425	PROGRAM SUPPLIES	600	0	600	600.00	0.00	0	100.00
0161052	540430	BUILDING MAINTENANCE SUP.	17,340	74	17,414	6,769.58	4,302.46	6,342	63.60
0161052	550511	BOOKS	443,000	0	443,000	269,245.40	165,498.34	8,256	98.10
0161052	550512	BOOK PROCESSING	41,800	9,064	50,864	24,046.28	7,231.49	19,586	61.50
0161052	570710	IN STATE TRAVEL	500	0	500	0.00	0.00	500	0.00
0161052	570730	DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,300	0	1,300	750.00	0.00	550	57.70
0161052	570735	PROJECT LITERACY/TOWN	8,700	0	8,700	3,214.85	2,085.15	3,400	60.90
0161052	570785	COMMITTEE EXPENSES	2,600	0	2,600	235.80	204.00	2,160	16.90
0161052	570787	STAFF DEVELOPMENT	10,000	0	10,000	677.00	2,860.00	6,463	35.40
		Total 0161052 LIBRARY - EXPENSES	965,711	18,713	984,424	564,019.37	284,862.77	135,542	86.20
0161058	580840	BUILDING RENOVATIONS	81,000	16,283	97,283	8,318.21	13,305.00	75,660	22.20
0161058	580870	REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT	20,000	3,047	23,047	5,122.76	0.00	17,924	22.20
		Total 0161058 LIBRARY - CAPITAL	101,000	19,330	120,330	13,440.97	13,305.00	93,584	22.20
Grand Total			3,433,498	44,224	3,477,722	2,035,413.91	298,167.77	1,144,141	67.10

FY22 FUNDS AND GRANTS

Fund or Grant	7/1/2021	Available to spend balance as of 7/1/2021	Deposits YTD	Expended YTD	Current available balance	Notes
Book Funds						
Pratt (includes Pratt Stock)	138,821.75	5,136.62	2,667.63	-	5,136.62	80% of int on periodicals
Whitney	3,382.14	3,382.14	78.69	-	3,460.83	
Mead	5,941.98	2,941.98	202.32	-	3,144.30	
Charles	2,647.84	2,447.84	63.17	-	2,511.01	Armenian History books
Barry	3,756.94	3,756.94	89.60	-	3,846.54	
McGuire	3,120.05	2,120.05	98.33	-	2,218.38	
W. Pierce	23,778.90	3,778.90	680.60	-	4,459.50	
MacDonald	9,408.92	4,408.92	248.81	11.61	4,646.12	Grief related books
O'Reilly	10,407.12	9,907.12	248.26	-	10,155.38	Fiction
Stone	3,711.56	3,711.56	88.54	-	3,800.10	
Campbell	5,429.03	4,429.03	129.51	-	4,558.54	Large print books
Santoro	2,286.36	686.36	54.52	-	740.88	Art
Brown	2,579.72	1,579.72	62.87	-	1,642.59	Sci-fi books
Keith	4,135.89	3,135.89	98.68	-	3,234.57	Wat history books
Drucker	2,975.95	2,975.95	71.00	-	3,046.95	Humanities books
Special Gifts	87,185.31	87,185.31	124,987.79	113,120.51	99,052.59	Unrestricted
- Cohen Fund	9,185.14	9,185.14	-	-	9,185.14	Cookbook and Mysteries
- Makerspace Fund	9,685.00	9,685.00	-	5,712.96	3,972.04	Makerspace materials
Other Funds & Grants						
Kaveny	37,090.36	8,718.87	884.69	-	9,603.56	Benefit of the library
Masters	4,512.06	1,805.06	107.63	-	1,912.69	Trustees discretion
B. Pierce	2,075.03	2,075.03	52.09	161.00	1,966.12	Trustees discretion
LIG/MEG	205,409.44	205,409.44	56,253.67	105,054.75	156,608.36	
Revolving Printing Account	7,878.28	7,878.28	6,435.51	8,080.90	6,232.89	
Friends of Project Literacy Fundraising	29,946.47	29,946.47	39,407.50	11,532.52	57,821.45	
McCall Gift Fund	58,887.60	58,887.60	-	3,137.24	55,750.36	For children's dept only

GRIFFIN FUND REPORT

MONTH ENDING	BEG BAL	ADDED	WITHDRAWN	INTEREST / DIVIDENDS	INVESTMENT MKT VAL ADJ	VERIZON DIVIDENDS	VERIZON STOCK MKT VAL ADJ	END BAL	CASH HELD FOR INV	CASH AVAILABLE FOR SPENDING	INV	
FY21 BAL FWD	228,632.81							\$ 228,632.81	\$ -	\$ 50,612.99	\$ 178,019.82	-
31-Jul	228,632.81		(5,549.85)	37.68	567.41		(808.75)	\$ 222,879.30	\$ -	\$ 45,668.23	\$ 177,211.07	-
31-Aug	222,879.30			2,125.67	247.25		(2,523.30)	\$ 222,728.92	\$ -	\$ 48,041.15	\$ 174,687.77	-
30-Sep	222,728.92			128.65	(921.41)	-	(3,202.65)	\$ 218,733.51	\$ -	\$ 47,248.39	\$ 171,485.12	-
31-Oct	218,733.51			54.65	567.10		(3,299.70)	\$ 216,055.56	\$ -	\$ 47,870.14	\$ 168,185.42	
30-Nov	216,055.56			2,116.57	(206.53)		(8,799.20)	\$ 209,166.40	\$ -	\$ 49,780.18	\$ 159,386.22	
31-Dec	209,166.40			92.22	1,111.44		5,457.15	\$ 215,827.21	\$ -	\$ 50,983.84	\$ 164,843.37	
31-Jan	215,837.21			23.06	(747.01)		4,108.45	\$ 219,221.71	\$ -	\$ 50,259.89	\$ 168,951.82	
28-Feb	217,052.48			-	-		-	\$ 217,052.48	\$ -	\$ 50,259.89	\$ 168,951.82	
31-Mar	220,676.59			-	-		-	\$ 220,676.59	\$ -	\$ 50,259.89	\$ 168,951.82	
30-Apr	230,790.39			-	-		-	\$ 230,790.39	\$ -	\$ 50,259.89	\$ 168,951.82	
31-May	229,987.02			-	-		-	\$ 229,987.02	\$ -	\$ 50,259.89	\$ 168,951.82	
30-Jun	228,060.12			-	-		-	\$ 228,060.12	\$ -	\$ 50,259.89	\$ 168,951.82	
FY22 TOTAL		-	(5,549.85)	4,578.50	618.25	-	(9,068.00)	\$ 219,211.71	-	50,259.89	\$ 168,951.82	-

