

ALA Intellectual Freedom Documents

ALA provides many resources surrounding intellectual freedom and the importance of libraries upholding freedom's ideals. Included here is the foundational intellectual freedom document written in 1938 by Forrest Spaulding, then Director of Des Moines Public Library: the **Library Bill of Rights**.

To access more intellectual freedom documents including, The Freedom to Read, Use of Public Library Meeting Rooms, Display and Exhibit Spaces, First Amendment and Censorship, and more, visit the [**ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom**](#) website.

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, age, 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 18, 1948. Amended by the ALA Council February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, January 23, 1980, January 29, 2019. Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.