FUNDS USED TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL SHARES

Burke FY22		Munis		Teen Mat	Teen Prog	Child Mat	Child Prog	Adult Mat	Adult Prog	Museums	Mov.Lic
\$27,504.04			\$27,504.00	\$2,750.00	\$2,600.00	\$1,375.00	\$8,854.00	\$1,375.00	\$3,900.00	\$5,000.00	\$1,650.00
PO or Check #	Date		Vendor/Description								
Spent as of	2/24/2022		\$20,270.92	\$2,750.00	\$1,260.40	\$1,324.80	\$5,987.44	\$1,318.13	\$2,909.58	\$4,460.00	\$260.57
Accounts as of											
2/24/2022			\$7,233.08	\$0.00	\$1,339.60	\$50.20	\$2,866.56	\$56.87	\$990.42	\$540.00	\$1,389.43

FY22 HATCH FINANCIALS

	July 1 Allocation	Adjustments (new funds added)	Encumbrances	Expenditures	Available funds
Special Gifts	\$ 2,125.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (1,580.00)	\$ 545.00
LIG/MEG	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Building Committee	\$ 325.00	\$ 450.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 775.00
Watertown Commuty Foundation Grant	\$ 7,560.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 400.00	\$ (4,052.96)	\$ 3,187.04
Town Budget: Equip. Maint.	\$ 14,680.00	\$ -	\$ 564.56	\$ (9,865.18)	\$ 4,250.26
Totals	\$ 24,690.00	\$ 530.00	\$ 964.56	\$ (15,498.14)	\$ 8,757.30



Library Director
Leone E. Cole

TO: Library Board of Trustees
FROM: Caitlin Browne, Interim Library Director
DATE: February 24, 2022
RE: Donations

The following donations were received in February:

\$9075 from various donors for the bookmobile in honor of Leone Cole

\$4471.50 from the Friends of Project Literacy for Project Literacy New Beginner Class



Library Director
Leone E. Cole

To: Library Trustees
FROM: Caitlin Browne, Interim Library Director
DATE: February 18, 2022
RE: Staff Day requests

I would like to have in-service training for staff on Wednesday, April 27. I have two requests to make this happen.

1. I would like approval to close the library from 9 am to 2 pm. We would be open from 2 pm to 9 pm.
2. I would like approval to use up to \$750 from the Pierce Fund for food and supplies. This would include coffee, snacks, and lunch as well as any incidental supplies needed for team building exercises.

Our library staff have been working with dedication through the pandemic and during this time of transition. We need an opportunity for connection to re-energize. If approved, the focus of the staff day will be team building and strengthening internal communication.

Thank you for your consideration.



Library Director
Leone E. Cole

TO: Library Trustees
FROM: Caitlin Browne, Interim Library Director
DATE: February 18, 2022
RE: Consideration and Action on Pride Events

This year for the first time WFPL is planning Pride celebrations and programming for the month of June. Staff have been working to coordinate a community wide festival celebration at Saltonstall Park, Watertown Pride Extravaganza, with the help of the City Arts and Culture Planner and other community partners. In addition to this day long event we are planning four separate library programs throughout the month of June. Currently, library staff are working to write grant proposals for funding for some of these events. We will also be seeking funds from the Building Committee.

To help facilitate these programs I am requesting your support in two ways.

1. Expressed support to raise the Pride flag on the library flagpole for the month of June.
2. Approval to apply for 2 grants.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council grant for festivals is for \$1500. Unfortunately the grant is due on March 1 so I am asking for post-submission approval for this grant. As of this writing the grant document is not finalized but it will be provided prior to the March 1 meeting. More information about this grant is available at <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/festivals/application-process/>

The Watertown Community Foundation provides \$5000 program grants. The cycle has not opened yet but we will submit an application for the full amount. We will submit this for your approval at the April Trustees meeting.



Library Director
Leone E. Cole

TO: Library Trustees
FROM: Caitlin Browne, Interim Library Director
DATE: February 24, 2022
RE: John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award

The John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award is given annually to eight libraries. The award comes with a \$10,000 cash prize. I would like approval to submit an application for our 2021 Zine Fest campaign.

If approved Jamie Kallestad, Print and Digital Promotion Specialist, will submit the application on behalf of the library. If selected as a winner Jamie would be required to attend the annual ALA Conference in June to accept the award and we have the funds to support this. Any money awarded would be put toward marketing and promotion projects and the 2022 Zine Fest which we have already started to plan.

The application is due April 1.

About the award

"The John Cotton Dana Award, provided in conjunction with the H.W. Wilson Foundation, Core a division of the American Library Association and EBSCO, honors outstanding library public relations, whether a summer reading program, a year-long centennial celebration, fundraising for a new college library, an awareness campaign or an innovative partnership in the community.

In recognition of their achievement, John Cotton Dana award winners receive a cash award from the H.W. Wilson Foundation. The John Cotton Dana Awards are presented at an elegant reception hosted by EBSCO held during the American Library Association annual conference."

More information is available at <https://bit.ly/wfplaward>

Thank you for your consideration.



Library Director
Leone E. Cole

TO: Library Trustees
FROM: Caitlin Browne, Interim Library Director
DATE: February 18, 2022
RE: Intellectual Freedom and the Watertown Free Public Library

In light of recent book challenges and bans on the national level there have been questions about the WFPL stance on intellectual freedom. In order to facilitate this discussion I have included the following materials for your review.

1. WFPL Collection Development Policy which includes the process for reconsideration of library materials
2. Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q&A
3. ALA Statement on Book Censorship
4. Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship

For further reading visit <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/fight-censorship>

The library receives requests for reconsideration infrequently. The most recent request was to remove Curious George from the children's collection in 2017. The majority of reconsideration requests we have on file are for children's materials.

I hope these documents help to inform your understanding of the importance of a Trustee's role in protecting the library as an institution and the intellectual freedom of our patrons.

Collection Development Policy

Watertown Free Public Library (WFPL)

Purpose of Policy

The WFPL must have a collection development policy to guide staff in its efforts to meet community needs and interests due to the volume of publishing, as well as the limitation of budget and space. This policy is used by library staff to evaluate and select materials. This policy also serves to acquaint the general public with the principles which guide staff through the selection process. Please see the separate policy in regards to the WFPL Local History Collection.

WFPL Mission Statement

The Watertown Free Public Library extends beyond its walls to connect people to ideas, information, education, creative opportunities, and to each other. While preserving the rich history of Watertown, the WFPL embraces the advancement of library service, inspires personal development, and promotes community. The library provides free recreation, entertainment, and enrichment. It welcomes and serves everyone.

Responsibility for Selection

The ultimate responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Director delegates the selection of materials to library staff.

Principles of Collection Development

The WFPL adheres to the following collection development policy principles:

- We serve patrons of all ages and cultural backgrounds, and we realize that patrons have diverse needs, interests, value systems, and reading abilities.
- The Library provides the best possible collection with the financial resources available. The decision to select any item for the collection is based on demand, anticipated need, and the effort to maintain a wide and balanced collection.
- Through ongoing assessment and maintenance, the library staff keep collections relevant in content and useful to patrons. Factors used to determine whether material is added or kept in the collection include, but are not limited to: currency, readability, accuracy, patron demand, circulation statistics, cost, availability, ease of use, critical assessments in review media, local interest, and the relationship of the material to other materials in the collection. New material types will be added to the collection when industry reviews indicate that the format is reasonably stable / viable and local requests suggest that a significant portion of the community has the necessary technology to make use of the new format. Similarly, the library staff may remove a material type when analysis demonstrates it is no longer a viable or desirable medium.
- Additional factors to be considered when purchasing digital materials and subscribing to electronic resources include, but are not limited to: hardware/system requirements, licensing

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Updated August 1, 2017

Updated April 7, 2021

and access restrictions, comparison of content and cost with other available formats, training needs, vendor capacity for direct customer support, and privacy policies.

- Not all materials will be suitable for, or of interest to, all segments of the community.
- Library staff is committed to providing an adequate number of copies of each title purchased so that patrons do not need to wait an unreasonable length of time to get any item.
- By participating with other library network members in resource sharing, the Library is able to provide patrons with a larger volume of information.
- Library staff encourages purchase suggestions from patrons and items may be acquired if such suggestions fall within the collection development criteria.
- The Library provides free and open access. Selection criteria for children, teen, and adult materials differ; however, any patron may access and/or borrow from the entire collection. The Library will not act in the role of censor for any age level, material type, or subject matter.
- The Library encourages parents to use the library with their children. The Library does not act *in loco parentis*, that is, caregivers, adopt the role as a parent for a child in the library. What this means is that the Library supports parents' rights and responsibilities to guide their children's reading and viewing of library materials. Librarians are available to assist parents, but not to determine what children should read, view, or borrow from the library.
- The Library endorses and defends the concept of intellectual freedom as protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Documents that support the foundation of intellectual freedom are included in the appendices of this document.

Gift and Donation Policy

The WFPL welcomes donations of books and other library materials that are in good condition except for textbooks, magazines, or encyclopedias. All donations become the property of the Library. Materials may be added to the collection if it falls within the scope of the Library's collection development policy. The Library reserves the right to utilize donated materials in whatever way best benefits the collection and services. No donations are accepted unless given to the Library without restriction. Donations may be added to the collection, sold with the proceeds to benefit the Library, passed on to other libraries, or discarded if necessary.

The Library accepts donation of zines from creators and third parties. Zines that are of a highly personal nature will not be accepted by third party donation unless written permission is granted by the creator. The donor is responsible for obtaining an estimate or appraisal of the donated materials for tax purposes. The Library is unable to assess the value of these items. The donor may request a letter of acknowledgement from the Library for their donation. Rules and regulations regarding charitable income tax deductions are available from the Internal Revenue Service.

Gifts of money for the purchase of materials are also welcome. Selection of the materials will be made by the Director in consultation with the donor within the scope of the Library's collection development policy. The donor may request that bookplates be placed in/upon the materials purchased.

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Maintaining the Collection

The Library collection shall be periodically examined for the purpose of removal, repair, or replacement of materials. The same criteria for selection of materials will be used for the removal of materials from the collection. Materials no longer useful to the Library's collection will be sold, passed on to other libraries, or otherwise disposed of.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The WFPL recognizes that some materials are controversial and that at any given time an item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made based on approval or disapproval but solely on the principles stated in this collection development policy. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from injury or theft.

The WFPL adheres to and supports the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix B) and the Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix C) which state that censorship is purely an individual matter. While anyone is free to reject books and other materials he/she does not approve of for him or herself, an individual cannot exercise this right of censorship and restrict the freedom of other persons to read or use library materials.

Responsibility for supervising children's use of the library and library materials rests with parents or legal guardians. At no time will the library staff act *in loco parentis*. Selection of library material will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

Patrons requesting material be withdrawn from the collection may complete a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form (Appendix A). These are the steps in the Reconsideration process. During this process the library material remains in the library collection.

1. The request for reconsideration will be addressed in writing by the Library Director within ten (10) business days.
2. The Library Director may wish to investigate the content of the item in question or he/she may assign a panel of Library staff members to evaluate the item in question. This will be completed in no more than thirty (30) business days of the initial request for reconsideration.
3. The panel's recommendations will be considered, and the Library Director's final decision will be mailed to the patron.
4. Patrons may appeal the decision of the Library Director to the WFPL Board of Trustees. An appeal must be made in writing and delivered to the Library Director.
5. Upon receipt of the written appeal, discussion of the appeal will be scheduled on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Library Board of Trustees. Their decision will be final.

Appendices:

- A. [Request for Reconsideration of Materials Form](#)
- B. [Library Bill of Rights](#)
- C. [Freedom to Read Statement](#)
- D. [The Freedom to View](#)

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- E. [Free Access to Libraries for Minors-An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)
- F. [Advocating for Intellectual Rights](#)



Watertown Free Public Library
Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Representing: ☐ Self ☐ Organization (please name) _____

Author: _____

Title: _____

Publisher: _____

Type of Material: ☐ Book ☐ Magazine ☐ Video ☐ Other

1. Have you read the Library's Collection Development Policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No (please do so)

2. Did you read, view or listen to the entire material? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. To what in this material do you object? (please be specific and cite pages)

4. What do you feel might be the result of reading, viewing, or listening to this material?

5. Have you read any professional reviews of this item? If yes, please list below:

6. What action do you suggest we take with this item?

7. What could we add to the collection to represent your point of view?

Signature / Date: _____

This a public document and may be reprinted.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q & A

- What is Intellectual Freedom? | Why is Intellectual Freedom Important? | What is Censorship?
- How Does Censorship Happen? | Who Attempts Censorship?
- What is the Relationship Between Censorship and Intellectual Freedom?
- How Do Censors Justify Their Demands that Information Be Suppressed?
- What Are the Most Frequently Censored Materials? | Aren't There Some Kinds of Expression that Really Should Be Censored?
- What Is Obscenity? | What about Protecting Children from Pornography, Whether or Not It Is Legally Obscene?
- How Do You Guide Children When You Can't Be with Them 24 Hours A Day?
- Don't Librarians Censor Everything They Choose Not to Buy for the Library?
- What If I Can't Find Something in My Library that Represents My Point of View?
- If Materials are on a Library Shelf, Doesn't That Mean the Library Approves of Those Materials?
- What Can I Do to Fight Censorship?

What Is Intellectual Freedom?

Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.

Why Is Intellectual Freedom Important?

Intellectual freedom is the basis for our democratic system. We expect our people to be self-governors. But to do so responsibly, our citizenry must be well-informed. Libraries provide the ideas and information, in a variety of formats, to allow people to inform themselves.

Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas.

What Is Censorship?

Censorship is the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons—individuals, groups or government officials—find objectionable or dangerous. It is no more complicated than someone saying, “Don’t let anyone read this book, or buy that magazine, or view that film, because I object to it!” Censors try to use the power of the state to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable, on everyone else. Censors pressure public institutions, like libraries, to suppress and remove from public access information they judge inappropriate or dangerous, so that no one else has the chance to read or view the material and make up their own minds about it. The censor wants to prejudge materials for everyone.

How Does Censorship Happen?

Censorship occurs when expressive materials, like books, magazines, films and videos, or works of art, are removed or kept from public access. Individuals and pressure groups identify materials to which they object. Sometimes they succeed in pressuring schools not to use them, libraries not to shelve them, book and video stores not to carry them, publishers not to publish them, or art galleries not to display them. Censorship also occurs when materials are restricted to particular audiences, based on their age or other characteristics.

Who Attempts Censorship?

In most instances, a censor is a sincerely concerned individual who believes that censorship can improve society, protect children, and restore what the censor sees as lost moral values. But under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, each of us has the right to read, view, listen to, and disseminate constitutionally protected ideas, even if a censor finds those ideas offensive.

What Is The Relationship Between Censorship And Intellectual Freedom?

In expressing their opinions and concerns, would-be censors are exercising the same rights librarians seek to protect when they confront censorship. In making their criticisms known, people who object to certain ideas are exercising the same rights as those who created and disseminated the material to which they object. Their rights to voice opinions and try to persuade others to adopt those opinions is protected only if the rights of persons to express ideas they despise are also protected. The rights of both sides must be protected, or neither will survive.

How Do Censors Justify Their Demands That Information Be Suppressed?

Censors might sincerely believe that certain materials are so offensive, or present ideas that are so hateful and destructive to society, that they simply must not see the light of day. Others are worried that younger or weaker people will be badly influenced by bad ideas, and will do bad things as a result. Still others believe that there is a very clear distinction between ideas that are right and morally uplifting, and ideas that are wrong and morally corrupting, and wish to ensure that society has the benefit of their perception. They believe that certain individuals, certain institutions, even society itself, will be endangered if particular ideas are disseminated without restriction. What censors often don't consider is that, if they succeed in suppressing the ideas they don't like today, others may use that precedent to suppress the ideas they do like tomorrow.

What Are The Most Frequently Censored Materials?

Throughout history, books have been challenged for many reasons, including political content, sexual expression, or language offensive to some people's racial, cultural, or ethnic background, gender or

sexuality, or political or religious beliefs. Materials considered heretical, blasphemous, seditious, obscene or inappropriate for children have often been censored.

Since the dawn of recorded human expression, people have been burned at the stake, forced to drink poison, crucified, ostracized and vilified for what they wrote and believed.

Aren't There Some Kinds Of Expression That Really Should Be Censored?

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that there are certain narrow categories of speech that are not protected by the First Amendment: obscenity, child pornography, defamation, and "fighting words," or speech that incites immediate and imminent lawless action. The government is also allowed to enforce secrecy of some information when it is considered essential to national security, like troop movements in time of war, classified information about defense, etc.

What Is Obscenity?

Sexual expression is a frequent target of censorship. But the Supreme Court has told us that material is not obscene unless a judge or jury finds that an average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the material appeals to the prurient (or morbid, shameful, and unhealthy) interest in sex (note that, by its definition, the Court implicitly recognized that there is such a thing as a healthy interest in sex!); that it depicts or describes certain sexual acts defined in state law in a patently offensive way; and that a reasonable person (community standards do not control this last element) would find that the material lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. All three elements must be present for material to be judged by a judge or jury as obscene and, therefore, illegal.

What About Protecting Children From Pornography, Whether Or Not It Is Legally Obscene?

The primary responsibility for rearing children rests with parents. If parents want to keep certain ideas or forms of expression away from their children, they must assume the responsibility for shielding those children. Governmental institutions cannot be expected to usurp or interfere with parental obligations and responsibilities when it comes to deciding what a child may read or view.

How Do You Guide Children When You Can't Be With Them 24 Hours A Day?

Parents who believe that the current state of society and communications make it difficult to shield their children must nevertheless find a way to cope with what they see as that reality within the context of their own family. Libraries can be extremely helpful, providing information about parenting, open communication between parents and children, how to communicate with caregivers and the parents of your children's friends about your rules, and the opinions of various organizations representing a wide spectrum of points of view about materials for children.

If a child borrows something from a library which that child's parent believes is inappropriate, the parents

are encouraged to return the item and make use of the expertise of their librarian to locate materials they prefer, among the hundreds of thousands of choices most public libraries make available.

Don't Librarians Censor Everything They Choose Not To Buy For The Library?

No library can make everything available, and selection decisions must be made. Selection is an inclusive process, where the library affirmatively seeks out materials which will serve its mission of providing a broad diversity of points of view and subject matter. By contrast, censorship is an exclusive process, by which individuals or institutions seek to deny access to or otherwise suppress ideas and information because they find those ideas offensive and do not want others to have access to them. There are many objective reasons unrelated to the ideas expressed in materials that a library might decide not to add those materials to its collection: redundancy, lack of community interest, expense, space, etc. Unless the decision is based on a disapproval of the ideas expressed and desire to keep those ideas away from public access, a decision not to select materials for a library collection is not censorship.

What If I Can't Find Something In My Library That Represents My Point Of View?

Ask for the materials you want. Libraries strive to serve the interests of the entire community. If your library is unable to purchase the material you want, it may be able to obtain it for you on interlibrary loan. Your library is there to help you find the information you need or want.

If Materials Are On A Library Shelf, Doesn't That Mean The Library Approves Of Those Materials?

The presence of any particular materials in a library collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials. The library is simply doing its job as a neutral provider of information from all points of view—if the library “endorses” anything, it is your right to have access to a broad selection of materials. If you don't find materials to your liking, ask your librarian to help you!

What Can I Do To Fight Censorship?

Stay informed. Know what is happening in your state legislature, local school and library boards, and city councils. Write letters expressing your view to your mayor, and your state and federal representatives and senators. Attend your local school and library board meetings.

May 29, 2007

ALA Statement on Book Censorship

The American Library Association opposes widespread efforts to censor books in U.S. schools and libraries

CHICAGO - Due to a dramatic uptick in book challenges and outright removal of books from libraries, ALA's Executive Board and the Boards of Directors for all of ALA's eight divisions have released the following joint statement regarding attempts to remove materials that focus on LGBTQIA+ issues and books by Black authors or that document the Black experience or the experiences of other BIPOC individuals:

In recent months, a few organizations have advanced the proposition that the voices of the marginalized have no place on library shelves. To this end they have launched campaigns demanding the censorship of books and resources that mirror the lives of those who are gay, queer, or transgender, or that tell the stories of persons who are Black, Indigenous or persons of color. Falsely claiming that these works are subversive, immoral, or worse, these groups induce elected and non-elected officials to abandon constitutional principles, ignore the rule of law, and disregard individual rights to promote government censorship of library collections. Some of these groups even resort to intimidation and threats to achieve their ends, targeting the safety and livelihoods of library workers, educators, and board members who have dedicated themselves to public service, to informing our communities, and educating our youth.

ALA strongly condemns these acts of censorship and intimidation.

We are committed to defending the constitutional rights of all individuals, of all ages, to use the resources and services of libraries. We champion and defend the freedom to speak, the freedom to publish, and the freedom to read, as promised by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

We stand opposed to censorship and any effort to coerce belief, suppress opinion, or punish those whose expression does not conform to what is deemed to be orthodox in history, politics, or belief. The unfettered exchange of ideas is essential to the preservation of a free and democratic society.

Libraries manifest the promises of the First Amendment by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, so that every person has the opportunity to freely read and consider information and ideas regardless of their content or the viewpoint of the author. This requires the professional expertise of librarians who work in partnership with their communities to curate collections that serve the information needs of all their users.

In 1953, when confronted with comparable threats to our democratic values, the American Library

Association issued the Freedom to Read Statement, a declaration in support of freedom to think or believe as one chooses, the freedom to express one's thoughts and beliefs without fear or retaliation, and the right to access information without restriction. ALA's Executive Board, staff, and member leaders reaffirm not only the principles of the Freedom to Read statement but also the daily practices that ensure it continues to inform the profession and that library workers and library trustees have the training, information, tools, and support they need to celebrate and defend their communities' right to read and to learn.

With the freedom to read under threat, the ALA, including its Executive Board, Divisions, Roundtables, and other units stand firmly with our members, the entire library community, allied organizations, and all those across this country who choose to exercise their own right to read and access information freely, and we call on others to do the same.

*American Library Association Executive Board
American Association of School Librarians Board of Directors
Association of College and Research Libraries Board of Directors
Association for Library Service to Children Board of Directors
Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures Board of Directors
Public Library Association Board of Directors
Reference and User Services Association Board of Directors
Young Adult Library Services Association Board of Directors
United for Libraries Board of Directors*

The American Library Association's (ALA) Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) is actively involved in providing confidential legal guidance and strategic support to libraries and library professionals in communities across the country impacted by the recent surge in book challenges. From June 1, 2021, to September 30, 2021, OIF has tracked 155 unique censorship incidents, and provided direct support and consultation in 120 of those cases. "We're seeing an unprecedented volume of challenges in the fall of 2021," says Deborah Caldwell-Stone, OIF's Director. "In my twenty years with ALA, I can't recall a time when we had multiple challenges coming in on a daily basis."

Established December 1, 1967, the Office for Intellectual Freedom is the premier advocate for the First Amendment right to read in libraries.

OIF and ALA divisions and offices provide tools and resources for libraries, including challenge support (<https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport>); consulting and training (<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/oif/consulting>); and awareness campaigns like Banned Books Week (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks>) and the annual Top 10 Most Challenged Books (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10>) list. Other support for library workers facing book challenges include the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund (<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/affiliates/relatedgroups/merrittfund/merritthumanitarian>), devoted to the support, maintenance, and welfare of librarians whose employment is threatened because of discrimination or because of their defense of intellectual freedom. A clearinghouse of resources is available on ALA's Fight Censorship (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/fight-censorship>) page.

Contact:

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11/29/2021



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship

Terms and terminology are a powerful tool when their definitions are misused, re-written, or conflated. The present climate requires we clearly define the language, especially to understand and defend intellectual freedom and censorship challenges. This collection of assembled terms and phrases strives to provide clarity, relying where possible on other American Library Association (ALA) glossaries for consistency. Additional notes within definitions may suggest how terms are being misapplied or used as a signal to others with the same agenda. We welcome your feedback and suggestions to refine what is presented here; email united@ala.org.

Anti-racist curriculum - For many educators, teaching through an anti-racist lens means helping students understand racism's origins and guises, past and present, so they can act to disrupt White supremacy. (NEA: <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/teaching-anti-racist-lens>)

Ban - A removal of materials from a library based on the objections of a person or group. Sometimes the ban is a decision made by a committee, and other times an administrator or staff member removes books without following a library's policy.

Censorship - A decision made by a governing authority or its representative(s) to suppress, exclude, expurgate, remove, or restrict public access to a library resource based on a person or group's disapproval of its content or its author/creator. See also Challenge.

Challenge - "An attempt to have a library resource or program removed or access to it restricted, based on the objections of a person or group. Challenges do not simply involve a person expressing a point of view; rather, they are an attempt to remove material from the curriculum or library, thereby restricting the access of others. Challenges sometimes lead to censorship."

CIPA - Acronym for the Children's Internet Protection Act (P.L. 106-554). CIPA places restrictions on the use of funding for internet access that is available through the Universal Service E-rate discount program and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) to public schools and public libraries. CIPA requires funding recipients to adopt internet safety policies and use filtering software that blocks or filters certain visual images from being accessed through the internet.

***Note: it is important to understand how filtering software works and how it is maintained (especially in your library), as laypersons most often do not.**

Compelling government interest - A term used by courts when assessing the burden of government regulation or action upon the exercise of a fundamental right such as freedom of speech. For such a rule to withstand constitutional challenge, the government must show more than a merely important reason for the rule. The reason for the rule must be compelling; that is, it must be so important that it outweighs even the most valued and basic freedom it negatively affects.

[continued](#)



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

Complaint - When a patron expresses concern about the appropriateness of a library program, service, or material. Some complaints are resolved with a simple conversation with the librarian. A complaint does not necessarily trigger the full Reconsideration Procedure.

Confidentiality - A condition in which personally identifiable information is not shared without the consent of the user or as required by law. In a library setting, confidentiality exists when the library is in possession of personally identifiable information about users and keeps that information private on their behalf.

Content-neutral restrictions - Constitutionally permissible restrictions on expression that apply uniformly to all speech regardless of the subject matter discussed or the topic addressed by the speaker. Public libraries, like all government agencies, may not silence speakers based on the content or topic of their speech or due to controversy. See also Viewpoint-neutral Restrictions.

COPPA - Acronym for the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (15 U.S.C. § 6501; 16 CFR § 312), which includes provisions requiring commercial online content providers who either have actual knowledge that they are dealing with a child under thirteen years of age or who aim their content at children to obtain verifiable parental consent before they can collect, archive, use, or resell any personal information pertaining to that child.

Crisis communication - The means by which an organization provides information to stakeholders and their community during and regarding a negative or challenging situation that could harm the reputation or operation of the organization or institution. In essence, the way a library communicates information about a negative situation, conflict or crisis internally and externally.

***Note:** A coherent plan for Crisis Communication should be made to cover any situation: who (role rather than name) will be consulted; who will write the content; how will the information be disseminated; etc. No organization wants multiple potentially inconsistent announcements released.

<https://pagecentertraining.psu.edu/public-relations-ethics/ethics-in-crisis-management/lesson-1-prominent-ethical-issues-in-crisis-situations/crisis-communication/>

Critical race theory (CRT) - A framework and/or analytical tool primarily used in university-level courses. Originating in the 1970s, CRT was first used as a way to help law students think critically about the impact of historical and present-day racism on the legal system. In the 1990s, some colleges of education also started incorporating CRT into their coursework to help aspiring school administrators and teachers better understand inequities in the context of education. <https://www.tasb.org/services/legal-services/tasb-school-law-esource/instruction/documents/critical-race-theory.pdf> Critical race theory (CRT) is not part of the social studies curriculum at the k12 level.

***Note:** Critics of intellectual freedom or an anti-racist curriculum often bucket anything pertaining to a non-white perspective or experience (fiction or nonfiction) as CRT.



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

Culturally responsive teaching (also CRT) [sometimes **Culturally responsive instruction**] - Connects students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with what they learn in school to help students access rigorous curriculum and develop higher-level academic skills. Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) works to bridge the gap between teacher and student by helping the teacher understand the cultural nuances that may affect a student's ability to understand and learn.

Censorship - The suppression of ideas and information that certain persons—individuals, groups or government officials—find objectionable or dangerous. It is no more complicated than someone saying, "Don't let anyone read this book, or buy that magazine, or view that film, because I object to it!" Censors try to use the power of the state to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable, on everyone else. Censors pressure public institutions, like libraries, to suppress and remove from public access information they judge inappropriate or dangerous, so that no one else has the chance to read or view the material and make up their own minds about it. The censor wants to prejudge materials for everyone.

What Is The Relationship Between Censorship And Intellectual Freedom? In expressing their opinions and concerns, would-be censors are exercising the same rights librarians seek to protect when they confront censorship. In making their criticisms known, people who object to certain ideas are exercising the same rights as those who created and disseminated the material to which they object. Their rights to voice opinions and try to persuade others to adopt those opinions is protected only if the rights of persons to express ideas they despise are also protected. The rights of both sides must be protected, or neither will survive.

Community standards - A challenging term to define, as courts have sought to recognize both national and local standards with little success. Many organizations have established a shared set of "Community Standards" that guide their work and decisions.

Disinformation - "deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda." Dictionary.com

Diversity - The sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. Visible diversity is generally those attributes or characteristics that are external. However, diversity goes beyond the external to internal characteristics that we choose to define as 'invisible' diversity. Invisible diversity includes those characteristics and attributes that are not readily seen. When we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual. ([ODLOS Glossary of Terms](#); Adapted from [National Education Association](#))

Equal and equitable access to information and services - An approach to operating that ensures that everyone the library serves is entitled to the same level of access to information and services and that all have the opportunity to avail themselves of that access if they so choose. "Equal" access refers to uniform access to information and services. "Equitable" access refers to just and fair access, taking into consideration the facts and circumstances of the individual case. Access to information and services is equal and equitable when there is a level playing field for everyone.



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

Equity - Not the same as formal equality. Formal equality implies sameness. Equity, on the other hand, assumes difference and takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. The effects of that exclusion often linger systemically within organizational policies, practices, and procedures. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups. ([ODLOS Glossary of Terms](#); Adapted from National Association of Social Workers)

E-Rate: Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries - Makes telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries. With funding from the Universal Service Fund (fcc.gov/general/universal-service-fund), E-Rate provides discounts for telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries. Eligible schools and libraries may receive discounts on telecommunications, telecommunications services, and Internet access, as well as internal connections, managed internal broadband services and basic maintenance of internal connections.

Discounts range from 20 to 90 percent and are based on the poverty level of the schools. Rural schools and libraries may also receive a higher discount. Recipients must pay some portion of the service costs.

According to the CIPA law, libraries that receive E-Rate discounts are required to implement library-based tools to prevent underage users from accessing content that is harmful to minors.

The ALA unsuccessfully challenged this law in the early 2000s: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/federallegislation/cipa/cipalegalfaq>

Exploitation - Any person who employs, uses, persuades, induces, entices, or coerces any minor to engage in, or who has a minor assist any other person to engage in, or who transports any minor in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, or in any Territory or Possession of the United States, with the intent that such minor engage in, any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or for the purpose of transmitting a live visual depiction of such conduct. (18 U.S. Code § 2251 - Sexual exploitation of children: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2251>)

Expurgation - The excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources for the purposes of censorship.

Extralegal pressure - Threat of legal action or pressure by community members or organized groups that results in the banning of library materials. The term also refers to requests from law enforcement without a proper court order and actions taken by persons in positions of authority (e.g., mayors, elected officials, school officials) to remove or restrict access to library materials or services without following library policies and procedures.



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

Fake news - “purposefully crafted, sensational, emotionally charged, misleading or totally fabricated information that mimics the form of mainstream news” [Fake News: Understanding Media and Misinformation in the Digital Age](#) (back cover).

FERPA - Acronym for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), which controls the disclosure of a student’s educational records and information and gives parents and students the right to inspect and correct their educational records. The act applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Filtering software - A “technology protection measure,” the use of which is intended to block access to particular kinds of online content. CIPA requires public schools and libraries accepting funds for internet access through the Universal Service E-rate discount program and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) to certify that they have adopted an internet safety policy that includes the use of filtering software to keep adults from accessing visual images online that are deemed obscene or child pornography. The filtering software must also block minors’ access to images that are harmful to minors.

Harmful to minors - Sexually explicit materials that adults have a legal right to access but that lack any serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors. It is illegal to knowingly distribute such materials to any minor. Not all states have harmful to minors laws, and the coverage varies significantly in states that do. Also, some state laws stipulate that in any prosecutions of organizations or individuals alleged to have provided content deemed harmful to minors, being a library or library worker is an affirmative defense.

Hate group - A social group that advocates and practices hatred, hostility, or violence toward a group or individual based upon their race, ethnicity, nation, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other designation of society.

Hate speech - Abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation. “Hate speech” doesn’t have a legal definition under U.S. law, and is protected under the First Amendment. It can be criminalized only when it directly incites imminent criminal activity or consists of specific threats of violence targeted against a person or group.

Inclusion - an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization’s success. ([ODLOS Glossary of Terms](#); Adapted from [Society for Human Resources Management](#), [Hewlett Packard](#), and [Ferris State University](#))

Inclusivity - the effort by libraries to include as many age-appropriate perspectives as possible on the diversity of human experience as well as to welcome all members of the library community to access the diverse and inclusive collection.



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

Intellectual freedom - The right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view, without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship/faq>

Internal challenge - a request by library management to reconsider currently available materials, often without following the full posted Selection and Reconsideration Policies. This kind of challenge is closely related to **Self-Censorship** and **Silent Censorship** (see below).

LGBTQ - LGBTQ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

***Note:** A number of states have and are crafting legislation to suppress content that may "promote, normalize, support, or address controversial social issues, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) lifestyles."

Critics of intellectual freedom often consider work representing LGBTQ lives or perspectives as a violation of their community standards.

Misinformation - "False information that is spread, regardless of whether there is intent to mislead." Dictionary.com

Neutrality - The idea that libraries should remain ideologically neutral spaces to ensure all patrons' access to any information they please, regardless of their identity, status, background, or beliefs. The reasoning of those who support libraries' neutrality is that by not offering any opinion or perspective, libraries create spaces where all members of the community can feel safe accessing materials, even if their beliefs contradict hegemonic ideologies. <https://hacklibraryschool.com/2020/02/25/libraries-should-take-sides/>

Today, there is discussion and sometimes critique of the term in recognition that libraries have always reflected the dominant culture in which they exist, which has been inherently not neutral.

Obscenity - Obscenity is defined as anything that fits the criteria of the Miller test (from [Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15, 24, 93 S. Ct. 2607, 2615, 37 L. Ed. 2d 419 \(1973\)](#)) which may include, for example, visual depictions, spoken words, or written text.

Miller Test - The **three-pronged** Miller test is as follows:

1. Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds that the matter, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests (i.e., an erotic, lascivious, abnormal, unhealthy, degrading, shameful, or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion);
2. Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

that the matter depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way (i.e., ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, masturbation, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals, or sado-masochistic sexual abuse); and

3. Whether a reasonable person finds that the matter, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. (<https://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/citizens-guide-us-federal-law-obscenity>)

Any material that satisfies **all three conditions** of this three-pronged test may be found obscene. However, it should be noted that only a court can truly label material “obscene” for purposes of the First Amendment. Generally, if an item is available for purchase in the general marketplace, it is unlikely to meet the criteria of the Miller Test.

Parental rights - Any parent has the right to request that any library prevent access by the children of their own family to specific resources or types of resources. No parent has the right to affect the access of any other children than their own to any library resources. Despite current efforts in state legislatures, no further laws are needed to enact these rights.

Personally identifiable information (PII) - Information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.

Pornography - A colloquial term referring to the portrayal of sexual imagery or behavior in books, photographs, motion pictures, videos, and other media that is intended to cause sexual excitement. In more recent times, has been extended to any item or image intended to incite desire (e.g., “food porn”). The decision about what is pornographic is largely subjective and reflects changing community standards and the subjective views of the individual. Imagery that might be considered merely erotic or even religious in one society may be condemned as pornographic in another. Under U.S. law, “pornography” has no legal definition. Instead, courts and legislatures identify illegal sexually themed content as “**obscenity**,” which is defined by statute in federal and state law.

- printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings. (dictionary)
- material that depicts nudity or sexual acts for the purpose of sexual stimulation.
- Numerous states have laws that make it a crime to distribute, display, or provide obscene, pornographic, or sexually explicit content to minors. Some of these laws specifically exempt Teachers and library staff from prosecution if the material(s) were provided to or obtained by the minor(s) in the course of the library staff performing their duties, or as part of an approved school curriculum. Library directors and boards, as well as teachers, should determine if their state has a similar law, and if that law contains an exemption from prosecution that applies to them.



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

- Some consider anything related to human reproduction or gender identity to be pornography, but that misconception holds no legal standing.

Privacy - "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." "The right to privacy includes the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others, in person or online. Confidentiality exists when a library is in possession of personally identifiable information about its users and keeps that information private on their behalf." [Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)

"Problematic" authors - Authors may be deemed problematic by a librarian or patron because they have written other works about controversial topics. Each book or other material should be considered on its own merit, and selected or not without concern for other work by the same author. One author may write for both young children and young adults; the work for older youth may have content not appropriate for the smallest patrons. Another author may write science non-fiction for a variety of ages, and include books about puberty. An adult author may choose to write an abridged edition of an adult title in order to encourage younger readers to engage with a topic appropriately.

Public forum - A "traditional public forum" is a government-owned place that has been traditionally available for public assembly, speech, and discussion (e.g., parks, sidewalks, and streets). A "designated or limited public forum" is a public place purposefully designated by the government, or established through tradition, as a place dedicated to a particular type of expression. A "nonpublic forum" is a place that is neither traditionally used for expressive activities nor set aside or opened up in a substantial way for expressive activities. Rules about what kinds of restrictions on speech may be legally imposed in a given place are based on the type of forum that has been established.

Reconsideration policy and procedure - The formal procedure available to patrons who wish a material removed from a library collection beginning with a complaint, then completion of the Reconsideration form detailing the claim, the committee membership who will consider the challenge, and the resolution of that claim as well as any possibilities for appeal. Also known as **Materials challenge policy**. A similar process may be initiated concerning library sponsored programs.

Request for reconsideration - A formal, written request that the library remove or restrict access to particular resources or programs, submitted on a form and invoking a formal, standardized review process by the library and/ or its governing body.

Selection/collection development policy - the policy guiding all selection and purchase decisions about library acquisitions: review source requirements, community standards, etc. These policies are generally approved by the school district, public library board, or other managing oversight body.

Self-censorship/silent censorship - Refer to librarian choices to not purchase new materials, to weed ones already available to patrons, or to not sponsor a program for fear of a challenge from the community. This type of unseen censorship potentially limits community access to information about topics to which



Terms and Definitions Related to Intellectual Freedom & Censorship, continued

a vocal minority might object and which a vulnerable minority may need. Also note **Internal Challenges** above.

Viewpoint-neutral restrictions - Constitutionally permissible restrictions on expression that apply uniformly to all speech regardless of the point of view expressed by the speaker. Public libraries, like all government agencies, may not silence speakers whom the government opposes or sanction only those whom the government supports, or silence particular speakers because of popular controversy. For example, libraries may not use filtering software to block or filter web content favoring same-sex marriage while allowing access to web content opposing or disparaging same-sex marriage. See also **Content-neutral restrictions**.

Weeding - The systematic removal of resources from a library based on selected criteria. It is the opposite of selecting material, though the selection and deselection of material often involve the same thought process. Weeding is not censorship; it is a vital process for an active collection because it ensures the collection stays current, relevant, and in good condition. Weeding should be done on a continuous, on-going basis. (Larson, Jeanette (2008), [CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries, Revised and Updated](#) (PDF), Austin, TX: Texas State Library and Archives Commission, retrieved October 7, 2014.) A "well-maintained, well-pruned collection is far more useful than one filled with out-of-date or unused materials." Lehman, Kathleen (2014), "Collection Development and Management", Library Resources & Technical Services, 58 (3): 169–177, [doi:10.5860/lrts.58n3.169](#)

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